Call for Papers
Organization Science Winter Conference 2020
New Themes in the Behavioral Theory of the Firm

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Co-chairs
Stefano Brusoni (ETH Zurich)
Felipe Csaszar (University of Michigan)
Vibha Gaba (INSEAD)
Violina Rindova (University of Southern California)

We are pleased to announce the 25th Annual Organization Science Winter Conference (OSWC XXV), sponsored by *Organization Science*. The 2020 OSWC is dedicated to celebrating the work of Jim March, and his seminal contributions together with Richard Cyert and Herbert Simon.

For over 50 years, these ideas have influenced a variety of disciplines and have provided the theoretical foundation for the work of generations of organization and strategy scholars. This work has transformed the thinking on theory of the firm, decision processes in organizations, learning and choice, as well as the relationship between those processes, firm behavior, and performance heterogeneity. Fields as diverse as management, economics, marketing, neurosciences, robotics and AI have turned to behavioral approaches as a source of ideas, methods, and inspiration.

We invite proposals/papers that articulate forward-looking theoretical and empirical agendas for the Behavioral Theory of the Firm (BTOF) and its implications for organization and management theory in the 21st century. We are especially interested in work (a) exploring less understood pillars of BTOF such as the organizational structure, cognition, multiple goals, and coalition formation; (b) examining the potential linkages that the original work school did not fully exploit; and (c) augmenting the well-established ideas with new settings, methods, and voices.

A few illustrative (but not exhaustive) topics of interest include:

- **Cognition, emotions, and imagination.** Decision making under uncertainty entails the interplay of different processes and skills. Jim March often reminded us of the dangers of excessive reliance on simple ideas of rationality and cognition. Over time, other important aspects of how people make decisions—including the role of representations, emotions, imagination, and values—have gained attention in the scholarly literature. The challenge is to develop a more complete picture of human rationality.

- **Attention, memory, and flexibility.** How do organizations affect, guide, and constrain the attention of individuals as they make decisions? The interplay of attention and memory processes is central to understanding the performance of individuals and organizations when they make decisions. And yet, both individuals and organizations sometimes forget and unlearn and even ignore in order to adapt and be flexible. Jim March codified this tension brilliantly within his exploration-exploitation model. Yet, many questions remain unanswered. How do individuals resolve these tensions? How do these solutions aggregate up to organizational decisions? Or does it work the other way around: do organizational structures set powerful limits on individual-level processes that adapt and respond to structural constraints?

- **Role of structure in decision making.** Jim March and his colleagues brought attention to the centrality of structure in decision making. The questions of structure remain just as important today, as the nature of structure and organizational boundaries are changing. Platform models, non-hierarchal forms of organizing, project-based organizing, as well as dynamic social structures like innovation contests and hackathons all raise questions about the about the interactions between individuals, teams, units, higher-level goals, and their effects on goal prioritization, search behavior, and performance feedback, to name a few.

- **Multiple goals, values, and ideologies.** A Behavioral Theory of the Firm viewed organizations as adaptive systems comprised of multiple actors with inconsistent preferences and identities. Organizational subunits with distinct functions, for example, are expected to develop their own objectives and norms and compete for scarce resources with other units, even though they must cooperate in support of decisions. What implications this has for firms' pursuit of multiple goals or performance assessment relative to multiple aspirations? How do organizations manage multiple goals, pluralistic values, and clashing ideologies? How do such factors affect organizational design, identity, strategy, and performance?

- **Conflict, coalitions, and contestations.** Although the Behavioral Theory of the Firm established multiples interests and intra-organizational conflict as fundamental driver of organizational behavior, subsequent work in the field has underplayed this aspect of organizing. How do organizations manage, and even benefit, from conflict and contestation in organizations? How do these sources of conflict (or alignments) affect other behavioral mechanisms such as setting aspirations, problemistic search, performance feedback, and attention allocation? How are coalitions formed, maintained, or dissolved in organizations?

- **Combining human and artificial intelligence in decision making.** Bounded rationality is a core principle of the behavioral theory of the firm. It is related to limits in cognition, time, and information when making decisions. While previous

waves of digitalization might have helped human intelligence overcome information or attenuated constraints on information, recent developments in computer sciences and AI promise to attenuate the limits on time (as they decreasingly require direct human supervision or even participation to collect and analyze data) and cognition (as AI is approaching and indeed overtaking human cognition in several tasks). Is bounded rationality a legacy of the past in the age of AI? Or will it remain as a central tenet of behavioral approaches to the firm and human decision making? What is the relationship between AI-assisted information processing and organizational decision making?

Among those scholars who have already committed to attend are: Gautam Ahuja (Cornell University), Henrich Greve (INSEAD), Theresa Lant (Pace University), Dan Levinthal (University of Pennsylvania), Arie Lewin (Duke University), Steve Mezias (INSEAD), Anne Miner (University of Wisconsin-Madison), William Ocasio (Northwestern University), and Zur Shapira (New York University).

Submission and/or participation application

We aim to attract a diverse set of scholars working on issues like the ones mentioned above. In the tradition of OSWC, we invite 3- to 5-page proposals for panel sessions as well as individual paper contributions. As has been the case in the past, much of the plenary program is created from proposals and suggestions received from scholars wishing to participate in OSWC. Most authors will be invited to join another highly acclaimed OSWC tradition—the open-ended evening-long (7–10pm) interactive poster sessions accompanied with finger food, wine, soft drinks, and desserts. As it has been the tradition, we will also feature distinguished scholars in the Fireside Chat on Saturday evening. If you are interested in attending OSWC but not as participant on the program, please submit a statement expressing your desire to participate and describing your interest in topics addressed above. Important: We can guarantee only one participant per paper/poster given the size of the venue. Requests for a second participant will be considered after the program is finalized.

The application deadline for submissions is **December 1, 2019**. Submissions for paper presentations, panel proposals, and statements of interest for non-presenting participation should be submitted via this webpage: https://tinyurl.com/oswc2020. Invitations to attend will be extended by the program committee by January 10, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact the organizers at OrgSciWinterConf2020@gmail.com.