

**MC.0356**

**Interviews of the Margaret MacVicar Memorial AMITA Oral History Project**

**Naomi Carmon**– Class of 1970 (Diploma, Special Program for Urban and Regional Planning )

(interviewed by Tobi Rudoltz '16)

July 21, 2015

MIT Women's Oral History Project  
Interview with Prof. Naomi Carmon by Tobi Rudoltz, '16  
Technion – Haifa, Israel  
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Approved by Naomi Carmon, September 2015

- TR: Okay, so today is July 21, 2015 and I'm Tobi Rudoltz and I'm here with Naomi Carmon.
- NC: And I'm very glad to meet you.
- TR: Okay, I think we should start by just talking about your childhood and early school experiences and your parents, where you grew up and things like that, especially since it might be different from most of the women who get interviewed in this program.
- NC: I was born in this country, in Israel, a few years before the establishment of the State of Israel, so I had a kind of British-Palestinian citizenship. I was born in Tel Aviv, but my parents moved to the city of Haifa when I was six weeks old.
- TR: Yeah.
- NC: And actually, I've lived in Haifa throughout my life, with several significant breaks: Three years in Jerusalem as an undergraduate student; three years in Tel Aviv as a young lecturer in Tel Aviv University, immediately following the completion of my PhD studies; four years in Boston, first as a student and later as a Visiting Professor; a sabbatical year in Los Angeles and another sabbatical in Auckland, New Zealand. So I had many opportunities to live in other places, but I always return to my base in Haifa.  
My educational history started at the age of 4 with 2 years in a kindergarten and then I went to the Reali School. The Reali School is 104 years old and is considered by many to be the best school in the country, which means –
- TR: Now, yeah.
- NC: This school runs from the age of six to eighteen, so I spent twelve years in the Reali School. I am the first child of my parents and other children of the family followed me. My sister who is 4 years younger than me and my brother - 6 years younger than her also studied 12 years in the Reali School. When my first son reached the age of 6 and went to school, my brother was still there in his last year of high school. My three children studied there and so did the three children of my brother. Then came the turn of our grandchildren. So it happened that since I entered the Reali School in 1947 until now – 2015, a period of almost seventy years, every year at least one of my parents' descendants has been a student in this school.
- TR: Wow.
- NC: I was lucky to have very good education in primary school and high school, both under the roof of the Reali School. The focus was on how to learn almost as much as on the contents of the learning.  
In parallel, since the age of 10, I was a member of a youth movement, an Israeli version of the Scout Movement. It was very common then, and even until now, that youngsters attend various activities of youth movements, which include community service as well as games, singing and dancing. Being part of this peer group was actually more important for me than school. One had to, at least I had the feeling I had to hide the fact that I was a good student in school, because this is not important.
- TR: It's not "cool."

NC: Exactly, it was much more “cool” to be a part of, an active person in the youth movement. So between the ages of ten and eighteen, being first an apprentice and then both an apprentice and a leader in the youth movement was a very important part of my life.

Anything else you want to know about the first years?

TR: Um, I don't know, did you have a favorite subject in school, or something you focused in?

NC: Yes, actually, we *had* to select a special, not really subject – wider than that, a field you want to specialize in, in the last two- three years of high school, and I selected Middle Eastern studies, so I studied also Arabic. I learnt Middle-Eastern history and culture and could read an Arabic newspaper, and this had a direct impact on what I selected for my first academic degree.

TR: I saw that, yeah.

NC: As you may know, there is a compulsory army service in Israel, for both boys and girls. Less than a week after I completed the final exams of high school I went to the army for two years. I had a very interesting service. This was the first time I was a research person, and I received a nice research diploma from IDF – Israel Defiance Forces.

TR: Okay.

NC: On the year that followed my army service I had a series of significant events in my life: I married my boyfriend, who had just completed his degree in Mechanical Engineering, I started studying at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem – a degree in both Middle Eastern studies and Sociology, and at the end of this year we had our first child. I was a mother before my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. We have three children; each of them was born at the beginning of one of my academic degree: the older son at the beginning of my B.A, our daughter at the beginning of M.Sc. and our younger boy at the beginning of my PhD studies.

TR: Yeah

NC: My first plan after having my B.A. was to work as a government official in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. But at that time (early 1960's), there were no jobs for engineers in Jerusalem. My husband took temporary jobs while I was studying but as soon as I completed my first degree we moved back to Haifa that had a developed industry and many offerings for engineers. In that city, I could not continue with Middle Eastern studies; Haifa University was not here then.

TR: But Technion was, right?

NC: Yes, Technion – IIT – Israel Institute of Technology, the MIT of Israel is an old university. Actually, the Reali School and the Technion were were established at the same time and were built in the same yard. The Reali School was opened in 1913, but the First World War stopped the construction of the Technion, the unfinished big building served the British army, and thus, did not open its gates for students until 1924.

TR: It was established before then, okay.

NC: Yes, but actually classes did not start until 1924. The idea was that the Reali School would supply students for the Technion.

TR: Like a feeder school? Like, it just feeds in?

NC: Yeah, something like that. And actually, there are many many Reali graduates at the Technion.

TR: Here today?

NC: Yes. Throughout the years.

TR: Okay.

NC: So, we arrived at Haifa. I went to an employment center and I looked for work for ten minutes. Almost immediately I found an ad about somebody searching for a research assistant at the Technion; I called him and since then, I'm here.

TR: Okay.

NC: I was the first social sciences student who had a degree from, an MSc from the Technion. It wasn't available beforehand. I was alone for half a year, and then six new students joined me,

TR: Okay.

NC: And we were the first class of graduates of the social sciences to enter the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, receiving a degree – Master of Science in Management Science with a specialty in Behavioral Sciences.

TR: Yeah, I saw your PhD was also in behavioral sciences, which seemed like a big migration from Middle Eastern to behavioral.

NC: The critical migration was the move from Jerusalem to Haifa.

TR: It just kind of fell into place?

NC: Yeah, yeah. But I really like what happened. Even though it was not my first choice, I am highly satisfied with the way it happened.

TR: Okay.

NC: As a good student, it was suggested for me to continue to a third degree in management. I started taking courses and after half a year or so, just by chance, while I was looking for a kind of subsidized holiday at the papers of the Technion Faculty club, I found there an ad of MIT suggesting students to apply for a fellowship. I don't know why I decided to do that.

TR: Had you been out of the country before?

NC: No!

TR: Okay.

NC: I wrote a letter to that address at MIT, and within a very short while I was accepted, and we had to make a decision. We were a young family, in a new home, with two young kids; I was starting my PhD, and my husband had a good engineering job. Yet, it looked like a great adventure and a great opportunity, and we decided to take it. It was my first time to go out of the country, and because I was so excited about that, so with two kids and with suitcases for a whole year – the fellowship was for a year at MIT, we went for a trip in Europe. With the little kids, and all the suitcases!

TR: How old were they? How old were the kids?

NC: They were eight and four.

TR: Okay, okay, I'm thinking about me and my sister.

NC: Yeah?

TR: Yeah. I imagine that would have been tough on my parents! We're three years apart, so....yeah, anyway.

NC: So, we went through Europe for two weeks, took our flight to the US and found a place to live in Brookline. We selected Brookline knowing that this is where many Israeli students who had families with children lived next to each other and next to a good public school. Luckily, my husband found a good job in a Bostonian engineering company. Our absorption into day-to-day life was very smooth, thanks to the big hug by the local Israeli community of students. Many Israelis have been taking their graduate studies in the Boston area because of MIT, Harvard, Brandeis and a few other good schools, and they

tended to live next to each other and to help each other. When I arrived at MIT a week after we landed in Boston, compared with my class mates, I felt very strong in knowing the area; I had the information about the best schools, about where to go, where to shop, including Filene's Basement, about garage sales that I had never heard about beforehand, and in general how to find my way in the city. Yet, my absorption into MIT studies was far from easy. The main problem was the language: I had eight years of English in school, but have never had an opportunity to talk English with anybody. And here I am, thrown into classes at MIT.

TR: In English.

NC: Yes, in English. Not in Hebrew [laughter]. Soon after arrival, I joined the Israeli folk dances, which flourished there then, and are still there now, and you can see the ads about Israeli folk dancing along the long corridor at MIT. Anyhow, from a social point of view, it was very easy to be integrated at the time. From an academic point of view, it was not easy at all.

TR: How so? Just the English?

NC: Because of the English. Not from any other point of view, but English was a problem. Especially the spoken language, including understanding the English of a few of my teachers. Reading was not a problem, but it was very slow and every reading task consumed a lot of time.

TR: Yes.

NC: And when you go to Urban Planning, it's a matter of language.

TR: Yeah, there's no math.

NC: No numbers, and no drawings, it's not architecture. You can't complete school with drawing and a few numbers; you need reading and writing.

TR: There's some maps

NC: Anyhow, it wasn't easy.

TR: I'm sure, yeah.

NC: And there were children at home, they had to get used to ... they arrived at school without a word of English. It was difficult for them until about Christmas/ Hanukah time. After that their advancement was very fast, and even though they spent just two short years in Boston, they have a Bostonian accent until today, while my accent has remained Israeli, in spite of the years and the dozens of dozen of lectures I gave in classes and conferences throughout the years.

TR: Did you, I mean, did you get an impression of the American students who were in the program?

NC: Not too many of them. I was part of the program for foreign students.

TR: Okay.

NC: We did study in classes with others, of course. I guess, in a way, it's the way you are here [at Technion through MISTI].

TR: Probably.

NC: We were a kind of class of foreign students, but actually, we went, each one went his/her way and selected different courses.

TR: Like me, I'm living with foreign students, and I mostly know foreign students.

NC: But, I was living in Brookline with -

TR: With Israelis.

NC: Yes, with Israelis, but also with neighbors and parents in school who were not Israelis. Yet, the main connections were with Israeli families and this was very helpful. This way I had someone to look for the children after school. There

were Israeli women whose husbands went to school or worked but they did not work and looked for additional income; so they took the children in the early afternoon and took care of them until I came back from MIT or my husband from his work. Otherwise I couldn't make it. The children attended a public school, not a Jewish or Israeli school, but our survival depended on the local Israeli community.

As for MIT, it took about three months until I felt like I knew where I was from an academic point of view. And actually, the whole first semester, but still, I ended the semester with fairly good grades, and the second one was much easier than the first one. Then, for the second year, I even had an opportunity to take a job – a kind of paid internship - in the Cambridge area, in Abt Associates. Abt Associates is a consulting firm, a-b-t, which still exists. *It's a big and good consulting firm that, then and until now, they want to save the world, to create a better world, and somehow, they have been earning enough money from saving the world to continue existing and growing for many decades.* For me, it was really an extraordinary experience. The combination of studying at MIT and working for Abt Associates was a major milestone in my life and my career.

TR: Do you remember any of the projects you worked on, either at MIT or with the consulting firm?

NC: Yeah. [Laughter] Yes, at MIT we worked, for example, on new towns, because a few of my teachers there were involved at the time with building new towns in South America, and they brought their experience to class. This was very relevant for me because we were building scattered new towns in my country. Another subject/project was rehabilitation of distressed neighborhoods. These two have become part of my tool box from those days at MIT to these days in Israel. Actually, the most meaningful experience was not with the subjects but with the teachers. I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to learn from several of the biggest names in Urban Planning. A few of them were not permanent members of the MIT faculty; they came to MIT for a few years and then continued their way to other good universities. They were my teachers, and years later, I was happy to become their colleague. MIT played such an important role in my life because of these teachers, and because I arrived there at the beginning of my PhD studies and the direction I took was actually...

TR: Influenced.

NC: Yeah. At the time, it was very flexible, and while at MIT I developed the ideas that served me when I came back to the Technion to complete my PhD.

TR: Okay. Do you remember any of their names?

NC: Of course.

TR: Because I don't know anything about planning, so...

NC: Okay, a few names. Lloyd Rodwin, the founder of DUSP – the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT; Lisa Peattie – one woman among many men; Donal Schon – an especially great teacher; Bernie Frieden, a permanent member of MIT who became after years the head of all the faculty at MIT; Mike Turner, the father of the term “housing as a verb”, who moved back to the UK; and especially important to me - Herbert Gans, who later moved to the University of Columbia in NYC. Gans was one of the first to combine sociology and planning. I came to urban planning from sociology, and there are very few persons in the world who write under their name, as I do, “professor of urban planning and sociology.” Very few. He was the first among them, and there is

one who is now at MIT - Xavier de Souza Briggs. While at MIT and under the influence of these teachers, I developed the field of specialty that served me throughout my career: "social aspects of urban planning".

TR: From both of those

NC: Urban planning, since the 1960's, is based mainly on the social sciences, and is not part of architecture as it used to be. Yet, architecture is and will always be part of the picture.

TR: Of course.

NC: And now, not then, but now also environmental aspects— you have to combine all these fields and a few others, like law, in order to deal with city planning.

TR: Yeah. I noticed you also do, like, water, you've done things with water...

NC: Yes. Actually, this is also, in some way related to MIT, because the person with whom I danced in folk dancing at MIT was a water person. Both of us returned to the Technion, and a few years later, we started working together on Water-Sensitive Urban Planning. The story goes like this: I was working on a very big project, the title of which was "Israel 2020." It was the early 1990s, which means, 25 years ago, and the idea was to prepare a master plan for Israel 2020, thirty years ahead from 1990. It was a very big project ...250 professionals were involved, and I was heading what we named "the social alternative of Israel 2020". We had an economic alternative, a social alternative, an environmental alternative, and an alternative of "business as usual", and we had to develop the alternatives, to comparatively evaluate them, and then to recommend the way to go. When I made a demographic forecast, I found out that until 2020, we were going to have another million on the central part of the seashore of Israel, which is the most populated area in Israel. We all know that this area sits on top of the main aquifer of Israel, its main water reservoir (and this was before desalination became a common source of water in my country). So I went to this friend from MIT and asked him – what are we going to do? We are covering with cement all the aquifer! What does it mean?

TR: Bad things?

NC: So, out of this naïve question our work on Water-Sensitive Urban Planning has developed; now there are eight MSc theses that have been completed, a few books, and many academic and professional articles. A few months ago, we received a grant, a big grant, from Australia, and we work with them on water-sensitive cities in Australia and Israel.

TR: Yeah, I imagine that would also be applicable to Australia.

NC: Anyhow, this is also related to MIT, because it's with someone I met there.

TR: Yeah, I noticed you spent another year at MIT in the late '90s – two years?

NC: In 1969 I arrived at MIT as a graduate student. In 1984-5 I spent a sabbatical year at DUSP MIT, as a visiting scholar. I came again in 1997-8 for another sabbatical year, this time with a double appointment, in DUSP and in the Center for International Studies.

TR: Yeah.

NC: And it's not only that, it's – I kept contact with my teachers at MIT throughout the years, and – as you may know - when one has to be promoted in academia, you need reference letters from around the world. So MIT was part of each step in my academic career. Of course, you need many references from various universities; yet, in each step in my promotion, from lecturer to senior lecturer, to tenure and associate professor, and then full professor, somebody from MIT was involved.

TR: Okay, that's cool.

NC: In addition, I sent a few of my students to study at MIT and one of them is now a faculty member here [at Technion]. He completed his PhD under my supervision, and – using my connections at MIT, I sent him to there for his post-doc. Recently, he has received his tenure at the Technion.

TR: Okay.

NC: So, it continues.

TR: I don't know how much you know about other departments, but do you see, like, a particular tie between Technion and MIT? Or just, like technical institutions around the world, or, like, how much interaction do you think there is?

NC: On a personal basis, in each department of the Technion, you find persons who spent time at MIT or at least have contacts with MIT colleagues. There is also some students exchange. But as institutions, we do not have a significant formal agreement. I was in office at some point in time, when Larry Bacow was the chancellor of MIT. We initiated together a formal visit by him at the Technion that was expected to lead to a wide agreement; it almost worked but for some reasons...

TR: Like, a formal connection?

NC: A formal connection between MIT and the Technion.

TR: Okay.

NC: And he came here to do that and it didn't work. He went from here to Cambridge and it did work with Cambridge.

TR: Yeah, and I know there are similar academic systems here and in Cambridge, so...

NC: Yeah, Bacow did establish a formal wide connection with Cambridge and it didn't work with the Technion.

TR: Interesting.

NC: I believe I know why not, but I'm not interested in discussing it now.

TR: That's fine, that's fine.

NC: Anyhow, I know there are many research connections and personal contacts, I guess in each department, at the Technion and at MIT.

TR: Yeah, I mean, I know the professor I'm working for spent time at MIT, but yeah. That's how I got in touch with him.

NC: Okay, yeah. And it goes from generation to generation.

TR: Yeah.

NC: But now MIT is changing. In the past, there were many Jews among MIT faculty. I was told that at some point in time, MIT was named the Yeshiva on the Charles. This might have been part of the explanation for the large number of contacts with Technion researchers. I don't know if it's a good thing to say this when it's being recorded, but I wonder if such contacts persist when the ethnic composition of MIT is changing.

TR: Really?

NC: There were many Jews around. Some of them everybody knew they were Jewish, but others, as the professor who was responsible for bringing me to MIT, nobody knew he was Jewish. He changed his name, both his first and his last name.

TR: Oh my god.

NC: My story is not that old, just 30 years ago. It was only after I knew them for years and met them in various occasions including several times at their home, that the wife of the MIT professor, not he himself, told me: "I have a family in



Israel”, which was her way to admit they were Jewish, in spite of the non-Jewish name they adopted.

TR: Nothing.

NC: But it wasn't so long ago that Jews were not wanted in American universities.

TR: Yeah.

NC: In Harvard, at Princeton. The claim is that Princeton used a quota to keep Jewish population under 4%.

TR: Right, it's true, it's true.

NC: So it was a delicate subject at the time.

TR: Yes.

NC: Anything else you need? Look at your questions.

TR: I'm looking at my questions, we might have covered everything. I guess – I was looking at some of your publications, and –

NC: You did some homework!

TR: I did, I did a little bit. A very little bit. If you don't want to answer this, it's fine. I noticed you have, you supervised – I forget if it was a masters' or a PhD thesis, but research on, like, Gaza and the West Bank, and the sociology and “community of trust” and...things.

NC: You really did your homework!

TR: It was interesting! I was wondering if you could talk a little about it, or where you see that going in the next, like, some period of time.

NC: I'll say it this way. The big study we did in Gaza.

TR: Yeah.

NC: It was 1999-2000. And it was actually before the first Intifada, before the first “burst-out” of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. At the time, it looked so optimistic. People in our area, both Israeli and Palestinians, seemed to be more interested in good life than in the political situation. And the fact that there were relationships between Israel and Gaza and the West Bank was accepted by many of them as, in a way, an opportunity to progress economically, and they were ready at the time to put aside the other considerations. This was the time of Prime Minister Rabin, if you know the history, who was talking about peace, and it was before Oslo, and we believed that we were going towards a kind of agreement, and things looked good. Our big study in Gaza took place at that time. We interviewed above 1200 persons in Gaza and had very interesting findings about housing and community there. Actually, we made another study at the time, not only in Gaza, but in Nazareth. Nazareth is within Israel.

TR: Yeah, of course, it's a little bit away from here [Haifa].

NC: It is a city in Israel, but it's divided between the Arab Nazareth, and the Jewish Nazareth with just a road between them. We made a study in the Jewish part, and we studied only Arabs who intentionally came to live within the Jewish city, searching for higher quality of life.

TR: Okay.

NC: They came to live in the Jewish town – Nazareth Illit, but they sent their kids to study in the Arab town on the other side of the road, because there was no school in Arabic on this side of the road.

TR: The Arabs on the Jewish side sent their kids back, okay.

NC: They actually used this urban space as if it was one city, and actually, physically, it is; they ignored the municipal border that divides between the Jewish Nazareth-Illit and the Arab Nazareth. There were better apartments and better living conditions here [on the Jewish side], while on the Arab side it was very

dense. If I did the interviews, I would believe that they lied to me, because I'm Jewish, they don't want to say the truth. But the person who did the interviews was one of my Arab student who grew up in their area, who talked their language, and I don't think they lied to her. And they told her they felt good in their living environment. They also said that they were in good, not very close, but still good relationships with their neighbors, that the Arab and Jewish kids played together, etcetera, and I wonder what would they say if it was a year later.

TR: What year was that again? Also 1999?

NC: It was 2000, but before October. It all started in October 2000. And our study was conducted a few months earlier. I wonder what would happen if we had the same kind of interviews a year later or today.

TR: Yeah.

NC: Because at that time not only were they talking about good relationships, but when this Arab student asked them, did you feel any discrimination when you came to rent the apartment, or to buy the place - most of them rented, 90% of the interviewees - a great majority, said "no". And everything was ruined within a short while, and since then, it's going down. And I feel very, very bad about it.

TR: Yeah.

NC: As many around me.

TR: Yeah. I've heard things like that.

NC: If you talk to people about it, you can see that many around here - not everybody, but ...

TR: I mean, actually, MIT - so, like, I'm here with MISTI, I don't know if you know about it, but it's like -

NC: Yes.

TR: So they took us on a trip, and we went and talked to a bunch of different Palestinians, like there was a woman who was from America but married a Palestinian and then lost her husband to violence, and a woman who teaches English at an Arab school, who is Arab, who teaches, she speaks like perfect English, and how she feels about it, and all these different people, and Israelis of course because I work with them, so. It's interesting. But none of them are doing -

NC: And sad.

TR: Research. And yes, of course, sad. Yeah. Anyway, yeah.

NC: I used to be very hopeful about the possibility to solve the Jewish-Palestinian conflict in the form of two states to two nations. Now, I'm less so, but still I live here. And being here, you have somehow to have hope for peace, otherwise why am I here?

TR: Yeah. Anyway, I hate to end this on such a dismal note, but, I don't know.

NC: So there, I believe, there is some hope, there are people with good will on all sides, if they win or maybe all of us are taken by Daj [ISIS], or...who can say? It's a very problematic neighborhood that we are a part of.

TR: Yes, I would agree.

NC: Very much so.

TR: Anyway, when was the last time you visited MIT? Was that the 90's, or?

NC: No, two years ago.

TR: So how have you seen MIT change? Or have you seen MIT change?

NC: I've just told you a few words about change, but I do not feel I really know MIT. I know my department, my home place in the US - DUSP - the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, and...

TR: Course 11.

NC: Exactly. **The place there** has changed, but not as much as you would expect, because even though it's the time of the neo-liberal regime, if you know what I'm talking about

TR: A little bit

NC: In this department, I would say, to talk in political terms, most of them are, were Obama-voters, but on the left side of Obama voters.

TR: Okay.

NC: I'm not about the political issues, not about Russia nor the Middle East, but about social issues, internal social issues in the US, okay? One of my colleagues in DUSP, his name is Xavier de Souza Briggs, took a leave out of MIT for two years to serve as a very high officer with Obama. In general, it seems to me they are very much on the left-hand side from a socio-economic point of view. They were in the past and they are now. Which means I see little change from this point of view. Yet, side by side with this general leftist spirit, there is this neo-liberal School of Real Estate Development that have been developing throughout the years, across the street from the 77 Mass Avenue. It has just received, a few months ago, 130 million dollars from a Chinese person, and god knows how they are going to spend so much money, this little initiative of the School of Real Estate Development. They are talking about all kinds of international planning enterprises, about free courses for the world, and there are these MOOCs, if you know what I am talking about.

TR: Yeah, I do.

NC: So these kinds of courses, free to the world, but organized, and other kinds of initiatives open to the world. So MIT seems to emphasize being a global school. It was there in the past, but even more so, as far as I can see, recently. You can certainly see this in the body of students. In the graduate school at MIT, most of the students are not US citizens.

TR: I think it's about half, maybe?

NC: Maybe, if not more than half.

TR: Yeah.

NC: So it's built, not on US citizens, and I wonder what it means for the institution and for the American society.

TR: Yeah.

NC: I wish MIT had more impact on the American society, or to be exact, I do not know MIT good enough to talk about it in general, but I can say I wish the values, the spirit I find in DUSP, the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, had more impact on the American society. MIT seems to work for the world, and its' nice, of course I appreciate it, but still, I wish it had more impact on US government and citizens. On the government, I wish it was more influential in social and urban policies. On the citizens, at least by attracting more students to science and engineering and planning, which seems to be a problem in the US.

TR: It is a problem, yeah, especially women.

NC: Especially women. Did you have an opportunity to talk about women at the Technion? As women?

TR: No, I haven't talked about it.

NC: Do you want to ask those who sent you, if they want to interview the one who studied with me, we were the first social sciences students here, and she is currently responsible for women's' affairs at the Technion.

TR: What's her name?

NC: Her name is Miriam Erez. And I'm sure she will talk to you if you want to talk with her, and this may be a kind of – to complete the connection.

TR: Cool. Okay, I don't know, is there anything else you want to talk about?

NC: Just to say I enjoy talking with you.

TR: Thanks! I guess one last question that I meant to ask earlier, I forgot the name of the school that you went to, but was it common or expected of women that after the army you go to university? Or...

NC: Yes. The answer is certainly yes. You know, the most important thing you can do in life is to be born to the right family, okay? Not sure it depends on you...

TR: No, of course not.

NC: But that's a critical thing. It's the family you're born into. And then comes the school you go to. *In the Reali School then, and certainly today, the question was what are you going to study, not whether you are going to continue your academic studies or not. In other places, sometimes, studying is considered to be beyond the mountain, it's for others do, not for people like me. So it depends on the kind of expectations you have from yourself when you grow up, and the expectations your parents and peers have from you. I was lucky to be raised in an environment that expected from me to go to the university. Indeed, going to PhD was not included in these expectations. It was never in my dreams, nor my parents' dreams. But somehow, I was trained to use opportunities and I did use them. For my children, it was a different story. It was natural for them to take graduate studies. One of my sons has a PhD from Berkeley and is currently a full professor in a prestigious international university, and my daughter is a medical doctor, heading a medical unit in a public hospital. It was natural for them to continue studying. They were raised this way.*

TR: Yeah.

NC: And it's very important in the US, as in Israel, as everywhere: the environment you are raised in. Let's add two statements. One is related to social capital. To explain social capital in two words, I am talking now about personal not community social capital, I would say that it is built of your social connections; a study at Harvard showed that your phonebook, or your list of contact persons...

TR: On your cell phone?

NC: On your cell phone, is more valuable economically than all your academic degrees. Okay? Your salary frequently depends more on your contact persons.

TR: Who you know than what you know?

NC: Yes.

TR: I believe that.

NC: And related to that is another statement, that it is more important where you study than what you study, which school you go to than what you study. So going to MIT is good for you. And in my context, going to Reali School, going to the Technion, is very important for whom I know. If I didn't go to the Technion *it would never occur to me to go to MIT. So it goes hand in hand with other parts. Yet, we should always remember that there are those who were raised very far from good opportunities and still they managed to go all the way.*

TR: Yeah.

NC: So you can do it, but it would be more difficult. Even though in the US it's considered to be very common...

TR: It's not.

NC: It is not. It used to be, maybe; even used to be is probably a story and not a reality. But now, unless you are born to, in the right place, your chances to go to the good schools and to reach the best offices is very low. It is not zero, no, but unfortunately, very low.

TR: Anyway, I think that's all I have

NC: Good for us!

TR: So it was really nice talking to you, and I'll turn this off.