

DEMOGRAPHIC DESTINIES

Interviews with Past Presidents of the Population Association of America A Project of the PAA History Committee:

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Interview with Anne R. Pebley PAA President in 1998

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Dr. Anne Pebley is Director of the California Center for Population Research at the University of California, Los Angeles, and also Professor of Sociology and the Fred H. Bixby Chair in Community Health Sciences at UCLA. She earned her doctorate in sociology at Cornell University, and was at Princeton University from 1979 to 1993, where she was a Senior Research Demographer at the Office of Population Research, and Professor of Demography and International Affairs in the Woodrow Wilson School. In 1993 she became Director of the Population Research Center at RAND in Santa Monica, California, from which she launched the Guatemalan Survey of Family Health and the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Study (L.A.FANS). In 1999 she accepted her current positions at UCLA.

HODGSON: We're beginning our PAA presidential interview with Anne Pebley, who was our president back in 1998—

PEBLEY: The two hundredth anniversary of Thomas Malthus' first publication.

HODGSON: There you go. That's correct. The first edition of his essay on population. Our initial set of questions has to do with your formative years—where you grew up and how you got interested in the field of population. So you can think back as early as you like, but definitely let's include your undergraduate years.

PEBLEY: Well, it's hard to say on how I got interested in population and demography. That's probably true for most of us. I grew up—well, my father was an AT&T executive, and we moved, I calculated, on average every two years. So it's hard to say where I grew up, but mostly on the East Coast. And then I became, as a teenager in high school, very involved in the environmental movement. My heart is still involved in those kinds of efforts. But my professional work hasn't been so much in that area, with one exception.

I went to college at Union College, in Schenectady, New York, which was at that time, or the year before I arrived, a private men's college. I went there for a variety of reasons. It was a great place to go to school, and reflecting the times, I was a comparative communist studies major, so I studied Chinese and Russian history and political science, and not very much demography. It was the era of big-power politics, and that was my major interest at that point. I hung around with guys who had jackets with the patches on their sleeves, and pipes, beards, and all that. Obviously I wasn't that kind of person, but that's what I did.

Most of the people from my program went on to Columbia to get an MA degree in international studies and from there to the Foreign Service. I went and worked for a year after college, but decided that what I was interested in really wasn't big-power politics, that that was really important but it wasn't my cup of tea. I was much more interested in poverty issues. So I went to Cornell and I entered a master's program initially, a master's of professional studies, which always makes me sound like a

perpetual student, which I suppose I am. For that program they expected people to be Peace Corps grads or Peace Corps alums and I wasn't, but nonetheless they let me in.

After a year I decided graduate school wasn't getting me the kind of education I needed. I had worked at that time with Joe Stycos, and decided that population was really the right place for me to be. But I also was involved with nutrition and agricultural economics, so those were my three fields. I really like population, so I went on and got a Ph.D., much to my chagrin, because when I entered the program I thought people with Ph.D.s were stuffy folks in academic ivory towers, and I wasn't interested.

HODGSON: Can you tell us a little bit about the research you did, in terms of the Ph.D.?

PEBLEY: Well, Joe Stycos was very focused on Latin America, and having been a comparative communist studies major in college, I spoke moderately good Chinese and a little bit of Russian. No Spanish whatsoever. I had some French from high school. The opportunities were really in Latin America and the first summer Stycos found me an internship in Guatemala, at the Nutritional Institute of Central America and Panama, working with another former Cornellian whom you may know, Charlie Teller. So I went to work there, trying pick up some Spanish, and gradually over time learned some Spanish and gradually forgot my Chinese. I worked on, not surprisingly, fertility issues—age at first birth, contraceptive use before first pregnancy, and age of marriage, both in Guatemala, where I was working, and in Costa Rica, where Stycos was working. That was my dissertation.

HODGSON: Moving on, you have your Ph.D. and that set of research. Let's move through your various positions, like your first job.

PEBLEY: Okay. When I was in the process of finishing up my Ph.D. dissertation, I was looking at jobs, just like everybody else. And suddenly, I found out from somebody that I was going to get a call from Jane Menken of Princeton. And Jane Menken was particularly worried that I was working on a dissertation that was exactly the same as one of her students. As I've subsequently come to conclude, two people could be working the same data, on the same dissertation, and produce totally different

things. And that's what was going on, but it introduced me to Jane. And it turned out they had a position available in Princeton for a research associate demographer. So they offered me the position and I took it.

I had planned to go to Princeton for about a year, because my family lived in New Jersey and I thought—you know, I lived in New Jersey most of my life, and I don't really want to have a lot to do with New Jersey, so I thought I'll take this position for a year and then I'll move on. And of course I stayed for fourteen years there and became a full professor and associate director of the Pop Center [Office of Population Research, OPR].

And then OPR's population research went through some tough times. Primarily I guess because the field was shifting so much and we weren't shifting quite as fast as we needed to—so I decided after fourteen years it was probably time to move on. And I looked at a couple of alternatives. I looked at potential job offers at Berkeley, one at North Carolina, and one at Rand. And oddly enough, to the sheer amazement of many of my colleagues, I took the Rand offer. And the reason, of course, is that it is odd to go from a tenured faculty position to this type of position. It's not a strictly academic position. It's a soft-money position.

So I went to Rand for six years. And it worked out very well because I had a big survey to do in Guatemala and I needed to be in Guatemala a lot of the time. Actually, Guatemala's located midway between the East Coast and the West Coast. But the truth is, the flights and the traveling and getting the staff from Los Angeles is much easier. And also, I had the free time. I wasn't teaching, so I had a lot of free time

HODGSON: One quick question. Fourteen years at Princeton. Did your research agenda change in those fourteen years?

PEBLEY: Absolutely.

HODGSON: Although you end up at Guatemala again when you went to Rand.

PEBLEY: Because of Guatemala, I think my fundamental interest became economic development and its consequences for fertility but also for child health. I started doing a lot of work on child health issues—child mortality first, and then broadened out to child health. My first set of projects that were really my own, as opposed to projects I shared with other people, had to do with experimental studies that had been done on child nutrition and family planning, such as the study in Guatemala that I originally went to work on. These were mostly public health studies. There was one called Narangwal that was done in the Punjab region of India, and a couple of other similar studies. And I thought, well, we could use these studies—because they were experimental designs—to look at different kinds of outcomes for kids. With these particular inputs, can you improve the health of kids more efficiently than with another set of inputs, or without input? So I worked on that for quite a while.

My initial position at Princeton was really to work with Charlie Westoff and Norm Ryder, on the National Fertility Study. So by the time I arrived, the National Fertility Study—which was extremely innovative, as you know, in the sense of being the first major cross-sectional fertility study in the US that had a sample of all women, as opposed to a more restricted sample—they had just completed another innovation, which was re-interviewing women. They had a longitudinal vision. So I was there partly to work on that with them. That was a remarkable education.

Two more different people you cannot imagine than Charlie Westoff and Norm Ryder, yet they were great buddies and worked very well together over many years. With them I worked on a lot of fertility-related issues, particularly related to starting childbearing in the US, and fertility intentions, and whether fertility intentions predict behavior. And one of the things I found was that for any idea I could think of for a new research project, I would walk into Norm Ryder's office and he'd already done it, but he hadn't published it. It was sitting in a paper in his drawer. So I would walk in and I'd say, well, I'd really like to do this and here is my idea. And out from the drawer would come the paper that was completed and vastly superior to anything that I, as a young person, could do. So that was a

little discouraging, because he had clearly done it all, but I had no access to the information about what he had done, because it was all in his drawer, not published.

Charlie Westoff, on the other hand, was a very lively, energetic person. He'd say, oh, don't worry about it. Just do what you want to do. So that's what I did. And then Charlie and I, along with Noreen Goldman and a number of other people—James Trussell and several people at the World Fertility Survey Project in London—got involved in a set of research on contraceptive use, and contraceptive failure, and the unmet need for contraception, which was quite a distance, as you can see, from my research on child mortality. But for me it was not so unrelated: people's fertility motivations and what they think about having children and their expectations of the survival of their kids seemed pretty related.

HODGSON: So that was the Princeton years.

PEBLEY: Well, I don't know if that was all of the fourteen Princeton years, but that was a lot of what I did during the early Princeton years. And then I did more work on child health and got involved in a program that the CDC ran. It was really kind of a crazy title. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) was running a program called Combating Childhood Communicable Diseases (CCCD). This was a program that AID [US Agency for International Development] had funded to try to shortcut the pathway to lower child mortality by immunizing kids in Africa. The idea was, let's take the interventions that are going to be most effective and pursue them first, and then we'll think about building an infrastructure. I was involved in helping to design the evaluation component, along with Doug Ewbank at Penn, and in evaluating what was then the Zaire component, now the Democratic Republic of Congo component, in the mid-1980s, with a graduate student of mine, Anouch Chahnazarian which was a fantastic experience. Anouch and I spent six weeks in a Catholic mission out in rural Zaire, running this evaluation survey. So I did various things like that, very much focused on child mortality, leading to the development of this survey in Guatemala, which focused on maternal and child mortality. And I can talk a little bit about that if you like.

HODGSON: Sure.

PEBLEY: My previous work had been this particular study in Guatemala. Guatemala's an interesting place because maybe more than half of the population are indigenous Mayans and other groups. The other half of the population are known as Ladinos, but many of them have Mayan inheritance too. The two groups think of themselves as very separate. From a social stratification point of view, the Mayan population has been confined to the very poorest ranks of society for quite a long time, and has maintained a real strong traditional medicine usage over time. And one of the issues was the strong feeling at that time—this was the early 1990s—that the Mayan population really wasn't taking advantage of the biomedical health services that were available, and wasn't that interested in them. So we designed a study to take a closer look at that, but also to look at the process of choosing healthcare options, and the consequences for maternal and child health. That was the study that I worked on, primarily with Noreen Goldman, and that we developed right before I went to Rand, and then carried out all of this at Rand, all while Noreen was still in Princeton.

HODGSON: You were at Rand. You've got the study you're completing. What takes place in the context of Rand and your research agenda?

PEBLEY: Well, one of the things that I always wanted to do—when I started out most of my research was focused on developing countries and poor countries, though I had also been working on the US national fertility study. I think it's a very good idea to be thinking about your own society as well as other societies. So I was quite interested in US society and some of the same issues. My own research interests had really broadened out quite a bit beyond maternal and child mortality and health, to include welfare issues, the well-being of the population. I think I returned to my old interest in poverty issues. Rand was a great place to do that because a lot of people had exactly that kind of interest. Some of the Guatemala survey focused on those kinds of poverty issues. A lot of the analysis we did focused on it.

But then of course one of the great things about moving sometimes is it makes you think differently. You may not plan it that way but sometimes it just changes how you view the world. Princeton is a great place to live in, a great place to raise young children. I think older children probably get bored out of their mind sometimes.

Los Angeles is a really different place, much more heterogeneous. I love that and that was part of the attraction, that kind of diversity. It made me think a lot more about not just diversity in terms of ethnicity, but in terms of social class and physical structures. I grew up outside of New York City, for the most part. And here was a city that looked nothing like what I thought a city should look like. It's got some tall buildings but that's not primarily what a city like Los Angeles looks like. So I was introduced to whole new urban type areas. It made me start thinking a lot about those issues, and again Rand was a great place to do that.

I started working on topics related to Latino health or Hispanic health. And also on poverty and wellbeing issues. A little bit on education, surprisingly, because it was never my field. I also did some work on family demography, like grandparents involved in taking care of their grandchildren. This all led to the development of the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey, which I worked on with a number of people at Rand but also a nationwide group, including my colleague Noreen Goldman, to some degree, but my primary co-conspirator has been Narayan Sastry, who was at Rand at that time and who had coincidentally been one of our students at OPR. I can talk more about the survey.

HODGSON: Did you have any interaction with grad students or did you miss that?

PEBLEY: I had some interaction, for two reasons. Rand has a graduate school, actually, in public policy, and I did teach a couple of classes there. Part of the reason I went to Rand was to have this period of not teaching so I could have a lot of time in Guatemala. It was more of a problem to teach. The other thing is later in my time at Rand, I took a position as an adjunct professor at UCLA. I started teaching a course there which was very similar to a course I had taught at Princeton. So it was very good. Then I also met my husband at Rand. I mean, I had met him a little bit before I came to Rand.

He was a Rand graduate student. He's an attorney but he was there to get a public policy degree, but then he decided being an attorney was a better deal for him. He went back to being an attorney, so we don't have people in the house competing for publications, which is good.

So I didn't have much interest in interaction with students. I actually love teaching. It's one of my favorite things. But it really was nice to have a period where I could just concentrate on a lot of hands-on survey research.

HODGSON: So from Rand we move to—

PEBLEY: UCLA. As I said, I had been doing some teaching at UCLA. UCLA has had an endowed chair in population for many years. I don't remember precisely. It was the 1980s. Judith Blake was my predecessor.

HODGSON: It was the Bixby chair.

PEBLEY: It was the Bixby chair. Judith had died in 1993 and the chair had been vacant since then. Part of the problem is that in the California system, you can have an endowment for a chair, but you have to have the position as well. And the endowment for the chair doesn't come with a position. So they hadn't been able to get a position for quite a long time. But they were finally able to get one because it was becoming an embarrassment to have this endowment for a chair that wasn't being filled.

They interviewed a lot of people and I decided it was a good time for me to move—I had never seen being at Rand as being a long-term prospect, just because I couldn't imagine being seventy and trying to fund all of my own time out of research grants. That didn't seem like an appealing prospect, particularly, though some of my colleagues at Rand do it and tell me how great it is, but I don't believe them.

UCLA at that time was beginning to attract a number of demographers. There were a couple of people there to begin with. So I applied and they hired me. I was very fortunate in that regard. And at the same time, partly through Rand, which has had a population center for a long time, we had invited out a number of demographers as visitors such as Rob Mare and Judy Seltzer and Joe Hotz and a

number of other people for a year. And they decided that they liked Los Angeles but they weren't willing to take the leap to Rand that I had been willing to take. Eventually, within several years, UCLA was able to recruit them as well. We developed a core, including Cameron Campbell and Don Treiman, and Bill Mason, who were already at UCLA. We developed a core group because we'd all known each other outside.

One of the wonderful things about demography is that we all have this network. We are in a variety of different fields but this network we can use effectively. University administrations don't necessarily know that, so we can be even more effective because we can bring in other people and get stuff done very efficiently. It's not intentionally under the radar, but it is under the radar and it works well.

Suddenly UCLA found they had this cohesive group in economics and sociology and public health. We were all forming a grass-roots organization, lobbying for resources for a population center. And so we started a population center in 1998 and subsequently got our funding from NICHD [National Institute of Child Health and Human Development]. And now we have a population center that has about seventy faculty members across campus. I have been in the field for thirty-five years or so, and compared to most population centers, we have more disciplines, and are vastly more diverse. We have people from medicine, from law, from public health, sociology, economics, psychology, public affairs—a variety of units across campus. We helped to hire a lot of them, again through this network that isn't so apparent on the surface, but not all of them. And it's really blossomed. I wouldn't have guessed we'd be this large and effective, this quickly.

HODGSON: Now, diversity in the population center: has that affected your research? Have you broadened out?

PEBLEY: It's affected my research in the sense that I had a lot more people of diverse disciplines to talk to. And I work very closely with a colleague in medicine, who also has a Ph.D., Arleen Brown. She's a physician but she has a Ph.D. And she is very involved in the center, so she's sort of on the

road to conversion to a demographer. And I've helped a little bit. And she's helped educate me about some of the issues that her community -- biomedical science folks -- talk about. That's helped a lot. I guess I would say the center is more an enabling tool. The seminars are very diverse so it helps me think about a lot of different things. But I also I'm naturally interdisciplinary, always have been. Like a lot of demographers, I don't fit neatly in, say, sociology. I'm not mainly in a sociology department or an economics department or some other department, because I'm also interested in other things that aren't specific to that the discipline. I don't worry about what's within and what's without sociology. I think the center provides a great intellectual community, if that's your orientation.

HODGSON: In terms of the current time period, what's your favorite, most intriguing set of interests right now? Is it Los Angeles?

PEBLEY: There's a lot more to do in Los Angeles. One of the things I should have known going into L.A.FANS was the huge amounts of time and effort that go into planning and fielding and documenting and making publicly available a survey. Ours is a longitudinal survey, so it just soaks up time and energy. It's really important we do these things. The thing about our field is that we have a long tradition of sharing data, so that you're not just collecting data for yourself, you're collecting data for the community. But I'm in a phase now where I can do a lot of analysis, and we've done quite a bit but there are a lot of new things that I want to do on Los Angeles.

I am interested in both in the US but also interested in what goes on elsewhere. So I have two other things going on. One is a set of projects that look at Mexico and the US, to a degree, the immigrant population in the US, but also the population immigrating from Mexico and the interchange between the two countries. One of the projects we're just about to start on, with luck, if we get funding for it, is to look at families in Mexico of immigrants who are in the US, and to think about the consequences for immigration. It's not a new topic, but it's something we don't know enough about. One of the consequences for families in Mexico, potentially in Guatemala, and in other countries of

migration to the US, is not remittances, but in terms of parent-child interactions, spousal interactions, and also eldercare.

One of the things we're very concerned about is what happens to parents, older parents, when their adult children are in the US, especially given that greatly intensified immigration restrictions. If you're undocumented, going back and forth across the border is never easy, but now is so much harder. So what are the consequences, not only for the immigrant, but for his family, typically, or her family?

And then another piece that I'm working on... we have a long term collaborative agreement with a university in China. This is the Qinghai University Tibetan Medical College, and its college is staffed by and trains almost exclusively, though not exclusively, Tibetan students in traditional Tibetan medicine. They also do some training in biomedicine. One of the things they decided was that they wanted to incorporate a public health component in what they do, and also to do more rigorous medical research, biomedical research, using randomized controlled trials, and other research on Tibetan medicine and Tibetan medical practices.

One of their faculty members was a graduate student of mine. He came to the US to get a Ph.D. in public health, so he could understand public health, and go back and help construct a program. Right now we're in an exchange phase. We've been doing it for six or seven years. They have sent students, graduate students, for additional training. And we send faculty and graduate students to do summer training.

The idea is that we will evolve into research collaborators. It's an interesting relationship because we have somewhat different interests. One of the things they want very much is to carry out a survey on socioeconomic status and demography of the population in their region.. They're incredibly capable, dedicated folks. They're the best possible collaborators. So we've really been working to try to both increase an institutional infrastructure there and then also to build these research projects.

HODGSON: That looks like a really diverse intellectual biography.

PEBLEY: There you go.

HODGSON: In terms of say, articles, books, what would you say is most influential?

PEBLEY: I have published a couple of edited volumes, but not any books per se, because my publishing tradition has typically been in articles. For me, one article is just a piece of a larger puzzle, it's not the earthshaking, groundbreaking thing. It is for other people. For me what's important is putting the pieces together. And often that takes five, six articles.

HODGSON: If you had to pick the most influential—

PEBLEY: If I had to pick one article, it would be something I haven't mentioned, something that means a lot to me, which is, surprisingly, my presidential address on population and the environment. Partly because of the nature of the presidential address, it couldn't be an in-depth article, but I'm hoping that it spurred people to think a little bit about the environment and environmental issues. And it was really thanks to a lot of your work, Dennis, which was influential in helping to put together that piece. It was about the field of demography and the environment, not so much about population in the environment. Certainly I hope that we would all step back from our fairly rigid positions, fairly well-defined positions, and think a little bit more about these issues. I wouldn't attribute it to the article because I think some of this was going on already, but since the article was published we've been forced to pay more attention to environmental issues. There are things going on. I think we've gone about it a little bit differently than I would have imagined, but my hope is that that article caused some people to think and will continue to do so.

Aside from that, I guess I'd say the Los Angeles research is something that matters a lot to me. Each piece of it matters a lot. Ironically, one of the most important findings is that neighborhoods are not as important for some outcomes as people had thought. This is an iconoclastic finding, which is really important. In public health there is a huge literature which essentially assumes that neighborhoods, meaning small residential units that we live in, are the be-all and end-all of contextual effects and of our social life. I think sociologists have known for a long time that that's an incredible simplification and doesn't get you very far. And we've got some good empirical evidence to suggest

that neighborhoods can be important for some things, like immediate safety and security. Right after the 1994 earthquake, neighborhoods were very important for a very brief period of time in Los Angeles. They're really important for basic levels of safety, like whether people are shooting up your neighborhood, whether it's unsafe to go out on the streets. Having a basic level of friendly relationships and trust with your neighbors is a good thing. But beyond that, are they really going to have a huge effect on your daily life? And on your psyche? And on your health? And all these things that are attributed to them? For little kids, maybe, if they're growing up in their neighborhoods, in well-to-do LA or middle-class LA. A lot of LA kids do not spend a lot of time in their neighborhoods anyway, so what's the difference? Their moms and their dads are out working. They're in daycare centers. That's been particularly important, defining what is important about neighborhoods, but also thinking about what effects neighborhoods are supposed to have, but apparently don't, and that people should be looking at larger social units.

For example, we're looking at what we call activity spaces, the areas that—you've been talking about this stuff, John—the areas that people travel in their daily lives, and the diversity or lack of diversity in their activity spaces and how that affects behavior and outcomes.

HODGSON: You almost had a perfect segue into our next topic.

PEBLEY: Well, tell me the next topic and maybe I can help.

HODGSON: The next topic is interdisciplinarity. Thirty-five years ago demography was a quite different thing than it is today.

PEBLEY: Yes.

HODGSON: We've got your biographical transformation over time. What about your reflections on where the discipline was and where it is now? And where you think it might be headed?

PEBLEY: Well, I suspect my reflections on that are not a whole lot different than anybody else's, but I'll tell you one story, which is my first PAA meeting, in Montreal in 1976. My first PAA session, I walked into—and you know, I was a new convert. I really loved demography. This was several months

after I started the program. I was all wound-up about everything. The first session I walked into was a session on mortality, and I can remember some of the people—but I won't name them, for obvious reasons—these very dour men dressed in dark suits, probably not black suits, but standing up giving very quiet and very modulated presentations on things like life tables, and causes of death, all things I was really interested in, actually. It was a funny experience, because here I was, twenty-three years old, a young woman, and I thought this stuff was wonderful and lively and interesting. And here were these guys, and they also loved it. And at a PAA meeting this year, I went to an event that was maybe on mortality, or possibly in health – something which grew out of my interest in mortality -- and there were lots of different people. They're a lot more lively: dressed in much more lively clothes and talking about everything you can imagine, and not focused so much on the technique of measuring mortality, but much more on the social determinants of mortality or economic determinants of mortality. That's an obvious trend that I think we've all seen. Essentially we had this field that focused on outcomes -- demographic outcomes and demographic measurement -- and didn't pay so much attention to determinants. I mean, some determinants, right? But we've expanded outward now, where the vast majority of what we're doing, you'd have to work hard to press it into the mold of determinants of fertility, mortality, migration, and age structure, right?

My students come to me now and say, okay, what is demography? A lot of them are public health students, and they hear all this language about population health, and they want to know, well, how does that differ from demography? I would say that demography subsumed part of population health, but we've taken in a lot of territory over these thirty-five years since I entered the field. I think that's altogether good. You can imagine, with my interests, I think that it's wonderful, because I can explore an even wider field and get more ideas.

On the other hand, I do worry about a couple of things. One is, I think demographic methods are really neat and very important and in some cases even simple methods are not unique to demographic issue. They help you to think about things. They help you think about time and about

processes in ways that other kinds of methods don't so much. And I worry that in our diversity we're losing the training in demographic methods for students. We have a lot of economics students in our population centers and students from other disciplines, but it's hard to fit demographic methods training into their program, because it is not rewarded in fields like economics. We can require the sociology and public health students to take demographic methods courses, not these other students. I think it's really a very great way to train your mind.

One of the things I'm thinking about, and I think the PAA should be thinking about, is providing online training in demographic methods. It would certainly be more efficient -- online courses in demographic methods. Why should it just be restricted to universities? It's a useful thing for a lot of people, because the kind of processes we're talking about, of course, can be applied to lots and lots of things we know. So that's one thing I worry about.

The other thing, the other potential danger, is that we absorb so much of the rest the world, there's nothing of our community left. It's the classic sociology of boundaries, for me. What's the definition of membership in the field "demography"? I'm not so worried about that. Other people have been more worried.

HODGSON: Any reflections about where you think the future will be, as we get more and more diverse? Many of the problems you perceive are ones where we're sort of losing a core. And you might have some ways of dealing with that, thinking about demography in 2030.

PEBLEY: You know, we're really good at twenty years of projection. I mean, we can do longer projections, but then we have a lot of unpredictable factors which make prediction beyond then difficult. It's hard. I think there are two things that could happen. There are probably seventy things that could happen. There are probably seventy other things we're not even thinking about. We face huge societal problems, particularly with regard to the environment, and who the hell knows where we're going to be in 2030, but especially 2050, I have no idea. We don't seem to be able to muster the political will to deal with these problems. I went through the 1970s, like you guys did, where the Club

of Rome and other people had all these disaster scenarios, which obviously never came to pass and were based on poor assumptions. I'm always skeptical about these doomsday scenarios, and I don't think we're facing a doomsday scenario, but we have very serious problems that we have to deal with and we're not dealing with them. But for demography, I think there are two ways we can go. One is, we continue to absorb other fields, and dissolve ourselves essentially in these other fields, because I think humans really do like silos and groupings. I don't think disciplines are going away any time soon. They may change but I don't think they're going away. So we could lose our identity, or we could make stronger efforts to essentially spread our identity. We could either dissipate or we could essentially—I hate to keep using these religious analogies, but we could convert other people, essentially make it clear why the ways we think are important and the kind of tastes and preferences we have for really good data, and being very upfront and honest about the quality of your data, and using thoughtful demographic methods. Doing these things is really important to the quality of research, data sharing, the ethos that we have among demographers.

One way for us to survive and thrive it seems to me, is essentially not to say, oh, we're going to dissipate, fade out over time. Essentially, we have something very important to offer and if we can persuade others that it's important and they should adopt it, not exclusively, but I think that as demography changes its identity, it remains really very important.

HODGSON: These are reflections about the planet, in some ways. I think you basically outline your thoughts about the organization itself, the PAA. We've got your experience from your first PAA meeting, then you're PAA President in 1998. We've got today. We've got a pretty good idea of what is happening to the discipline. Organizationally, what can the PAA do to preserve its identity and perpetuate it?

PEBLEY: I think the PAA has to be careful, because—and I know you didn't mean it this way—but if it's just about perpetuating ourselves, we shouldn't do it. We shouldn't be spending our time on that. We should be doing things that are important and useful, and taking the ideas that we have and getting

out there and making sure that other people understand they're important. I think that I was a bit of a skeptic, as many people were, about the development campaign, although I've been on the development committee since the beginning. But it's worked well, and will help us in disseminating our approach to thinking and research.

Part of the problem is our age-structure. Many of us are baby boomers and older, so the kind of ideas we have about getting ourselves out there and carrying out the kind of things we're talking about are good, but there might be better ideas among our younger colleagues. We have sessions every once in a while to try to gather their ideas, but it's not enough. So I think we need a bigger public presence. We need to provide public education. We're a small association, but a lot of bigger associations do it. Now it's fairly cheap to do it. If you have a really good course and a really good instructor and you think about online teaching, well, you learn that particular set of techniques. You can do a good job. And I think we as an association ought to be out there, not to supplant people who are teaching demographic programs, but we ought to be out there promoting our science and our methods and our research in a way that we're not now. And I think the censuses in the classrooms are a great program. But we should really be thinking a lot more about social media and more about mass media than we are.

HODGSON: Can you give specific teaching roles for the association?

PEBLEY: There's an issue of copyright and also who would do it and all that, but I know we've done a lot of much harder things. One of the things that the PAA has is a lot of good will among members. I mean, we have arguments and fights, just like anybody else. There's not a lot of major political nonsense that goes on in the PAA, but we've got a lot of really good trust and social capital, which makes it much easier to do things.

HODGSON: Have we missed anything you want to tell us?

PEBLEY: I don't think so, but thank you guys.

HARDEE: Can I ask her one question?

PEBLEY: Sure.

HARDEE: What was it like being in Guatemala?

PEBLEY: The first day I was ever in Guatemala was in 1976 and I was 21 years old. And Joe Stycos had recommended that I stay in the Pan-American Hotel, which I thought was some fancy place. Turned out to be a somewhat fancy place, but not that fancy a place. And I went there and I thought it was the best thing I've ever done, to go there, because it was new and different, and I'd never been anywhere besides Canada. So it was fantastic. On the other hand, I didn't have much money. I had \$730 for the whole summer, for three months in Guatemala. So I had to figure out really quickly where I could stay because this hotel cost vastly too much. So I went traipsing around looking at all different kinds of pensions. I think the good thing is, I had a really open mind, somehow. What happened then was—this is always happening to me. When I'm in another country I don't have the same set of expectations. I don't know what it is. I think if my parents had seen some of the places that I looked at and places I stayed, they would have died. And if I now saw my daughter going and staying at some of those places I probably would die as well. Nonetheless I took up residence in this pension that was really this very old building and settled in, and tried to figure out how things were going. It was very exciting, but somewhat worrisome at the same time. But I thought, okay, I can deal with this.

HODGSON: So how was your Spanish?

PEBLEY: It was nonexistent. I spent maybe five months working with a tutor. As I told you, I was a French speaker. It's a really different thing to sit with somebody trying to speak Spanish for five months and then actually being immersed. That's the way to learn, to be immersed. Have you been there?

HARDEE: I lived in Bolivia for six months.

PEBLEY: Okay, cool. In some ways it's very similar, not the mountains so much.

HARDEE: And what was the experience like, working with the people there?

PEBLEY: The people I started working with were people at the international nutrition center, who were a very international group. They weren't just Guatemalans. In fact, they were from all over Central America, and they were terrific. The project I worked on was an experimental design focusing on improving the nutritional status of kids in Eastern Guatemala, an exclusively Ladino area.

HODGSON: That's all the time we have, but we really appreciate your willingness to sit down with us today. Thank you very much.

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