

**INTERVIEW WITH  
LOTTE BAILYN  
NOVEMBER 30, 2011  
SLOAN ORAL HISTORY SERIES**

B: Bob McKersie  
L: Lotte Bailyn  
G: George Roth

B: We're in Dining Room 1 with Lotte Bailyn, George Roth, and myself, Bob McKersie. This project goes to luncheons that took place periodically with Eli Shapiro. He always talked about the early days of school because he was the Associate Dean here and really in a sense brought the first faculty together for the school. We turned the tape recorder on one time – we always met over at the Harvard Faculty Club – and he talked quite openly about how he in a sense thought his way through the creation of the faculty and serving as Associate Dean. Bill Pounds who had been involved in that session said – and Alan White who had been also in close touch with Eli – said maybe we ought to round out the circle and talk to others, find out when they came to the school, what was going on when they came, how they saw the school developing, how their own part of the school connected to other things going on, just really quite open ended. So we proceeded.

We had two luncheons, Al and I, where we turned the tape recorder on with Bill. We've brought Ed Roberts into this same process, Jay Forester. Last week Alan and I interviewed Stu Myers and John Little. We interviewed Ed Schein before he went to California.

Lotte, I think the place to start is, we ask everyone is how you connected with MIT, when you came, and what your role was and early things to say about your starting your career at the ... there was a Sloan School already when you came.

L: How I got here was I had been working with Herb Kelman at Harvard. And he was leaving Harvard so I was looking for something else. And I knew Ed from graduate school somewhat. And Herb knew Ed and so Ed was just starting on the alumni survey. And he had Carnegie funding for that. I'm not sure. He said, "Fine. Come on over." So I came as a research associate. And this was the fall of 1969.

I was working on the survey. This was before the questionnaire went out. And actually that became my first book, the analysis of those survey data. We had a group of PhD students who were working with us on that project. At one point, it was the first year or the second year, we had one of our group meetings, I went to the board and made some point. Ed said, "Why don't you teach that?" So they made me a lecturer. I began to teach and that turned into 15.347, which I taught for years. I don't know when it got a number. Then they made me a senior lecturer.

By then it was the early '70s and it was really the beginning of institutions looking for women. Millie Dresselhaus had been at Lincoln Labs. They found women in their peripheries. One day Bill Pounds came into my office and he said, "We've made you an Associate Professor without tenure." He never asked me. I don't know whether it went through formal channels. I have no idea. But that was it. That's when I joined the faculty as an Associate Professor without tenure in 1972.

In the meantime I was involved with this research project but I wasn't very much involved with OSG [Organizational Studies Group]. I remember Dorothy Wedderburn came to visit for a year in that period before I was on the faculty. She's the one who went up to Ed and said, "Why in the world don't you invite Lotte to OSG meetings?"

My appointment in 1972 actually was the first female faculty appointment at Sloan. Mainly I continued to teach the [research] methods course. It became more formalized. For a few years I taught 15.311, which didn't work out too well. Then I did the Sloan Fellows course and continued 15.347 for many years.

1972 was also the time that John Van Maanen arrived as an Assistant Professor. I remember the salary: it was \$17,000 for an Associate Professor without tenure, in OSG.

B: You mentioned that when Bill Pounds came and said, "We're going make you an Associate Professor without tenure," did he specify what subgroup you might be affiliated with?

L: It was obvious it was going to be Organization Studies. I was research associate under Ed, I think Ed was head of OSG at that time. He certainly was for many years. It never was a question.

The interesting thing is that it was fairly unique for Sloan at that time. No other business school would have hired someone who had absolutely no experience, not only in business or in organizations. My only experience had been with academic things.

I remember hearing that Sloan felt that you hire people from the disciplines because it's easy to teach them about organizations. But if you hire people who know a lot about organizations it is not so easy to teach them disciplines. At that time, I don't know about Chicago, maybe they were doing this too, but compared to the Harvard Business School it was completely different.

B: I can say a bit about Chicago because I was at Chicago during the same period of time. They had the exact same philosophy. It was influenced by that Gordon Report that came out and the Ford Foundation study about business schools and how they needed to move away from being trade schools who really in a sense having some substance and depth. That came out in the late 1950s—1959, 1960, in that area.

The Associate Dean in Chicago, they were hiring anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists for the business school. Exact same idea. Eli felt the same way about economics. He felt that all economic courses in Sloan School should be taught by people from the Economics Department. Now that's an interesting evolution. There's a close relationship, but that was all part of that

philosophy. The discipline is really in a sense the branding.

L: It was funny because this was 16 years after my PhD. My discipline had dissipated. Everything I knew from my graduate work was completely out of date.

B: We ought to back up a little bit. I think it would be important for you to say a little bit about those 16 years before you got to MIT.

L: One thing I was going to ask you: how many Sloan people did oral histories for MIT 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary?

B: We know that Jay did it, and Bill Pounds did. John Little did not. Stu Myers did not.

L: I did. For this background it's very good. Thereafter I talked mainly about my relation to MIT and less to Sloan. And to be perfectly honest, I always felt more comfortable at MIT than at Sloan. I never felt very comfortable, certainly not in those early years at Sloan.

I got my PhD in 1956 and nobody was hiring women. So I took a series of ad hoc jobs just like the original job with Herb Kelman at Harvard. I spent a year at MIT, 1957 to 58, as an instructor in the old Department of Economics and Social Science and taught a methods course to their doctoral students. I had also taught at Harvard where I had had a series of jobs. Then these few years with Herb Kelman where I also was a lecturer and taught a methods course.

B: But mostly your assignments during this period were at Harvard, then?

L: Mainly. There was a year at MIT. There was a year at the School of Education. Most of the others were in the Social Relations department.

G: What were the big things that were – the big ideas that were being pursued? What was popular? What was attractive to the larger industry of management education in corporations?

L: When John came, John and I and Ed, very much supported and helped by Abe Siegel, started all this work on careers and socialization. And indeed the alumni survey, which ended in 1980 in my book in collaboration with Ed, *Living with Technology*, which is also centered on careers. We had a number of very productive and creative years.

I remember Abe would come and talk to us and support us. There were some edited volumes and conferences. We really put the careers field, and the whole socialization, on the map. There's lots of material from that period that did not get into publication. Some of it got into Ed's early career book. Some of it got into articles. It certainly got into that original book and some of it moved into my 1993 *Breaking the Mold*.

Out of that careers thing, after the initial three-way collaboration on it, we each more or less went into a somewhat different direction, but still emanating from that original work. John went

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on to culture, and so did Ed. But they do it in different ways. I picked up on work and family issues, which was part of the original work.

We had this notion of a career cube where work and family were two of the dimensions. Ed picked it up; he always had three dimensions because he put in the self. I have a whole file case of models. I have models on accommodation because that was an early publication. I even had data I brought to MIT and then used the MIT survey. I had put work-family questions into that survey and those data came out of it.

I remember Tom held a conference in 1985, or it may have even been earlier because the publication may have been '85. I introduced into that the family thing and gave a paper that turned into a publication. For a long time I pursued technical careers, longer than Ed and John. I know I overlapped somewhat with Tom Allen on some of that. We had some joint students.

On the notion that you can teach people organizations but can't teach them discipline Ed sent me into organizations. I made all the typical first mistakes of not checking on the rules and having the manager ask me about a particular person and what he should do. That's when I started the work on the R&D labs. That much overlapped with what Tom and Ralph were doing.

I studied three labs. I did two sites at Bell Labs and one at GM, they had research labs. I did one or two labs there. And I did one other lab in England.

I used a lot of that material in a lot of ways. There was an article on autonomy in the R&D labs that differentiated strategic and operational autonomy, and that these technical personnel who are scientific are managed in exactly the wrong way. I had a working paper and presentations at Bell Labs. My most prized possession was a hand-written letter from Penzias, the Nobel Laureate at Bell Labs, saying he doesn't think much of social science but this was wonderful.

I was doing mainly interviews and talking to people. I remember vividly one key idea that came out of this in talking to an HR person. And I was saying, "Why aren't you doing more for the technical people and only for the management people?" She said, "If we didn't pay the managers more we'd never get them to leave their technical thing." I knew that was wrong because they were treated like academics, allowed to flounder around. Then they were controlled because they didn't quite fit. What they really wanted was to be told what the goals are, what the important projects are, and then left alone. They didn't want the strategic autonomy. They wanted the operational autonomy. They were getting exactly the reverse. I had no real notions going in, but I had talked to a lot of these scientists. A lot of that went into the book. It was that one remark that put it all together.

B: Were PhD students able to connect as you did these? I'm just trying to get a sense for organically comprehend the OSG group, how your work was situated.

L: I was on PhD dissertation committees. At that time they weren't working with me. I had no funds. I don't know who, Ed probably paid for my travel. I had no way of supporting anyone. It was through 15.347 that I was acquainted with all the PhD students, and through some dissertation committees. It was not until the '90s when I got the Ford Foundation money and we

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started interactive action research projects at Xerox that we had a team. That included only one PhD student from Sloan. We had a PhD student from Harvard and a PhD student from BU. One PhD student from Sloan, no one else from Sloan. That project, which got a lot of attention outside, never got any attention at Sloan.

B: This is the project with Xerox, which had a major impact on Xerox?

L: Well, they say – or they did at the time – that it did have an impact.

G: You raise an interesting question. What was getting attention inside of Sloan at the time?

L: It wasn't much that was coming out of OSG. When did BPS come together? That's a very important date.

B: It was under Abe's leadership. Abe was Dean when this happened. And we've got a book that Abe did, it's in there.

L: That was an important step. BPS turned out more than other areas to really make a difference. And I think it was Deborah Ancona who really made that difference and brought BPS together. She and Bob Gibbons went around on this, what did they call it? "Org@Sloan," or something like that, getting everybody together. It really became a unity that was important and has been dissipated in the new building. It's going in the wrong direction with the new building.

B: Before we were all on the same floor, jammed together, but yet together.

L: One of the big differences in OSG was that in the early years when Dick Beckhard was here, Dave Kolb and Reuben Harris and Irv Rubin, were OD people who went through the department and played quite a role. There were students who perpetuated that. But both the Sloan and the MIT system didn't make it possible for those people to get tenure. It dissipated. That was very much part of OSG in those early years.

B: Could you say a little bit more about what you mean by the MIT system?

L: The MIT system, the way I understood it, when I got tenure and got on the Personnel Committee. It was all under Abe, but a centralized system where every appointment had to go through the Academic Council. Central MIT. That was highly science and engineering centered. It trickled down into the Sloan Personnel Committee knowing that our appointments had to go through that process. It was also reinforced by the economists who also had very rigid criteria for what stands for scholarship and was reinforced by the fact that it had to go through the Academic Council. That made our kinds of appointments very difficult to get through. It was a self-reinforcing system between the economists and the MIT central system. That did in OD.

In my mind what typifies that system the most, which I got very angry about, is when Eleanor Westney came up for tenure. First of all, it was when John Little was head of BPS. I did some behind-the-scene work to get Ed and John together. Paul Joskow had just been made a joint

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appointment with Sloan. When we were discussing Eleanor he came in new to Sloan and blasted her and her work. I was furious. Now, it went through, but that's the attitude. That got reinforced by the MIT system. It made the OD kind of approach almost impossible and made all our appointments – I'm sure mine – extremely difficult. I haven't been in personnel committee now for some time, but when I was there it was getting a little better, but it's still, I think, there.

B: You saw also when you were chair of the faculty I'm sure?

L: I saw the appointments come through Academic Council. I saw the suspiciousness by some parts of MIT, their attitude to the Sloan School. It's fed by the salaries which even in the soft fields at Sloan, which have the lowest salaries within Sloan, but are still considerably higher than most of the salaries in the rest of MIT. And it's fed by only a handful of Sloan people who get involved with MIT. There are now lots of them, that's getting better, who see that connection to MIT more positively.

In the earlier years I had the feeling that quite a lot of Sloan people didn't want to have anything to do with MIT. Their reference group was outside. That changed. At BPS there began this more recent change, which is now very much involved, coming away from management and towards the disciplines in a way it had never been before. That's economic sociology. For a long time now the Sloan message to PhD students and junior faculty is don't publish in the AOM journals. Publish in the sociology or psychology ones.

I remember one junior faculty member who left; she left for dual career reasons. When she left, we talked and she said, "You don't do your junior faculty or your Ph.D. students any service because every other business school in the country thinks the AOM journals are the top tier." –I was very struck by that, I hadn't registered on it until she said it. It's just rampant within BPS – sociology is what counts. AJS, ASR. Maybe you try for ASQ or Organization Science. But you certainly don't go near the AOM journals. I think Michelle's warning that we may be overdoing it and not helping people move on from here. It's hard to know, but that has very much changed the tenor of the floor. It's been coming for some time but with Roberto, Ezra and Ray's appointments it's very much the dominant position of BPS and it hits all the groups.

B: Yesterday we had a seminar in the Industrial Relations Group and Fei [Qin] talked about something that would relate to some of your interests. People leave India who have been through the institute system but they come back as entrepreneurs, and who are they? Instead of having a lot of interview data and really understanding different trajectories, it is survey data that can lend itself to very sophisticated regression analysis. I don't know about this kind of research because it's worrying about statistics primarily. Just before I came up here I was meeting with Hiram Samel, who has all this rich case study data from his summer in Malaysia. He's being forced into testing hypothesis. His data doesn't lend itself to that, it is not deductive but inductive. He's got a lot of rich data about how these companies are coping with labor standards, being competitive ...

L: Part of it is that it is hard to publish that stuff. It takes more time. It takes more thought, but I couldn't agree with you more. I think we are losing. There is an overemphasis on theory, and it is not the mid-level theory which emerges from the data but it is high social theory.

The only thing that counts is what are you contributing to that theory. What are you adding that hadn't been there, and not what do you understand better about what's going on in the world.

G: May we go back to the area you talked about in your work with Xerox and the Ford Foundation, and not having a lot of impact at MIT. Now we are talking the attention of the journals and the larger academic audiences. I see three communities in play here. You've got the people here at Sloan, the influence on MIT more broadly, and one another and particularly OSG. You've got the influence on the Academy. Then you've also got ways to influence management practice. And of this practice especially, and out in organizations, no wonder that the things that have a great influence, like the quality movement, don't come from academia.

L: I know. It's not been institutional theory.

G: The genesis of some of this took place here but seemed spin out very quickly. I've seen MIT and Sloan as a great incubator for these things. But it's hard to grow here, and maybe I'm wrong but I fear it is getting harder.

L: It's not what gets you tenure. It's beginning to spread to other business schools. I don't know about other business schools. Never mind. But what's valued here is the straight scholarship, the fancy models. If you can take care of all instrumental variables, that's what's valued in the journals. That's what's valued here. That's what you need to get tenure. You need refereed journals.

Ed, as you know, has always said that he learned much more from his consulting practice than from his research. He's now going to write a book on humble inquiry. It goes back to if you're training your PhD students along this line this is one approach to get them good jobs. Your junior faculty, that's what will get them tenure. I don't know how you bring that back in into faculty work.

B: I'm trying to sort through this complex subject. You would think that at MIT where engineering is celebrated and engineers solve problems and things are in a sense recognized because they make a difference in practice that that would in a sense be a cultural value.

L: The culture is science; the culture of the Academic Council. This culture of engineering feats, and you are so right, is different. It is solving problems and they do it very well. And they get tenure on that basis.

Science is the main culture of how to judge scholarship. So engineering is okay. We understand that; we know how to do that. Science is the model for understanding scholarship. The social sciences and what we do are pretty suspect. Does it make any difference? That science model gets carried over, even though they're professional schools. I think it also happens in Architecture and Planning.

B: One little anecdote: In reviewing different documents I came across one where the Dean's office had looked at the masthead for MIT where different things are celebrated. There's

very little up there, this was some years ago, for Sloan. A note came, I forget who was head of BPS, saying what are some things that we can put up there? I'll give you some examples from other parts of Sloan, this is what's interesting, what they chose is the Black-Scholes Theorem.

L: Which killed us. But never mind. If Sloan can be like engineering at least, it's okay. But on the scholarship side it's not seen. It's both a Sloan context and an MIT context and how they reinforce each other. I could see some of it, at the end of Abe's term there actually was one appointment that the Personnel Committee approved which was turned down by the Academic Council. It was somebody in finance. I've forgotten. It had an element of punitiveness because Sloan wasn't playing along. It's very vivid in my mind because it came as such a surprise. I think Sloan is very different now, but for a while Sloan felt superior. We had the good salaries and didn't feel we had to engage MIT in some ways. That's very much changed.

An anecdotal example: When they asked me to be chair of the faculty, you get half time from the provost. My points of what I was teaching didn't quite add up to half time points. Glen was Dean. I went to talk to him and he said, "Why don't you take it out of your research funds to make it up?" Well, I wasn't about to do that. It took only one call to the people who had asked me to change his mind. It was indicative ... what people told me, they were so surprised, they said most deans are very happy to have someone on Academic Council. It gives them another voice. But not here. Glen didn't show up very often. I think that's now changed. I think that was a complication and it was a little punitive.

B: We're very much MIT/Sloan with the emphasis on MIT.

One topic I'd like to go back to. You mentioned you were the first woman at Sloan and that it was typical in those days, women hadn't had any clear opportunities in education. This has been a big development at MIT and you've played a role. Do you want to fill in a little bit more about how you've seen this journey over the last 20 years?

L: It's started ... I forgot the order of people. It was Millie and Vera Kistiakovsky who were some of the early people from the research associate world. Sheila Widnall was the first woman who came up through the academic process. I think she's one of the very few women lifers. At that time MIT faculty had about one-third lifers. People who were undergraduates, graduates, and stayed on. So Sheila was one of the first few. And Millie started bringing women faculty together. We would talk. There was nobody at Sloan during those early years. Then Phyllis [Wallace] came.

Phyllis came three years after I was put on faculty, in 1975. She was the first tenured woman at Sloan. By the time I got tenure I think she had already retired or there was a very short overlap. My main memory after I got tenure was being the only woman on the Personnel Committee for many years. Eleanor was the next one. It was all MIT-oriented in those early years. Millie and Sheila Widnall also would bring women faculty together. Then Eleanor and some of the other people – Joanne became associated – we started, during Lester's term, to bring in an extraordinary number of junior women. All of a sudden it ballooned out. Most of them didn't stay. That's still a trend, that women and minorities are more likely to leave than the white men before the first appointment or before tenure.

The women used to get together at Sloan and meet with the rest of MIT. People made such nasty remarks that we didn't dare meet at Sloan. People would say, "What are you doing making revolution?" So we'd meet at the restaurants. After Lester's influence we almost got too big for this meeting. Then we could do it again because those people had left. Now it's much too big. We do occasionally meet.

What also happened, when I first joined in the early 1970s, Leslie Hruby, who was an MBA student, was made Director of Admissions at Sloan. There was a five-year program at that time, people could do four years at MIT, one year at Sloan, and get both Bachelors and the MBA. That meant we would take kids out of college because MIT did. So she grabbed me by the hand and she took me to Wellesley and all these places. I think she singlehandedly got the women applicants to the MBA program up by an order of magnitude. So it was happening at the student level.

At the undergraduate level the Institute was pushing for women. Our data from the classes in the 1950s had 1-2% women. There were 22 women in our sample of 2200. There was this push, more women faculty. But it was slow. Then in the 1990s Nancy Hopkins came along. Nancy, and that report and the *New York Times*, just broke the thing open.

B: And to the credit of the administration they embraced the report.

L: That's what made an enormous difference. Chuck's [Vest] remarks, combined with the front page of the *Times*, put the onus not only on MIT but on every other university.

B: The person who was Dean of Science and went on to be president of Toronto.

L: Bob Birgeneau.

B: And now he's in California.

L: Chancellor of Berkeley. But in Toronto they didn't like him. And they felt he was terrible for women.

B: What haven't we asked about or what haven't we pursued, doors that we didn't open that we should have?

G: Our focus is the Sloan School and the evolution of the Sloan School, which is not separate from the evolution in research of the faculty. Another way to think about what have been the factors that have influenced that the Sloan School's ranking. It was not all that highly ranked. Maybe 10 to 12 in overall schools ...

L: In the early years it prided itself on not being in the rankings because it was a different kind of school.

B: We're a School of Management...

L: It wasn't only management. There are other management schools, but it's technical, it's other things. As a matter of fact, they used to play down the rankings tremendously. Then under Glen's deanship when the Sloan School became number one. Some of us tried to convince him, "Be consistent." He wouldn't. He had a huge celebration. He could have really made a point there.

G: Part of my question is: to what extent when you are highly ranked does it lessen your ability to innovate because you think of the potential consequence and risks?

L: That also goes back to our education. What is our MBA education? These are presumably where we educate. It's not on the kinds of issues we deal about. It's on the problems. I haven't kept track of curriculum for a long time, but when I knew it, it was finance models and problem sets. That was seen as the core of people's education. In 311 they never paid attention and they'd come back five years later and say "I wish I had paid more attention because I now see that that's what's important." I don't know how much that's changed, whether that has equalized by now.

B: We have evolved. Having the MBA now and very few of the students do the thesis. It's still available.

L: We are clearly competing in the business school world whereas in those early years we were specifically not competing in that world.

B: Well, we had some non-business programs. We had some health studies.

L: Exactly.

B: We thought of ourselves as a school of management, not the school of business. But we are *de facto* a school of business now.

L: Right. At that time our emphasis on financial models was fairly unusual. I'm sure there were some, but in the larger world it was different.

B: And we now have a special Master's degree in finance.

L: I know we do.

B: That adds to the personality of the school when we have a special degree in finance.

L: How BPS can become more central to Sloan and Sloan is seen as more central by MIT. There was a while when people were talking about MIT should talk about three legs: science, engineering, and management. It never quite came about.

B: Everybody waits for the president to say something.

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L: Say something. That is the third leg.

G: It hasn't happened.

L: It's an interesting place.

G: What has been the influence of the shift in the teaching program on the research program here? Moving from a school of management to a school of business to the particular MBA program's taking away of the thesis requirement for the master's degree?

L: I don't think it's had any effect on the research. The research has been going in the other – at least within BPS – in the opposite direction. More academic and more discipline.

It's not that people don't pay attention to the teaching. They try very hard. The teaching is very good. People worry about the curricula. I think 311 at the moment is better than it used to be, much better thought of. It has coherence. It has a framework. And, that's Deborah Ancona. She brought people together and she pulled it off.

B: This has been very good, Lotte. We should take a look at the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary since it's up on the MIT website.

L: Those we were able to edit because when you listen, we couldn't edit the videos. And you say some foolish things when you talk. The transcripts we were able to edit. They're so much easier to deal with. You don't have to click and listen.