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THE WORLD BANK GROUP ARCHIVES

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH

SUSHMA GANGULY

Interview By: John Heath

Washington, D.C.

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[Transcribed from a digital sound recording]

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The following is a transcript of an interview conducted for a special oral history project on the McNamara years. The project, led by John Heath from 2016-2018, was a partnership between the 1818 Society and the World Bank Group Archives to capture a social history of the experiences of staff during President Robert S. McNamara's tenure (1968-1981).

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I N T E R V I E W

HEATH: This the World Bank Group Archives in Washington, D.C. Today is the 3rd of April, 2017. On behalf of the special oral history project on the McNamara years, I am John Heath, and this is the interview number 20 in the series. I have with me today Sushma Ganguly, a former Sector Manager of the World Bank, who was a staff member from 1980 to 2006. Sushma let me begin by asking you, where actually are you phoning from?

GANGULY: I am calling from home in Potomac, Maryland.

HEATH: I see, fine. You left the Bank in 2006. Is that correct?

GANGULY: Yes, I took an early retirement. Left in December 2006.

HEATH: Right. Have you done any consulting or anything since then?

GANGULY: No. I have not been consulting with the Bank, but I was doing some volunteer work with various organizations. I had some health challenges. Currently I am not doing anything. I did volunteer work mainly.

HEATH: Right. Now I want to take you back right to the beginning of your career with the Bank. Now you were born and raised in India. Is that correct?

GANGULY: Yes.

HEATH: You entered the Bank as a Young Professional [YP] in 1980.

GANGULY: Correct.

HEATH: Can you tell me something about why you decided to come and work for the World Bank?

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GANGULY: Yes. Having grown up in India and seeing a lot of development issues and poverty around me, I did my master's from Delhi School of Economics. Then I started teaching in Delhi University, while I was doing my M.Phil at Jawaharlal Nehru University. I kind of started having a lot of socialists and leftists' leanings. That's what happened to me. You have to change the system from within, et cetera. Those arguments you are having when you are in your 20s, and late 20s. Then I just thought I would come here to US and do my Ph.D. So, I joined University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for my Ph.D. in Economics. Then I moved to Clemson, South Carolina, where my fiancé then was going.

Throughout my studies, even while I was focusing on agriculture, I just felt one has to work in that sector and contribute. Somehow poverty; there were some pictures from my childhood of a guy and a kind of dog, both at a garbage can and going through it. Somehow, I could never get over that picture. I felt I just had to do something. Just doing volunteer work, working with NGOs like I did back home, or even teaching in schools, wasn't an answer. I had to do it. Scale up my efforts and everything. Then I heard about the World Bank YP Program while I was doing my Ph.D. here. I thought I will just give it a try. That's what happened. I flew in from Clemson for my interview. Yes.

HEATH: When you were back in India, had you at any point had any contact with staff of the World Bank?

GANGULY: No. I had not actually. I heard about World Bank but, like I said, I was working with a very small scale. I was so busy with my statute, because of my master's and M. Phil and teaching. No, I did not have any contact, or didn't know anybody.

HEATH: Now, in your own words, you were a left-leaning person. Is that correct?

GANGULY: I was in India, and when I was at the interview for my YP, I was grilled about my leanings. I still remember.

HEATH: Right. Well, tell me something about that interview process. Do you remember who interviewed you?

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GANGULY: I don't remember the panel, but I distinctly remember -- I wrote a piece on my journey at the World Bank, John. I would love to share with you at sometime --

(cross talk)

HEATH: Please. Yes.

GANGULY: -- after I have retired.

HEATH: Please send it to Ann and we will add it to the archive.

GANGULY: Okay. I think I had sent it to [Jayasankar] Shivakumar at one stage for 1818 Society. Anyways, because I wrote those memoirs, I distinctly remember two or three things from my interview. One was basically they said, what were my leftist leanings. They even knew that I was a member of the Students Federation of India, which used to be the youth wing of the Communist Party in India. The Bank had done enough research. I was quite impressed.

Then even at Illinois, I used to join a group which was a socialist group, mainly of Iranian and Romanian students and some Indians. We also had a group where we used to meet once in a while. The Bank knew about it. They asked me, do I still have leftist leanings. I said no. I do care for poverty development. I am not sure I am that radical in my views or anything. I did remember being asked that question as to where I stand on my political ideology. I did say the famous quote, that if you are not socialist when you are young, you don't have a heart.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: By then I was in my 30s, 30 and a half. I said, well, I think I probably have a mind now. I am not that leftist, ultra-leftist, but I have always had leanings to the, shall we say, left of the center.

HEATH: Wasn't that a cause of concern to you, that they would even bother to ask about your political orientation?

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GANGULY: I did express my concern. Wait till you hear my second question. Oh, I did express my concern. No, they just said they just wanted to know about my political views and ideology. I don't think they critiqued me, or said, why were you a leftist, the Bank doesn't hire people, we are more to the right, or we have a different kind of an organization. They never gave me all that spiel, if I honestly remember.

The other question that I asked, and that brings me back to McNamara years, which is more closely related, John. I was asked this question. I guess when I look back it was an interesting question. One of the panel members asked me, that here I am a woman, I am Indian, and I am 30 years old. I have a Mission Leader who hates all three. He hates women, he hates Indians, and he hates 30-year-olds. How would I behave; conduct myself on a mission?

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: I thought that was a weird kind of an amazing, amazing question. Nobody would dare to ask or say it in so many words. I thought about it for a while, and that's when I responded. I said, look, if these are the kind of people the World Bank hires, I am really not interested in joining the Bank. I am ready to walk out of this interview.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: I still remember responding to that question. I think by then I had got a little irritated. That here I am going to work in an international diverse organization, and the question. I guess that's what they wanted to know.

HEATH: I see. You say so it was like a, sort of, trick question you are saying to see if you would --

GANGULY: Yeah. I think so.

HEATH: Okay. All right. Well, let's follow up that lead. When you, in your first, couple of years with the Bank, when you were rotating as a Young Professional, did you at any point feel

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uncomfortable being either a woman, an Indian, or 30 years old?

GANGULY: No, I was very lucky to work with Dan [Daniel] Ritchie, doing my first YP assignment in EMENA [Europe, Middle East, and North Africa] region, working on Yugoslavia. He is a fantastic manager to work with.

HEATH: Just to clarify, that was the Agriculture Division of EMENA?

GANGULY: Yes. That's right. It was the Agriculture Division of EMENA. Dan Ritchie was my Division Chief then. I did my first YP assignment, and I liked him. The atmosphere and working on Yugoslavia, which was absolutely a fascinating country at that time; before it breaks apart in to eight provinces and Republic. It was great place. No, the environment was very good. I never felt that at all.

HEATH: How would you describe what set Mr. Ritchie apart as a manager?

GANGULY: Well, I think Mr. Ritchie, over the years when, after I spent 28 years in the Bank, I found that he was one of the role models that I would like to follow sometimes. Unwittingly or unintentionally. One, he was a very peoples' person. I was also pregnant during that period; my first YP assignment. He was very helpful, whether it came to my leave or when I was going to a mission. He would tell the mission leader, please make sure Sushma doesn't go on those rough roads; let her get the data. Here I would do all that, but he just showed these little concerns.

At the same time, I think what I now hear is missing at the Bank, is the whole mentoring. Like when I go on a mission, he would a send a senior leader, mission leader, senior task manager with me. Somebody who could hold my hand and walk through. I remember he asked me to lead the first, what was it called, ICRs [Implementation Completion and Results Report] right?

HEATH: Yeah.

GANGULY: Implementation Completion Mission. That was the first mission I led, and I asked him, I said, why are you asking me to lead ICR, instead of a preparation or an appraisal mission?

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You know how all task managers told me appraisal mission was the thing to do. I still remember him telling me. He says, Sushma, you know with ICR, you learn about the whole history of the project, it's origin, it's preparation. As a learning experience and a learning tool, it's probably one of the finest missions you could do. Things like that that I learned from him. Later on I discovered how right he was. Preparation, appraisal, one could always do later, but ICR did give me a sense of the whole cycle and the whole Bank processes. It's how it all goes through. So, it was just fantastic.

HEATH: Right. So just to get one question out of the way. Did you ever have a one-to-one meeting with McNamara at any time in your career?

GANGULY: No. I did not.

HEATH: Did you ever see him in action in a meeting with other people?

GANGULY: Yes. I did see him once in action. I think it was [Robert] Bob Picciotto, if I remember, was our Director. I was sitting way at the back, but I did go. I don't know what it was, one of our grey cover reports was being discussed. My mission leader was Vinay Bhargava, if I remember, was sitting in front and with Bob Picciotto, and I was at the very back. So, I did go for a meeting.

HEATH: And do you have any recollection of the style?

GANGULY: Oh, yes. Very much so. One, he had an amazing personality for sure. He had a charisma which, I don't know, after that I don't know which President, probably [James David] Wolfensohn, had it later in the subsequent Presidents. What impressed me most was that, I mean to the point that I couldn't understand how he did it. I remember the grey cover -- was it called grey cover SAR [Staff Appraisal Report] Grey cover report -- (cross talk)

HEATH: Yes.

GANGULY: -- the staff appraisal report, the final versions, right?

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HEATH: Yes.

GANGULY: I don't know if it was green cover; it's probably grey cover.

HEATH: I think it was the grey cover, yes. That's right.

GANGULY: Grey cover, yeah. He had actually the pages of the report where he found some inconsistencies. I still remember, photocopies and put them all on the table. Like there were seven pages on the table, I still remember that. He looked at Mr. Picciotto, if I recall and said, Bob, here on page 12, this is the number, and on page 42 of the appraisal report, why is this number different?

The way he used to read, you know, that was amazing. Every question, linking numbers and data with the project concept was something that I found absolutely a great learning tool. Just sitting in that meeting, I think it was just, what 15 minutes or half an -- or maybe less, meeting. But what came out was that his ability to link numbers and data.

Then the questions he would ask; how many beneficiaries, how far, cost per unit. It was always cost per unit, cost per household. Those were the questions he used to ask. So very much data oriented, but at the same time linking it with the strategic project objectives and concepts. That's what stands out most in my memory, John.

HEATH: Right. Now, before you joined the Bank, did you have some sort of impression of McNamara from a distance? Were you aware of the policies he was introducing at the Bank?

GANGULY: Yeah. I mean when I was a student, since I was agriculture, working in AG economics, I remember hearing about his -- there is this famous speech that he had given in Nairobi. I don't think I have read the speech until I came to the Bank, but I did hear about it. It was the whole first time he talks about the strategy to help poor communities meet basic needs, et cetera. I had only heard about him in that context. And, of course, the fact that he was Secretary of Defense. Then his role in increasing US -- enhancing US role in Vietnam. I always thought, before I joined the Bank, my God, somebody was like that. How could he -- you know,

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how coming from, knowing about Vietnam and all. One said, how could he -- how could the World Bank appoint him as the president. Of course, later on one learnt that he was a visionary. I don't think we had too many presidents like him after him, to be honest. Though I worked only one year while he was president. He has left some distinct memories which, I think other than Wolfensohn, and Wolfowitz probably, not in a very positive way, have left memories.

HEATH: Right. Throughout your career in the Bank, you essentially -- although, let's see. In your second rotation you worked in a country; in a Macroeconomics Division.

GANGULY: Yeah. Program.

HEATH: But --

GANGULY: Macro, yeah. In Latin America.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Yes.

HEATH: With the exception of that second rotation, the rest of your career was in agriculture. Is that correct?

GANGULY: That's correct. That was after my macro division, I remember Jose Sokol was my team leader. He actually suggested, he said, either you have to go to macro, or you stay with the sector. Sector you probably -- the way he explained it to me was, I still remember. Macro will be more vision, strategies, while sector you will be able to do both sector strategies, and yet you will be able to do investment projects, et cetera. So, it will be brick by brick. The choice was between the sectors, which sector, because I could go into any because I had done my macro.

One of the only things that I remember which put me off; you asked me about being a woman. When I graduated from YP Program and I was looking for regular assignments. I went back to Dan Ritchie's division for the first five-six years of my Bank career after YP. One question I

was asked was, which really amazed me, why am I not looking at health and education sectors, or whatever those soft sectors were called.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: I forget what that division was.

HEATH: HNP [Health, Nutrition, and Population].

GANGULY: I said, no.

HEATH: Yeah. Health Nutrition Population.

GANGULY: Yeah. Exactly. Why am I not looking at the soft sectors? So, I said but why? Oh, because most of the women in the Bank are in those sectors. There are few women we have in agriculture or whatever. I said, that doesn't matter, I don't care. That was the only time I think I felt that the Bank was trying to push me. I resisted. I said, no. I am not interested.

Then, of course, I was also told, oh, you have a little kid, you know, your newborn baby. Would you like to move to a non-traveling kind of a job in the Bank as your regular assignment? I said, no. I have been told moving back into operations is very difficult. Don't worry, I have very good arrangement for my child. I can travel, so not to worry. Those were the only two I remember issues where --

HEATH: So, just to be clear. Just to be clear, Sushma, that those suggestions were made to you by the personnel department?

GANGULY: I don't remember now. I think it could have been the -- was it the YP office or HR [Human Resources] that I don't remember.

HEATH: I see.

GANGULY: Yeah.

HEATH: Okay. Was there any perception where, I mean, presumably, you could have made a decision to become a loan officer, rather than to become a project officer? Why did you decide to become a project officer not a loan officer?

GANGULY: I think I liked the combination of doing project investment and sector strategy. As a YP, I had joined some of the negotiations, and I had seen the loan officers. One I thought they were more generalists, to be honest, within the Bank. I felt I had more technical skills or even as an economist, more focused in one area, one sector. So, I thought I could bring in more value added and not just be a loan officer. I was great in negotiations and all but, you know, there wasn't much otherwise. I felt, at least the loan officer I got to know then. Whereas I was more impressed with the investment and project officers at that time. So, I just wanted to do that.

HEATH: Some people have suggested to me that in terms of fast track promotion, if you are really ambitious, it made more sense to work in the programming rather than the project side.

GANGULY: No. Actually, Jose Sokol was the one who convinced me that I will have better career as a sector. He said that I could move more easily into management stream through investments and program. Program before me at best become Lead Economist. That was his view and that's what he retired as. I remember him meeting me in Africa and telling me couple of times, Sushma look, going to management stream wasn't a bad idea, was it? He has always taken credit for that advice given to me.

But yeah, no; even the loan officers were doing pretty well that way. Yeah, career wise, but they were generalists, so they would be good managers. I think halfway through Bank changed its criteria and recognized that even managers don't have to be generalists. You could have people who could mentor better if they had the skills.

HEATH: Right. Now, you mentioned that you aware of the Nairobi speech 1973, and that was, you might say, the high watermark of agriculture in the World Bank, no? But --

GANGULY: Absolutely. Yes.

HEATH: -- by the time you joined in 1980, would it be fair to say that some of the enthusiasm for such programs as Integrated Rural Development was already going away. In addition, of course, you had the rise of structural adjustment.

GANGULY: Uh-hmm. Correct.

HEATH: What do you remember about the policy priorities at the time, and the thematic priorities when you joined the Bank in 1980?

GANGULY: No. The structural adjustment loans were still going on. I still remember joining the Structural Adjustment Loan [SAL] mission in '83. But then I was representing the agriculture sector. That was the first SAL mission that I did while I worked in EMENA region. And I thought --

HEATH: Just to clarify. What year would that have been?

GANGULY: Could it be '83, '84. I won't remember, really.

HEATH: I see.

GANGULY: I could look up and check.

HEATH: No. That's all right.

GANGULY: But yeah, I don't remember.

HEATH: That's okay.

GANGULY: It was just one of the SALs to Turkey, because Turkey joined our division later. I think at that time Dan Ritchie was not the Division Chief. It could have been Randy Harris or somebody else. I don't recall. Richard [Burkrop] and I were representing agriculture on the

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Turkey mission. That's how I got a real feel for SAL. I found in those days, even the macroeconomist, I don't remember his name, but even those days, macroeconomist recognized the importance of agriculture in the whole economy. I don't think you felt like you were being ignored or anything, you know, to that extent. It felt, yeah, agriculture was the driving sector of growth and they gave us enough in terms of reforms or whatever. I would say enough leeway.

Somehow in EMENA, we continued with our agriculture lending. I will come back to Integrated Rural Development Project. In EMENA, we didn't do any of those. We did have some of the multi, kind of, I wouldn't call it Integrated Rural Development totally, but yeah, there were several components. They were still built like Christmas tree projects, to be honest with you. They weren't very simple, straight forward. Then we were dealing with middle, high income countries. Those days, Yugoslavia, Turkey, who could afford better, I would say somewhat better, supervision skills. So, they were manageable.

HEATH: Right. Would you say that the focus on absolute poverty reduction, which was one thing that McNamara emphasized, was that still very much the climate of the place in 1980 when you joined? I am thinking about, you know, some people in the Bank think that growth is more important than targeted poverty reduction. What was the general sense around 1980 when you joined among your colleagues, the people who you worked with?

GANGULY: No, I think at that time, unlike later years, I would say, at that time, still the Bank's strategy was to help the poor communities. Agriculture, health, and education were the sectors being emphasized. I don't think we had any funding or budget constraints either for our sector. One thing that was very clear, John, which I wanted to go back to and that's what I remember when I was trying to walk down my memory lane, that as a YP, I still remember, one never had doubts about what the Bank vision or mission or strategy was. It was very, very clear.

Unlike later years when we added so many multiplicities of objectives, and things got confused or whatever. I think those days, even with SALs, et cetera, the basic fundamental mission of the Bank being poverty reduction, was at least very clear. We definitely got more into policy analysis, policy reforms, than we did earlier, and tried to do both in the broad investments, you know, have policy-based lending as well. Other than that, I think the mission was quite clear.

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HEATH: Right. Did you have a sense that the poverty focus went away after McNamara left the Bank?

GANGULY: I think we did. One, of course, in agriculture, as you rightly pointed out, Integrated Rural Development Project was; well, it was a disaster. It was all top down approaches. That was an issue, of course. Then we struggled to come up with community-driven approaches, and CDD [Community-Driven Development] and all came up much later. The poverty focus didn't get lost. I think some of the sectors like agriculture over the years -- now I won't be able to go back because after Yugoslavia, see, I went and worked in Indonesia, East Asia Region.

There, also Indonesia, we were doing a lot of lending for irrigation, and we were doing lot of -- lending in agriculture was still going on. I did about three sector reports on tree crops, et cetera. Then there were the issues of transmigration. I don't know if you remember that. The Bank was getting a bit of a flak on that one as well.

To answer your question, yeah, I think the focus on growth did get enhanced over the years. At least some of the sectors, like agriculture and health, got a short shrift over the years. One had to struggle and fight for those sectors. Particularly after that reorganization, where the country directors (CDs) assumed the budget control. I remember I was then still called a -- no, I think my title had changed from Division Chief to Sector Manager in Africa. It became a struggle, dealing with 5 CDs as a one sole Division Chief for Agriculture, and fighting those battles wasn't easy.

HEATH: Right. Going back to when you joined as a YP, do you remember how many women there were in that year that you joined?

GANGULY: I don't think that, I don't remember too clearly, but I don't think there were many women. I remember one who joined IFC [International Finance Corporation] later, but she is the only one I remember.

HEATH: Right. What was her name?

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GANGULY: Yeah. I don't remember her name. I can think about it, but yeah.

HEATH: Did you keep in touch with any of the YPs in your graduation class, if that's the right word. Your promotion.

GANGULY: No, actually. To my surprise, I kept in touch with the YP Administrator rather, she was a -- one thing I must -- Paula Donovan was my YP Administrator. I am still friends with her. We still meet for lunch once a year or so.

HEATH: Paula Donovan, you said?

GANGULY: Yeah.

HEATH: Yeah.

GANGULY: Paula Donovan was my YP Administrator when I joined.

HEATH: Yeah.

GANGULY: So much so, that I think over the years, every time she would meet me in the corridor, she remembered my name. I wish we had more administrators like her. She would remember my name. She would stop me in the corridor, and ask me how things are? How is my career going? Et cetera, et cetera, is everything okay? Once in a while we will even have lunch at the Bank. I still her though we are both retired, once a year or so. Then she had an Assistant, what was her name, who later on became HR and I worked with her on Rural Sector Board, [Ulrike] Ulli Wiesner --

HEATH: Yes.

GANGULY: -- used to be her Assistant. Again, she and I became great friends too. She knew me from my YP interview days, she remembered me. These two I have kept in touch.

YPs, I think only two I kept in touch. One was Roberto Zaghera, who joined Programs Division, and later on I think went to India. He retired there as Country Director. The other one was Sudhir Chitale. Then -- I forget, [Udayan] Uday Wagle who joined IFC. Those were the three YPs, as I remember. I did stay in touch with them.

HEATH: Right. Now the very first mission you went on, was that to Yugoslavia?

GANGULY: Yes. That was this Morava Regional Development Project. It was a complex project. In those days, in EMENA they used to call it Regional Development Projects.

HEATH: Right. What do you remember about the details of, not so much of the project, but the general working environment of going on a mission with colleagues and so forth?

GANGULY: I thought it was good. Basically, they were very helpful, and I was working with an economist. Those days we didn't have computers or anything. I remember those cards, what were those called, those were the ones we used to do.

HEATH: Punch cards? IBM punch cards, you mean?

GANGULY: IBM punch cards, right. That's what I had to do. It was IBM punch cards that we were doing. Of course, even though one had done a Ph.D, you had never heard of cost-benefit analysis. I mean, I knew about it, but I had never done a cost-benefit analysis; and what was the other thing? Costab, oh yeah. Costab for generating cost tables. One had to quickly learn some of those things. I remember when shadow pricing, because this project had a component which was the agri-business project. It had vineyards and farming and was supporting the agro-combinates, and through them, the farmers who were associated with agro-combinates and the other were non-associated farmers. Later on, I did a sector report in Yugoslavia and looked at some of those issues. The non-associated farmers were really getting a short shrift, because the government wasn't very keen to help them unless they joined the agro-combinates.

There was one component, agri-business component. I remember, again, very good technical skills. We had an Agro Industry Specialist who had come from California, an Agriculturist,

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Agronomist. It was amazing the kind of technical skills that you would have on a mission. So many people to guide you and help you, and not just generalists, you know. That was what I remember very clearly.

HEATH: One thing that strikes me about what you say, is that you said you didn't have any previous exposure to cost-benefit analysis. When you were interviewed for the job, was there not an attempt to see whether you understood, let's say, the principles of shadow pricing, or --

GANGULY: No. No. No. I was asked questions on that. No, what I am saying is I had never done it myself. You know, actually cost-benefit analysis.

HEATH: Okay. You understood the principles.

GANGULY: Yes, I knew the concept.

HEATH: Right. Right. Okay.

GANGULY: Yeah, my whole interview was based on a quadratic programming modeling. Actually, that's the research that was I doing. Plus I looked -- that actually my thesis was based on cost-benefit analysis.

HEATH: Oh, I see.

GANGULY: It was called EB Frontier Mean Variance. So that was what we were discussing, mean variance, yeah.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: No, why I was going to bring that up, is that the agri-business component, you know, those are very sensitive projects. Like you would remember we did sensitivity analysis of our projects. You change the cost one percent, or brought the benefits down, and internal rate of return would change. I remember doing all the sensitivity analysis and being so sensitive. Then

the minimum opportunity cost of capital, whatever that was, 12 percent if I remember.

Then, I don't know whether -- I just felt that some of that statistics and the work that I was doing; I don't know what to say, how to put it this. I thought you could fudge with the numbers, let me put it very bluntly like that. As an economist, you could fudge with the numbers and later on and when you ICRs [implementation Completion Reports and Results] came out, you realized, that's what used to happen. One could just do a little bit of sensitivity analysis, a minor change in the shadow price by adjusting international freight or whatever.

I remember; this is what I remember of the negative part of my mission. Going up to task manager and telling him, this agri-business has negative rate of return. He said, why? It worked well, look at the technical guide. I said, but yeah, I am telling you what the economic analysis is. I said, I am going to say yes, we should reject this agri -- I forget which sub-project it was. He accepted my argument, but it took a, I must say, some convincing before he would accept that I am not going to -- this is what I have tried. I have tried three kinds of sensitivity analysis. It's just overly sensitive. So, it won't work.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: We did reject the sub-component, but I remember he wrote in my OE -- what was it called, the Anniversary Evaluation Report, AER --

HEATH: The Overall Performance Review or something. Yes.

GANGULY: Annual Performance Review. I think he wrote that I was very feisty. I don't know if my questioning got me that reputation or whatever, which I carried with me rest of my career, which was fine with me. I had no problem.

HEATH: Right. Do you remember the name of this task manager?

GANGULY: No. I don't remember the name.

HEATH: Okay.

GANGULY: This task manager did -- so, I felt some of that was going on at probably at the Bank. That was my little impression to what extent task managers were under pressure, which continued as we know. IEG [Independent Evaluation Group] always critiqued. I think that over the years with monitoring and evaluation, impact indicators and things like that, people just became more -- It depended a lot on individual's own judgments on a lot of these things.

HEATH: Yeah. Right.

GANGULY: Eventually, you can't take that away. Despite all the facts and numbers and data analysis. That's the only point I am making.

HEATH: Right. One of the things that they said about McNamara is that he was, as you have said yourself, he was very keen on data.

GANGULY: He was.

HEATH: But he also was, you know, when it came to an economic rate of return, he would never be satisfied with a range. He always wanted to know the exact number.

GANGULY: I remember that, yeah.

HEATH: What did you think about that at the time?

GANGULY: No. I always felt, yeah, exact number. Sometimes he is over doing the statistics, was always bit much. I always also told incidentally that task managers were prepared to answer very confidently with numbers. I remember a loan officer telling me. They're well-recognized and was rewarded in the Bank those days. That was a problem, yeah. No, I didn't think it would ever come with a single number like that, and a range would make sense. But, yeah, no.

To some extent, John, as you will remember, the Bank was kind of centralized in that sense.

There was a bit of a -- but fortunately, both Ernie [Ernest] Stern and he were good guys. I mean, clear strategy, vision, so it didn't effect -- Imagine if somebody else had such a centralized control of the institution. It could have been far worse. That way I think McNamara was great. That there was centralization but at the same time, he himself was pretty good about these things.

HEATH: Were there any people at the top of the Bank at that time in the late -- well, in 1980 or around that time, who left an impression on you? Other, sort of, big names?

GANGULY: Well, Ernie Stern, definitely. Bob [Robert] Picciotto was my Director, with his flowery language. I still remember right in my first sector report in Yugoslavia, and his comment in my appraisal report. I don't think I have forgotten even now. Finally, a curtain of obfuscation has been lifted; it was all this flowery language. So, you know, to give you both comments and compliments. Again, he was like the rest of them. I remember, very numbers oriented, tough guy, and a lot of people didn't like him because he was hard to please; a little difficult. I don't know, I got on well with him. Paul Goffin, I remember, was our Assistant Director in EMENA in the projects over there. Those are some of the names I do remember.

HEATH: Did you have any interaction with Ernie Stern at any point in your career?

GANGULY: Ernie Stern, yes. It was actually on Yugoslavia, this Regional Development Project mission, when he was there. Ernie Stern; that was just amazing. I was told he is going to join a wrap-up meeting with the government. That's the only time I have seen him. He was very good. He opened the meeting, I still remember. Then he let the mission leader take over and intervened only as necessary. He did tell our group that he won't be intervening or anything, unless there is something warranted. I was quite impressed with him. Yeah.

HEATH: Right. What do you remember about the general culture of the Bank when you joined in 1980? What it was like to --

GANGULY: Yes.

HEATH: -- the mood, the spirit.

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GANGULY: The morale was high. Generally, people were okay. Even with the SALs and all, because the sectors weren't neglected. But I still remember, the one thing that struck me, which probably started with McNamara and Ernie Stern, and including Bob and others, there was a bit of intellectual arrogance in the Bank. Coming from a developing country, having only been a student in this country; I was just taken aback, it was, 'we know it all'. It was a little bit of, I don't want to use the word, remnant of colonialism was there. Some of my mission leaders were all also like, at that time and I remember it was a little that kind of an era, 'we know it all'. There wasn't much when we went to developing countries, or whatever.

In those days I only worked in Yugoslavia and Turkey and later on. In Turkey, I don't know, I had to reformulate the famous Grain Storage Project, restructuring. Again, I wrote about that in my own note. That it was a -- the Turks did -- 85 million, I remember, dollar project, and only five million had been disbursed in six years or seven years. The Turks didn't want to cancel the project. So, I was sent out in a mission to go and restructure the project.

I remember the TMO [Turkish Grain Board] which was a procurement -- Grain Procurement Agency in Turkey telling me, World Bank mission came, they talked, we talked. They didn't listen to us, we didn't listen us, all these storage facilities are not where -- which match our grain inflow-outflow. I still remember, Samir Bhatia, who used to be my Deputy Division Chief. In those days, remember, there used to be deputies too. He and I did this green reflow or inflow-outflow model to look at it. We found the storage facilities that the Bank had suggested weren't really right, and the Turks were right. I had to write a memo on this restructuring of grain storage.

Yeah, that's the other thing that I remember. I remember that memo. I had to draft it like ten times. It will go through a loan officer, go to division chief, assistant director, director. Everybody would come back with -- the substance of the project never changed. So much so, I had reached the conclusion after my -- it was one or two years, three-four years at the Bank, that this was the "International Bank for Drafting and Redrafting."

HEATH: (Laughter).

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GANGULY: That's what I used to call it. It's not IBRD but "International Bank for Drafting and Redrafting." That sometimes used to frustrate me in that earlier environment. How much time we spent. I remember walking up to my division chief and saying, gosh, I have written a Ph.D. thesis with my English; is it the language? He says, no, no, no. Just everybody had to put in a comma, a period, or add a word here. It was trying to anticipate what the next layer of management is expecting. Each one, each layer, was doing it. That review process that a simple memo would go through, I could not, for the sake of my whatever, figure out what the heck was going on.

HEATH: Right. What was the office technology like in those days? Do you remember what it consisted of in 1980?

GANGULY: Like I told you it was just the IBM punch cards. We didn't have any computers or anything as I remember. We used to work with those IBM punch cards. There wasn't much technology, no.

HEATH: Did you have a computer terminal in the office, or how was it?

GANGULY: Yes. I did have a terminal. Later on I did get a computer terminal.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: It started off very, kind of, outdated, but then it picked up; yeah.

HEATH: Even as late as 1980, you didn't have access to, let's see, a HP-12C calculator for doing rates of return?

GANGULY: I used to have that on my hand, yeah, HP that little calculator.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: I did use that. Yeah. I used to use to that, quite often an HP-12C. Yeah, that's

what I had forgotten.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Costab and all, we still had to do it on the bigger spreadsheets. A lot of it hand-written stuff, I still remember doing.

HEATH: Right. Right. After you completed your YP, after you graduated, you went back to work with Dan Ritchie in Yugoslavia.

GANGULY: Correct.

HEATH: At that time, how many days a year would you spend on mission? That first year when you rejoined Dan Ritchie's division?

GANGULY: I think travel was quite a bit. Used to be about, I would say, three months. But Dan had a policy. I think that he didn't like staff to travel more than 90 days, if I remember. There was no legal -- I don't know if it was Bank-wide policy, but he preferred staff not to travel for too long. Still, it used to be about three months. Each mission would be three to four weeks long. I would like to keep my own missions to three weeks, because I told him very bluntly that my diminishing returns second and the fourth week. So, for me I will try to be as efficient as possible. I think throughout my career I kept that through wherever I worked. Whichever division chief, I managed to do a two or three, maximum four-week mission. But yeah quite frequent. About three to four months, I would say, I would be out of the Bank, out of Washington.

HEATH: At this point, you said that you had a young child, yes?

GANGULY: Yes. I did.

HEATH: How did that --

GANGULY: I had to rely on live-in housekeepers.

HEATH: Right. Okay. How did that work out?

GANGULY: Well, live-in housekeepers was tough, but as a result, like I always say, what the Bank made me do was -- because I used to travel so much that when I got back, I wanted to spend all the time with him and my husband then. Of course, now I am divorced, but it was with my husband at that time. With him I would spend all my time. I think, I totally sacrificed on my social life. I had absolutely no friends, no social life. Either it was work at the Bank, or it was travel, and the third was me spending weekends with my child to make up for the time lost.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: It did affect quality of life. As a result, one does become a workaholic, which didn't help.

HEATH: Right. Did you have any engagement with World Bank clubs or societies of any sort?

GANGULY: No. I don't think so. When the Bank was thinking of starting, what you call, a little nursery or -- no, this babysitting place. Remember the Bank was going to introduce that, because a lot of women had by then joined the Bank, and they were trying if they could bring their kids to work.

HEATH: The crèche.

GANGULY: And I remember -- yeah, the crèche, right. I wasn't remembering the word. That crèche then -- a discussion had started, I think, around that time. I remember joining some of the meetings and making a pitch for it myself. Not that I ever used it, but I did make a strong argument then. Not everybody in the Bank, particularly assistant staff and others, can afford to have live-in housekeepers. It's different for us. So we need something like that. I think I played a role in that if I remember clearly.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Otherwise, no I don't know. No, I had no time for the clubs or social life, to be honest with you. Between my family and work though, that's all that kept me going for several years.

HEATH: Did you socialize with other members of the Bank in your off-duty hours, or you didn't really have time for that?

GANGULY: I didn't have time for it. That's what over the years now when I wrote my memoirs, I thought maybe that did affect my career. I always used to say I managed laterally and down, did a great job, but I think I never learned to manage up. That was probably the reason for my career ending where it did. I just never learned how to manage up. One, I didn't have time, so I was not very good at networking.

HEATH: Just for our purposes, could you explain what you mean by managing up?

GANGULY: Managing up, meaning networking with your bosses, or seeing them off and on, you know. Or anything. Just an interaction with them, or just going for coffee with them. I didn't even do that, you know.

HEATH: Right. I see.

GANGULY: I just didn't have time. I find time to do that with my staff. I used to have one day a week, every week where I would say, I am having no meetings. Any staff who wants to have lunch with me or coffee with me, I am available. Whatever they want to talk about. Their personal issues, the work-related issues, environment issues. I did that very well, because that was done within my work hours, but other -- post and pre-work, no. I did not do that. My networking skills were wedged for a long long time. I think they continued to be. I couldn't work on those.

HEATH: Right.

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GANGULY: I learned that after my son went and did his MBA. That's when I realized.

HEATH: (Laughter).

GANGULY: After his Harvard Business School, how bad my networking skills are. I could compare, I think, with his networking.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: That brought the lesson home. But no regrets. I loved my career at the Bank.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Loved the institution.

HEATH: Talking about the promotion trajectories. You were a YP. Was there a sense that the YPs were in a privileged position? Was there any, maybe, resentment by non-YPs who felt that they didn't have such good prospects?

GANGULY: There was a bit of that resentment. But I must tell you one thing, while there might have been resentment, but also the non-YPs, one thing they used to like, and a lot of managers imposed that, unlike what happened later, I think -- though I still follow the old rules in my own career. There was a standard profile that you wouldn't get your next grade, what was it, the L, or I don't remember after -- it was a K. Was it alphabets or numbers, I forget? 22.

HEATH: It was numbers, yeah.

GANGULY: Like I joined the YP at 22. So you wouldn't get grade 23 until you worked for three years as an economist. Then you had to work -- so it was very good that you had a time this thing. Then at least two to three years, you had to prove that you could do your job before you would become a senior economist. Another three to -- and there is a criteria. I must say, I think the non-YPs liked that. That he was being subjected to the same criteria to, of course,

moving a faster ladder up to at least, you know, a principal economist or principal engineer or whatever.

Still we all went through this three, four, five-year rules, or whatever they had. I have forgotten now. Also, the fact, it was very clear to everybody that, okay you had to lead major sector missions, you had to do this to become principal economist, and you had to do this to become, whatever. I think up to principal economist it was very clear.

There was a resentment. Of course, they had a faster career. Then also people in my project's division, I think, resented a lot of loan officers. They used to feel, have a faster, this thing, whereas some of young people like me didn't have. I used to say, no, no, but we are going through the standards.

No, I was okay until my division chief. My career stopped somehow after that, but that; I can explain to you what happened. I moved pretty fast up to division chief level, but after that, yeah. Then I think it became more like also -- to be honest, not only what you know but who you know. I wasn't good at that.

HEATH: Right. I see. When did you take your first project to the Board?

GANGULY: First project to the Board. Oh, gosh; I don't remember. I don't think I did a major mission in Yugoslavia, other than ICR and joined. I think the first project to the Board might have been Indonesia, which might have been 81 -- no, sorry, no, 85.

HEATH: I see, right.

GANGULY: 84-85. I don't remember exactly.

It was the irrigation subsector project, and then IPM [Integrated Pest Management project]. I had done sector reports before that, even in Yugoslavia sector missions, I had led.

HEATH: Right. Thinking about the relative priority given to appraisal versus supervision, and

also compared to sector work. What sense did you have about the priorities in assigning resources to these different tasks?

GANGULY: I think, over the years of course, it became bad. When the budgets were cut, it became terrible. I will go through that. Initially when I started, I thought there was very good balance, when I started my career in the Bank. That there was adequate budget devoted to supervision. Every project was supervised at least twice a year, sometimes twice. If there was a problem project, we would do more. Then you remember monitoring and evaluation was introduced, from that those criteria were developed. I mean, how effective they were, we all have questions about that, but regardless at least there was some discipline being imposed on staff about that. Over the years, yes, like I told you, when there was a reorganization, particularly. I went through several reorganizations. One where we were all fired, all the management team, and we were rehired. I remember that happened in the Africa region. I don't remember what year that was.

HEATH: That was in 87, no?

GANGULY: Yeah, 87.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Yeah, 87.

HEATH: Yeah.

GANGULY: We went through that reorganization, major one. Then, of course, when this whole CD—I think things really started, I would say, deteriorating after this matrix management was set up. Somehow that, in my view, didn't work. Matrix was never balanced. Any matrix is intrinsically unstable, and I think that matrix that the Bank tried to get was unstable. Though now I am told it's even worse, so I don't know; maybe it's comparing apples and oranges. I don't know.

HEATH: Right. You have probably heard of the [Willi A] Wapenhans report. He referred to this principal - of the approval culture. Meaning that there was a focus primarily on devoting resources to getting projects to the Board. Back in 1980, were you aware of that as the priority?

GANGULY: In 1980, I knew the focus was on lending. Also, I think at that time at least, there was adequate budget and allowance, and staff time allocated to supervision also. But yes, of course, I knew all about Wapenhans report. Over the years, you are right, it became more and more approval culture. People started seeing their career in terms of how many projects the task managers would take to the Board. That would then be the criteria for the promotion. Everybody then started doing that.

Yeah, that was terrible. It became more and more approval culture, less budget being devoted. I remember there were colleagues of mine who weren't really interested in going on supervision. Particularly young people, because they thought there was not much career in that.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: So, they had rather lead an appraisal. Then of course, the pressure later on, unlike where we would say, okay, you have to grow into your level before you get promoted. Later on these younger people expected, once they have led a task mission, they should be promoted immediately. I remember going through lots of watch rooms in my own staff. Just because you led a project mission doesn't mean you need to become a, you know, get next provision grade.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: So, yeah. You are absolutely right. The approval culture -- it effected the quality of projects, right? IEG, or what was it called earlier, OED [Operations Evaluations Department] used to come up with pretty negative evaluations of some of these projects, which were rushed, to be honest.

HEATH: Let me ask you about that. What were the mechanisms of quality control that you remember around 1980 for projects?

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GANGULY: In 1980, of course, we didn't have QAG [Quality Assurance Group] and all, but there was a lot of review. I think peer quality of review, I must say, was very good in 1980. Not that we didn't have problem projects, but we used to have all kinds of group. The country program, loan officer go through white cover, yellow cover, green cover. Sometimes you would say this is getting to be little frustrating with all those covers. I thought the review process was much better when I started my career than by the time I left. Later on, all I remembered was QAG, and there wasn't much of a review process. So, no, actually; when I started my career it was a lot better, I would say.

HEATH: What changed exactly? Why did it deteriorate subsequently?

GANGULY: The review process?

HEATH: Yes.

GANGULY: I think what happened was, one was the time. You remember we were being critiqued by the Bank; I mean, critiqued constantly by the outside world. I remember going for this Executive Development Program Training, remember, that Wolfensohn started?

HEATH: Yes.

GANGULY: I still remember these private sector guys. Boston telling us, you guys all PhDs and all you think and think. You analyze to the point of paralyzing. You know, analysis leading to paralysis. I still remember that statement. I think the Bank reached a point where we were taking so much time on preparing, reviewing and doing everything. Almost a year, 18 months, two years to a project. Then with the global capital flows going into these countries, we were not the only, kind of, a lender. We had competition. We felt we had to cut short on time. In the process of cutting short the processing time, I think, instead of finding better cuts, I would say, or more efficient cuts, we just decided to do it in our own way, and cut down the review process because we thought that's what takes time.

HEATH: Right.

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GANGULY: That's at least what I remember.

HEATH: Let me ask you now about the first major sector report you did. Was that for Yugoslavia?

GANGULY: Yes.

HEATH: That would have been in, when 1981 thereabouts, or earlier?

GANGULY: 82 maybe; no 82.

HEATH: I see.

GANGULY: 82.

HEATH: All right.

GANGULY: After I graduated from YP program; I think my first -- yeah.

HEATH: Right. How did you set about doing the sector work? What do you remember about that?

GANGULY: We had so many technical specialists in the division that I had no problem, where I could get an agri-business person, the one who had worked on the project, to come out with me, so he could give me the project, kind of, perspective. I also had one macro-economist join my mission who could give us the sectoral and macro perspective, and linkages of agriculture with the macro economy.

Then, of course, Richard Burcroff was there. He was asked, later on I learnt, that. Richard and I became great friends over the years; we still are. So later on, I learned that Richard was sent to basically keep an eye on me, so that I don't slip or whatever, and if I do, he was there. This is what I meant, you know. In those days there was fantastic mentoring, which you don't find or

didn't have time or budget, later on in my Bank career. He was sent to be there on the mission with me just to hold my hand if I slipped.

HEATH: That would have been the initiative of the Division Chief, Mr. Ritchie --

GANGULY: Exactly.

HEATH: -- right. I see.

GANGULY: Exactly. Division Chief's initiative.

HEATH: Yeah.

GANGULY: His advice to me, you know, don't feel threatened just because I am sending a principal economist with you. Being very open about it.

HEATH: Right. Now on that particular occasion. You were dealing with a fairly sophisticated client, Yugoslavia. Was there any attempt to engage the client in some of the analysis for the sector work?

GANGULY: Oh, absolutely. We worked very closely with the, what was it called, institute in Belgrade. It's an economic institute. I still remember the guy who headed the institute. He later on died of cancer or something, but a brilliant man. We worked very closely with that institute. Also tried to collaborate with the government. But, it was very difficult, because we were coming out critiquing the way the government was operating in agriculture sector, with the agro-combinates and all. My report was not well received by the government in spite of the local level with the banks and others were involved. At the very senior ministry level, there weren't too pleased with the report.

So, did any of its recommendations get implemented? I think the only one -- the few might have; but overall in terms of the impact, I think it was greater impact within the Bank. We decided we are not going to lend for this or not lend for that or agri-business is not going

anywhere, and we should stop doing this Regional Development Projects. To that extent at the macro-level, I think, we reached agreement with the government on how we are going to change our lending focus. But the actual policy reforms, I don't remember what I had, but those weren't implemented.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: It was quite a controversial document with the Bank. They weren't allowing Bank to do a sector review for a very long time. I was the first one. That's why Bob Picciotto had written, finally the curtain of obfuscation has lifted. Bank was just told, you can do projects, but no, we don't need sector strategies. They were aware that we might come up with something like this.

HEATH: I just want to clarify. You said Bob Picciotto had said finally the curtain of obfuscation has lifted.

GANGULY: Has lifted, yeah.

HEATH: He was referring specifically to your writing style, or what?

GANGULY: No. He was referring to some of these issues that I am saying we exposed, about these associated farmers, non-associated farmers, and things like that.

HEATH: I see. Okay. So, he was complimenting you on revealing the truth about these projects. Okay.

GANGULY: Exactly. Yes. No, no, he was complimenting me. I was just saying it was always this flowery language to even compliment you.

HEATH: Yes. I understand.

GANGULY: Yeah.

HEATH: Yeah. Sure. Finally, Sushma, tell me something about the things that you least liked about working for the Bank, in the first couple of years that you were in the Bank?

GANGULY: I think I already alluded to those. One, this drafting and redrafting of memos. It used to drive me crazy.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Like, I now look back and say review was great. But sometimes those reviews and layering of reviews, and how much value was added by each review, I wasn't sure. Sometimes that would frustrate me. The third one was, I think, the role of a loan officer to be honest with you. I know you asked me that question, why didn't I go into that stream. The role of loan officer was never very clear to me. I couldn't understand what role he or she played for that matter. There was a little bit of frustration on that. Though I got along very well with all my loan officers, but somehow within that was a bit of a problem. The mission strategy was very clear. Then little bit of I could see, as I said, a little intellectual arrogance was there.

HEATH: Yes.

GANGULY: We did have this, 'we know it all'.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: That used to bother me a bit. That we didn't have the humility when we went to see a client, or how much you wanted to learn from them. That was clearly -- and I found out, even in the Colombia mission when I joined the programs mission, it was the same thing. This was a joint IMF-World Bank mission, because IMF went with this agenda in its back pocket, which was even worse than us. Even me, I was looking at balance of payments and things like that. How much we involved our client wasn't very -- and also when we went, and they also listened to us. The Bank had this monopoly, right?

HEATH: Yes.

GANGULY: We exploited it. We exploited it to the fullest extent, now when I look back. We were the big ones in the development field, and we used all our exploitative powers that we could. To the extent, I think, we would have been better off had we listened to the clients more. We didn't do that. That has always been there in my mind, and over the years one tried to correct that but --

HEATH: Right. When you were in Dan Ritchie's division, were you the only female professional, or were there other women?

GANGULY: I think later on there were two other YPs, or one other YP, who joined the subsequent year. I think, but I may have been the only one. Like I told you, in agriculture there weren't many women.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: There were two or three. There was Uma Lele who used to work in Africa region, and I don't know, maybe two or three other women. There weren't many women in agriculture. Marjory[-Anne] Bromhead probably joined later, but I don't remember exactly. There were very few women. That's all I can remember. That's why the pressure to send you to HNP. That was where the women are supposed to go.

HEATH: Right. Tell me something about Uma Lele, a fellow, I think -- she is Indian as well, isn't she?

GANGULY: She is Indian, yes.

HEATH: She obviously had already by the mid-1970s under McNamara, she had made her mark.

GANGULY: Yes. She wrote that report, right, on Africa.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: What was it called?

HEATH: How well did you know Uma Lele?

GANGULY: I didn't know her at all. Only when I was in the anchor. After retirement I have got to know her a little better. I had heard of her.

HEATH: I see. Right.

GANGULY: Then she used to work on Tanzania. When I became Division Chief in Africa, East Africa first, then Eastern and Southern Africa. Then I covered about 14 countries after reorganization. Before that, my division used to cover Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania. I remember going to Tanzania and the government telling me that, do I know my compatriot, Uma Lele. I think that's when it got reinforced. I had heard of her report in Africa.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Yeah.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: She had left the Africa region by the time I joined.

HEATH: I see.

GANGULY: Never really crossed my path.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Then when I was at the anchor, with Kevin [Cleaver] and I; when we were there, she would come back. She would do a E5 review or some other review for IEG, that's where she was, right?

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: She retired from IEG, if I remember. With some of her reviews that she would do. She would come and discuss with us, and all I remember is I couldn't get a word in edgewise with her. She already had made up her mind, and she wasn't going to take any contrary views. So, between Kevin and I, we used to figure out who is going to meet with her.

HEATH: Right. I was curious whether there was any sort of sense of solidarity among women professionals in the Bank. Did you compare notes on your position as a woman in the Bank, or was that simply not something you did?

GANGULY: No. All I know, it is like Pamela Cox was the Senior Economist working on India, or Principal Economist working on India, and I was the Principal Economist working on Indonesia. We were both at the same level, and we were both writing sector reports. We both had each other as a reviewer, or just somebody to draw up on their input. As Pamela had me as reviewing that. Then, of course, later on she was the Country Director in Africa when I went there as Division Chief. We got to know then; there were couple of these. Barbara Kafka with whom I am still friends.

I think more in the management stream, I got to know a few women. Otherwise in the rest of my career, no, there was not much bonding. Except once, I did start chairing a group about, this gender equality. When the Bank started talking and then some of the women would say, what about gender equality within the Bank. I remember starting a group. Now I don't remember when it was; whether I was East Asia or Africa. I started chairing this group, and I think I just chaired two or three meetings at lunch time. Very few women showed up. There was very little interest. Few of them who came, particularly from the developing part of the world, who wouldn't even open their mouths. It just didn't work. So, I gave up on that, to be honest. That was the only, I would say, women's group that we started and didn't go very far. Again, I think, people were so pressed for time. They just didn't have time to even join for brown bag luncheons or whatever.

HEATH: Around 1980, were you aware of cases of sexual harassment of women?

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GANGULY: No. I don't think so. I wasn't aware; I became aware later but not really during my YP years. I never had heard of any of those cases. Or at least I was shielded, or nobody told me. So no, I had not.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Like I said, I didn't have many women friends or whatever. Just knew people in my own division. So, no, I did not.

HEATH: Were there any issues, not specifically relating to women, but cases of bullying between, let's say managers and their staff. Were you aware of cases where some people really suffered, because they were -- their life was made difficult by a manager, or by maybe by a colleague?

GANGULY: Look I was very lucky, to be honest with you, throughout my career with managers. I had, just pure luck I would say, some of the top notch, most people I had would give me a lot of leeway. I never had any issues per se.

You know, I don't know. Now that you ask me, I have had one experience where on a mission I was asked if I can pick up his briefcase; one of the mission leaders. I said, excuse me. This is when we are leaving the meeting. Then, of course, he realized and he said, oh, I just meant can you pass it to me.

HEATH: (Laughter).

GANGULY: Which was so strange. That's the only instance of bullying, personal bullying, that I remember. But no, of course, there were cases. Particularly, I think, the support staff, or assistants as we used to call them, I think they used to get bullied by task managers; because they had to do all their typing. I remember these guys going and shouting at some of these women. That was where the gender was. I think the professional career women, since we were few and far in between, we were treated okay at that time, in 80s at least. Later on, it became different.

These support staff, I am not so sure. I always felt that there was a lot of bullying. Oh, I needed this report to be done; my memo has to be done right away. It was just constant pressure that they were facing, and they would help pass it along. Deadlines was driving everybody crazy, which continued for a long time in the Bank, right.

HEATH: How did you get on with the support staff? How would you describe your relationship with them?

GANGULY: I had good relationship. I think most of my support staff were very good. Only in Africa region, I had issue, I would say with one or two staff -- one staff. I had to go to the Appeals Court. Appeal, what was it called, Tribunal with one ACS [Administrative Client Support] staff. I don't remember the issues. I think, Pamela Cox was the one who was chairing that Tribunal. I forget what the issue was. I think, by and large, I had very good relations. I had problem cases more, not reporting to me directly, but when I was manager, they were reporting to other team leaders. There were some issues where I had to... and then one of them did take me to the Tribunal. That's all I remember. No, not on my one-on-one people who worked with me, loved me and I worked very well with them. It was always issues related to other staff that I had to go through some of them.

HEATH: I see.

GANGULY: Then we had some other -- I have had some real -- yeah. Then there was one task manager also, we had issues. We had to send him to that psychologist we used to have, remember at the Bank? What was his name -- Silverman. I have had cases like that. Tough people -- yeah, the issues weren't always easy.

HEATH: Right. I forgot to ask you, when you were working as an Agriculture Economist, did you have any interaction with the Research Department, with DEC [Development Economics Vice Presidency]?

GANGULY: Yes. Actually, yeah. Gershon Feder and I, over the years became great friend. Then I knew people there in DEC, and I would interact. Then I remember in Indonesia when I

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did -- even the Commodities Group, remember we used to make projections of, commodity prices, Ron [Ronald C.] Duncan.

HEATH: Yeah.

GANGULY: Now I remember him.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Ron Duncan's division. I knew a lot of his staff, Don [Donald O.] Mitchell, Don [Donald F.] Larson. I used to work very closely with them. Actually, they joined my mission in Indonesia when I did sector report on sustained transformation. Even Hans Binswanger who used to there. He also came. He and Jeffrey Hammer came and did the multi-markets or something, multi-sector models, for my sector report. I worked very closely with people like Jeffrey Hammer and others and Don Mitchell on commodity projections. Then we were looking at tree crops; the sector report that I did in Indonesia. We were looking at pricing of rubber, coconut, oil palm, export taxes, a whole lot of pricing commodity issues, where they had actually joined the mission. I did interact very closely with them.

HEATH: Right. Okay. Finally, Sushma, is there anything you would like to add about your early career in the Bank?

GANGULY: No. I think I enjoyed. I just had a great time. I loved this institution's objectives, goals. Of course, there were frustrations as we all know in any job. Still, as long as one kept the mission and the ultimate goal in mind, I used to get up in the morning, feel good.

I quit because I realized, one of course the push and pull factors, which made me quit. One, I will be honest with you, I was Acting Director in the anchor for nearly six months after Kevin left for IFAD [International Fund for Agricultural Development].

Then my VP at that time couldn't give me firm commitment whether I could throw in my ball to become a Director. I said, look, I don't work with anybody else. I have reached a point where I

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said, either I am a Director or I am quitting. I am now happy to throw in my hat and compete, but if you are not going to make up your mind for a year. When the position will be open, will it be internal, will it be external, all those things were going on. That became frustrating, but then I thought that to leave when you are wanted, not when you feel it is time to go.

I think I left the Bank at the right time, and I used to feel on top of the world. With rural sector board, I was doing quite well. I still feel the only regret that I have had, but then I enjoyed what I was doing at that time. I think the institution should have at least given me director's position. Never eyed for vice president or anything. I thought I got one grade less, but then I don't complain because I loved what I did. Enjoyed it. Sometimes I was given false promises. I moved to the anchor thinking I was going to be, but then it didn't happen. Those were just management issues which I wouldn't let them bother me for too long in life.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: I had to move on. Just enjoy what I was going.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Anchor gave me great -- you know, I got into global issues. I have worked in all the regions. The only region I didn't work was South Asia. I didn't want to go back. Didn't want to work there because I knew that region. The only option I had was on the end of my career was to move into an anchor. I got a great job. I loved it because I got to focus on several issues. Look beyond countries and regions. I always tell people, one thing I learnt is if you stay in one sector, then at least move around geographically; you know, which I did.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: Otherwise change your sector. You had to make this constant move in my career. I love mentoring. Incidentally, I did a lot of that. I used to love being both mentee and mentor in my career.

HEATH: Right.

GANGULY: That's basically it.

HEATH: Well, Sushma, it's been a pleasure talking to you. I wish you all the best in the years to come. Thank you so much.

GANGULY: Thanks, John. All the best to you too. Take care.

HEATH: Bye-bye.

GANGULY: Bye-bye.

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