

**INTERVIEW  
WITH  
ELEANOR WESTNEY  
March 11, 2015  
Sloan Oral History Project**

E: Eleanor Westney  
G: George Roth  
B: Bob McKersie

G: It is Wednesday, March 11, 2015, and this is George Roth with Bob McKersie, interviewing Eleanor Westney as part of the Sloan Oral History series.

We generally begin by having people think back about their first remembering of MIT, even before you came here what you thought about MIT, how you first heard about it, what your views and impressions were. Then evolving into the story of what brought you here, and working through your career, particularly people you've collaborated with in projects and teaching. When we get to the end of that we have a couple of other questions that give you an opportunity to reflect on your journey here and while you were here. And of course, we would be very interested because you've been gone. And now, in the meantime since you were gone, we've put up a new building and I am sure there are other changes you might have noticed.

E: I actually just missed the move (I left Sloan in June, 2007). I was very grateful to leave from my old office, which I dearly loved. And not have to move over to a new building and then have to move. That would have been very hard. This is my first time in the new building.

My background originally, in East Asian studies with a focus on Japan as an undergrad. And then, as an undergrad, moving into sociology and combining that with Japanese studies.

B: That was at Princeton?

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E: Well, as an undergrad it was at the University of Toronto, and in those days you had to start in an honours course. In high school, I had pre-registered in English Language and Literature, because that's what I loved and I was quite good at it. But one day in high school, my last year, I was reading the university catalog and reading about the courses I'd be taking the next year, and my eye went up the page and alphabetically in the catalog "East Asian Studies" comes right ahead of "English Language and Literature." I started reading about all these really interesting courses on China and Japan – and India, at that time, was part of that. I thought, "I don't know anything about these places." I started looking around, and as a result, I wound up registering – they never had a student, they had just started the honors Japanese program. That fall, I started in East Asian Studies–Honours Japanese.

By the third year, I was getting claustrophobia because it was VERY narrow and I had discovered the social sciences. I switched into sociology, determined to shake the dust of Japan off my feet. I had had enough! But in sociology, I was quite irritated by the fact that so much of what I was reading totally ignored Asia, especially Japan. I wrote a lot of my papers on social stratification, and org theory, on whether or not these theories applied to Japan. The professors loved it, and I realized I was onto a good thing.

I humbly went back to the East Asian Studies department and asked if I could combine Japanese studies and sociology, and they were very accommodating. In the days when you couldn't really do that, I had, in effect, a double major. I carried an extra course each year to do that.

Then I did my PhD at Princeton because they had a very strong sociology department, and a very strong Japanese studies department. My interest was in social change. Nobody can be interested in Japan without being interested in social change [laughing]. Particularly, Tokogawa, Meiji. Marius Jansen was, at that time, the leading Japanese historian on Meiji. I did my PhD, combining the two.

I got a job in the Sociology department at Yale. Those were the days, in the 1970s, when Marius Jansen got a call from John Whitney Hall, who was his buddy at Yale, to say, "You know, the Japanese have given us money for a chair in the Sociology department. Do you know any....?" They started wanting Ronald Dore, but he wouldn't come. Then they wanted Bob Cole, but he wouldn't come. They were getting a bit desperate: "Do you know ANYBODY? Do you have anyone in the pipeline?" And Marius said, "Well, it just so happens we have a

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person coming up.” Basically I got the job at Yale before I’d even started my fieldwork on my dissertation in Japan, on the basis of a PhD proposal. They were desperate. And then I was appointed with a leave of absence and no salary for two years, to go off and do my dissertation. I’ve been very lucky in my career – I’ve never actually applied for a job, because I was tootling along quite happily at Yale.

G:           You then finished your PhD....

E:           I actually started teaching at Yale before I had quite finished. Being a notable procrastinator.... The first 1.5 years I was there, I was still working on the dissertation, but I got it done just under the wire.

G:           What year was that?

E:           I got the PhD in 1978. Started teaching there in Fall 1976. Finished the PhD in December 1977, but the formal approval process was 1978.

So in 1982, I was coming up for Associate without tenure. Those were the days when no one got tenure at Yale, but they give you a longer clock with three-to-five year appointments as Associate without tenure. I got a call from MIT, out of the blue. The Japanese had given them money to have a position in the International Management Group, focusing on Japan. They had started out wanting Ron Dore and he wouldn’t come, and they wanted Bob Cole and he wouldn’t come. They were looking for a social scientist who was a specialist on Japan, who might be able to evolve into teaching in international management. I knew, of course, of MIT’s reputation, but knew very little about it, although I knew that there were some – John Dower was here in Japanese History, so I knew there was some interest in Japan here. But the idea of being in Boston was appealing, and being in a real business school. MIT got my name because I was teaching a course in Yale School of Organization & Management. They had come to me because I was teaching a comparative organizations course for the undergrads at Yale, and teaching the SOM Masters students – it was the MPPM in those days, Master of Public and Private Management. Their students were getting very irritated that there was nothing about any other part of the world except America, and they wanted some comparative stuff. They came to

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the Sociology department, so they asked me if I would teach a Masters course. I really enjoyed it. My name showed up on this very short list of social scientists who were Japan specialists, who were teaching in management or business schools.

Yale, in those days, SOM wasn't deeply involved in teaching what you would call "real" management; it wasn't very much connected to the external world. It was very social science-based, with very interesting people. Very dominated, on the one hand, by economics and the micro-orgs people, the OB people, and there wasn't much place for a macro person, and not much access to companies. My work was all historical, focusing on the Meiji period

Dick Robinson called and invited me to consider the Japan-focused position in Sloan's International Management group. I thought that might be interesting, so I flew up. I arrived and Dick took me to lunch in the old Faculty Club, up on the 6th floor. We had a very nice lunch, and then he said, "Well, I expect you'll want to prepare for your seminar...."

I said, "But my seminar is not until 3:30, or 4" – it was late afternoon.

He said, "Oh, no, but you will need some time," and he hustled me into one of the offices. Remember those offices, before the building was renovated, there were these carrels, cubicles, offices that had bunches of carrels in them. They plunked me down there and I sat there for three hours twiddling my thumbs until I was wheeled out to do my seminar.

I think there were six people in the room. The only other person who was in the International Management group at the time was Don Lessard. It was Dick Robinson and Don Lessard. Don's wife was having her first child, and Don was not there. It was Dick. I guess he felt he had to have somebody else in the room, so thank heavens Ed Schein was there, Lotte Bailyn, and John Van Maanen, and a couple of graduate students. I think Bruce Kogut was there.

B: He didn't bring anybody in from the Center for International Studies? Dick Samuels, or anybody like that?

E: No, no other Japan people, no others. It was a tiny group. I gave my seminar on the transfer of organizational patterns to Meiji Japan from Western organizations. Dick shook my hand afterwards and said "Thank you very much," and put me on the plane home.

B: Oh boy.....

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E: I thought, “This is not serious.” They added my name because they needed to have a woman on the list. I forgot all about it. I guess it was 2-3 weeks later, I got this phone call from Dick saying, “We’re very interested in having you come, but our question is: Are you seriously interested in the job?”

I basically said, “What job??! Nobody talked to me about the job!”

He said, “Ohhh, I guess we didn’t....”

I came up another day and then talked to the dean, talked to other people, and had a real job interview without the seminar which I had already given.

It turned out that Ed and Lotte and John really liked what I was doing, saw the potential relevance of this cross-border transfer of organizational patterns, and they lobbied Dick hard. The other person, as John Van Maanen said later, was the one Dick thought they were going to hire, one of Ezra Vogel’s students from Harvard. That’s why it wasn’t a serious job interview, they just needed to have more candidates on the list. But what I did was more interesting to more people than the person who was doing a more obviously business-focused dissertation – for which I was very grateful.

I wound up coming here in the Fall of 1982. John Little was just setting up the BPS group at that point.

B: He’d been asked by Abe Siegel, who was the dean at the time to do that....

E: That’s right, to take over – the School had just been reorganized into these three mega groups, and BPS was the residual group. It seemed to be everything that didn’t fit into Applied EFA, which clearly was a fairly cohesive group, and Management Science. Quite a number of people/groups didn’t fit, and it was quite a diverse group. John saw it as a challenge to put it together. That summer, in August, they were having a BPS retreat, the second retreat, and I asked John if I could come as an incoming faculty member, and he said no!

I was really interested. I was quite surprised by that. I realized I should have gone to lobby my future colleagues to get me included. For someone whose job was to integrate this group, John was not terribly inclusive. He did some things very well, but I think he regarded his

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job at that point as trying to manage this very diverse herd and didn't want newcomers further muddying the waters.

B: He'd been brought over by Abe from Management Science, which had functioned as a department for quite a few years, quite effectively. He was seen as a good administrator.

E: I think he was, and he did some things very well. I did think that he tended to draw lines rather tightly. But that's not what this is about. And it was a little funny – I can't remember how many years he was the head of BPS, but in his very last year he was still saying, "Well, I don't know anything about what all these people do," whenever he would talk about BPS – which I thought was a little strange.

G: He was still head when I came here as a PhD student in 1987.

E: Aha, he was still doing it?

G: Yes.

E: And then Tom Kochan took over with a much more inclusive approach.... and I think he was able to build on the good things that John had done, but was much more willing to bring in people, bringing in communications people.

That's the long story of how I wound up at Sloan.

B: John Dower was here, wasn't he?

E: He was here in HASS, yes.

B: And Richard Samuels?

E: Yes, and it was great because Richard was an assistant professor then and he had just started the MIT-Japan program in 1982 or 1981. He had leave, a sabbatical in 1983-84. He

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asked me if I would be acting director that year, in 1983-84. I said yes because there was nobody else. And it was a great opportunity, because that year Nori Sakakibara was visiting from Hitotsubashi. He was interested in studying engineers and technologists and the organization of technology in the US.

In the Fall of 1983, Digital Equipment Corp went to Harvard and said “We’ve set up an R&D center in Tokyo, and we don’t know if it looks very different from Maynard because it’s Japanese, or because it’s just weird.” And when they went to the literature, there was nothing in English on the organization careers of engineers: lots on blue-collar workers, something on white-collar workers and ruling and strength, the Japanese banks, and the Japanese trading companies but nothing in English on engineers. Harvard said, “Yes, of course, we’ll take the grant.” And then they came and farmed it out to us to do the research because, after all, if you’re doing a study of engineers, you come to MIT. They came to the MIT-Japan program when I was there. I was interested; I was interested in everything in those days. Nori was here, so Nori and I did this study, in cooperation with DEC, where we interviewed engineers in three US computer firms and three Japanese computer firms at the time. We did surveys, collected data, and did an analysis. DEC was very happy with that.

But it got me interested in the internationalization of R&D, and it gave me real insight into the fact that if you are interested in internationalization, comparative is a necessary but not sufficient condition. You have to understand what’s different and what’s similar in different locations before you can actually start crossing borders.

B: You were doing this interviewing of engineers in Japan?

E: Nori could get access to the Japanese companies. It was easy. The combination of Hitotsubashi and MIT was the golden key in Japan. Here, it was Route 128 companies, and none of them are still alive – Wang, DEC, and Data General. In Japan, it was Fuji, Hitachi, and NEC. All the Japanese companies are still going strong, the American companies are long gone.

B: How did you handle your time with travel to Japan for the research? What was your teaching? Courses? What were you doing? How did your first couple of years play out?

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E: It was very interesting because, of course, I came here and it was a very bold move on the part of MIT to hire someone who was an area specialist but had no background in management or business, and no research track record in that. I had done Meiji stuff, primarily; I was a historical sociologist. I loved history, always have. It was very bold of MIT.

The first term, autumn, they let me sit in on courses in strategy. I sat in on Ed's Sloan Fellows course; Don's international management course; Dick Robinson's courses.

I don't know if you've got this background – Dick is a remarkable figure, and one of the pioneers in the international business field: one of the founding members of the Academy of International Business, an anthropologist by training, and a generalist by inclination, and also an activist. He got into a certain amount of hot water, both at MIT and in the Academy of International Business for his strong critique of the American government and its involvement in Vietnam. And a very strong critique of capitalist enterprise and what it was doing, and an early exponent of what we now call corporate social responsibility – the idea that multinational corporations had to be good citizens wherever they operated. A very remarkable man.

B: He had been at Harvard Business School, as I remember.

E: Yes.

B: I knew him there, and I don't know why he came to MIT. He also took retirement a little before I thought he should, and then he was.... he moved away from the area, didn't he?

E: He went to the University of Puget Sound.

B: Yes. And I never understood why he didn't stay here and continue. He just faded from the scene.

E: I think there were two things going on. One of the things was that the international management field was taking a turn, in the early 1980s, away from Dick's core interests. Dick did a really very interesting course – we've come full circle, we do more of it now



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– he did a course on doing business in different countries. It was how you would do business in India, how you would do business in China, how you would do business in Japan.

In the early 1980s, the field was growing closer to strategy, and the hot stuff was CK Prahalad, Yves Doz, and Chris Bartlett, their work on global integration and local responsiveness. The focus was shifting from firms going abroad to established multinationals trying to manage their extended networks better. It became the transnational model. It started with a growing focus on companies like Corning Glass that operated in many places, and face the challenges of “What do you do?” Especially – and this is where I came in – when the Japanese are starting to change the rules of the game in international business because they had a very different model in the 1970s and into the 1980s. They concentrate much of their value-adding in their home market, and then expand by exporting at a time when trade barriers were coming down and transportation costs were falling. Cost efficiencies become much more important, and you can’t do that without integrating your operations across borders, which the country operations in the established multinationals resisted quite fiercely.

The interest shifted, and I was really lucky to come in 1982 because Don Lessard said, “You should really talk to Chris Bartlett.” Chris was just an assistant professor across the river. I think in the spring of 1983, I had lunch with Chris Bartlett in the Faculty Club, and he drew on a napkin for me the global integration/local responsiveness framework and how it was used and applied to different things. This was a revelation for me, and it had not been published very much.

The other great thing that happened – my timing was impeccable – was the right time in the field for someone with an organizational bent, because it was moving away from trade and economics and doing different things in different countries, to a much more organization theory-based, strategy-based view of multinationals.

But also in 1982, Sumantra Ghoshal came here. He came to do the AMP program, the Accelerated Masters Program, a 12-month Masters program sponsored by the Indian Oil Company. He took Dick Robinson’s international business course in the Fall when I was sitting in on it. I still remember meeting Sumantra., Dick assigned him a role play in a case discussion, and Sumantra just wiped the floor with the other people in the role play. He was clearly a driven and brilliant student. Dick gave him to me as my RA for the spring term, to help me map the

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field. I had no idea what to do with an RA, I'd never had one. Dick said, "He'll help you figure out the field, and read things, etc."

I said, "Maybe one of the things you could do is go and find a few recent articles in the literature about what's going on, current trends, and let me know what they are and we could maybe start going over them." The next morning, I arrived in my office and there's a stack of Xeroxes this high! [laughing] Sumantra must have been up all night reading the journals! He became a kind of partner. I became his dissertation chair, and we learned the field together. Then he took Chris Bartlett's course over at HBS, and decided that he wanted to do a DBA simultaneously with doing a PhD at Sloan. I thought this was a great idea, and between us, Don and I muscled it through the bureaucracy here. We were a fairly flexible place but there were some things that they looked a little skittish about. Sumantra remained very grateful to us for doing that because he did two completely different dissertations.

B: He did two doctoral programs?

E: Yes, two doctoral programs, two completely different dissertations. There he was in strategy; here he was in international management. He has a PhD from here and a DBA from Harvard. A dynamo! He was the third author on a book with Michael Scott Morton that came out of the Management in the '90s program, and he and I did some joint research for that on competitor scanning in multinationals and got a couple publications out of that.

B: Where is Sumantra now?

E: He died. Very unexpectedly. A very driven man. When was that? I should know. [note: this happened 3/4/2004, in the UK, of a brain hemorrhage]. Very sudden. He always seemed to think his time was short. Very driven. I remember he wanted to leave his mark on the field, and he did.

G: He certainly did.

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E: I was here at a great time. And the international management group here, in the 1980s and into the 1990s, was very small. Dick Robinson was increasingly seen as “old school”, and I think that’s why he left. He was out of sympathy with this new movement in international management. He was old-school international business, and he wanted to go off to a place where he could create the program that he thought students needed. That’s why he went to the University of Puget Sound. And that was going home for him. He was a Washington/Pacific Northwest person. He invited me out there a couple of times to do some sessions out there on Japan, and he seemed to be in his element. It was his program, and he really made a mark; a very remarkable man.

B: We have you here. You are coming up to speed, your feet on the ground. How do things unfold from there in terms of research, and the courses you were teaching?

E: I was teaching a Japan course, because Japan was hot. All through the 1980s, I got to teach a Japanese business course – I can’t remember what it was called. I also taught a comparative management course. I taught the whole cycle of the international management courses. We didn’t teach undergrads, but International Management I and International Management II. In the 1980s I wasn’t teaching in the Executive programs of the Sloan Fellows. In the 1980s, I was interested in teaching executives because I thought it would be a great way to learn things. But I was told that you needed a “certain physical presence” to teach in the Executive programs – which I think was code for “having a beard” or gray hair. Because a junior person came on board in IM, a political scientist, Dennis Simon, and he was given a chance to teach in some of the executive programs. Don was moving into the “headship” of the group as Dick faded out. There was always this additional slot, usually for a political scientist. And following the pattern of bringing in a discipline-based area specialist, to make the transition into international business.

B: That was Dennis Simon?

E: Yes, then it was Nick Ziegler, and then it was Rick Locke. Rick was the only one who “took” and got tenure here. Interestingly enough, I think partly because one of the things I

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liked about MIT-Sloan, which was a huge potential strength especially for someone in a small group, was that you could have dual citizenship. I was a dual citizen of international management and organization studies. Don was a dual citizen of finance, and he taught international finance. Dennis sort of had a foot in political science but not another home in the Sloan School. Rick had dual citizenship in industrial relations and international management, as well as Political Science. I think having two legs to walk on really strengthens both your research and your institutional credibility.

It took me a long time to do my book, *Imitation and Innovation*, and that was my main research focus. Partly because it was on Meiji and it was something I did in off hours. I was also doing a lot of research on the internationalization of R&D. It was very interesting. I had come up in a program at Princeton, and been at a place at Yale, where you didn't write articles; you wrote books. As a sociologist, and especially in the Japan field, you wrote some articles, but your heart was in doing your books. Then I moved to a place where books were not highly regarded and you were supposed to do articles. It was just in the transition in the 1980s toward the very strong article. Fortunately, I got tenure before that completely took over, because I think I got tenure on the basis of my book and the fact that I had a suite of articles under these different research projects.

When Nori Sakakibara and I presented our work on the engineers to the MOT group here, they jumped all over it with hobnail boots because they said, "You don't make clear what the sampling frame is." "It's not legitimate the fact that you say some of these Japanese engineering filled them out at work and the company mailed them back to you. How do you know they weren't just parroting what the company wanted. Completely unreliable data."

So we thought, gee, we can't publish it. So we put it in a Working Paper, and a chapter in a book. But that working paper was one of the most-cited things I did in the 1980s. I should have said, "Thank you very much. We'll take your comments on board and put it in a footnote." We really should have made a lot more of that than we did. I was too naïve to realize that that's what happens with research: people do jump all over it, and you have to say "Thank you very much," put it in a footnote and go ahead.

B:           And press on.

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E Yes. I was doing that. I got tenure in 1989. I spent six months in Japan in 1987, six months in Japan in 1989, and kept going back and forth a fair bit on shorter visits, with very strong ties to Hitotsubashi University.

B: Working on what?

E: Working on the internationalization of R&D, and the evolving Japanese business system. I got very interested in the Japanese mass media, did a chapter in a book that Susan Pharr at Harvard was editing. I wanted to keep in with the Japan community. I saw myself very much as a dual citizen.

B: I always wanted to ask you about that. You had Ezra Vogel, and the Center for International Studies....

E: I was a Fellow of the Reichauer Institute, with privileges at the Harvard Yenching Library. Yes, it was nice to be part of that larger community of Japanese studies. That was great in the 1980s. It was a shock to all of us in the field when Japan fell off a cliff in the early 1990s. Talk about the “lost decade” for Japan.... In a way it was a lost decade – and it turned into two – but it was a lost decade for Japanese studies. Many of the Japan social scientists had moved into business schools, and like me, had got tenure just before Japan fell off the cliff. Suddenly, nobody wanted to know about Japan any more. You couldn’t sell Japan at any price. My Japan courses went away. Fortunately, by then I was moving into teaching the Sloan Fellows much more general courses in International Management, and courses in in the internationalization of R&D. It was much harder to get people interested in Japan.

I think we missed a trip there. I’ve done one article on it in the late 1990s. Never got it published except in Japanese. Arguing that Japan had a lot more to teach us than we thought, that Japan “lost decade” was seen as a peculiarly Japanese pathology, and if the Japanese would only bit the policy bullet, they could get themselves out of this pretty easily. I was arguing that they are the first highly industrialized, highly developed economic society to reach this point of slow growth and a deflationary environment. And they are unlikely to be the

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last, and we should study more closely how firms are coping with this, what are the successful ones doing, what are the less-successful ones doing?

B: It's an issue today.

E: It's a huge issue today, and if I'd only had the guts to really tough it out and stand up and say this and publish it, I think I might have got some more people involved in studying this. I just didn't do it. But anyway, that's water under the bridge! [chuckles]

But there is no question.... MIT and I should have done a lot more on that. One of the things that happened in the 1990s, I was getting much more involved in executive education, and I found that very exciting, and validating, for someone who felt a little under-qualified in terms of not having an MBA. The fact that I could teach executives, you just learn so much from doing that. I was the director of the Senior Executives Program, the last one, in the early 1990s. Then I got involved in doing a lot more of the very beginning of the BP Projects Academy, starting in 2003.

B: Before getting to the 2000 period, going back to the "lost decade." When did we get all of the chairs from Japanese companies? Alan White was involved in that...

E: The 1980s....

B: I don't know how many chairs he brought in.

E: Yes, that was the 1980s. The boom years.

B: And the Japanese companies have continued to send to the Sloan Fellows program sponsored students.

E: It would be very interesting to see the trajectory. We did see, in the 1990s, the number go down. It's back up. We have 10 this year in the Sloan Fellows Program, and this is the highest it's been for a long time.

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B: It didn't go to zero during the 1990s...

E: No, but it went down. And some of the companies that had always been sending, stopped. But we've got some new companies now. The trading companies are still active.

What's very interesting, because through the lost decade, you had some Japanese companies that were extremely successful globally. It was not all of Japan going down. If you look at the number of companies on the Fortune Global 500, yes, it went down. But the ones who went down were mostly the ones who were there because of their huge domestic market. Just as a lot of the Chinese companies on the Fortune Global 500 now are there because of the huge Chinese domestic market, not their global footprint. The Japanese companies with the global footprint in the 1990s did very well. Some of them, like Sony, are having trouble now, but we are seeing some very interesting new companies coming up and there are represented in the SF program.

B: And while we are reflecting on these broad themes, George you would know something about this, the Toyota production system, and how that came across the Pacific and it had a big impact here at MIT.

E: *The Machine that Changed the World*, the automobile...

G: The IMVP program, the book, and John Paul McDuffie. I don't remember the Japanese scholar John Paul worked with, and it was a strong connection with the MIT-Japan program. And then, of course, Jim Womack went back to the Japan Program as his home, for various reasons, before he left MIT.

E: Yes. I don't know what he's doing now. Do you know?

G: He still runs the Lean Enterprise Institute, which is in One Cambridge Center, the buildings over there. I don't know if you ever met John Shook, who runs it now?

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E: No.

G: His story is very interesting. I don't know where he did his degree. He was an anthropologist, interested in Japan, went over there, worked in Japan, and became the first American that the Japanese hired to translate a lot of their documents, to help them start NUMMI and then start Georgetown. He translated a lot of organizational things. He's actually taken over the organization for Jim. But written a couple of good SMR articles about some of that experience.

I have a book coming out in April on managing change across companies, and I think the Japanese did that enormously well. Actually, the first chapter says that we really missed the boat in understanding the organizational capabilities they have. A few companies have really gotten it and run well, and that's one of the bases of it.

E: Oh, that's great! I'll look forward to reading that.

G: I couldn't agree with you more on some of the comments that you made, that we kind of dismissed it without really understanding it. And there are some notable exceptions – although I would say they have followed and been successful. I don't know if they would have understood it in the same way. That's why we write books so we can tell people what to think.

E: Yes! (laughing]

G: On to the 1990s, an executive education....

E: There's something about the 1980s I should have mentioned. When I came here, there weren't very many women.

G: That's really important, because that's been a big change, and you were just on the edge...



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E: Yes, I was just on the cusp. When I came here, there was Joanne Yates, Katherine Abraham in IR, and Lee McAllister in Marketing. Phyllis Wallace and Lotte Bailyn were the tenured women. And me. There were 4 junior women, and 2 senior women. There were just 6 of us. So we decided we would have dinner every month, just to get together. So we did. We would meet in the lobby to go to dinner. You might have heard this story from Lotte. We were meeting there one night, and Ed Roberts came along and said, “What are you doing?”

“Oh, we’re going to dinner.”

“You’re going to dinner together? Just the women?” He looked at us and then he said, “You know, you shouldn’t do that. The powerless shouldn’t hang out with the powerless!” [laughs] His intentions were good. He said, “When I came here, I was the lone Jew, and I didn’t go around trying to find other Jews to hang out with. You hang out with the powerful.”

I recognized that he was trying to give us, from his experience, his best advice. We decided we’d stop meeting in the lobby to go to dinner.

G: It might seem like an insurrection....

E: I don’t know. People obviously didn’t like that. It was a bit of a sensitive issue.

B: We heard a similar version from JoAnne Yates.

E: Of course.

G: Wasn’t JoAnne’s comment about being able to select wines when you went out to dinner?

E: Oh, then we decided we would take Ed’s advice. Apparently, we had gotten a few comments from people, which we hadn’t paid much attention to. But Ed’s frontal attack did alert us to that. We said, “OK, we’ll invite the dean, Abe Siegel, to go to dinner with us. And we’ll invite Al Silk, the deputy dean.” We invited Abe, and we were going to order the wine, and somebody suggested “What about Vouvray?” and you could just see him.... “Well, Vouvray is Vouvray,” so we had to give him the wine list and he ordered the wine!” [laughing]

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B: On that theme, we have a TV out here, just opposite the elevators, and it has all kinds of materials.....

E: ...the picture with Lester and the women?

B: That's right. You saw that too?

E: I did, because Lester was a great champion for women in school, both hiring them and getting them tenured. He was a very strong supporter, and we were very grateful to him. We invited him to dinner – this was well past the time of political insurance when you invited the dean to dinner. This was because we really wanted to thank Lester for all he had done for women in the School.

G: He would have been dean while you went up for tenure?

E: Yes, and I'm very grateful to him for showing that through.

B: You got tenure in the late 1980s?

E: 1989.

B: Yes, Lester was dean into the 1990s.

E: You can see from that photo, the number of women went up dramatically under Lester. Not so much under Abe. I just think it wasn't one of Abe's priorities; it was one of Lester's priorities. That was a nice change.

And then it got so that by the late 1990s, we had too many women to be able to have a monthly dinner. You couldn't get them all around the table, they couldn't all come, and you had growing diversity among the women in terms of whether or not they found that useful. When there are only 6 of you on the faculty, it's very useful to get together and be able to

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complain to each other. But then it becomes less of an issue. And although we mourned the loss of the camaraderie, we celebrated the fact that it was no longer necessary.

B: The other support group we've heard about was when you get a cluster of junior faculty together.

E: Yes, that was Rick Locke's cohort. Rick, Marcie, Rebecca, Steve Eppinger, Karl Ulrich... they got a group together. That was the first time that had happened. There was a whole cohort of them hired together. To my knowledge, I don't know if anybody else was hired in the year I was hired. It was certainly not anybody I knew. So that wasn't a feature. And the groups in the early 1980s were still much more – we were still in those little cells. There was a certain resistance, too. Both the Org Studies and the IR Group were a little reluctant – were not fans of this renovation which did away with the pods. Because when I came here, every department – was it the fifth floor or fourth floor? When I came here, I moved offices 3 times because we were moving up and down. It was one of those floors. But there was a pod. You went into a door and there was the IR group in its own little set of cells.

G: I remember that....

B: I don't remember that....

G: Those suites....

E: Yes, but there were bigger suites, so you could accommodate an entire group. That created a very strong identity, and it did, in a sense, reinforce this "us vs. them." There wasn't much that cut across those groups. The renovation was important in opening up the groups and making dual citizenship more possible.

B: We were still a Master of Science in Management, with students doing theses then. Did you get many students?

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E: Quite a few. I got all the Japanese until Mike Cusumano came, and then he took some of them. But yes, I mostly supervised Japanese theses and learned a lot that way. That was great.

B: Mainly the SF Japanese?

E: Yes, SFs and MOTs.

B: Yes, they both had to do a thesis.

E: Yes, and some of the MBA students, and Masters students. I would supervise between 8 and 12 a year. That took a lot of time, but it was well worth doing.

I suppose you've had comments on the point system, which got introduced under Glen Urban?

B: Yes. What are your views?

E: Well, I think all of us on the BPS side regarded it as a somewhat pernicious system. I think it was introduced because people in the Dean's office had a kind of perception that there were free-riders around who weren't paying their dues. You had to have a point system that would make this transparent to people. They had a committee that worked out an algorithm about how many points you got for what, and an extra 5 students would result in 0.505% in the number of points you got, or some such thing. It was quite elaborate.

One of the things they hadn't anticipated was that there were a number of people around the School who were doing far more than the normal load. That's what they did, they thought that was just what you did. Then when you had the point system, they realized that if the point quota was 112, and you had 300 points, bloody hell!! You were over!! You were doing more than your share! You had people saying, "What am I doing this for?" and cutting back...

B: Or banking them.

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E: Yes, and then using them to pay for extra time on their sabbaticals. The banking was good. I got a full year off that way. The other pathology is that people used to just do things because it was part of your professional obligation, and you enjoyed it, and that's just part of the job. Then you change to a culture of "Well, how many points for that?" and if there weren't points for it, it was obviously not something that was valued by the School so you wouldn't do it. Not just because you wanted the points, but because the points were symbolic. It was a symbol of something that mattered to the School. You know, everything we study about incentives systems – we told them this – but nobody listens to the BPS folks who know about organizations and organization change around this place. But that's another issue....

G: It's interesting. In a company, what you would say is, you can put in place a point system, but after you've had it in place for a while you have to decide whether it's really producing the behavior desired, and then modify it. I don't know the extent to which it's been reviewed in that way, it was a political process to get it agreed to and then nobody wants to open that box.

E: I think they tinkered with it a lot from time to time. They had to tinker with it when they did away with the Masters theses, and all sorts of things. But I do think it's typical of many of these ideas of creating impersonal metrics. The people who are under-performing were often under-performing because they just weren't very good teachers. Or they were great researchers in a field that none of the Masters' students wanted to take. No matter how much you beat on them, they weren't going to be able to teach classes of 55 people. There are very few slackers. I can understand this, but I think managers don't want to have to manage. They want impersonal systems so they can just point to the numbers and not have to say, "You know, I really feel that you could do more around here. How about this or that?"

B: But your point is interesting, because there is some research about performance appraisal systems that need to be revised periodically. The half-life, you know, is about 3-4 years, because people start to game the measure.

E: Yes. I keep derailing us....

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B: You were here when we put the MBA in place. You saw that major change.

E: Yes. I saw that change, and I think it was a good change. I actually think it got harder and harder for students to do a thesis because it was harder to get the faculty. As our program increased in numbers, you just couldn't get the faculty attention that you used to have in the days – I don't remember what the numbers were for the Masters class in the early 1980s. It was quite small. And then, the transition point came with the rankings because MIT was always able to define itself, and the Sloan School was in a niche. It wasn't competing with Wharton and Harvard and Stanford. It did its thing. That was perfectly fine, it was fine for the alumni, it was fine for the students, great for the faculty. Then along come the *Business Week* rankings and suddenly, if you were not in the Top 10 at least, trouble. I think the first year those came out, we were 16th. The alumni start writing nasty letters; you start losing people from your executive programs; the application rate goes down. It has consequences. And whether you like it or not, you ARE in the same competitive group as Wharton and Harvard, and then you need scale. So we needed scale. And if you have scale, then you can't have something that is as contact-intensive as a research thesis.

B: Right. So, have we missed anything in terms of research and teaching?

E: I think one of the things that I found, just very personally, I became an academic because I love to learn things. MIT is just the best place on the planet for learning new things. I wasn't always as good as I wish I'd been at writing and producing, and I felt that. But it is a great place to be. I really really enjoyed it, and I learned a lot.

G: One question we usually ask at the end: What are you particularly proud of when you look back over your time at MIT?

E: Goodness.... I don't know.... I think one of the things, clearly, is – and I feel the loss of this – in the days from the mid-1980s into the mid-1990s, we had a group here that had a major imprint on the international management field. I was doing a lot of work on bringing

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institutional theory into the study of the multinational corporation, so some of the stuff I did on that is still widely cited. But more importantly, the doctoral students we had. We were able to attract them. Bruce Kogut, Sumantra Ghoshal...

B: Bruce is at Columbia?

E: Yes. Sumantra, he went to INSEAD and London Business School, a major impact on the field. Nitin came to the IM group but decided that his interests were more in organization studies. But this was a place where you could migrate like that. I had a dual appointment so I was his chair, but I was equally at home with him doing an org studies-type thesis. And Sri Zaheer, again, one of the people whose research has been fundamental in the IM field. And Tony Frost.

B: Oh! Yes!

E: Yes, and married to Ann Cross. In the mid-1990s –I can understand it – the IM group ceased to be an independent group with its own PhD program. It merged with Strategy and became Strategy and International Management. The initiative came from the Strategy group, not the IM group, because at that time they were struggling. Michael Scott Morton and Arnaldo Hax were the strategy generalists and there were a bunch of younger people coming up, Rebecca Henderson in particular and Michael Cusumano, who was another dual citizen, MTI and Strategy. Neither group, Strategy or IM, was seen as having critical mass in the School. We merged, but in the course of that, we no longer had the ability to recruit PhD students who were really attracted to IM. And from that point, we ceased to be the research center that we'd been, and the impact on the field.

B: We also have the year you left to go to Europe, and what you're doing now. Why don't you fill that in?

E: Oh yes. I always knew that I wanted to go home to Canada, and I figured it was smarter to go when you could go and take up a full-time position and rebuild your friendship networks and professional networks. And my mother was in her mid-90s and living on her own

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in the family farmhouse, so it was time to move home. It's a good thing I did because in 2009, she had a stroke and because I was there, we were able to keep her at home where she wanted to be, for the next 2 years.

B:               What year did you move from here?

E:               2007. I hadn't anticipated this, but from 2009 through 2011, when she died at the end of 2011, I was very family focused. I couldn't travel much; I was the primary caretaker. But you do these things, and I was very glad to do it. Then I retired from Schulich in June 2014.

B:               I didn't know that.

E:               I'm now retired the second time around.

B:               But you're still teaching at Schulich (School of Business)....?

E:               I'm still teaching at Schulich, one course, but this is the last year. I told them no more! I'm teaching here. I'm co-teaching with Don Lessard, the 6-weeks SF course on global strategy and management, and the similar course for the executive MBAs.

B:               You have 2 sections of SFs?

E:               Two sections of SFs and two sections of E-MBAs. The E-MBAs, it's a good thing to be co-teaching that because on the weekend programs, it's 3 hours in the morning and 3 hours in the afternoon. If you have 2 people you can do 90 minutes, 90 mins, 90 mins., and 90 mins. It's just easier on everybody, including the students.

                  And I'm a visiting researcher at Aalto University in Helsinki. I spend 4 weeks a year there.

B:               How did you make that connection?



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E: They have a very interesting international management group. They wanted to have someone who was seen as being a senior figure in the IM group to talk to their doctoral students and interact with their faculty. I'm doing joint research several people there. That's a lot of fun.

I'll be going to Australia and New Zealand in the fall next year and keynoting at a couple of their IM conferences.

B: So, this is exciting.

G: That's not retirement!

E: No, the great thing about being an academic, when you retire you can keep doing all the things you like best about being an academic and shed some of the ones you don't like so much, like sitting on committees! [laughs]

B: Is there anything else we need to cover? A topic or question?

G: I have one follow up: you talked about a lot of partnerships with others, usually visiting, and some of that has to do with Japan. I couldn't help but think that some of the things you were saying, you were looking at R&D linked into some of the career studies that were here. I don't know the extent to which you found it easier or harder to partner with some of that work here?

E: My interest was more macro, not so much on the individual level, but much more on the organizational level. How were careers organized? You raise an important question. One of the things I'm proudest of, and we didn't even talk about it. I should have. And it was under Lester. When he said, "We have these 3 groups. We have to have a one-semester core in the management course, now that we're being ranked by everybody. We have to have more convergence with the dominant models, and we need to give students more choice." We used to have the entire first year spend in core courses. The faculty didn't like that the idea of reducing the core to one semester. Lester announced to *Fortune* or *Business Week* that MIT Sloan was

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moving to a one-semester core, and of course then we had to do it. He was great at using the external environment to put pressure on the organization.

I was part of the group that was to develop the BPS core course. There was supposed to be one core course for each of these groups, a kind of perspectives course for the EF&A group, for Management Science, and for BPS. I think we were the only group that actually developed a new course for this, in the spirit that was intended. The others just morphed their existing courses, they had a battle over who got to have the core course.

But we put together a group with John Van Maanen and Deborah Ancona from Org Studies; Tom Kochan and Maureen Scully from IR; and me from the Strategy and IM group. We created a new core course. Deborah was the driver on “We have to think of this as creating a textbook, so let’s commit to writing a textbook, and that will really make us organize this stuff.” And we did. We developed the idea of the Three Lenses on organizations, and it was an Organizational Processes course text. It was weighted toward the macro a bit, but covered the whole spectrum. I’m very proud of that: that idea of the three perspectives on organizations, John and Roberto have both taken that into their executive teaching, as I have. It’s a great way to communicate some basic principles of org theory to a non-theory-oriented audience.

B:            Maybe for the record you should just say what the Three Lenses are.

E:            Organizations are, as strategy sees them and the business school predominantly sees them, are strategic architectures. They are strategic designs that are set up to achieve certain strategies and goals. But they’re also political systems that are about power and interests, and they are cultural systems that are about identity and meaning. Academics have the luxury of specializing on one of those perspectives. Managers don’t. They have to be able to manage all three; that’s what we try to instill. I think it was quite brilliant and it was very much a collective effort.

I think that’s another thing that MIT Sloan did well, the joint teaching, and the way it was set up, we all taught on Friday mornings. It was a 3-hour class on Friday morning. We were all in here at 7:30 doing our slides and exchanging stuff. John would come running in with a *New Yorker* cartoon that he was going to use, and we would all share that. It was just great!

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G: That doesn't happen that much.

E: Doesn't happen very often in academia; I don't think it happens here as much anymore. But it was a great experience.

B: Well, it's a good time for you to come back, if you were a cultural anthropologist because you knew, and you described it quite eloquently, how E52 worked. And now you're back in this building... Do you have any reflections on how the culture has changed?

E: I'm going to sound like an old fogey, but there is much less interaction, at least that I can see. And it's a shame. The building is not interaction-friendly. I wander around.... I've been able to find people, but it's even hard to FIND people.

B: People aren't in their offices...

E: They're not in their offices nearly as much. You're lucky if you find them there. I saw this beautiful space on the 5th floor for the Faculty lounge, but nobody ever seems to be in it. I think the building is much less collegial. And I don't know how much it has to do with the fact that it's also a bigger faculty.

G: And it's a different time.

E: It's a different time.

G: I have to say that I find that at the University of New Hampshire. People are there to teach and they do their work from home. I don't think that's uncommon. I see more of that here. It used to be people came here to work, and they were there, and you could access them and catch them at the cooler, or the coffee, or the round table on the 5th floor?

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E: And also, when people were here, you knew it. I understand this idea of spreading people out (not clustering the groups in the same space), but the principle actually doesn't lead to more interaction – just because you have an office next door to someone in accounting doesn't mean you're actually going to talk to them. I guess there is some clustering, but it's not evident.

B: The Marketing group always prided itself on having a community, and they are still struggling with this new building, how to get that community again. Well, it's been terrific to talk with you.

E: One of the great things about MIT, that I benefited from, is that we have great support people. Loretta Cairra was my support person from 1989, when I got tenure, until I retired. She was absolutely amazing, and still is. I had lunch with her last week. A character is her own right, and somebody you should probably talk to about this history. She would have the perspective of someone who had very strong views on administration and how the place should be run, and what support people should do for their faculty.

G: When did she retire?

E: She retired a couple of years after I did.

G: Did she make the move? Well, she would have, because you retired just before the move, so she would have.

E: Yes, she made the move. She moved John Van Maanen and Lotte over.

B: And she has come in on a substitute basis.

E: She still comes in. Pam brings her in. She helps train people and do things. Her bones are a bit fragile, so she has decided, very wisely, that she's not going to come in in the winter because she doesn't drive.

B: That's why I haven't seen her.

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E:           But come the nice weather, she might be back.

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