



Carolina Population Center

In 1966, the Carolina Population Center was founded at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. To celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2006, a project was conducted to document the history of the Center. This transcript is an excerpt from an oral history interview.

Interviewees: Boone A. Turchi, Richard E. Bilsborrow, and Chirayath M. Suchindran.

Interview conducted by: Grace Camblos

Interview date: February 24, 2006

Boone A. Turchi has been a CPC Fellow since 1977. Richard E. Bilsborrow has been a CPC Fellow since 1977. Chirayath M. Suchindran has been a CPC Fellow since 1977 and a Statistical Core Consultant since 1984.

BT: Now, that's all a function of the structure that came into place, that Udry put into place to support that stuff. And he was very, very interested in multidisciplinary stuff. And that's really what separated us from all the other population centers in the country was that we could put together a research group that came from six or seven different disciplines across schools and everything like that and make it plausible, make it work.

RB: And this is the one, that's what made this unique. In the early '70s, they [Turchi and Suchindran] were trained at Michigan and I went to Princeton as a postdoc, and those were known as the two best places in the country to study demography in an academic setting at that time. They were fairly small scale and they were both tied up with two departments. So when this, as this place evolved - and we should give Moye some credit because he is an MD. He was already thinking of this from a public health point of view, and a policy point of view. So he's much more eclectic from the very beginning. And so in some sense he laid the groundwork for this to become a very interdisciplinary center...

CS: Oh. Oh yes.

BT: In a great sense.

RB: ...involved in both the arts and sciences and the whole health side as well. And to this day that's become increasingly stronger and more and more departments and faculty. And our difference and our strength compared to all the other population centers in the country and in the world really, because most of them that are outside other countries are also economics or sociology. That's the real strength of this Center.