

## Letter from the Editor

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This issue is dedicated to celebrating and remembering Professor James Gardner March, who passed away on September 27, 2018. I have been fortunate to have James March as my professor during my first year as a PhD student at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (Carnegie Mellon University) Graduate School of Industrial Administration (Tepper School today). I had previously studied the book *Organizations* (March & Simon, 1958), which provided the underlying conceptual foundation for my master's thesis at UCLA, under the supervision and guidance of Professor Jacob Marschak. My thesis developed a simulation model of employee decisions to join or leave the organization and why and how hard employees worked.

It is hard to describe the feelings and emotions of getting to know and learn from James March and Herbert Simon, but I know that I have been very fortunate to be accepted to the PhD program at GSIA in September of 1963 (a cohort of 12 students out 176 applicants). On the first day of the organization theory PhD seminar, Professor March handed out his latest working paper 'The Power of Power', which he had completed, as was his annual custom, on his retreat with family somewhere in the Colorado mountains. Reading this paper was an experience that has remained with me ever since. It was an 'in-your-face' review of one specific concept of power in political science, and its functionality in empirical analysis of mechanisms for social choice. It was based on an elegant and parsimonious mathematical analysis of key power formulations in political science. His conclusion that 'Power is a disappointing concept. It gives us surprisingly little purchase in reasonable models of complex systems of social choice' was classic James March. He did not pull any punches.

To my disappointment, March left GSIA at the end of the 1963/64 academic year to found the School of Social Science at the University of California Irvine. During my last meeting with him, I sought his advice about doing a PhD dissertation on the concept of organization slack, which was a central element of the behavioral theory of the firm (Cyert & March, 1963). His response was classic James March: 'Slack is a seductive concept; it explains a lot and predicts little', which I eventually interpreted as a clue that the topic was not feasible for a PhD dissertation at GSIA.

Twenty-five years later, in my second year as the founding editor of *Organization Science* (1990), the journal published the first issue on organizational learning (Feb. 1991). This issue, which published two papers by James March (1991), ‘Learning from Samples of One or Fewer’, co-authored with Lee S. Sproull and Michal Tamuz, and, perhaps the most influential paper published by James March (1991), ‘Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning’, served to open up and establish the generative and still very active area of research on organizational learning.

Professor March published what became an omniscient paper of later criticism of empirical social science research. His paper in the inaugural issue of *Management and Organization Review* (2005), ‘Parochialism in the Evolution of a Research Community: The Case of Organization Studies’, anticipated recent criticisms (e.g., Lewin et al., 2016) of empirical social science research as a consequence of the emergence of a community of scholars around a journal who ultimately reinforce their theoretical and empirical orthodoxies on papers published in that journal. Further, it also represented Professor March’s interest in indigenous research in the context of China.

The current special issue of MOR was made possible by a special MOR and IACMR (June 17–18, 2019) paper development workshop that was held at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China. The paper development workshop was chaired by Professor and MOR Deputy Editor Peter Ping Li. The guest editors of the special issue, Peter Ping Li (University of Nottingham Ningbo China), Mooweon Rhee (Yonsei University), and Bilian N. Sullivan (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology), invited eleven submissions from the PDW of which five articles were accepted for publication in this special issue. On behalf of the IACMR and MOR, I wish to express my deep thanks and appreciation to the University of Nottingham Ningbo China for hosting the PDW and to the guest editors their commitment and guidance of developing the papers included in this special issue. I am especially appreciative of the dedicated effort of three guest editors to find the gem ideas in those papers and guide the authors to ultimate publication in this special issue. Professors Rhee and Sullivan were former PhD students of Professor March and Professor Li, I believe, was the last scholar to interview Professor March before his death. A summary of this insightful and interesting interview is included in this special issue.

This issue also features a Perspective Paper, ‘Chinese Bureaucracy Through Three Lenses: Weberian, Confucian, and Marchian’ by Professor Xueguang Zhou (Stanford University). Professor Zhou was also a former PhD student of Professor March and this paper develops the concept of ‘organized anarchy’ for explaining how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Chinese government have developed the Chinese economy in search of common prosperity by giving meaning to Deng Xiaoping’s 1978 speech ushering the opening of China’s economy and his closing sentence that the way forward will be like crossing a river by *finding the rocks on which to cross*. In addition, Professor Yanjie Bian, past

MOR Senior Editor, also has a commentary, ‘A Relational Image of Chinese Bureaucracy’, which expands the idea of organized anarchy by noting the importance of relationship networks within the CCP and their influence on implementing national policies.

Lastly, the Dialogue, Debate, and Discussion section explores alternative ideas for measuring a country’s capacity for innovation. Annika Hochstrasser and Johann Peter Murmann’s article, ‘China Innovation Capacity Growth Index 2015 and 2020’, proposes a new country innovation index – the China Innovation Capacity Growth Index (CICGI). This intriguing index is followed by two commentators – Professor Martin Kenney (University of California Davis) and Professor Can Huang (Zhejiang University), Deputy Editor for MOR.

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink on the left, which appears to be 'A. Y. L.'. To the right of the signature is a red square seal impression containing stylized Chinese characters.

## REFERENCES

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