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SCANCOR 25 Years: Sustaining Organizational Scholarship Across Boundaries

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Editorial introduction

It is fairly well established that the Vikings "visited" not only their neighboring countries but also went as far as "Vinland" – as the Viking travelers named the place they discovered on what we now know as the "American continent." Scandinavian artists in the 19th century went to Southern Europe, visiting Rome, Paris and other sites to find inspiration. The "new Vikings" – scholars and academics – also travel to Palo Alto in California to visit an organization named SCANCOR located right in the middle of a beautiful campus at Stanford University.

As Veblen (1915) noted the Scandinavians are known for being pragmatic, and for relying on a skill in picking up and making use of what they might find along the way. This particular skill is depicted in influential Nordic fairy tales about the "Ash Lad," or "Clumsy Hans" (H.C. Andersen) who is fond of staying home and taking care of the fireplace and removing its ashes, but who is pushed by his mother to get out of there and thus in quite an unintentional way ends up in competition with his two older brothers, and in the end wins the princess and the kingdom (Asbjørnsen and Moe 1888). His brothers are both older and much more successful and skilled in all kinds of conventional ways. However, it turns out that the older brothers are trapped in their goal-oriented thinking, while the Ash Lad is more socially aware and able to face the serendipities of life and make use of whatever comes along. He thus makes unexpected friends and these friends, in combination with the tools he has picked up, become the secrets behind his success. In Kvaløy Setreng's words "instead of being directional and goal-seeking, he is obser-

vant and fascinated by what presents itself along the road" (Kvaløy Setreng 1995).

A fairy tale, however, always has a beginning and an end, unlike the story we are now going to tell about SCANCOR. It is difficult to determine when SCANCOR began, and certainly there does not seem to be an end in sight. SCANCOR at 25 years of age displays a lot of vitality and has showed more endurance than other similar undertakings, also at the University of Stanford (Scott 2010:453), so perhaps it is rather more like a TV series to-be-continued than a fairy tale. There seem to be some similarities with the Ash Lad and Clumsy Hans fairy tales, however, since the story is also about what the Scandinavians and their fellow travelers picked up at Stanford and what aquaintances they developed on their way back and forth between California and within Europe. In spite of the fact that SCANCOR was formally founded with a charter in 1988, one might claim that the origins of SCANCOR date back to the late 1960s and early 1970s. The SCANCOR legend states that, "In 1968–69 two young scholars from Scandinavia, Johan P. Olsen from the University of Bergen and Soren Christensen from the Copenhagen Business School, visited James G. March at the University of California, Irvine because of their interest in organization theory" (SCANCOR website). Jim March returned their visits by spending six months in Bergen and Copenhagen, respectively, the following year, prior to moving from the University of California, Irvine to Stanford University in 1971. These encounters marked in many ways the beginning of what we know today as SCANCOR, the entity that is being celebrated by this special issue of *Nordiske Organisasjonsstudier*. Thus, SCANCOR emerged, out of visits and later on a network of Scandinavian and American researchers, who apparently shared a mutual interest in traveling together with a research interest in how public reforms affect organizational practice. This group of researchers first set out to create an informal academic network and then found it best to formalize it. They accomplished this goal when they launched the Scandinavian Consortium of Organizational Research (SCANCOR) in 1988 at the heart of the Stanford University campus at the School of Education.

There are many takes on and different memories about how SCANCOR developed and what the significant turning points in the history of SCANCOR have been. Several of the contributions in this issue provide their take and perspective on SCANCOR and its history (see for example Eriksson-Zetterquist and Georg, and Svejenova, Croidieu and Meyer in this issue). In the following we will provide an account of the creation and development of SCANCOR and the ideas that developed as a consequence of the meetings and the journeys associated with it. Of course, it is difficult to get such a story right, our lens like most others will be tainted in one way or the other. In the spirit of the words of the great American writer Mark Twain,

"Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please," we present some historical "facts" in the following.

PRE-SCANCOR: FROM INFORMAL NETWORK TO FORMAL ORGANIZATION (1970–1988)[2]

After initial visits between Johan P. Olsen, Soren Christensen and Jim March in the late 1960s, during the 1970s an informal network of Scandinavian scholars gradually formed around professor Jim March at Stanford University. He had on several occasions visited Scandinavia and the research institutions in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden where he engaged in different kinds of research collaborations with researchers from business schools and universities.[3] The book *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations,* edited by March and Olsen (1976;1979), contains contributions from a number of Scandinavian researchers and is one example and early evidence of this collaboration. The book is about decision making with a particular focus on loose coupling. It challenges the notions of organizations as densely linked systems, marked by clear means-end goals and aligned with intentional plans, a research theme in which March and the Scandinavian scholars shared a common interest. An informal research network gradually emerged around March with a group of Scandinavian scholars consisting of Nils Brunsson from the Stockholm School of Economics (Sweden), Søren Christensen from the Copenhagen Business School (Denmark), Johan P. Olsen from the LOS Centeret (Norway), and Guje Sevon from the Swedish School of Economics in Helsinki (Finland).

For more than a decade, from the mid-1970s and till the late 1980s, this informal network around March, referred to by March himself as a "community of scholars" was gradually developed and expanded. Over the years, researchers from Scandinavian business schools and universities visited Jim March at Stanford University for longer or shorter periods of time. During these visits at Stanford University, the Scandinavian researchers (visiting professors, Ph.D. students etc.) attended meetings, seminars and courses, through which they also acquired contact with Stanford faculty and Ph.D. students. Prominent institutional scholars such as W. Richard Scott and John W. Meyer and their respective Ph.D. students were among the first acquaintances of the Scandinavian scholars visiting Stanford University. This is how many Scandinavian researchers were exposed to new ideas and new organizational theories, including decision-making theory and institutional theory.[4]

SCANCOR 1.0: CREATING AN INSTITUTION (1988–1995)

This special issue of *Nordiske Organisasjonsstudier* (NOS) commemorates the 25-year anniversary of The Scandinavian Consortium for Organizational Research, also known as SCANCOR. Scandinavians seemingly always have liked to travel and it was noted by Thorstein Veblen (1915:43) that "these peoples borrowed freely, both in technological and in other institutional matters."

Towards the late 1980s the Stanford-Scandinavian networks (and the Ash Lads and Clumsy Hanses doing the "Viking" travel to Palo Alto) had grown to proportions that were increasingly difficult to handle on an informal basis. On September 15, 1988 a formal organization was founded at Stanford University with a board, a director, and a secretary. The board was composed of Scandinavian researchers, one representative per country, and Jim March was elected as Director of SCANCOR. The mission of SCANCOR was, and is, "to advance research and development in the social sciences, particularly in the area of organizational studies; to operate facilities at Stanford University to support Scandinavian visiting scholars at Stanford; to facilitate and support collaboration among its member institutions; and to facilitate and encourage collaboration among scholars at Stanford, in Scandinavia, and in other research centers in Europe" (SCANCOR website).

The funding for SCANCOR came from seven educational institutions (universities and business schools) in the Scandinavian countries.[5] Each member institution paid a fee that ensured sufficient financial resources to secure office space at Stanford University. Hence, on March 10, 1989, SCANCOR established its physical premises within the Department of Education on the Stanford University campus. The visits from Scandinavia, which had previously been organized informally, became subject to a formal application procedure, through which the board (Nils Brunsson from Sweden, Søren Christensen from Denmark, Johan P. Olsen from Norway and Guje Sevón from Finland), in collaboration with Jim March, selected among the formal applications from scholars applying to visit SCANCOR.

Another example of institutional development is the creation in 1990 of a junior network of scholars among Scandinavian Ph.D. students and assistant professors. The network was founded on the initiative and financial support of the SCANCOR board. Over the next four–five years, the Scandinavian Young Scholars Network (SYSN) held annual workshops and conferences in the various Scandinavian countries. SCANCOR also organized activities so as to enable senior researchers, notably Jim March, Dick Scott and John Meyer, to give talks, lectures, and research seminars at the annual meetings in the Scandinavian Young Scholars Network. These activities were important for the creation and maintenance of the network, and for the diffusion of ideas and theories to the community of young Scandinavian scholars.

The network of young scholars was not created with the intent of diffusing institutional theory to Scandinavia but this nevertheless came to be one of the effects in the early 1990s, when institutional theory was one of the new and exciting theories of social science in Scandinavia (as well as in Europe and the United States).

Particularly Swedish and Danish organizational research had a strong emphasis on organizational culture and symbolism in the 1980s. In Norway the focus was more on the ideas associated with what Johan P. Olsen later has called "The Bergen School": "an organization theory-based approach to the study of public administrative behavior, institutions and developments in the context of democratic governance" (Olsen 2006:94). This approach combined an interest in organizational forms and processes with an interest in theories of democracy. One of the reasons for the particular strength of this way of practicing organization theory in Norway was the research funds and studies associated with the so-called power and democracy project that was initiated by the government in 1972 and completed ten years later. A similar study was undertaken in Sweden from the mid-1980s (and even in Denmark in the late 1990s). In Sweden it was more the business economists who were making use of organization theory, also in the study of public organizations, whereas it was the political scientists in Norway. The fact that Johan P. Olsen was invited to be one of the main contributors to the study of power and democracy in Sweden may have boosted the already established cooperation between Swedish business economists and Norwegian political scientists. It may also have mattered that Nils Brunsson was already cooperating with Johan P. Olsen as member of the board of SCANCOR.

Similarly in Finland it was business economists, such as Risto Tainio and Kari Lilja, who were making use of organization theory and cooperating with similar minded researchers in Denmark and Norway (Lilja & Tainio 1996, Christensen 1996, Halvorsen et al. 1996). Their main focus was on changes in the organization of the economy and industries and how the institutional framework of society provided different societies with different kinds of "business systems." Furthermore, it was in Finland that a particular brand of discourse studies developed (see e.g. Tienari, Vaara, Bjorkman 2003). Other Finnish specialties were the activity theory represented by Yrjø Engstrøm and the emphasis on innovation theory and strategy as practice that developed later. Finland again contributed a different disciplinary mix to the SCANCOR melting pot, less influenced by public administration and political science than in the case of Norway, but with a greater focus on technology and innovation studies.

A reason for the further development of cooperation among Nordic researchers oriented towards what later has been termed the variation of capitalism approach was the ESF-funded research program European Man-

agement and Organization in Transition (EMOT). In the meanwhile, there was also a stronger move towards the development of a Nordic approach to institutionalism where the earlier research on organizational culture and symbolism was integrated. As mentioned previously, this shift was initially driven by research on public organizations and public reforms that were taking place in Norway and Sweden at the time and the shift was also significantly stimulated by the publication of *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, edited by Powell and DiMaggio (1991). The books *Rediscovering Institutions – The Organizational Basis of Politics* by March and Olsen (1989) and *The Reforming Organization*, edited by Brunsson and Olsen (1993) are prominent examples of the budding interest in new institutionalism and public organizations. During the early 1990s, many activities took place, including seminars, workshops, and mini-conferences attended by researchers from Scandinavia and Stanford University. In 1992, for example, a group of eight scholars from the Copenhagen Business School visited researchers from both New York University and Stanford University. The following year a mini-conference in Denmark led to the publication of *The Institutional Construction of Organizations – International and Longitudinal Studies* (Scott & Christensen 1995). The publication was one of the first joint publications within institutional theory including researchers from Scandinavia as well as from US. Another outcome of this encounter was that the "traffic" of researchers between Scandinavia and US over the next couple of years became more multi-directional, as some North American scholars spent a semester or an entire year at Scandinavian research institutions.[6]

SCANCOR 1.1: INSTITUTIONAL MAINTENANCE AND CONSOLIDATION (1995–1999)

One might argue that during many of the early years, the work of Scandinavian organization scholars was difficult to distinguish from that being conducted elsewhere. At the very least, their work was not as articulated and distinct as we would argue that it has come to be in recent years.

In particular the institutionalist tradition has gained momentum, but this tradition is a fairly "open tent" and has allowed for the pragmatic vikings to pick up a lot during their travels and conference gatherings related to SCANCOR. In a typically Scandinavian pragmatic way, organization theorists picked up elements from other theoretical strands such as Actor Network Theory, historical-comparative studies, network research and innovation studies. Such studies were now presented in joint volumes (Czarniawska & Sevon 2003) and *festschrifts* (like the one for Jim March edited by Brunsson and Olsen in 1998) as both a display of the Nordic variety of organization studies and the increasing tolerance the various approaches showed towards

each other. After many years of network building and academic exchange of scholars and ideas, the organization theory tradition in Scandinavia now seemed to have found a voice of its own. This voice was not only apparent in these joint volumes but also reflected in publications and in conferences and seminars that Scandinavian organization theorists have organized since the mid-1990s. One example is the symposium on "Action in Institutions" held in conjunction with the 1995 Academy of Management Meeting in Vancouver. The Scandinavian voice is evident in the announced call, which states that "the purpose of the symposium is to address the troubling gap in new institutional analyses of organizations – the seeming lack of a theory of action." On the initiative of Scandinavian researchers, the symposium explicitly explored the role of actors and action in institutional analysis. Scholars from both Scandinavia and North America attended the symposium, which in 1997 gave rise to the special issue on "Action and Institutions" in American Behavioral Scientist (edited by Christensen, Karnøe, Strandgaard Pedersen and Dobbin).[7]

During the late 1990s, SCANCOR also hosted several seminars and conferences, including a seminar on "Standardization" in 1997, followed by the publication of the book *A World of Standards*, edited by Brunsson and Jacobsson in 2000. The book by Røvik (1998) *Moderne organisasjoner: Trender i Organisasjonstenkningen ved Tusenårsskiftet* ["Modern Organizations: Trends in Organizational Research by the Millennium"] (authors' translation) is another significant publication and example of Scandinavian organization theory from the 1990s. Røvik followed up with a book in 2007, *Trender og Translasjoner* ["Trends and Translations"] (authors' translation) where he explicitly sought to develop a Scandinavian pragmatic variety of institutionalism (Røvik 2007).

Perhaps the most significant landmark in relation to creating a distinct brand of Scandinavian institutionalism was the edited volume *Translating Organizational Change* by Barbara Czarniawska and Guje Sevón (1996). This book, which brought together Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian researchers, articulated several important research agendas within institutional theory. The volume introduced the concept of "Scandinavian Institutionalism" and also imported the notion of translation from actor network theory into institutional theory.[8] The Scandinavian approach to translation challenged the notions of isomorphic diffusion that had so far dominated organizational research and became a core feature of Scandinavian Institutionalism. Examples of this research stream and the concepts they have used to capture the phenomenon of local adaptation are, apart from "Translation" (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996: Boutaiba & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2003; Boxenbaum, 2006; Røvik, 2007), "Editing" (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008), "Transposition" (Boxenbaum & Battilana, 2005),

and "Social transformation processes" (Strandgaard Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006).

SCANCOR 2.0: REACHING OUT TO EUROPE (1999–PRESENT)

As mentioned above, the so-called EMOT program developed further cooperation both among Nordic researchers and other researchers in Europe interested in business systems and the role of institutions in organizing business and societies. This provided inspiration for comparisons of the Nordic countries as well (Byrkjeflot et al. 2001; later: Kjær & Slaatta 2005, Kristensen & Lilja 2011).

The early comparative studies of business systems and institutions related to EMOT gave inspiration to study the spread of management practices in Europe and the outcome was an interesting mix of historical and institutional approaches to the "Creation of European Management Practices" in Europe. This research program, managed by Lars Engwall from the University of Uppsala in Sweden studied processes of production, circulation and consumption of management ideas from an institutional and historical perspective. Through a series of workshops and seminar activities, the research program brought together a number of Scandinavian (as well as other European) scholars working with institutional theory and historical comparisons. For several years, this group of researchers organized sub-themes at the annual meeting of the European Group of Organization Studies (EGOS), alongside other workshops on business systems as well as other predominant themes in Nordic organization theory. In relation to the CEMP research program, SCANCOR also organized a conference on "Carriers of Management Knowledge" at Stanford University in 1999.[9]

The year 1999 marks an important change at SCANCOR. The founding parties and the first generation of board members at SCANCOR (Jim March, Nils Brunsson, Søren Christensen, Johan P. Olsen, and Guje Sevón) decided to step down to make room for the next generation. Professor Walter W. Powell replaced Jim March as director of SCANCOR, and Kristian Kreiner (Denmark), Kari Lilja (Finland), Per Lægreid (Norway), and Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson (Sweden) became the new board of SCANCOR. From 2001 a principle of rotation was introduced, involving a shift of board members after either four or eight years. The changing of the guard was followed by a reorientation and change in focus, from a Scandinavian focus to a European focus. This was also signified by the inclusion of a limited number of associate membership institutions over the years, such as Mannheim, Maastricht, ESSEC (Paris), IESE (Barcelona) and WU Vienna, extending the concept of Scandinavia and inventing the notion of "Southern Scandinavians"

(see contribution by Svejenova, Croidieu and Meyer for more details on the "Southern Scandinavian" perspective).

Since the turn of the century, the annual meeting of EGOS (European Group of Organization Studies) has played a role in the institutional maintenance of the various institutionalisms alongside other trends in Nordic organization theory and more generally, organizational theory in Europe. Since 2004 SCANCOR, under the leadership of Woody Powell, has been organizing a doctoral workshop on institutional theory that brings doctoral students from the Scandinavian member organizations into contact with one another as well as with doctoral students and faculty from the United States. After two editions had taken place at Stanford, the Ph.D. workshop became a traveling workshop.[10] More recently, since 2007, formal alumni networks have been established in each of the Scandinavian countries and also one for the rest of Europe. For the most part these networks have been used to disseminate information, but there have also been some informal and formal gatherings, such as when the SCANCOR director visits Helsinki or when SCANCORians in Stockholm meet over a cup of coffee (*fika*). In 2008, the alumni association in Norway organized a conference with 50 participants on "the neoliberal state – perspectives and experiences." Some of the papers were later published in a special issue section of *Norsk Statsvitenskapelig Tidsskrift* (Askim, Byrkjeflot & Christensen 2009). Since their foundation, the alumni networks have grown in their numbers to more than 600 Scandinavian scholars who have visited SCANCOR over the years. The number of alumni from other European countries has also continued to increase and there have been 11 scholars from Iceland over the years.

On November 21, 2008, SCANCOR celebrated its 20 year anniversary with a conference titled "Kindred Spirits – developing ideas to catch and release," in the company of its alumni network and friends of SCANCOR. Other celebratory conferences have, for example, included "Great Scott Conference" for Dick Scott in 2002, "SCANCOR Institutions Conference" in 2004, and "Institutions, Networks and Knowledge, an Asilomar Conference in honor of Woody Powell" in 2012.

In 2008, Woody Powell and the board created the SCANCOR Post Doc program, where early career Scandinavian scholars can apply for a limited number of post doc positions sponsored by SCANCOR educational institutions and mentored by Stanford faculty (for more on the Post doc program see the SCANCOR website). In 2010, Mitchell Stevens took over as SCANCOR director after Woody Powell, coming from a position at New York University. One of his first tasks and achievements was to secure a new physical space at the School of Education (see his account of this experience and Eriksson-Zetterkvist and Georg in this issue for a more detailed account on the role of physical space in the history of SCANCOR) and install SCANCOR

in these new facilities. Since 2011 Mitchell Stevens and the board have also secured SCANCOR's presence and visibility in a European context through the highly popular SCANCOR reception at the annual EGOS colloquium.

This slightly tainted narrative of the emergence and development of SCANCOR summarizes what we see as a promising combination of preparation – in the form of intentional actions and manifestations of agency – meeting opportunity, which have been said to be the main ingredients of "luck." Thus we will claim that the formation of SCANCOR, joint book projects, exchange of visiting scholars, joint seminars and conferences, young scholars network, joint doctoral courses, and alumni networks are all examples of the institutional journey that led to the intentional creation of SCANCOR and the unintentional creation of a Scandinavian tradition of organization theory. An important outcome of these actions to create, and later formalize, a research network between organizational researchers in Scandinavia and researchers at Stanford University, is that the shared experiences by "SCANCORIANs" give rise to an emerging sense of collective identity ("a community of scholars" as Jim March has entitled his contribution in this issue) that may extend far into the future.

Let us now turn to the content of this special issue and through the various voices explore and experience how SCANCOR is perceived by the various authors in this issue. Many metaphors have been applied to capture and describe SCANCOR over the years. In this issue many of these are mentioned, seeing SCANCOR as an "inter-disciplinary community," a "research hotel," a "community of scholars," a "hospitable organization," a "feast" and a "journey" or "travel."

In the contribution by Jim March, titled "A Community of Scholars," the readers are let into the context and ideas of the founding of SCANCOR. Not surprisingly, the unintentionality of the founders is stressed, and strategy and intentionality are portrayed as parts of an emerging process and more likely to be seen as an outcome than as input.

In the article by Ulla Eriksson-Zetterkvist and Susse Georg, titled "The Sustainability and Serendipity of SCANCOR," a question raised is: "What does it take to build such a research institute?" The answer provided is informed by the sociology of translation and the concept of "agencement" in an account emphasizing the material dimensions of building a research institute like SCANCOR and how the material, spatial and social are intertwined. Three physical locations of SCANCOR are examined – the Hoover Institution, the top floor of the CERAS building and the present location on the ground floor of the CERAS building.

In the contribution by Mitchell Stevens, director of SCANCOR since 2010, titled "The Space of SCANCOR," the issue of physical settings and

space is continued. The author reflects on the role of space in relation to academic work, interaction, status signalling and SCANCOR's present location in the CERAS building.

Liisa Valikangas and SCANCOR friends and colleagues, in their contribution titled "Traveling with Ideas – Encounters of People and Perspectives at SCANCOR," thrive on the notion of travel and discuss the role of travel in a context of scholarship and intellectual encounters. Exploring the significance of the temporary nature of visiting and how this change of context frees the scholar as well as scholarly thought is the focus of this tale about the role of travel.

In the article titled "Welcome to the Hotel California: Strangers and Hospitable Organizations", Silviya Svejenova, Gregoire Croidieu and Renate Meyer provide a "Southern Scandinavian" perspective on SCANCOR as a "hospitable organization." The authors address the issue of what the mechanisms are that enable pluralism in a homogeneous organization, and how they contribute to its vitality. They explore the conditions for the hospitable organization through concepts of "stranger," "home-comer," "organizational identity" and "pluralism."

In the article by Tom Christensen and Per Lægreid, titled "SCANCOR and Norwegian Public Administration Research Development," the focus is on the dynamic relationship between Stanford/SCANCOR organizational research and political science research in Norway. Its place in the tradition of Scandinavian Organization Theory is discussed with a particular focus on what are the influences back and forth in this relationship.

In the contribution by Kristian Kreiner, titled "A Feast of the Fog of Reality," he provides an analysis of SCANCOR inspired by Karen Blixen's *Babette's Feast*. Taking as a point of departure the old maps decorating the walls of SCANCOR, the author portrays SCANCOR as "a little Scandinavia at Stanford University" that celebrates ambiguity and uncertainty and in this way the author reflects upon the inestimable importance of the role Jim March has played in the creation, development and institutionalization of SCANCOR.

In the contribution by Woody Powell, director of SCANCOR 1999–2010, titled "Through a Glass Lightly," he reflects on what he has learned from Nordic scholarship and the Nordic countries. He discusses the contribution of the particular kind of network studies and institutionalism developed in Sweden and the advantages of including the political sciences in the orbit of organization studies as has been done in Scandinavia, as well as the kind of transparency and equality associated with Nordic organizations. Finally, he discusses the literature on the Nordic model and argues that the Nordic countries are not as similar as usually assumed, but that they have their pragmatic orientation and ability to form coalitions in common.

Finally, let us comment on the current understanding of SCANCOR and implications for its future. Compared to other research centers SCANCOR is a rather peculiar kind of organization, perhaps a rather "incomplete organization" if we use a term introduced by Ahrne & Brunsson (2009). It neither runs research projects nor engages in teaching nor carries out the exchange of researchers or students on a regular basis. Neither is it a center of excellence, a think-tank, a career development agency or a consultancy. So what is it? Something in between? Perhaps it is exactly the strength of SCANCOR that we do not know what it is. As noted in several articles in this issue, SCANCOR is a place that has to be created and discovered by the visitors themselves, and we assume that both the legacy of open-ness represented by Jim March and by the established tradition of cross-disciplinarity in the study of organizations both in Scandinavia and at the University of Stanford contribute to this atmosphere. The ability to avoid established categorizations, be it of the disciplinary or organizational kind, may be one of several reasons for SCANCOR's surprising surrival and energy at the age of 25.

So what about the future? Do we find anything in the articles in this special issue that may inform us about what future we may expect or want for SCANCOR? Jim March has suggested that SCANCOR is really a community of scholars, whereas Svejenova and her co-authors indicate that it may be a good idea to emphasize its identity as a hospitable organization. From the article by Ericsson-Zetterquist and Georg, we learn that it is the serendipity and spatiality of SCANCOR that is both its strength and vulnerability. That may indeed be the case, although Mitchell Stevens provides us with another alternative; he indicates that the established networks of alumni may be a key resource for SCANCOR, particularly in the "digital age." But is it really possible to maintain SCANCOR as a community of scholars without the kind of space or "home" it has had so far? A lot of questions, and not all that many answers. As readers of this special issue you now have the chance to reflect more on these issues while reading the articles that we have made available for you. Perhaps you are not all that interested in the questions we have asked here, or perhaps it is nonetheless better to do like the Ash Lad and Clumsy Hans and just enjoy the spirit of the hospitability and serendipity of SCANCOR while it is possible. Like the Ash Lad you may just go there, make discoveries and pick up what you find on your way. Perhaps it is this attitude which is really the secret behind the surprising survival and apparent vitality of SCANCOR on its 25th anniversary.

NOTES

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Rubecksen, the contributing authors, participants at a session at the New Institutionalism workshop in Warsaw in March 2013, and SCANCOR for financial support.

2 Parts of the historical description of SCANCOR have previously been published in Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen (2009).

3 Jim March's numerous Scandinavian honorary doctorates testify to this strong relationship.

4 The significance of this contact between Scandinavian and American researchers is also noted in Lægreid (2007) and Kreiner (2007) and the discussion of the particularities of Scandinavian Organization and Management Theory is discussed in Engwall (1995 and 2003) and Czarniawska & Sevon (Eds.) (2003). See also Hallet & Ventresca (2006) and Dobbin & Schoonhoven (Eds.) 2010 on the significance of Stanford's organization theory community.

5 The seven Scandinavian universities and business schools who contributed to the creation of SCANCOR were the Copenhagen Business School (Denmark), the Stockholm School of Economics (Sweden), the Norwegian School of Economics, the University of Bergen and the Norwegian Research Centre in Organization and Management (Norway), the Swedish School of Economics in Helsinki, the Helsinki School of Economics and Åbo Akademi (Finland). Later on Iceland has joined the other countries with the University of Iceland in Reykjavik as a member.

6 Previously researchers such as Jim March, Arthur Stinchcombe, Richard W. Scott had been visitors in Scandinavia. Frank Dobbin, professor at Harvard University, was a visiting scholar at the Copenhagen Business School (CBS) in 1994–1995. He had been a student of John W. Meyer. In collaboration with researchers from CBS, he launched a doctoral course in "New Institutional Theory," which has now run for more than fifteen years at CBS.

7 Ten years later, in 2005, a group of institutional scholars from Scandinavia, Europe and the United States gathered in Denmark for a conference on "New Public and Private Models of Management: Sense-making and Institutions," which resulted in a special issue of *American Behavioral Scientists* in 2006, edited by Westenholz, Strandgaard Pedersen & Dobbin.

8 The concept of translation refers to the notion that ideas change when they travel from one context to another, an idea borrowed from French scholars like Bruno Latour and Michel Callon (Callon & Latour, 1981: Latour, 1986; Callon, 1986).

9 The CEMP research program has resulted in various publications, for example Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall (2002), Amdam, Kvålshaugen & Larsen (2003), Alvarez, Mazza & Strandgaard Pedersen (2005).

10 Previous editions of the Institutional Theory workshop were hosted at Stanford University, CBS, Helsinki School of Economics, IESE, Aalto University, University of Mannheim, WU Vienna, and is planned for HUJI (Hebrew University of Jerusalem Israel) 2014.

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A Community of Scholars

Et kollegialt fellesskap

JAMES G. MARCH

Nøkkelord: lærd, samarbeid, samfunnet, tverrfaglig, multi-nasjonal
Keywords: scholarship, collaboration, community, multi-disciplinary, multi-national

As is true in the evolution of other enduring institutions, SCANCOR has constructed the intentions of its founders from its history, discovering them in its experiences and glorifying them with its successes. I am not sure that the founders had anything much grander in mind than solving the practical problem of finding office space at Stanford for my Scandinavian friends, but they shared a perspective that has found some clarification as SCANCOR has developed. That perspective was one of a scholarly community that existed independent of institutions or nations. It was not an accident that the SCANCOR Board was made self-perpetuating, rather than an explicit instrument of existing institutions. SCANCOR was constituted by, and continues to be governed by, the community of organization scholars, to the perpetual wonderment and occasional annoyance of the academic institutions and nation states involved as partners.

Nothing is totally independent of institutions and nations, of course. We live in an organized, connected world, and any scholarly community is necessarily embedded in institutions and dependent on nations. However, SCANCOR was intended to be, and to a substantial extent has become, an autonomous international, multi-institutional community that pursues an independent course designed to strengthen and enrich that community. SCANCOR could not exist without the support of its institutional and national friends, but it does not "belong" to them. It belongs to the community of organizations research scholars in Scandinavia and their colleagues in the rest of the world.

A scholarly community is, of course, a poetic figment of indefinite boundaries, obscure membership, and mystical materiality. Yet, it is embodied in

SCANCOR and gives sustenance to organizational research. At its core, the community encompasses scholars in Scandinavia, but it extends to outposts throughout the rest of Europe, increasingly to Asia, and conspicuously to Stanford University. Stanford organizations scholarship has profited from contact with the individual Scandinavian scholars at SCANCOR and from the spirit of mutual support that has persistently characterized their presence at Stanford.

The community of scholars' perspective is in conflict, of course, with the idea of academic institutions as administrative organizations. SCANCOR has benefited from the generous support of academic institutions in Scandinavia, not only for the direct support given to SCANCOR but also for the support given to individual scholars who came to SCANCOR. At no time, however, have those institutions exercised administrative control over SCANCOR. The Stanford story is similar. In the beginning, the Stanford administration made no collective decision to embrace SCANCOR. It was one of many small initiatives that attached themselves to the university with the support of a few faculty members and existed outside of any significant consciousness on the part of the administrative apparatus. SCANCOR had neither a university budget nor a location on the organization chart, though it secured office space from, and for some purposes was adopted by, the Graduate School of Education.

This independence and informality allowed SCANCOR to develop its own ethos and its own style, connecting itself to the Scandinavian and Stanford organizations research communities without much attention to where any particular part of that community located itself. Along the way, SCANCOR became not only a facilitator of contact among Scandinavian scholars, but also a modest facilitator of inter-school contact among Stanford scholars located in the schools of business, education, engineering, humanities and science, law, and medicine. No dramatics, no administrative decisions, no bureaucracy.

Individual scholars coming to SCANCOR have varied considerably in their interests and in the connections they have formed with each other and with Stanford. Within that diversity, scholarly developments within the SCANCOR community have reflected the broader enthusiasms of Scandinavian organization studies. For example, although a majority of SCANCOR scholars have come from business schools in Scandinavia, their links with the Stanford Graduate School of Business have typically been modest. Organizations research at the Stanford business school has emphasized experimental studies at the micro level and large database, multiple regression studies of organizational demography at the macro level, neither of which have matched the interests or training of most SCANCOR scholars.

On the other hand, many SCANCOR scholars have found kindred spirits in other departments. In the early years, scholars interested in various

brands of institutional thought developed ties with Stanford sociology. Subsequently, scholars interested in various brands of social constructivist ethnography developed ties to Stanford engineering management. Individual scholars with different orientations established links with Stanford colleagues in medicine, political science, and economics. A few scholars found Stanford barren of faculty interested in their work, but discovered the joys of a large library, myriads of doctoral students, and sunshine.

Through its programs, SCANCOR has strengthened the links within the organizations research community and made collaboration easier within Scandinavia and between Scandinavian colleagues and their compatriots elsewhere. These community-building successes did not happen automatically. They have depended a great deal on people, particularly people who have served on the SCANCOR Board and those who have been visiting scholars at Stanford. They have depended on the effective leadership of W.W. Powell and Mitchell Stevens who have served as my successors as directors of SCANCOR at Stanford. And they have depended on the imagination and persistence of three unusually talented administrators: Barbara Beuche, Annette Eldredge, and Marianne Risberg. Most of all, however, they have depended on a spirit of basic goodwill and a host of cooperative instincts that can be attributed, at least to some degree, to Scandinavian traditions of shared values, constructive cooperation, and community building.

Over time, as SCANCOR established itself and became better known, it started to appear on administrative radar screens, both in Scandinavia and at Stanford. The administrative impulse was to normalize things, to fit a small deviant operation (SCANCOR) into large systems of rules and routines (Stanford, universities and governments in Scandinavia). SCANCOR became visible and legitimate, with all the good and bad consequences of achieving that status. The transition from a renegade cluster of unnoticed scholars to an established part of the Stanford and Scandinavian scenes was gradual but profound. In Scandinavia, SCANCOR became a standard component of research and educational budgets. At Stanford, SCANCOR seminars began to compete with other seminars for participation. Stanford scholars, such as Stephen Barley, John Meyer and W. Richard Scott, and their students, began to seek collaboration with SCANCOR scholars. On its own terms and with a gentle insistence on its independence of institutions and nations, SCANCOR joined the chaotic world of Stanford intellectual life in which talent counts more than titles and there are more scholarly events seeking attention than there are scholars available to attend them.

It would be romantic to claim too much. SCANCOR has made possible numerous good things that might not have occurred otherwise. It has not transformed the world. I think it is to its credit, however, that despite becoming administratively respectable, it has for the most part supported a view-

point that recognizes all scholarship as collaborative and all scholars as part of a multi-institutional, international community, that honors the integrity and skillfulness of first-class research, and that supports members of that community in their efforts to deserve their memberships without regard for national, institutional, or disciplinary labels. That is, I think, not an entirely bad perspective; and the SCANCOR record in fomenting that perspective and realizing its potential is, I think, not an entirely bad record. Not bad at all.

ABSTRACT
SCANCOR was constituted by, and continues to be governed by, the community of organization scholars, to the perpetual wonderment and occasional annoyance of the academic institutions and nation states involved as partners. Despite becoming administratively respectable over time, it has supported a perspective that sees all scholarship as collaborative and all scholars as part of a multi-institutional, international community, that honors the integrity and skillfulness of first-class research, and that supports members of that community in their efforts to deserve their memberships without regard for national, institutional, or disciplinary labels.

ABSTRAKT
SCANCOR ble utviklet av, og fortsetter å være styrt av det felles-skapet som organisasjonens forskere representerer, til evig undring og tidvis irritasjon for de akademiske institusjonene og nasjonalstatene som er involvert som partnere. Til tross for at SCANCOR har oppnådd å bli administrativt respektabel over tid, har forsker-fellesskapet fortsatt maktet å bevare den ide at det er integritet og dyktighet som preger den gode forskningsgjerningen. Medlemmer av dette kollegiale fellesskapet gjør seg fortjent til sin plass ved å unnlate å ta hensyn til nasjonale, institusjonelle eller disiplinære etiketter.

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The Sustainability and Serendipity of SCANCOR

SCANCOR: gemensamma forskningsintressen och tilfälligheter

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Nyckelord: forskningsinstitut, "agencement", spatialitet, materialitet, stabilisering
Keywords: Research institute, agencement, spatiality, materiality, stabilization

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INTRODUCTION

With its 25 year history, SCANCOR has come to constitute a recognized research venue amongst university researchers across Scandinavia, Europe and the US; it has attracted and continues to attract researchers from across disciplinary and geographical boundaries, and to house them in offices at Stanford University. SCANCOR is often associated with the fostering of new theoretical approaches such as Scandinavian Institutionalism (Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen 2009, Olsen 2009, Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009), and it has been labeled as a site for "situated creativity" (Berg 2013).

What does it take to build such a research institute? Within Scandinavian research there exist a variety of answers to this question: some emphasize the work and perseverance of dedicated individuals in mobilizing support for turning informal networks into formal organizations (Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen 2009, Christensen & Lægreid this issue), while others examine the work of institutional entrepreneurs in enrolling and trans-

lating the interests of others to stabilize a diverse array of initiatives into a well-functioning and widely-known entity (Czarniawska 2009). In this paper we follow along the lines of the latter approach, viewing the institutionalization of a research institute through the lens of the sociology of translation. We suggest conceptualizing SCANCOR as an "agencement," because this allows us to capture the socio-materiality of building a research institute that is so often overlooked in the human-centered accounts of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby 2006, Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen 2009, Raviola & Norbäck 2013), and it allows us to address the serendipity in building a research institute.

While the impact of developing a research institute has been discussed in a number of publications (Stevens et al. 2008, Czarniawska 2009), the building of a research institute – in a figurative and physical sense of the word – has not been explored to the same extent (a notable exception being Ernberg & Normark 2009). In what follows we focus on the spatiality and materiality of building – stabilizing – SCANCOR. Buildings are, like other things such as desks and computers, material and technological artifacts that can help to "stabilize social life" (Gieryn 2002: 35). From this vantage point, buildings – and the spaces that they provide as well as the discourses and material things that they contain – influence the social: the non-human elements can frame or gently "program" ways in which people (inter-)act. Not that this takes place in any determinant way; both the spatial and the material are reinterpreted and reconfigured as they are taken into or put to use.

In keeping with Berg and Kreiner's observation that buildings are "markers of time, ideas and existence" (1990: 57), we focus on three spatial domains of particular importance to the development of SCANCOR: the Hoover Institute, where the nascent beginnings of SCANCOR took place, the top floor of the CERAS building, which was SCANCOR's first "home," and the office facilities located in the lobby of the CERAS building, SCANCOR's current location. Each of these locations marks distinct changes in SCANCOR's history. We argue that the buildings and the material artifacts that they contain, as well as the communities of scholars in and around SCANCOR, afford visiting scholars interactional possibilities that not only allow them to further their careers, but that also provide SCANCOR, as a collective, with a capacity to act. It is these interactions that form SCANCOR as an agencement.

The paper is structured as follows: We begin by exploring the intertwining of the material, spatial and social, captured by the notion of agencement. Following this, we discuss how the material for this paper has been constructed. The building of a research institute will then be explored in the context of the three sites in which SCANCOR has been located over the last twenty-five years. In the discussion we elaborate upon how the agence-

ment of people, place and perspectives has enabled the serendipitous travel of research ideas, and we discuss how the agency enabled by this agencement has varied over time and space, i.e. under specific circumstances and in different places. Finally, we will conclude that although SCANCOR has been stabilized as a research institute and has, in the words of Callon (1992: 91), become "heavy with norms," it is vulnerable as an agencement, since the elements it encompasses can become enrolled in other relations and, perhaps, weaken the network of things and people keeping SCANCOR in place.

SPATIALITY, MATERIALITY AND STABILIZATION

Materiality is used in various ways within the social sciences. Given this paper's emphasis on the inter-relatedness of spatiality and materiality in the stabilization of organizational entities such as a research institute, each concept requires some elaboration. Starting with the latter, as pointed out by Gergen (1998), "materialism" can easily be seen from a monism point of view in terms of the viewpoint that "there is only one world, and it is material" (Gergen 1998: 9). The general tendency is, however, to take a dichotomous view – separating the material from the social and then privileging one or the other as in, for example, material determinism or social constructionism. Within organization studies the juxtaposition of materialism and determinism dates back to developments within contingency theory (Leonardi & Barley 2008: 161–163). According to Leonardi and Barley (2008), "the stigma of determinism" may be one reason why materiality has received so little attention within organization studies. However, even in instances where the importance of material practices is acknowledged, such as in the definition of institutional logics (Friedland & Alford 1991, Thornton, Jones & Kury 2005, Thornton & Ocasio 2008, Greenwood et al. 2010), the material practices are largely ignored in the analysis (Tryggestad & Georg 2011).

Through the acknowledgment of experience as a way to perceive the world, however, the material can be seen as part of the social construction. The material as well as the individual consciousness can be investigated as social constructions (Latour & Woolgar 1979, Gergen 1998). Furthermore, within organization studies, scholars focusing on technology development and the use of new technologies have pointed to the constitutive entanglement of the social and the material (Orlikowski 2007). Such a view equips researchers with the necessary tools for investigating the relations between socio-material constructs (Orlikowski 1992, Leonardi & Barley 2008).

The issue of spatiality has been studied from the perspective of how the construction of space in organizations influences the occurrence of informal interactions. The relationship between the physical environment and

informal interaction was noted long ago in the Hawthorne study; one example of this observation was demonstrated through the moving of six women from their normal work-stations to a smaller test room, where the interaction among the women was seen to change (Roethlisberger & Dickson 1939, Gillespie 1991). In a study observing the social interactions taking place around photocopiers, Fayard and Weeks (2007) found that the space around the machine offered (1) propinquity, as the machine was situated in a small room and so people were brought into contact with others, (2) privacy, as the room was narrow and controllable, and (3) social designation, as it was legitimate for people to spend some time talking to each other. It has to be noted that in these studies, the relationship between work interaction and physical design is not seen to be deterministic; rather, the studies show how social norms and physical conditions have to be designed in order to support these informal interactions.

Exploring the cultural understanding of open office design, Hatch (1990) found how open space limits communication – a result quite contradictory to the belief that communication would be enriched in open office environments. Recently, it has been suggested that open-space office arrangements signal a less formal organizational culture, and in addition, stimulate collaborations and organizational commitment (McElroy & Morrow 2010). Studies in the field of organizational culture have thus contributed to the increasing understanding of materiality in organizations as a social construction.

While cultural studies re-opened the black box of materiality in organizational studies, studies examining the organizing of new technologies such as IT came to explore the issue of place and space. Proponents of IT solutions have, for instance, been likely to argue that IT can act as a substitute for physical meetings, yet studies of the development of financial markets provided insights that ran counter to these claims. The development of IT has contributed to changes in the relationship between organizational work and space, through reducing the numerous workers on the physical shop-floor to a work situation with single workers in sterile computerized monitor rooms (Zuboff 1988). Still, personal meetings continue to be crucial to organizing, and examples of this can be found in studies of financial markets, which are nowadays "appresented" by a computer screen (Knorr Cetina & Bruegger 2000). In practical terms this means that financial work can take place wherever: regardless of geographical setting, traders and analysts will be as close – or as distant – to the financial markets. Yet, as shown by Renemark (2007), financial workers prefer to be in the vicinity of financial markets; the urge for closeness is based on the understanding that their work not only includes computerized actions, but also meetings with other analysts and funders. Part of the explanation given is that the digital era still requires "social connectivity" (Sassen 2001, 2005) as a compliment to technical connectivity;

even if trading is done electronically, people need to meet and uphold their personal networks in order to be able to interpret information provided on the screen (Sassen 2001, 2005; Renemark 2007); indeed, the concentration of financial markets in or around large cities enables people to meet. In a similar vein, Thrift (1994) argued that electronic communication in financial markets is merely a complement to personal meetings: cultures in financial centres are formed through contacts creating trust among the traders, experts who can interpret the information and develop new products, and electronically-provided information. Furthermore, communication taking place within the major financial markets results in financial centres being centres of representation. This representation means that the major narratives and images depicting the financial market will be produced there. This gives the place a symbolic value, rendering histories and images of financial centres, which will eventually be distributed by mass media (Thrift 1994, Renemark 2007). In this sense, major financial markets and academic milieus are not unlike each other. Although most academics can work anywhere and collaborate with colleagues located in other places via the internet, few would disagree on the importance of proximity and face-to-face interaction. Just like financial work, research is an interactive and collective endeavour that is often hinged on being in the same place at the same time.

As has been suggested, ideas are inscribed into institutions. The transfer of ideas has been studied among scholars in the field of sociology of translations (Callon 1986, Latour 1987, Czarniawska & Joerges 1996). Even if translation bears the connotation of linguistic transfer, sociology of translation has in addition emphasized the transformation and the transference that takes place when an object is transferred to a new setting. When translating a word from one language to another, some of the meaning and content of the word will also change. Translation hereby includes a linguistic element, as well as a geometric element whereby objects move between different contexts and places (Latour 1987). When management ideas travel into new local settings, these ideas need to be materialized into objects and actions in order to be translated. During the transfer, they will be transformed in order to fit into the new local setting (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996). While moving the idea or the thing, it will inevitably be changed and thereby constructed to fit to the new context. Hereby, ideas are not only inscribed into institutions, but also into material artifacts (Joerges & Czarniawska 1998). As stated by Czarniawska (2009: 425):

> … translation is a concept that immediately evokes symbolic associations, while at the same time being stubbornly material: only a thing can be moved from one place to another and from one point in time to another. Ideas must materialize, at least in somebody's head; symbols must be inscribed. A

> practice not stabilized by a technology, albeit a linguistic technology, cannot last; it is bound to be ephemeral. A practice or an institution cannot travel; it must be simplified and abstracted into an idea, or at least approximated in a narrative permitting a vicarious experience, therefore converted into words or images. Neither can words or images travel until they have materialized, until they are embodied or objectified.

The approach provided by the sociology of translation enables us to focus on the process through which ideas are inscribed and translated between different elements. Agencement captures this process and its relational quality, as this approach encapsulates how the materialization of ideas translated into different elements gives the ideas agency and a capacity to act (Raviola and Norbäck, 2013).

The term agencement is a philosophical concept emphasizing connections. Introduced by the French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari (1988), "[a]gencement implies specific connections with other concepts. It is, in fact, the *arrangement* of these *connections* that gives the concepts their sense that exceeds them and of which, transformed, they now form parts" (Phillips 2006: 108, emphasis in the original). Following from this, there is, in Phillips' reading, a connection between the state of affairs and statements made about these, but priority is given to neither of the two, just their connection. It is this relationality that carries into the work of Michel Callon and others (Callon, Millo & Muniesa 2007, Hardie & MacKenzie 2007), who have used it in their analyses of economies and markets. In what follows we explore how the use of this concept can be extended to other domains, in particular to the building of a research institute.

Agencement is, as Phillips (2006) notes, a common French word meaning "arrangement," "fitting" or "affixing." It is, however, often translated as "assemblage." Although this translation may be easier for non-French speakers to pronounce, it does not fully capture the (agentic) meaning of the word. In keeping with Callon's view that it can imply a divide between people and things, i.e. between those who assemble and that being assembled, we prefer the French word. Agencement has "agence" or agency at its root. Agency can be understood as "the capacity to act to give meaning to action" (Callon 2005: 4). This can, however, according to Callon (2005: 4), "neither be contained in a human being nor localized in the institutions, norms, values, and discursive or symbolic systems assumed to produce effects on individuals. Action, including its reflexive dimension that produces meaning, takes place in hybrid collectives comprising human beings as well as material and technical devices, texts, etc." The hybrid collectives are the agencements, and they are "endowed with the capacity of acting in different ways depending on their configuration" (Callon 2007: 320). Reconfiguring

them – and reconfiguring agency – requires various kinds of investments – material, textual, and financial, amongst others.

Although the term "agencement" is used to connote how an array of heterogeneous elements such as people, particular places, papers, pencils and other things enable action, to consider it as "fixed" would miss the agency of both the individual entities *and* their interactive whole, both of which change through interactions. They are, therefore, only temporally stable, provisional arrangements whose elements can co-evolve and/or be attached/detached from one another (and become enrolled in other agencements). Thinking about SCANCOR as an agencement directs attention not only to mundane things such as offices and desks, but also to the situatedness and contingency of its development. Clearly, there can be myriad agencements involved in this, and in what follows we will focus on a few of those involved in developing the infrastructure which enables SCANCOR and Scancorians to act (do research). Moreover, as we shall see, parts of the agencement are changed in order to sustain agency.

METHOD

In what follows we offer some observations on how the research activities at SCANCOR have unfolded over time, and thus provide input into ongoing discussions as to how the building of research institutes can bridge gaps between disciplines and foster collaboration across geographical distances. By no means do we claim to offer the "full story" of how material artifacts shape research institutes such as SCANCOR, as this would hardly be in keeping with the paper's theoretical grounding. However, researching the socio-materiality of different buildings and office spaces is not without its challenges, as it is difficult to untangle the role of the material and the spatial in peoples' everyday usage of SCANCOR. Nevertheless, the changing of office locations is one example of a situation where these roles can be easily analyzed, as this provides an opportunity for considering the concerns, issues and priorities associated with changing places.

In this paper we have focused on what people have said about working at the three physical premises in which SCANCOR has been located – in the Hoover Institution during the 1970s and early 1980s, on the top floor of the CERAS building (1988–2010), and on the ground floor in the CERAS building (2011–). In doing this, we have drawn upon the annual reports (2001–2011) accessible on SCANCOR's web-page as well as other written documents concerning SCANCOR's development and location. We have conducted interviews with a few former visiting scholars as well as with a former board member, Kristian Kreiner, and the directors, James G. March, Woody Powell, and Mitchell Stevens. In addition to these sources, we have

drawn upon our respective experiences as a visiting scholar and as a board member, which as experience-based material draws upon different forms of participant observation. As a visiting scholar, Ulla has both observed and experienced the visiting scholars' everyday usage of the space at SCANCOR, while Susse has many "snap-shot" observations from her many visits to SCANCOR throughout the course of 2003–2011.

SCANCOR – an agencement

To a visitor from Europe, SCANCOR is a place where one can meet other scholars and work on one's research when not attending interesting seminars or enjoying the ambience of the Stanford campus. It provides a space for academic discussions about how to understand organizing, management, institutions, decision-making, uncertainty, and so forth. Situated on "the farm" – the local expression for the 6000-acre fields of Stanford University – the surroundings have a distinctive appearance. Many find Stanford's sandstone buildings fascinating, if not for their beauty, then for their size, structure and visual dominance. Whether old, newly built, sponsored by and named after a famous person, or just rebuilt in order to better stand the threat of earthquakes, the characteristic signature of each building contributes to "the farm's" style, where money and competing interests are inscribed into the buildings, giving Stanford a distinct visual identity vis-à-vis its surrounding communities.

In this environment, SCANCOR was formally established with a "charter" in 1988, but this does not mark SCANCOR's beginnings, which go back a number of years. Just how many is difficult to say, because as with many other research institutes it is difficult to establish a precise starting point. One way of highlighting SCANCOR's beginnings and development is, however, to look at the space where what was to become SCANCOR was first located.

Rooms for visiting friends in the Hoover Institution

There are a number of landmarks on Stanford's campus, one of which is the 285 foot-high Hoover Tower. Completed in 1941 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the university, the Tower contains the library collections of former president Herbert Hoover and his wife, both former Stanford students. It was in the vicinity of this tower that Jim March had his office during the 1970s and the 1980s. "His office" may bring connotations of having one room and maybe a room for an assistant; this was, however, not the case. Jim March's "office" included a room for Jim, one for his assistants and seven or eight additional offices for guests whom he chose to invite.

It is this space that could be described as SCANCOR's embryo. On the SCANCOR webpage, the founding story is told accordingly:

> In 1968–69, two young scholars from Scandinavia, Johan P. Olsen from the University of Bergen and Søren Christensen from the Copenhagen Business School, visited James G. March at the University of California, Irvine because of their interest in organization theory. Not long after their one-year visit, Jim March moved to Stanford University. But before taking up residence at Stanford in 1971, he arranged to spend six months in Bergen and six months in Copenhagen. This established relationship marked the beginning of a lasting interest in organization theory among a large number of Nordic scholars. Accordingly, several conferences and workshops were organized throughout the 1970s, and organization theories were spread to all corners of the Nordic countries.
>
> March also invited young researchers to Stanford as visiting scholars. Olsen and Christensen continued to visit Stanford, and from the early 1980s also Guje Sevón, from the Swedish School of Economics in Helsinki, and Nils Brunsson, from the Stockholm School of Economics, visited on an almost annual basis.
>
> *(http://www.scancor.org/about-scancor/history-and-founding-institutions/)*

During this period, a number of collaborative research efforts were published. Jim March and Johan P. Olsen collaborated on work such as "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice" (with Michael Cohen), published in 1972. This article served as a source of inspiration and set the scene for further collaboration between March, Cohen and Olsen as well as a number other Scandinavians (Søren Christensen, Harald Enderud, Kristian Kreiner, Kåre Rommetveit and Per Stava to name a few) as well as Stephen Weiner. The fruit of their collaboration materialized in 1973 as a book manuscript in which they continued to explore ambiguity, choice, decision making and the institutional setting of organizations. It took a while to get the book, *Ambiguity and Choice*, published, but it nevertheless marked a knitting-together of Scandinavian and Stanford scholars that would have far-reaching effects. Another example is "Behavioral perspectives on theories of the firm" (1988) by Jim March and Guje Sevón, or the volume *Organizing organizations* (1998) edited by Nils Brunsson, Johan P. Olsen and Jim March. These collaborations grew not only out of events taking place at Stanford, but also from conferences and seminars organized throughout Scandinavia, and the regular exchange of ideas between scholars from the US and Scandinavia, who met regularly during this period (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009).

When SCANCOR formally opened in March 1989, Jim no longer had his office close to the Hoover Tower. A few years prior to SCANCOR's opening he had been asked to leave this location as a result of a political controversy at Stanford. In the interim, Jim's visitors were placed in one of his many offices around campus. Lunches and seminars were what tied people together, and these were the humble beginnings of what were to become institutions (here understood according to the Jeppersson (1991: 145) definition: "institution is a social order or pattern that has attained a certain state or property") within the research institute – Jim's "Monday or Friday munches" and the seminar series. Without the facilities in the Hoover Institution, it was clear that new offices had to be found somewhere.

Life on the top floor of the CERAS Building

In trying to find a new home for what was to become SCANCOR there were several options, given Jim's ties to Stanford University's School of Education (SUSE), the Business School and the Political Science and Sociology departments. After careful consideration, Jim decided that the SUSE would be a good place to house SCANCOR; less contentious than the other places, they also had space available on the 4th floor of the CERAS building, a five-story, modernistic atrium building designed in the 1970s.

Located on the top floor of CERAS, with glass walls opening out to the atrium and daylight streaming in, SCANCOR's reception was a welcoming place. It had a distinctive Scandinavian feel to it, not only because the reception desk and the meeting room furniture were all "Scandinavian design," but also because the Scandinavian maps and flags hanging on so many of the office walls left no doubt as to which countries were involved in this initiative – Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark (see Kreiner, this issue).

SCANCOR's office space included a big reception area; a seminar room for use by the seminar series, among others; four offices for visiting scholars, each with two desks; an office for the formally-appointed director; and a small depot for office supplies, a copier, two printers and an asthmatic coffee machine. Having a desk in this place was seen by many as a sign of seniority and status. Not only did these offices have a spectacular view of the San José Mountains, the visitors could also, if they wanted to, close the door to "their" office. The office was, of course, only "theirs" in a limited sense – they had to share it with another visiting scholar. The visiting scholars, who were not senior enough to get an office space, had to make do in other ways: by either working at home, using one of Stanford's many libraries, using the seminar room as an open space office when there were no seminars, and/or using the office depot as their workplace under conditions that would be illegal according to Scandinavian occupational health and safety standards

because of a sputtering coffee machine, o-zone emissions from the copier and printers, and the lack of windows.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to assess what affect these presumably more hybrid workspaces had on the visiting scholars who "floated" around campus and SCANCOR's office space. Judging from their reports, this lack of space may have been a source of irritation for some, but on a whole it was not much of a concern, presumably because of all the many exciting things happening on the "Farm." The scholars appear to have found ways of "making do." Even though many of these "floating" visitors presumably would have liked a fixed and stable workplace, it is likely that the role and significance of having an office had as much to do with what other resources and development opportunities the scholars could see and mobilize. This was to a large extent made possible by one small, but very important thing – a Stanford (guest) ID, issued to the visiting scholars upon arrival. With this in hand, the visiting scholars could circumvent all the formal "barriers of entry" and access Stanford's multifarious facilities.

The 4th floor of the CERAS Building was to be SCANCOR's "home" for a little more than twenty years. Needless to say, a lot happened in the course of those years, and we can only highlight a few things pertaining to the continued formalization of SCANCOR and the research activities taking place in and around SCANCOR.

Continued formalization

Jim stepped down as director in 1999 as did all the founding board members (Nils Brunsson, Søren Christensen, J.P. Olsen and Guye Sévon). Walter W. Powell (Woody) was appointed as the new director, a position he would hold for twelve years until 2010. Shortly thereafter, the new Board, consisting of a representative from each of the founding countries (Kari Lilja, Per Lægreid, Kristian Kreiner and Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson) began developing documents regarding board member succession, the division of labor between the board and director, and other facets of SCANCOR's governance structure. This included the uptake in 2001 of a new member country, Iceland, and the affiliation of a non-Scandinavian member university, the University of Mannheim, thus geographically extending the bounds of SCANCOR's sphere of interests and influence to places other than Scandinavia. Later, SCANCOR's geographical reach was broadened even further with the affiliation of a number of other European universities. As SCANCOR's geographical "reach" grew so did peoples' interest in visiting SCANCOR, leading to the creation of selection committees and procedures in each of the Scandinavian countries and in the affiliated member universities so as to assist in assessing and prioritizing the incoming applications. The results of these applications were compiled in spreadsheets that Woody could use for "set-

ting" the next team of visiting scholars, in order to create a suitable match, as well as diversity of research interests, seniority, gender and nationality amongst those visiting SCANCOR.

SCANCOR was described in the first formal Annual Report[1] (2001: 1–2; our emphasis) as providing: "young scholars, primarily from Scandinavia, with an opportunity to study and to conduct research in the truly international research community at Stanford University. It provides an *infrastructure* for more seasoned researchers to maintain networks of collaboration. It provides a *venue* for academic meetings, seminars and conferences with attendance from many universities and from many countries. SCANCOR functions primarily as a '*research hotel*.' In allocating desks we continue to give priority to senior researchers, and yet Ph.D. students continue to outnumber senior researchers and visitors." The goal was, however, to become a "*center* of excellence" that could collaborate with similar centers. SCANCOR was a place that provided office space for visiting scholars, from which they could further explore what Stanford University had to offer. With this formalization, SCANCOR was able to respond to other changes in the environment, such as new immigration policies in the USA, and changing funding conditions in Scandinavia. Both of these would demand more administrative work to be conducted within and "around" SCANCOR.

In 2008 a post-doc program was added to SCANCOR's growing repertoire of activities. Based on additional funding from each of the Scandinavian member countries, this program provided the post-docs (one from each of the member countries) with the opportunity to conduct research in close collaboration with Stanford faculty. "The goal of the program is to foster close interaction between a new generation of Scandinavian scholars and faculty at Stanford and the wider North American intellectual community" (Annual Report 2012: 92). This, too, called for the introduction of a new set of application and selection procedures, adding to SCANCOR's formal "grounding."

Research activities

Apart from providing many visiting scholars with a place to work, SCANCOR also involved other types of research activities, notably seminars and conferences. Seminars have presumably always been part and parcel of SCANCOR, but it was not until 2002 that they were formalized as "the SCANCOR Seminar Series." The aim was to create a seminar series that could continue to attract organizational scholars at Stanford and strengthen SCANCOR's position as a facilitator of research activities not just amongst Scandinavians and Stanford faculty but also other US researchers, invited in as guest speakers, and organizational scholars with similar research interests

and approaches at European universities – researchers who, in SCANCOR parlance, have come to be known as "Southern Scandinavians."

SCANCOR has hosted and funded a number of workshops and conferences over the years, the topics of which covered a lot of ground (see appendix 1) and marked areas of collaborative research amongst both Northern and Southern Scandinavians and a number of US scholars. Many of these workshops and conferences resulted in joint publications: scholars in and around SCANCOR were involved in conferences that led to the publication of *The Institutional Construction of Organization – International and Longitudinal Studies* (1995) and a special issue on "Actions and institutions" in ABS in 1997 (Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen 2009).

The 10th and 20th anniversary conferences (in 1998 and 2008) are probably the strongest markers of SCANCOR's consolidation as an organizational entity. The list of invited speakers, the number of participants and the diversity of topics presented at each conference bear witness to changing research agendas. Key topics at the 10th anniversary included, for instance, talks such as "Research on Organizations: Hopes for the Past and Lessons from the Future" by Jim March; "On the Absence of Plot in Organization Studies" by Barbara Czarniawska; "The New European Experiment in Political Organization" by J.P. Olsen; "Bringing work back in" by Steve Barley; and "A World of Standards: Organizations and Standardization" by Nils Brunsson; as well as a host of other issues regarding social constructionism, bounded rationality, organizational culture, and inter-organizational interaction. The 20th anniversary had a different format with no keynote presentations but many more concurrent sessions, addressing such themes as new directions in institutional theory; entrepreneurship; governance, accountability and responsibility; structures and dynamics of innovation networks; comparative capitalisms; university governance and transnational rule-making: actors, logics, processes. Not only was the number of invited speakers far greater at the 20th anniversary than at the 10th, but they also included far more US scholars from other universities than Stanford, thus, extending SCANCOR's "reach" once again.

Although organization studies research continues to figure prominently amongst Scancorians, the theoretical domains of economic sociology and organizational economics continue to influence the research activities at SCANCOR. Some scholars, such as Michael Dahl (Aalborg University) and Serden Ozcan (CBS), have established fruitful collaborations with scholars from the Graduate School of Business within the field of organizational ecology, extending SCANCOR's contacts to other parts of Stanford. Moreover, as the bounds of SCANCOR on the 4th floor of the CERAS building were extended to a number of affiliate universities across Europe, this too provided new influences on the research and collaborations taking place during this time. Giuseppi Delmestri, Johannes Kepler University, Austria (then Ph.D. at Bocconi University, Milan, Italy), came to collaborate with

Gili Drori, Stanford, on the institutionalism of university websites, a collaboration which more recently also includes Achim Oberg (University of Mannheim) and Kerstin Sahlin (Uppsala University). Also, there are a number of scholars who met initially at Stanford and later chose to collaborate, as exemplified by this very paper as well as the paper by Gregoire Croidieu, Renate Meyer and Silviya Svejenova in this edition. All of these research activities point to the vitality of SCANCOR in setting research activities into motion, not just in California but in many other places as well.

SCANCOR's offices were re-vamped in 2004 with new bookcases and desks that lived up to Scandinavian ergonomic standards (i.e. allowing the possibility to change one's work position), further accentuating the offices' Scandinavian "look." The spaciousness and unique design of the office space and the relatively high level of activity, compared to other parts of the building, may just have been the qualities that made other people in SUSE aware of the attractiveness of this office space. Space has always been considered to be a scarce resource at Stanford, and the fact that SCANCOR stood out from the rest of the offices in CERAS both in terms of office design and activity level may have in a roundabout way contributed to SCANCOR's being moved to another location when Woody stepped down as SCANCOR's Director in 2010. The change of Directors provided an opportunity for relocating research activities and centers within SUSE.

Life in the lobby

On March 11, 2011, SCANCOR's third director, Mitchell Stevens, opened SCANCOR's new facility in the CERAS building lobby, an office space with a pronounced Scandinavian signature. SCANCOR's new office space has a limited number of dedicated desks for its visitors and a number of drop-in desks, so that the scholars without a dedicated desk no longer have to sit next to copiers, printers and a coffee machine while working. SCANCOR now has full kitchen facilities, a prominent seminar room and a welcoming lobby library, and in addition to these facilities there is also access to a few "satellite offices" situated within SUSE.

With its many walls made of glass, SCANCOR is much more open to people passing by in the lobby, thus making SCANCOR more visible than when it was located on the top floor and, perhaps, also more inviting to "drop by." Although the move to the lobby meant a slight reduction in size, it has nevertheless provided SCANCOR with more space due to the possibility of using the adjoining lobby to temporarily expand SCANCOR's spatial domain. The move to the Lobby in CERAS was, however, a culture shock for some SCANCOR veterans. Gone are the offices in which the scholars could close their doors and "disappear" for a while. The new offices have glass walls and do not offer the same kind of privacy as the old ones did. Even though the front

office is just as welcoming as before, if not more, the back-office layout differs from that of the fourth floor. Much like the meeting room on the fourth floor, the back office serves as an open space for office use, and while there is more available space than in the previous office, it too is more open and susceptible to disruption and lack of privacy, due to people moving through SCANCOR's office area.

For those new to SCANCOR, and thus unaware of what the previous facilities were like, it may be easier to accept this open office setting. Regardless of whether the scholars are SCANCOR veterans or not, the ways in which this organizational space is used is informed not just by the offices' spatial layout but also by the possibilities that the space affords the scholars. Indeed, the new layout does afford the scholars certain possibilities, such as the flexibility to move one's work and/or meeting space out into the lobby, or to engage with colleagues in pleasant surroundings with the use of kitchen facilities. Presumably, for many the prospects of being at Stanford – such as attending seminars and interacting with Stanford faculty as well as SCANCOR scholars – far outweigh whatever grievances many may have in terms of limited space, so they find ways of coping with the challenges of working in an open office setting. However, whether or not the open and more transparent space will encourage (or discourage) interaction and collaboration is an open question, as it depends on the recursive interplay between the spatial, material and social.

DISCUSSION

We have proposed considering SCANCOR as an agencement, and in this brief account of SCANCOR's history we have highlighted the interplay between the social, spatial and material in the gradual formalization and stabilization of SCANCOR. Table 1 provides an overview of this development.

Our account has highlighted that empty offices, as well as trends in research ideas and changes in legal conditions for immigration, all contribute in unpredictable ways to the sustainability of the research institute. In terms of the agencement, letters of invitation, Stanford IDs, flags, furniture, application and selection procedures, annual reports, conferences, lunches and Friday wine all support and sustain SCANCOR. This hybrid collective is not fixed, but reconfigurable as new objects, people, perspectives and places are enrolled and attached to SCANCOR, highlighting the serendipity of building a research institute. In what follows, we elaborate upon the relationship between stabilization, materiality and spatiality. We have separated the discussion into three parts, though in fact they are closely intertwined.

Spatiality	Stabilization into formal research institute	Materialization	Research
Hoover Institution	Informal contacts A continuing flow of visitors No formal records	The Hoover Tower: a symbolic artifact Jim's empty offices	Invitations to friends, developing into lengthy research collaborations Ad hoc Ph.D. workshops
CERAS top floor	Formalized structure: Director and board. Development of Board policies: board membership succession, application and selection procedures, SCANCOR membership/affiliation. The issuing of annual reports Formalization of the SCANCOR Seminar Series Affiliation of other universities outside Scandinavia Changing immigration requirements adding to the paper work at SCANCOR Formalization of Ph.D. programs in Scandinavia, leading to more Ph.D. applications	SCANCOR allows one to get a Stanford ID card and access to Stanford facilities Scandinavian design and furniture; Scandinavian flags materializing identity Offices with status, open-space office in the seminar room, and workspaces dispersed across "the Farm" Friday wine: an institution bridging social and research interests	Jim's lunches: an important place for presenting work in progress. The "institutionalization" of the Ph.D. course "institutions & organizations" repeated eleven times in a variety of locations Establishment of the SCANCOR Post Doc Program Branching out to other domains and research disciplines (e.g. economic sociology, organizational economics). Extending SCANCOR's geographical reach – research collaboration across Scandinavian, US, and European borders
CERAS lobby	Formalization of procedures continues. Development of Alumni networks	Strong sense of "Scandinavian design" remains Glass walls – increased transparency Open office space and the possibility of "satellite offices" (offices rented in other parts of SUSE). Lobby location affords extra space, which may invite people to drop in or may push scholars out into satellite offices in other parts of Stanford	Conference to honor Woody Powell Research projects initiated by alumni

Table 1: Overview of SCANCOR development, 1988 to 2013.

Formalizing and sustaining SCANCOR

In its first 25 years SCANCOR has evolved from being based on informal ties to having a coherent organizational structure supported through a host of things, e.g. an organizational charter, web pages, the official opening of new SCANCOR offices, documents describing the governance structure, as well as agreements regarding membership fees and how many non-Scandinavian countries that can be affiliated to SCANCOR at any one moment in time. In their own way, each of these developments helps to stabilize SCANCOR as an entity, and this gradual institutionalization of formal organizational structures (Meyer & Rowan 1977, DiMaggio & Powell 1983, Hoffman 1999) has also enabled SCANCOR to formally communicate with other organizations (Lanzara 1983). SCANCOR has a number of the characteristics that one would expect from a "normal" organization, e.g. membership rules, administrative routines in connection with processing the scholars' applications, etc. What was once accomplished by an invitation letter from Jim March to a relatively limited number of scholars is now possible for a wider community of scholars, based on an extended application process entailing the submission of motivated applications, selection procedures in the applicant's home country, a final selection process at SCANCOR and reporting processes. Even though this formalization is associated with a growing number of scholars' interests in SCANCOR as a place to visit, some connected to SCANCOR still talk of the possibility of being invited by the director to stay at SCANCOR and its surroundings at Stanford with "just" a letter of invitation.

The gradual stabilization of SCANCOR as a "formal" organization has required the commitment of many people to find a place where the visiting scholars could meet and work, secure funding, import Scandinavian office furniture, etc., but the administrative routines evolving in response to the growing interest among Scandinavian and European scholars in visiting the place have further worked to stabilize it, as have the immigration documents that require visiting scholars to state with which organization they will be affiliated. The social and the material are constitutively entangled (Orlikowski 2010) in creating SCANCOR. As the visitors coming to SCANCOR interact with Jim, Woody, Mitchell, Stanford scholars and other visitors in conversations, writing and in organizing seminars, conferences and social events, these actions leave traces in the form of fond memories, articles, books and applications, which can circulate, draw attention to SCANCOR and add to SCANCOR's reputation as quite a place. Through this, SCANCOR is able to achieve further stability and sustainability.

Collaborations and serendipity

At times, visiting scholars have come only to spend time on their own work, collaborating less with other colleagues from Stanford, Europe or Scandinavia. On other occasions, the interactions amongst scholars have been more intense and fruitful. The serendipity of SCANCOR lies in the ways in which the interactions between the people and the place unfold. Nothing is given, and what SCANCOR becomes is the temporally emergent outcome of these interactions. This is why coming to SCANCOR can be highly enriching for some scholars, while others may find their stay less fruitful. Some people come to SCANCOR with an individualistic and extremely focused agenda, and are perhaps not particularly inclined towards collaboration, while others are more externally oriented. Even though SCANCOR tries to encourage collaborations between those from Stanford, Scandinavia and rest of Europe, the individualistic approaches of both US and SCANCOR scholars can make this difficult.

One could then question, what is the point of being at SCANCOR, if it is only to do research on one's own? This question might be answered, in part, by acknowledging the capacity of the place. Even if working individualistically, SCANCOR and Stanford have a capacity to act through the materiality of the libraries, seminar rooms and other venues for possible interaction and gaining new insights. Being at Stanford provides opportunities to sit in on seminars, which may be influential on one's research work. If this work is published and shared, it will contribute to the dissemination of research ideas, which originate from mixed backgrounds in different times and places. As a result, inspiration gained from visiting SCANCOR may influence the research community in ways less obvious than through more overt forms of collaboration. SCANCOR has a capacity to act on people's research, regardless of whether they work individually or collaborate. In addition to this, its influence may continue even after people have left "the Farm," e.g. when they meet up afterwards and start new collaborations back at home (as shown in this special issue).

Whether during scholars' visits to SCANCOR and/or afterwards, still they carry with them new and evolving ideas, some of which they further develop into recognizable forms of scholarly activity such as journal articles and books. Much like a carpenter, the scholars are the ones who fashion, shape or make something new by "the variable undulations and torsions of the fibres" (Deleuze & Guattari (1988) in Ingold 2010: 92); the fibers in our case would be the ideas or intellectual impulses existing in and around SCANCOR.

Place, offices and materiality

Although it is difficult to say precisely when SCANCOR began to take form as a place (and for many as *the* place) to visit, it is clear that what started out with just a few scholarly friends visiting Jim March has evolved into large numbers of people labeled as visiting scholars. Over the years, the prospect of being part of the huge intellectual community at Stanford University and in Silicon Valley became one of SCANCOR's strong attracting features, a feature which can be compared to that which attracts bankers to the heart of the financial district (Thrift 1994, Sassen 2001 and 2005, Renemark 2007).

The development of information technology has enabled the establishment of virtual research communities. At present, SCANCOR upholds its virtual presence through its webpage and the alumni network, as well as a Facebook community. What impact this virtual presence will have for or on the SCANCOR community remains to be seen. Yet we would argue that all of this is possible because SCANCOR as an agencement provides opportunities for scholars to meet inside and outside, as well as prior to and after, a visit at Stanford. Following Sassen (2001, 2005), the technical connectivity enabled through IT still requires social connectivity. People spending time at SCANCOR have the opportunity to meet, uphold social networks, and most importantly, pursue ongoing research in Scandinavia and Europe as well as at Stanford. This social and technical connectivity requires a place in which things can happen, and here SCANCOR has served as an important point of entry. Had SCANCOR just been a virtual research community, it is likely that it would attract less attention – it would not allow people to (physically) visit "the Farm" or Silicon Valley. Hence, SCANCOR's survival as a research institute has also been dependent upon materiality, in the sense of having a place, and in its offering of access and office space.

The capacity of the offices to act has changed over time. At first it was the empty offices acting, by providing opportunities for visiting scholars. Following this, the period when SCANCOR held no specific place led to the institutionalization of lunches and seminar series. The lack of office space combined with the prospect of developing something that could help bridge Scandinavian and US organizational research, and the attractiveness of visiting "the Farm" for Scandinavians prompted a reconfiguration of SCANCOR. On the top floor of the CERAS building, offices came to act in new ways, offering status and privacy to people residing in them. For people with no offices, SCANCOR afforded them the possibility of finding and creating workspace in places that might not have otherwise been considered. Hence, what counts as office(space)s is produced through the scholars' interactions with their material surroundings. What counts is a temporary achievement, and it is subject to re-interpretation and re-configuration as the people and things making up the hybrid collective of SCANCOR changes.

The materiality of buildings and place brings in a capacity to do research, both at Stanford, and also beyond Stanford as when coming home with new inspiration and ideas. The capacity of the place to act works through collaborations as well as through individualistic research efforts; it affords certain possibilities, and it is up to the individual to see these as opportunities or limits. An example of the latter is the notion of not having an office: for some it is no problem at all, while others get a feeling of being rootless, hence preferring to stay at home in Menlo Park (or wherever they happen to live). They hereby miss out on the capacity of SCANCOR to act, and consequently on the flow of ideas and discussions permeating the place.

As has been pointed out by Berg and Kreiner (1990), buildings can be seen as symbols, and what we read into them is socially constructed. In this paper, we have read materialization, opportunities for collaboration, and the dispersion of ideas into the buildings and the place of SCANCOR. Every place creates a certain uniqueness, which is socially constructed by people attending the place. If people have memories related to the place, the place will still have the capacity to act even once they have left the place itself. Other people may come to SCANCOR and Stanford with new ideas, hereby sustaining the serendipity of opportunities for research and collaboration. As long as the buildings stand there, as long as Stanford University provides research activities, and as long as SCANCOR upholds a formal venue with seminars, wine receptions, ID cards and offices, people will be able to meet there and share ideas. Through this agencement of people, place and ideas, research production continues and ideas can continue to travel. This agencement has given SCANCOR a reputation that is so strong that it continues to attract Scandinavians, as well as Europeans, all of whom have the possibility to sustain it.

CONCLUSIONS

Seen through the lens of agencement, SCANCOR has become a distinct entity with a board of directors, visiting scholars, a few formal rules, office space, a website, and more. However, the boundaries of SCANCOR are also quite blurred, as the number of visiting scholars, as well as where they come from and the length of their stay, varies, and the outcomes of their work circulate globally. The spatial and material instantiation of SCANCOR has afforded – and continues to afford – the visiting scholars different possibilities for action and interaction, but without determining the outcome. SCANCOR's capacity to act is, however, conditioned by changes in its institutional surroundings, e.g. in the US government's tightening of visa-procedures, Stanford University's administrative procedures and in the Scandinavian universities increased emphasis on formalized Ph.D. programs, publication

and internationalization. Factors such as these also play a part in "forcing" changes in the agencement so as to ensure its sustainability.

Although the creation of SCANCOR could not have happened without many institutional entrepreneurs (Czarniawska, 2009) at Stanford to secure political acceptance and negotiate office space, as well as those in the Nordic countries who secured funding, SCANCOR is also defined by the socio-material associations that make it an interesting place. Apart from the obvious precariousness of securing funding, which plagues research institutes without permanent endowments, SCANCOR's development is serendipitous, and still subject to a certain vulnerability. This is related to the issues of having to compete for space on foreign ground, transnational governance, the waxing and waning of scholars, and the eventual happenstance of scholars' interactions.

As an agencement, SCANCOR changes and yet it stays stable. It is constantly being made and re-made through the transition of place, people and perspectives. The place will undergo constant change, through relocation or the mere updating of furniture; people will come and go, and, importantly, take opportunities for collaboration back home. Some of these will be prosperous, acting over time and bringing in new people. As long as SCANCOR embraces new research ideas, provides spaces for development and interaction, and has Scandinavians moving in and out, its serendipity is likely to be sustained.

NOTES

1 There are to our knowledge no formalized and publically available accounts from the first decade of SCANCOR's existence (1989–2001).
2 From this listing it could appear as if there were no SCANCOR conferences in the time period 1990–97, but we have no documentation as to whether or not this was the case. No SCANCOR conferences were held in 2008–2012. This is documented in the respective annual reports from that time period.
3 There is no documentation of Ph.D. courses in the years 1991–2002.

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the question of what it takes to build a research institute. This is exemplified by the development of the Scandinavian Consortium for Organizational Research (SCANCOR). SCANCOR is conceptualized as an "agencement", that is to say, as a hybrid collective of people, perspectives, place and material devices that together have a capacity to act. We focus on three spatial domains of particular importance for building and stabilizing, both figuratively and literally, SCANCOR. Over time SCANCOR has morphed from a handful of people tied together through mutual intellectual interests and letters of invitation to visit James G. March to a formal entity with an organizational charter, web page, membership and payment rules, a distinct visual presence and a growing number of people labeled visiting scholars. Although the interweaving of ideas, spatiality, materiality and action SCANCOR has stabilized as a research entity well worth visiting, it is vulnerable in the sense that its attractiveness depends on a continued flow of visiting scholars who bring and develop new ideas, and then take these ideas back home. Even though the place allows for a gentle programming of

scholarly interaction and collaboration, the ways in which these unfold are serendipitous.

ABSTRACT

I den här uppsatsen undersöker vi vad som krävs för att bygga ett forskningsinstitut. Forskningsinstitut exemplifieras här av det Skandinaviska konsortiet för organisationsforskning, SCANCOR. Vi föreslår här att SCANCOR kan förstås som ett "agencement", det vill säga en enhet som består av människor och materiella artefakter tillsammans har en kapacitet att handla. I uppsatsen fokuserar vi på tre rumsliga domäner som är speciellt viktiga för att bildligt och bokstavligt bygga – stabilisera – SCANCOR. Över tiden har SCANCOR utvecklats från en handfull personer som var knutna tillsammans genom gemensamma forskningsintressen och inbjudningsbrev från James G. March, till en formell entitet med organisatoriska stadgar, websida, medlemskap och betalningsregler, en distinkt visuell presentation, och ett växande antal personer som besöker institutet under titeln gästforskare. Även om sammankopplingen mellan idéer, spatialitet, materialitet och handlingar tillsammans har bidragit till att göra SCANCOR till en forskningmiljö som är väl värd att besöka, är det samtidigt ett sårbart institut i den meningen att dess attraktivitet är beroende av ett konstant flöde av gästforskare som kommer med idéer, utvecklar dem och även tar med sig dessa idéer hem. Även om platsen tillåter en försiktig styrning av forskares interaktion och samarbete, är det ändå tillfälligheter som bidrar till hur dessa interaktioner och samarbeten utvecklas.

AUTHOR PRESENTATION

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APPENDIX 1:

Table 1. SCANCOR conferences 1989–2010
SCANCOR conferences

Year	Contact/Organizer	Topic	Location
1989	Kari Lilja	Human Resources Workshop: innovation through Research? With Margarete Grieco, University of Oxford and Richard Whipp, University of Warwick	Stanford University
1989	Risto Tainio	Workshop on the Management of Technology and Innovation with Robert Burgelman, Stanford University	Stanford University
1989	Helge Larsen, U of Tromsø	The Third Tromsø Seminar on Organization and Leadership, Conference theme: A Crisis of the Welfare State Model?	University of Tromsø, Norway
1997[2]	Nils Brunsson	SCANCOR Conference on Standardization	Arild, Sweden
1998	Jim March	SCANCOR 10th year anniversary conference: "Samples of the Future"	Stanford University
1999	Lars Engwall and Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson, Uppsala University, Sweden	Workshop on Carriers of Management Knowledge	Stanford University
1999	Mie Augier, Jim March, and Kristian Kreiner	Conference on The Roots and Branches of Organizational Economics	Stanford University
2000	Tom Christensen and Per Laegreid	Workshop on Transforming New Public Management	Stanford University
2000	Mie Augier, Richard Swedberg and Kristian Kreiner	Workshop on Crossing Boundaries: Economics, Sociology and Organization Theory	Stanford University
2001	Bengt Jacobsen, Per Lægrid & Ove K. Petersen	Transnational Regulation & the Transformation of States	Stanford University

2002	Former students of Dick Scott; sponsored by Center for Work, Technology & Organizations and the Dept of Sociology, Stanford University; SCANCOR and CBS	"GREAT SCOTT" CONFERENCE – Conference for Dick Scott	Stanford University
2003	Ivar Bleiklie and Woody Powell	SCANCOR Conference Universities and the Production of Knowledge	Stanford University
2004	Woody Powell in collaboration with Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson, Finn Borum and Huggy Rao	SCANCOR Institutions Conference	Stanford University
2004	Woody Powell	Berkeley-Stanford-Michigan Mini-Conference on University Industry Interfaces	Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research
2004	Doug Guthrie and Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson	SCANCOR/SSRC Conference: Corporate Social Presponsibility in the Era of the Transforming Welfare State	Florence, Italy, at the New York University site of La Pietra
2005	Tom Christensen, U of Oslo and Per Lægreid, U of Bergen	AUTOMAZATION OF THE STATE	Stanford University
2005	Peter Maskell, CBS	PROXIMITY & KNOWLEDGE CREATION	Stanford University
2008	Peter Maskell, CBS	SCANCOR/DRUID Workshop on Distributed Innovation	Stanford University
2008	Woody Powell	SCANCOR 20TH Anniversary Conference: Kindred spirits – developing ideas to catch and release	Stanford University

Ph.D. courses

1989	Prof. Tom Colbjornsen, LOS Centret	Ph.D. Seminar on Organization Theory	LOS Centret, University of Bergen
1989	Risto Tainio	Doctoral course on Strategy and Management of Change, with Paul Shrivastava, New York University	Helsinki School of Economics
1989	Kari Lilja	Intensive course on Qualitative Methodology with Renata Tesch, Santa Barbara, CA	Helsinki
1990	Prof. Tom Colbjornsen, LOS Centret	Ph.D. Seminar on Organization Theory	LOS Centret, University of Bergen
2002[3]	Rolf Wolff and Woody Powell	Ph.D. course: Approaches to the Study of Markets and institutions	Stanford University
2003	Rolf Wolff and Woody Powell	Ph.D. course: Approaches to the Study of Markets and institutions	Stanford University
2004	Woody Powell and Rolf Wolff	Ph.D. course: Approaches to the Study of Markets and institutions	Gothenburg University
2005	Woody Powell and Susse Georg	Ph.D. course: Institutions and Networks	Copenhagen Business School
2006	Woody Powell and Raimo Lovio	Ph.D. course: Organizations and institutions	Helsinki School of Economics
2007	Woody Powell and Susse Georg	Ph.D. course: Organizations and institutions	Copenhagen Business School
2008	Woody Powell and Joanna Mair	Ph.D. course: Organizations and institutions	IESE Business School, Barcelona
2010	Woody Powell and Liisa Valikangas	Ph.D. course: Workshop on Institutional Analysis	Helsinki School of Economics
2011	Woody Powell and Achim Oberg	Ph.D. course: New Developments in Institutional Analysis	The University of Mannheim
2012	Woody Powell and Renate Meyer	Ph.D. course: Workshop on Institutional Analysis	The Vienna University of Economics and Business
2014	Woody Powell and Gili Drori	Ph.D. course: Workshop on Institutional Theory	Tel Aviv University

Nordiske Organisasjonsstudier 15 (4): 51–54

The Space of SCANCOR

Rom for SCANCOR

MITCHELL L. STEVENS

Nøkelord: rom, arbeid, forskning, SCANCOR
Keywords: space, work, scholarship, SCANCOR

My first job as the incoming Director of SCANCOR in 2009 was to secure new physical space for the organization at Stanford. My dean had other plans for the commodious offices on the top floor of the CERAS building that SCANCOR had happily occupied during its first twenty years. My dean had offered SCANCOR a new renovation in the basement of Cubberley Hall. That option was a non-starter. I was informed by several members of the SCANCOR board that it is illegal in at least one Scandinavian country to oblige people to work in rooms without operable windows. Thus began my first experience with the blood sport of academic real estate and true lessons in the social organization of academic work.

Physical space is a particularly obdurate capital resource of scholarly enterprise. One has to sit or stand somewhere while engaged in the work of writing or reading or listening or conversing that accumulates into formal academic knowledge, and two people cannot sit or stand in the exact same physical space. Of course this engaged sitting or standing can be done in all sorts of places: in cafes, on airplanes, or in bed. I write this while sitting on a bed in Helsinki. A different kind of engaged sitting will happen this evening, in a restaurant, over dinner with a group of SCANCOR alumni. Yet while it can and does occur anywhere, a good deal of this engaged sitting and standing happens on the campuses of great universities, and while the importance of these physical locations to the scholarly production process is still largely mysterious, my work with SCANCOR has taught me at least a few lessons on the matter.

Physical space on a campus is important, first, because it provides a context for the routine definition of academic work as *work*. The phenomenology of this should not be discounted. *Going to work* is a deeply institution-

alized feature of life in modern societies. To go to work means to psychically separate from other things one might wisely do, like tend to children or housework or the maintenance of one's own physical body. A dedicated room or desk or seat of one's own, specifically designated for the purpose of working, goes a long way in generating the sustained attention that good academic work requires – all the more so if that physical place carries the resonance of others engaged in parallel pursuits. I can work pretty much anyplace, and often do, but working in a particularly academic place, at least some of the time, alongside and in the tradition of many others who have similarly worked, I am psychologically reminded of the reasonableness and seriousness of what I am doing.

Physical space on a campus is important, second, because it provides a routine context for ongoing interactions between scholars that are essential to intellectual progress. I am talking partly about the seminars and scheduled social hours that fill academic calendars so quickly, but at least as important are the unscheduled and highly contingent interactions that take place while moving through daily life at a great university. As many observers of urban and classroom life have variably explained, it is the relative richness of these spontaneous interactions with others that make particular places especially lively and intellectually productive.

Physical space on a campus is important, third, because it signals the importance of one's work to a larger academic world. Physical space is a status signal. Where one is provides a powerful marker of who one is, and to whom one can be reasonably compared. This is why academic real estate is a blood sport. There is always more status seeking than there is real estate. There are always "space issues." The fact that these issues have to do with prestige only exaggerates their political implications.

SCANCOR visitors could have gone to work in the basement of Cubberley Hall, and indeed many happily do, in one of the few offices in that location blessed with an operable window. Nevertheless the official address for SCANCOR's enterprise specifies a location sufficiently prominent to elicit pride. That location might also plausibly be called a basement, but I prefer to call it the *lobby level* of CERAS, a modernist building with a light-filled atrium designed by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill to house education research at Stanford. Our new home (note my use of the semantically loaded domestic metaphor) enjoys natural light through several walls of windows, and a layout that encourages spontaneous interaction. It is thoughtfully designed and furnished handsomely. It has talismans of the national origins of our visitors (maps, books, decorative objects). It does not look quite like the rest of the building or the rest of the campus. But it is here, at Stanford, at a temporary remove from the obligations and distractions of the rest of our visitors' lives.

Much has been made, in our peripatetic and digital era, of the de-territorialization of life and work, of how much of the stuff of our existence plays out over wires and in clouds independently of the location of our physical bodies. This de-territorialization is an important but only partial fact of contemporary academic life. We still go to the trouble of traveling to conferences, of squeezing our bodies into ever-smaller airplane seats, only to complain about the quality of many of the papers we officially have traveled so far to hear. We still go to the office and, when we are lucky, go away on sabbatical. We do all of these things because physical co-presence has productive utilities that so far at least cannot be fully replicated through digital media.

By no means do I wish to imply that our physical home at Stanford is either necessary or sufficient for SCANCOR's scholarly enterprise. That enterprise is a truly global phenomenon now, carried in the minds and relationships of our hundreds of alumni worldwide. It will continue in some form with or without a California address. For now, a fortuitous commingling of coincidence, creative thinking and goodwill anchors it in a little corner of the CERAS building. But I see a lot of real estate out there.

ABSTRACT

Physical space is a particularly obdurate capital resource of scholarly enterprise. In this afterword to the article above about the space of SCANCOR, the current director of SCANCOR outlines how he has understood the role of space in the development of SCANCOR. The "de-territorialization of life and work" is an important but only partial fact of contemporary academic life. Physical co-presence still has its productive utilities.

SAMMENDRAG

Det fysiske rom er en særlig bestandig ressurs i akademiske institusjoner. I denne kommentaren til artikkelen ovenfor om betydningen av SCANCOR sin fysiske arkitektur forteller direktøren ved SCANCOR om sitt arbeide med å skape og innrede nye arealer for SCANCOR ved Stanford-universitetet. «De-territorialiseringen» av arbeidet og tilværelsene er et viktig, men stadig bare et av flere aspekter ved dagens akademiske tilværelse. Fysisk tilstedeværelse har fremdeles sin nytte.

AUTHOR PRESENTATION

Mitchell L. Stevens has been Director of SCANCOR since 2011. He is Associate Professor of Education and associated with the Department of Sociology and the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University. He has done research in the fields of higher education and digitalization and among his

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Traveling with Ideas – Encounters between People and Perspectives at SCANCOR

Att resa med idéer – möten mellan människor och perspektiv på SCANCOR

LIISA VÄLIKANGAS AND SCANCOR FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES

Nyckelord: SCANCOR, resa, vetenskapliga sökandet, idéer
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Ideas travel (Said, 1983, Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005). People travel. People travel with ideas, and ideas travel with people. While travelers are many, lasting meeting places are few. SCANCOR, the Scandinavian Consortium for Organizational Research at Stanford University, has been a place for encounters for more than a quarter of a century. The SCANCOR experience has defined the visiting scholar, as per many a testimony. And indeed, the educated person was long considered, by necessity, a traveler, much like the journeyman in the tradition of the guild system.

> Only by constantly changing life's abode one could avoid being taken in by everyday life and becoming a commonplace person; only thus one could educate oneself. (Stagle, 1995: 1345 Kindle location)

This essay is about the traveling visits of a group of SCANCOR friends with a connection to Finland. Some of us were very junior aficionados when the first formative visit to SCANCOR took place; others held senior academic positions. Yet SCANCOR, as illustrated by the testimonies conveyed here, enriched our scholarly horizons. In return, we hope to have contributed to a thriving community of organizational scholars. For us as travelers, the visits are important precisely because they are not permanent residencies. The

temporariness of visiting frees the scholar from many a burden that the pretence of staying would immediately bestow.

The purpose of these remarks is to appreciate this stopping but not staying, together with its prerequisites. How to prepare for the journey? What ideas to travel with? What is the experience like?

The SCANCOR travelers are in good company.

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY OF EXPLORATION

Start with a curious mind. *Pietas* became *curiosita*s as the early humanists redefined pilgrimage as a journey of education (Stagle, 2012). Travel was no longer a religious obligation but an intellectual privilege. It was also a way of life. "Wandering life was a conscious program" (Stagle, 2012:48) – like many highly educated and well paid new nomads[1] of today, the "true travelers" are supposedly purposeful and serious. True travel (*peregrinari*) is contrasted with aimless and useless rambling (*vagary*) (Stagle, 2012). SCANCOR was (and is) the epitome of true travel, yet some – like myself – wandered there somewhat serendipitously. But even for us vagaries, SCANCOR offered the opportunity for immersion in scholarship and challenging dedication, no matter how occasional the arrival.

Some consolation (and inspiration) may be drawn from the archetypical example of a(n almost Finnish?) nomadic scholar with his migrant lifestyle: the proliferate Hungarian mathematician, Paul Erdõs. Erdõs traveled to collaborate, which was a very modern mission. The mathematical ideas he traveled with apparently required company. Declaring his brain to be open, he would come and visit his colleagues to work jointly with mathematical ideas. Erdõs co-wrote more than 1500 papers while trusting his friends to provide nourishment and care. To celebrate the memorable collaboration, an Erdõs number is assigned to specify the closeness of a mathematician's publications to those of Erdõs himself. "One" means a jointly coauthored paper. "Two" means you have written a paper with someone who has written a paper with Erdõs, and so on. (My James G. March number is two.)

Another (reluctant) traveler, Claude Lévi-Strauss, starts his book *Tristes Tropiques* with: "Travel and travellers are two things I loathe – and yet here I am, all set to tell the story of my expeditions" (p. 17). He goes on to explain that fifteen years have passed since he left Brazil, allowing him to clean "the truths that we travel so far to seek" of the troubles, for him the "fungus" of the journey. Perhaps *historia* then became *scientia*. Exploration, claimed Lévi-Strauss, had become a new profession (not just a civilizing Grand Tour for the European upper class male).

Yet it is not always necessary for the person to suffer hardships and the "vain expenditures" of travel. Edward Said in "Traveling Theory" suggested

that "… ideas and theories travel; from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another" (p. 157). He defined intellectual activity as such influence – translation, transference, circulation and commerce – of ideas and theories from one place to another, noting there are impediments related to the processes of representation and institutionalization. It is intriguing to consider how virtual technologies of communication (Skype or Google hangout anyone? Traveling by Google Earth?) are meddling with such circulation of ideas today, catalyzing but also shaping meanings (e.g. Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Could there be a virtual SCANCOR for avatars to frequent, the current management wonders (cf. Stevens & Miller-Idriss, 2009).

The physical aspect may be important though. The famed novel *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel suggests a person can survive a shipwreck in part due to the necessity of having to fight the onboard Bengal tiger. Perhaps travel's elementary challenges also help us come to terms with what is significant in our lives. That is the acknowledged role of travel in human flourishing. Alain de Botton (2004:9) writes:

> If our lives are dominated by a search for happiness, then perhaps few activities reveal as much about the dynamics of this quest – in all its ardour and paradoxes – than our travels. They express, however inarticulately, an understanding of what life might be about, outside of the constraints of work and of the struggle for survival. Yet rarely are they considered to present philosophical problems – that is, issues requiring thought beyond the practical. We are inundated with advice on *where* to travel to, but we hear little of *why* and *how* we should go, even though the art of travel seems naturally to sustain a number of questions neither so simple nor so trivial, and whose study might in modest ways contribute to an understanding of what the Greek philosophers term *endaimonia*, or 'human flourishing'.

What may sustain such an art of travel is a quest for discovery. In Merton and Barber's (2006) account of the origins of the word serendipity, the Princes of Serendip travel, making unexpected discoveries along the way such as the passing by of a blind donkey eating grass on the side of the road that was less green. Travel, according to the inventor of the word serendipity, invites something fabulously termed "accidental sagacity."[2] Travel removes us from our regular surroundings and presents us with opportunities for discovery we would not necessarily notice, or care for, back home. It thus invites accidental or serendipitous observations, but we have to be alert, or perhaps wise or sagacious enough, to take note and understand what we see. Ultimate travel becomes a state of mind (as SCANCOR has also been characterized) that shakes us from our received wisdom and learned tendency not to notice.

"The main characteristic of [that genre] is its openness to reality. The travelers are repeatedly admonished to suspend their judgments, to be open to everything strange and new, to observe and listen rather than to talk" (Stagle, 2012–11–12). A very Finnish characteristic: as a proverb suggests – "talk is silver, listening is gold."

Susan Krieger in *Traveling Blind* (2010) explores the notion of traveling with poor eyesight, in that she is legally blind (but still able to hear). If the whole point of traveling is "seeing," what can it mean to travel "blind"? Still appreciative of light, of the monumentality of a mountain, and one's ability, indeed insistence, to cope with the changing circumstances, is that the affection? The book is a story of coming to terms with the idea, and reality, of blindness as it affects a person, the traveler, seeking to perceive.

To be a scholar may indeed be equivalent to a permit to travel while legally blind. We spend our careers describing something we cannot see directly. Some things we even leave purposefully aside, avoid seeing them. In this to-see-or-not-to-see, we receive important guidance from our fellow travelers. What things should we see and not see in studying organizations? How should we co-opt serendipity? The ideas we have chosen to travel with, to and from SCANCOR, regulate our seeing.

THE IDEAS WE TRAVELED WITH

What ideas have we traveled with? What ideas did we pack in our suitcase for the journey? This is a sampling of scholars, friends and colleagues, connected to Finland who have spent significant time at SCANCOR throughout the past quarter of a century. The sample is skewed toward scholars who were at SCANCOR when I first arrived there in 1994–1995.

Guje Sevón: Someday even a discipline of interest

Guje Sevón, Professor Emerita of Stockholm School of Economics and a former professor of management and organization at Hanken in Helsinki, was one of the founders of SCANCOR and a long-time board member.

> I have two dominant ideas that have followed me over the years, and these ideas have also changed my scholarly focus. Moreover, both ideas took me on intellectual and physical journeys to Stanford University and later to SCANCOR …
>
> My route started in Psychology of Art Perception and ended in Behavioral Decision Theory, which in the coming years became a dominant field for scholars in both Psychology and Organization Theory. On this route I traveled as a follower. I followed the ideas of Jim March and Herbert Simon, which also led me to visit Stanford University for the first time, soon after my dissertation was completed.

… As with all travels between contexts, old ideas meet new ones, and become recontextualized, and as a young doctoral student in the early 1970's the new research environment had that effect on me. I will claim that the Stanford courses in organization theory in the early 1970's trained not only me but also a large amount of other young Nordic scholars of business studies to become students of organizations. (…) I still remember that one of our teachers, James (Jim) March at that time remarked on my disciplinary background as, 'well, maybe someday also psychology will become a discipline of interest for organization studies.'

Intellectual as well as psychological traveling to other places means encounters with new ideas, people and cultural contexts. That became even clearer to me after the first visit to Stanford University. I still remember my surprise when I discovered that marketing theory at that time was not only a prescriptive theory, as we saw it at Hanken, but also a description of how people in California were reasoning when they planned their shopping trips. I thus discovered that social theories, although they are adopted from other cultures and accepted as universal in a way, might strongly reflect an idiosyncratic culture. Social ideas do not become universal theories just because they travel globally.

Thus, my stop at Stanford made me less interested in decision theories and more fascinated by social relationships and processes. This time the reconceptualization led to a change in perspective. I wanted to see how we and our institutions are developed in a social context. My research interest was colored by an idea that social context is of outmost importance to a researcher who wants to understand how people act and institutions are created. It also means that researchers do not differ from other people – they and their ideas are more and more shaped by the professional conditions they live by.

Kari Lilja: History Matters

Kari Lilja is a professor of organization and management at Aalto University School of Business in Helsinki and a former SCANCOR board member.

When I had my sabbatical year at SCANCOR in 1994–1995, I traveled to California with a dream of writing something interesting about the Finnish forest industry companies. They had gone through a consolidation process nationally and acquired forest industry companies elsewhere in Europe. By doing so, they had become dominant players in the paper industry in Europe. How and why was such an outcome possible? In developing a historically sensitive explanatory mechanism for such an outcome, earlier comparative empirical studies on national business systems were extremely useful as well as the workshops of the network of scholars who were doing such studies. I must say that I am still very proud of the chapter in a book

where the explanatory mechanism for the dominance of companies of Finnish origin in the European paper industry was reported (Lilja & Tainio, 1996). Needless to say, being in Silicon Valley and at Stanford University gave relevant benchmarks, which helped to explicate many of the peculiarities in the Finnish history, institutional settings and professional practices. It also gave an early warning signal for me that the cluster based approach on which the Finnish economy has been renewing itself until the first decade of the 21st century could be in danger as it turned out.

Risto Tainio: Exploring the Mystery

Risto Tainio is a professor of organization and management at Aalto University School of Business in Helsinki and a former SCANCOR board member. Risto is also credited with giving SCANCOR its theme song.[3]

I have traveled with the mysteries of management and organizational performance in the post-industrial world. I have traveled with questions – and perhaps ideas for questions? (*LV's remark*) – rather than with answers. Here are some questions that have bothered me for a long time:

Do borders still matter in an increasingly interconnected world? How to deal with a prophecy about a completely new era? What does 'and' mean in 'management and performance'? How to specify processes that produce observable outcomes?

I also wonder why organization theory has not been better at coming to terms with its 'dark side' – the capability to organize criminal networks, for example. Organizing can be used to good ends as well as to ends that are not socially desirable or unequivocally immoral or exploitative. I think more questions should be asked about how we can come to terms with the effectiveness of undesirable or immoral organizations (think of the mafia), and study the shadow that such capabilities throw on the society across and within borders.

Eero Vaara: Discourse in organizations

Eero Vaara is a professor of management and organization at Hanken in Helsinki and permanent Visiting Professor at EMLYON Business School in France.

I guess that I have always been interested in the crucial role of language in organizations, although I have also had other questions on my mind. Nevertheless, this focus has become increasingly clear over time. Whether we see it as discourse, narrative, rhetoric, tropes or frames, I have been fascinated by the performative power of language in organizations in general and in organizational change in particular. That is, language is more than representation or reflection of some kind of reality out there, but it's what

discursive practices or texts imply or 'do' – or what they are made to 'do' – that continues to interest me. I think that this is the quest or journey that characterizes my research efforts.

In several ways my visits to Stanford – first as a doctoral student and then as a more senior scholar – have been a search for theories and methods that would connect with this interest. During my first visit, I learned a lot and was at times puzzled by the difference between the ways Americans and Europeans seemed to approach issues such as language or discourse. To be honest, people at Stanford didn't seem that interested in discourse, but over time I also realized that they used different concepts and methods to study essentially similar phenomena. So while I had learned about discourse or narrative analysis in Helsinki, they were focusing on framing, networks or vocabularies. My second visit involved more building of linkages with institutional theory and topics such as legitimacy and in particular discursive legitimation.

THE SCANCOR EXPERIENCE: WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

Guje Sevón*:* "Already a decade before SCANCOR opened, when I first visited Stanford University, I was struck by the focus on intellectual discussions that existed on campus. It felt like ideas were swarming in the air, and occasionally settled down on me and other scholars like mosquitoes a warm humid summer day. But the experiences also included a dilemma. I became aware of the cultural impact on the choices that researchers make. I recognized the ways researchers from the US extracted and dealt with research ideas and that it was different from many of our Nordic colleagues. The US researchers in social science often concentrated on building general models for the aggregated US organizational behavior, whereas Scandinavian scholars often preferred systematic descriptions of sometimes rather complex idiosyncratic relationships in organizations. However, I also saw how many SCANCOR scholars, myself included, found pleasure in cooperative work with their US counterparts."

Kari Lilja: "The scholarly culture at SCANCOR has always been very pluralistic (LV note: open to multiple academic traditions and welcoming people of different backgrounds, in and out of Scandinavia). By sharing your ideas during lunches, seminars and Friday evening get-togethers you become sensitized to ideas that both complement your own modes of doing research and it also helps you to recognize the wide scope in the professional practice. When making a commitment to a research project there is always a trade-off: should I do something else? That is why it is so important to detect relevant discussion circles to which you can contribute. By making the intellectual layers developed over time at the SCANCOR community transpar-

ent we are better equipped to contribute to the renewal of organizational research. Also in this context 'history matters.'"

Eero Vaara: "SCANCOR is something else! It is a really fantastic combination of Californian and Nordic culture. The theoretical and methodological discussions reflect the great work and ideas of Jim March, Woody Powell and Mitchell Stevens, but at the end of the day a lot depends on the visitors and their interests. Thus, diversity, pluralism – and unpredictability – are what SCANCOR is all about. It's hard to pin down, and this is what is so special and valuable. Stanford, the university, offers a great deal – and usually means different things for different people. And there's more: living in the Bay Area and California is a big part of SCANCOR's attractiveness."

Risto Tainio: "I arrived at SCANCOR with many questions (see above) and with my preliminary answers to them, and I left with new questions, and a critical mindset."

A JUNIOR TRIP

My story is somewhat different. Having completed my Ph.D. degree at the University of Tampere in Finland, I first traveled to SCANCOR in the mid-90s from Keio University in Japan where I had been a visiting scholar. I came in response to an invitation that read something like: "You seem Finnish. Welcome."[4]

I was, if anyone asked, traveling to try and make myself a better person. But really, I was living out the restlessness in me. Curiosity, new ideas and traveling were my drivers. I have always thought of a person, the researcher, as an instrument for gathering the required knowledge, or *doctrina*. The accomplishment of the necessary *virtus* is of course challenging and in many ways impossible (the scholarly discipline is hard to achieve, for me anyway). The increasing separation of the two, the scholar and the knowledge (often lauded as researcher objectivity) seems arbitrary. As in music, the player, the instrument, and the piece, or the score being played, should be an inseparable performance. Early scholars might have agreed:

> This rootedness of the ars apodemica[5] in Renaissance empiricism explains why, till the end of the early modern period, it never clearly made a distinction between travel as a means for the formation of the individual personality and as a means for the gathering of useful knowledge (between 'virtus' and 'doctrina'). (Stagle, 2012–11–12)

As I moved to SCANCOR from Keio University in 1994, I traveled with impressions more than ideas. My mind's suitcase had lingering images of metropolitan Tokyo. Crossing the downtown Shinjuku metro station with tens or hundreds of thousands of other people meant one ceased to experi-

ence one's particle-ness and became a wave, part of a human movement. As I explained this feeling to Okumura-sensei, my mentor and colleague, he suggested that was the beginning of trouble. "That's when you stop feeling like an individual and become Japanese." Well, Gaijin I remained but certainly the experiences of swarming were educational. It was possible to swarm even while asleep as many *sararymen* on the metro demonstrated by never waking up before their station. Those who were more awake rehearsed opera arias or their golf swing in the station while waiting for the train: Never a more private place – no one to disturb.

After the "*So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish*"[6] – the mandatory postcard to my Keio colleagues – I reentered the land of directional wakefulness. Otherwise, driving a car in the traffic of California's Highway 280 would indeed be hazardous. Unless, of course, you follow the leader (the car ahead of you). I had been wondering what makes people follow others (other than self-preservation in traffic) and came up with three reasons (Valikangas & Okumura, 1997): 1. It was in my interest to do so (utility). 2. It was the right thing to do (values). 3. That is just what I do (identity). Little did I realize that I could have saved myself a lot of trouble by considering March and Olsen (1989)! No matter, traveling is about discovering the post-obvious.

Then I wondered about the powers of explanation. Even if we were able to capture the grounds, motivational or rule-based, that make people do things, there seems to be a certain banality to the enterprise. It is as if all life were reduced to being an instrument in someone else's script. Why would beautiful or horrendous acts have other reasons than their potential beauty or horror? Why would not serendipity evoke our intrigue? Why this extraordinary need to find explanations for things that merely happen as if to give us (vagarious) travelers some cause!

Luckily, there is anarchism. Anarchists don't need reasons to act (Scott, 2012). They just do. Long live on-the-road calisthenics with which we can rehearse the future reservoirs for traveling (Valikangas, 2010)!

But I am getting ahead of myself. There were a great many more (and you may think more respectable) ideas to encounter at SCANCOR. Reading a contemporary article (Valikangas, 1996), I am reminded of the power with which these ideas spoke to me and my SCANCOR fellows. Three of the ideas I am particularly possessed by.

First, experimentation is in danger of dying in any successful enterprise (March, 1991). This is an insight that I have cherished. Most business organizations are rather enamored with their success, while it lasts; they are equally surprised at its ending. "Companies are successful until they are not." Pre-warning is futile to the point that one must wonder whether this is a matter of awareness of the danger as much as it is a (total) lack of available corrective behaviors. For example, AT&T, the once powerful American

TELCO allocated a task force to study the impact of "the Internet thing" when the Internet was about to wipe out the whole purpose of AT&T's existence (long distance calling) (see Muller & Valikangas, 2003). Perceived success makes it unnecessary to experiment with anything new or deviant from what worked in the past. There is only one cure: to travel, to avoid the routine! One must constantly experiment with new ways of coping while on the road.

Second, how to learn from the future. This is a favorite pastime: trying to extract foresight from experience and turn it into some kind of personally or institutionally meaningful insight. Learning this way is the best kind of entertainment: it is the near perfect escape from the boredom of now. Even here, traveling helps to encounter a future "that is unevenly distributed" as William Gibson famously put it. Traveling may help us bump into fragments of the future that have not yet arrived at our home turf. No wonder the future-fuzzy Silicon Valley has been the destination of choice. The favorite text for many of us in this regard is of course "Learning from Samples of One of Fewer" (March et al., 1991). I keep reading it to celebrate imagination that finally is given a worthy role in a scholarly quest.

Third, the significance of exploratory patience (Valikangas, 2007). A hard lesson for someone, as you may imagine, who is used to a frequent change of scenery and efficient departures. There is a lot of adventure in the act of leaving, still fully expecting the foggy windmills out there – before the realities of travel inevitably arrive – the late airplanes, the dying of a hundred deaths in non-descript hotels. But I digress. You said exploratory patience?

DETACHMENT

At the end of each journey one must make admissions. We customarily think of ideas as something we can own, control or manipulate (travel with) but perhaps it is the ideas that actually own us. Ideas are feasibly much more powerful than we generally wish to grant. Keynes noted our common enthrallment with a likely defunct economist. Ideas not only potentially use us for their own purposes, they may also possess us. Think of Herman Melville's Captain Ahab and the white whale that he pursued obsessively across the world's seas to the point that he no longer was a free man in charge of his actions. Ideas – our white whales – make us perform on their account. There are no good cures for such imprisonment (except for an occasional glass of champagne in a perspective-building conversation. Thank you, Woody!).

Or, might a jester help (Valikangas & Sevón, 2010:149)?

> Here we wish to introduce one such mechanism that provides a detachment between ideas and humans; the universal institution of a jester. Otto (2001) has documented the existence of court jesters worldwide at different

> historical periods, suggesting the importance of the role played by the king's (or occasionally the queen's) fool. But foolery is not left to the antics of history alone; jestering has relevance even in today's corporate world. Kets de Vries (1990) notes that jester-like roles (and humor more generally) are a 'guardian of reality' against orthodox or biased interpretation … In the late-1990s British Airways even employed a person with a formal job description as the corporate jester (who was previously a senior executive at the firm) to aid corporate change. According to Paul Birch, the appointed jester, he was highly effective as a change agent for the first two years, after which he resigned.

Traveling may be a form of jestering: not only is humor essential for surviving the hardships but traveling exposes us to our own idiosyncrasies as they are contrasted with the local absurdities. Our antics then become ways of making sense of who we are and what we think. We catch a few local ideas and soon release them. Some ideas may insist on staying with us despite our attempts to travel away. The ideas become us. Over time, it seems, we become our ideas, or perhaps jesters of our ideas. Maybe then it is time to let go – but never stop traveling.

This essay is written with gratitude for the traveling companions, the people and the ideas, that have made the SCANCOR journey, still continuing of course, so passionate. We travel with ideas, and sometimes the ideas travel with us, even possess us for a lifetime. Guje Sevón travels to understand the cultural contextuality of our institutions. Kari Lilja seeks to depict how history shapes us and how we shape history. Risto Tainio crosses national borders to understand the local situatedness of being global. Eero Vaara contributes to understanding the role that discourse plays in organizations. There have been many more travelers of course with many more quests. For me, I have sought to delight in and explore the ideas that my travels have serendipitously granted me. Many of those ideas originate at SCANCOR and have become very dear traveling companions.

NOTES

1 See e.g. www.businessweek.com/stories/2007-03-12/the-new-nomadsbusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice

2 Travel has not always been benevolent. Horrendous deeds in human history have been committed, in the name of faraway rulers, with ideas such as racial inferiority or imperial greed. Perhaps much more travel was required to become human and educated– not simply to discover a civilization but become civilized, appreciative of difference not as a source of inferiority but of immense value, so that like Alexander von Humboldt, we may be traveling with a mission to measure the world. Or we may travel following the great explorers, looking for riches or new waterways. We may even be trying to simply record what is out there, the monsters and beauties alike.

3 The SCANCOR song is titled "Pikku Pukki," and it is sung in Finnish as follows:
Pikku pukki kakki kalliolle, kalliolle, huh hei, sen tuuli vei.
Iso pukki kakki kalliolle, kalliolle, huh hei se siihen jäi.
4 I am grateful to my colleagues in Finland for supporting the invitation at the time.
5 *Ars apodemica* is travel advice literature that dates from the mid-16th and the late 18th century as travel became much more commonplace. There was an effort to create more systematic information to help the traveler. See e.g. http://dho.ie/drapier/node/45.
6 *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Galaxy*, in reference to all the superb sashimi so fresh that it's alive.

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ABSTRAKT
Detta är en uppsats för att hedra SCANCOR, utifrån perspektiven av fem finnska forskare och frekventa besökare, över ett kvarts sekel. Vilka idéer tog vi med oss på resan? Vilka erfarenheter har gjorts vid SCANCOR? Att resa diskuteras inom ramen för vetenskapliga sökandet.

ABSTRACT
This is an essay in honor of SCANCOR from the perspective of five Finnish frequent visitors over the course of a quarter of a century. What ideas did we travel with? What was the SCANCOR experience like? The role of travel is discussed in the context of a scholarly quest.

AUTHOR PRESENTATION
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"Welcome to the Hotel California": Strangers and Hospitable Organizations

«Welcome to the Hotel California»: Fremmede og gjestfrie organisasjoner

SILVIYA SVEJENOVA, GREGOIRE CROIDIEU AND RENATE MEYER

Keywords: pluralism, strangers, organizational form, hospitable organization, mechanisms, SCANCOR

Nøkkelord: pluralisme, fremmede, organisasjonsform, gjestfrie organisasjon, mekanismer, SCANCOR

I had to find the passage back
To the place I was before
'relax,' said the night man,
We are programmed to receive.
You can check out any time you like,
But you can never leave!

Excerpt, Lyrics, "Hotel California", The Eagles

hos·pi·ta·ble

1: a: given to generous and cordial reception of guests
b: promising or suggesting generous and cordial welcome
c: offering a pleasant or sustaining environment

2: readily receptive: open <hospitable to new ideas>

Definition, The Merriam-Webster dictionary

[S]trangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near…

Simmel (1950:403)

Hotel "California" on California Avenue in Palo Alto has a mythical status among former, actual, and aspiring fellows and affiliates at SCANCOR, the Scandinavian Consortium for Organizational Research. They populate its quaint rooms with dreams, proposals, applications, papers, projects, and ideas. Their main hospitality experience in the area, however, remains SCANCOR itself, as a Stanford University based "research hotel" (2001 SCANCOR Annual Report) for visiting scholars and their ideas.

SCANCOR was established in 1988 as a non-profit association, governed by an executive board. Its founders were "five individuals (the founding board of March, Olsen, Brunsson, Christensen, and Sevón) who quite explicitly rejected the notion of being constitutionally associated with any institution or country bureaucracy. The initial funds came from various institutions, but they were not the founders, nor did they have any governance role" (March, 2013). SCANCOR gave a formal expression to what had begun in the late 1960s as a thriving informal network (Christensen 1989) based on a shared interest in organizations and "collaborative colleagueship" (March 1988), a term capturing the spirit of camaraderie and cooperation. As hinted in the opening excerpt from The Eagles' lyrics, SCANCOR's facilities at Stanford University are "programmed to receive." The guests – Scandinavian scholars and, occasionally, guests from outside *Norden* fondly referred to as "Southern Scandinavians" – usually "never leave," transforming their temporary visit into a permanent belonging.

At first glance, SCANCOR is a homogeneously Nordic community with a distinctive character (Selznick 1949). Its Nordic identity is reflected in numerous symbols and artifacts, from its name – *Scandinavian* Consortium – and the old maps of Scandinavia on its walls (for a depiction of their role, see Kristian Kreiner's essay in this issue), through the Scandinavian furniture in its offices (Christensen 1989), to the celebrations of Scandinavian countries' national days and other holidays. The strong imprints (Stinchcombe 1965, Marquis & Tilcsik 2013) on the organization come from founding academic networks of Scandinavians and their closest US friend Jim March who, in his words, is "hopeless Nordic groupie" who adds "American condiments to this Nordic casserole" (March 2003:413). Thus, SCANCOR is a "Little Scandinavia at Stanford University" (Kreiner this issue), its Nordic temperament taken pride in and taken for granted.

When seen, however, from the vantage point of naïve or perhaps rather ignorant "Southern Scandinavians," less aware of the historical, geographical, cultural and linguistic confines and subtleties of what is known as *Norden*, SCANCOR feels heterogeneous and pluralistic (Kraatz & Block 2008), with numerous dimensions, layers, and dualities. Homogeneity and pluralism are usually difficult to reconcile and tend to act as centrifugal and centripetal forces, pulling an organization in different directions and posing

challenges to its survival and stability. Against such expectations, SCANCOR has sustained its vitality over time.

In this paper we seek to unravel an empirical conundrum: What are the mechanisms that enable pluralism in a homogeneous organization, and how do they contribute to its vitality? We address the conundrum by examining the case of SCANCOR and providing a distinctive "Southern Scandinavian," i.e. a strangers' (Simmel 1950) view of it.

The paper seeks to extend the understanding of organizations by putting forward a template that has not yet been discussed in the relevant literature – *the hospitable organization* – which, when institutionalized, allows a balancing of uniformity and exclusivity with pluralism and openness to strangers. We unravel mechanisms that allow pluralism and heterogeneity to become the organization's unifying feature and a source of its vitality. In defining the hospitable organization, we also extend the notions of stranger and home-comer (Simmel 1950, Schütz 1944, 1945) to the context of formal organizations and connect them with ideas on organizational identity (Pratt & Foreman 2000), academic hospitality (Phipps & Barnett 2007), and educational or academic travel (Veblen 1918, Pels 1999, Scaff 2011).

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we discuss selected theoretical contributions on organizational pluralism and the role of strangers in social organizations. Second, we briefly review relevant features of the empirical setting, and the data and methods used. Next, we show evidence of SCANCOR's pluralism as well as its different levels and degrees of strangeness. We do not discuss its Nordic character beyond what is concisely depicted in the introduction and the empirical setting's description, as "Nordeners" have provided insightful accounts of Nordic Organizational and Management Theory (see, for example, the contributions to the Czarniawska & Sevón's (2003) edited volume *Nordic Lights*) as well as Nordic organizations (Kreiner & Schultz 1993). Based on our insights, we advance a definition of the hospitable organization and articulate five mechanisms that propagate plurality. We discuss how it adds to organizational vitality and for what other contexts it could be propitious. We conclude with implications and directions for further research.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: ORGANIZATIONAL PLURALISM AND STRANGERS

Organizations are "rationally ordered instruments for the achievement of stated goals" (Selznick 1948). At the same time, they are symbolic (Selznick 1949), "socially constructed systems of human activity" (Aldrich, 1979), whose members and other constituencies strive for survival and boundary-maintenance.

Pluralistic organizations operate across multiple boundaries and simultaneously engage in several institutional spheres, "within multiple normative orders, and/or [are] constituted by more than one cultural logic," which exert numerous and often competing demands on an organization (Kraatz & Block 2008). They host divergent goals and are characterized by diffuse power (Denis, Lamonthe, & Langley 2001). As a result, they are usually rife with contradictions, conflicts, resistance, competing coalitions and logics and identities concomitantly at play. This contributes to a fragmented polity with intractable decisions processes, paralyzed governance, inability to change and adapt, which is perceived overall as illegitimate by multiple constituencies (Cohen, March & Olsen 1972, Heimer 1999, Kraatz & Block 2008).

Pluralism may also have positive effects on an organization, as the interaction of diverse institutional orders may open up opportunities for creativity and innovation. Thus, organizations may purposefully encourage and engage with different institutional templates, as conflicts resulting from bringing these together can be productive (Parker-Follett 1925) and yield creative solutions (Courpasson et al. 2012).

Organizations react to pluralism in different ways. They may decrease or get rid of it proactively, as illustrated in Selznick's (1952) *The Organizational Weapon*, depicting the Bolshevik party's use of multiple mechanisms, such as isolation of the organizational elite, and its intense socialization and indoctrination in a single ideology. As an organization grows, pluralism may be unintendedly undermined by institutionalization (Selznick 1949) or hierarchization (Burns & Stalker 1961). Organizations can also manage competing institutional spheres by compartmentalizing or decoupling them (Pratt & Foreman 2000), as in the case of organizations that combine a commercial logic with an artistic (Chiapello 1998), social (Pache & Santos 2013), or scientific logic (Colyvas 2007).

They may also integrate competing and/or conflicting spheres through consensus or a dominant identity (Selznick 1949, 1957), appropriation of these spheres (Powell & Sandholtz 2012), their hybridization (Battilana & Dorado 2010) or bricolage (Christiansen & Lounsbury 2013). Moreover, the environment may favor organizations that are not pluralistic but, rather, able to espouse widely held beliefs about what to do and how to organize (DiMaggio & Powell 1983) and, hence, better fitting the categorical expectations (Zuckerman 1999).

Whether proactively or reactively embraced, however, little is known about how pluralism is sustained over time (for exceptions, see Kraatz and Block, 2008; Pache & Santos 2013), especially how organizations may turn heterogeneity and pluralism into one of their core defining features, making them part of their strong and unifying identity.

One way to sustain organizational pluralism, which has been underexplored in the organizational literature, is through an ongoing influx of and interaction with newcomers and strangers who bring in new qualities and perspectives. Seminal works by Simmel and Schütz have defined the notion of a stranger and his or her role in a collectivity. For Simmel (1950), the stranger is not a "wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow," but rather one who comes today and stays tomorrow, engaging with a collectivity both spatially and socially, though "he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going." Hence, a stranger is "able to connect group membership organically with outsidership and opposition" (Pels 1999:68).

As a stranger has not belonged to a collectivity from its inception, he or she "imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself" (Simmel 1950). This importation can have effect, if a stranger is accepted or at least tolerated by the group, as noted by Schütz (1944). The maximum expression of such acceptance and "the highest degree of familiarity and intimacy" (Schütz 1945:370) with a host community is when a stranger starts "to feel at home."

Strangers have a generative force by combining or synthesizing a number of dualities: wandering and fixation, nearness and distance, indifference and involvement (Simmel 1950). They are socially skillful amphibians (Powell & Sandholtz 2012, Fligstein & McAdam 2012, Fligstein 2001) that navigate across and connect diverse domains, enlisting collaboration. Their outsider position prevents them from being "radically committed to the unique ingredients and peculiar tendencies of the group" (Simmel 1950). The absence of entanglement in existing interests and cleavages often gives the stranger a position of influence and has proved important in overcoming hegemonic ideas and in mobilizing new individual and collective identities (Polletta 1999).

Scholars have further extended Simmel's and Schütz's ideas on strangers to the case of intellectuals, creators, and academics, such as Bacon's (2001) depiction of Le Corbusier's and Scaff's (2011) account of Weber's American journeys. They have detailed the increasingly nomadic nature of the intellectual stranger (Said 1990, Pels 1999), and how traveling theory (Said 1983) and exile understood as "restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others" (Said 1994:39) influence the trajectory of ideas. The intellectual as stranger is "freer, practically and theoretically; he surveys conditions with less prejudice; his criteria for them are more general and more objective; he is not tied down in his actions by habit, piety, and precedent" (Simmel 1950:405). This unique position of marginality allows the intellectual to provide a more reflexive or objective view (Mannheim 1968), while at the same time engage in translating his or her "knowledge about the group – as an object of reflection – into knowledge of the group

as an action object" (Czarniawska and Sevón 2008:238). It may also lead to certain advantages and disadvantages in sustaining an academic career, as described by Czarniawska and Sevón (2008) in the case of foreign women professors as double strangers in academia.

Academic travel is not only about the interaction of strangers with their host communities. It is also about the difficulties of coming home, which is both a "starting-point as well as terminus" (Schütz 1945:370). Strangers expect to find the unfamiliar, while home-comers hope for familiarity, re-entering a group of which they have a deep knowledge, and re-establishing relations interrupted by the travel in space and time. As Schütz affirms, the challenge is that both home-comer and welcomer have changed: "He is neither the same for himself nor for those who await his return" (Schütz 1945:375).

This paper extends the notion of the stranger (Simmel 1959, Schütz 1944) from the context of social collectivities to that of formal organizations, and connects it with arguments on organizational pluralism (Kraatz & Block 2008), organizational identity (Pratt & Foreman 2000), and academic travel and hospitality (Pels 1999, Phipps & Barnett 2007, Scaff 2011). To the best of our knowledge, the notion of strangers has not been employed by organizational scholars to improve our understanding of pluralistic organizations. We argue that strangers are a force that brings vitality to pluralistic organizations. For this vitality to be realized and sustained, however, pluralistic organizations need to be hospitable, creating and institutionalizing a organizational template that is readily receptive to strangeness and able to convert strangers into "known strangers" (Polletta 1999), and even make them feel like kin. We offer insights on the generative force of strangeness and hospitable organizations with the example of SCANCOR.

EMPIRICAL SETTING

In this study we used SCANCOR as a critical case (Yin 1984, Eisenhardt 1989) of a homogeneous, yet pluralistic organization and examined inductively the mechanisms that help sustain its pluralism. Seen through our strangers' eyes, being Scandinavian is a powerful unifying and uniting feature of SCANCOR's organizational identity and a source of scholarly pride for its members. It is grounded in "a strong sense in Scandinavia of being different – of belonging to a research community which is different from communities elsewhere" (Kreiner 2007:86), operating in the academic fringe and with an "unintendedly benign neglect of the establishment" (March 2003:415). At the same time, it is also about taking a keen interest in other traditions and being open "to scrutiny, critique and dialogue" (Czarniawska & Sevón 2003:11).

Scandinavian organizations are somewhat Quixotean, embarking on challenging, unrealistic projects (Kreiner & Schultz 1993). Scandinavian management and organization theory are often labelled "Viking," and characterized by interest in the "praxis" and process of organizing and its local embeddedness (Czarniawska & Sevón 2003). The "modern Vikings" seem to be influenced by the Carnegie-Tech tradition, particularly the works of Cyert, March and Simon (Engwall 1996). They have developed Scandinavian branches of scholarship on project management and institutional theory, as well as rich accounts on organizational culture and symbolism, among other streams of research (Kreiner 2007, Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen 2009).

At the same time, the "Scandinavian" label is a "rather vague one… refer[ing] to a very diffuse idea" (Kreiner 2007:84), with several "Nordic variations" and "puzzling differences between organization structures and management styles" (Byrkjeflot 2003:37), which allow for multiple interpretations. It is this pluralism we set out to explore.

DATA AND METHODS

The study draws on a wealth of sources. We developed insights from publicly available documents, such as selected issues of the SCANCOR newsletter (1989–1995) and data from SCANCOR's web (www.scancor.org), including annual reports (2001–2012) and current descriptions of what it is and stands for.

We also had numerous informal conversations with SCANCOR directors, former and present board members, fellows, guests, and friends of the consortium, which we conducted during 2012–2013, in relation to our work on this manuscript. We complemented the gathered data with insights from selected unpublished archival sources with documentation on the earlier days of SCANCOR. We were granted permission to access them from the SCANCOR Board as part of a larger, ongoing research project on the history of SCANCOR, supported by a SCANCOR network grant. We also contacted the individuals whom we had quoted from these documents to get their approval of being referenced in the text.

Last but not least, we added some leaps of imagination and a strong bias from our own observations and experiences as "Southern Scandinavians" at SCANCOR during different periods from 2008 to 2010. Our outsiders-as-insiders' account complements previous accounts of SCANCOR (e.g. Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen 2009), which focus on the Stanford-Scandinavia connection and the role of institutional work in stabilizing and institutionalizing it but do not examine the presence and potential role of pluralism and strangers.

In analyzing the data we unraveled themes related to SCANCOR's pluralism and strangeness, as well as its organizational form. We also developed a number of indicators of SCANCOR's diversity and respective displays of their evolution over time, which are reported in Appendix 1. We discussed our findings on several occasions in person and over skype or e-mail to reach an agreement. We also shared earlier drafts with SCANCORians to get their reactions and comments. On the basis of this exploration, we put forward the notion of the hospitable organization and discuss its particularities, as well as the boundary conditions under which it is applicable. We conclude with limitations and directions for further research.

FINDINGS: SCANCOR'S PLURALISM AND STRANGENESS

Despite its unified and unifying Scandinavian character, our study revealed that SCANCOR is a rather "strange" and pluralistic organization, along a number of dimensions and dualities. Below we first give account of SCANCOR's pluralism. Then, we provide evidence of its strangeness.

SCANCOR's Pluralism

SCANCOR is a pluralistic organization, which exhibits a number of dualities as well as numerous dimensions of diversity.

In the inaugural issue of the SCANCOR newsletter, Jim March defines SCANCOR as "a hotel and a bureaucracy, an office and a bar. … a loose collection of individuals poorly disguised as a normal organization, a state of mind more than an institution, a mélange of spirits more than a clear vision" (March 1989:5). It is also "a group of friends who happen to do research together and engage in the elementary enthusiasm of academic life. They are not inclined to separate those activities from drinking wine, hiking in the mountains, sailing, or quiet conversations about the relative merits of speed and strength in football, love, and politics" (March 1989:5).

This depiction points to the organizational dualities of SCANCOR, such as hotel-bureaucracy, office-bar. It also hints at its formalized informality: it disguises a loose collection of individuals as a normal organization, and allows them to combine enthusiasm for research with the pleasures of "real" life. Last but not least, it points to SCANCOR's complex simplicity, the latter captured by its minimal organization (limited stuff and rules), which gives structural expression to a complex organization of individuals (March & Simon 1958) as well as (in recent years) of legally autonomous organizations, i.e. a meta-organization (Ahrne & Brunsson 2005).

SCANCOR is also an inter-disciplinary community that facilitates inquiry in organizational social science and, as such, welcomes a host of different perspectives. It is embedded in and engaged with multiple domains,

each given unique expression in the diverse backgrounds, career stages, and research fields of its fellows. These research fields range from political science and economics through sociology and anthropology, to various sub-areas of management and organization theory. They also span multiple methods – from essays and ethnographies to quantitative modeling and simulations. These fellows in turn interact with scholars from different schools, departments, research centers, and formal and informal networks at Stanford University, establishing or strengthening unique connections. Last but not least, the organizations in the Bay Area with which the fellows engage and interact, the experiences in and of California as a backdrop, etc., all bring additional diversity to what is a pluralistic organization.

Over the years, the Board has encouraged the pursuit of diversity through a number of initiatives. For example, the 1992 Board minutes reveal that it had embarked on activities in Eastern Europe. It is noted that Jim March is "trying to establish networks with scholars/researchers in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland." That goes even further with the idea to "try to establish something like SCANCOR in Scandinavia for Eastern European researchers to come and do research. There is a need to create a community for these people. This implies… that funds must be raised to cover their travel/living expenses." This initiative disappears from the SCANCOR board minutes in subsequent years. Yet, it is a testimony of an ongoing concern about engagement with "strangers" beyond the already established networks. To our knowledge, SCANCOR has also served as inspiration for scholars from other regional communities who have played with the idea of starting similar initiatives in other academic institutions and parts of the world, following the SCANCOR "model." This is suggestive of a "template," the replication of which is perceived as being attractive.

In the 2000s, pluralism was further enhanced at the meta-organizational level, as selected organizations beyond the traditional borders of Scandinavia were invited into the consortium as associate members. In that period, after two editions at Stanford University, SCANCOR also established a travelling Ph.D. workshop, which additionally expanded its diversity through the local hosts, the faculty involved and the Ph.D. students accepted for participation, as well as through the choice of locations, increasingly from "Southern" Scandinavia, e.g. Barcelona, Mannheim, Vienna, and forthcoming, in 2014, Jerusalem. Also, seminars, conferences, workshops, and celebrations, such as the two SCANCOR anniversary conferences or those dedicated to Dick Scott and Woody Powell, also brought a wealth of scholars with foreign ideas and from foreign lands in relation with SCANCOR.

Finally, diversity has increased over the years also as an outcome of changes in the context. Applicants from Scandinavian countries are increasingly international in terms of their background, reflecting that "more for-

eign nationals [are] studying and working in Scandinavian universities" (2011 SCANCOR Annual Report:3). [See Appendix 1 for an overview of SCANCOR's diversity through a number of indicators.]

SCANCOR's Strangeness

A way to increase pluralism in an organization is to secure the ongoing exposure to strangeness. Building on strangers' defining characteristics (Simmel 1950) – nearness and distance, wandering and fixation, or coming today and staying tomorrow – SCANCOR's strangeness has several manifestations. First, it has no formal status or permanently granted residence and affiliation in a school or department at Stanford University. Hence, metaphorically speaking, it has no "ownership of soil" on the "Farm," as Stanford is known and referred to informally. It has maintained a certain nomadic character, being hosted in different spaces on campus over time, as discussed by Eriksson-Zetterquist and Georg in this issue.

Second, its founder and subsequent directors have been rather outsiders to Stanford University at the time of taking on their duties. Jim March moved to Stanford from UC Irvine in 1970, after the first "nodes" in the informal network that became the basis for SCANCOR had been established in 1968–69 and during the 1970s and 1980s operated it in an informal way, accumulating affiliations and, as an outcome, additional office space across the University schools to host the ever growing number of Scandinavian friends eager to visit (see Eriksson-Zetterquist and Georg, this issue, as well as Boxenbaum & Strandgaard 2009, on the origins and development of SCANCOR).

In 1999, Woody Powell joined Stanford's School of Education from the University of Arizona, becoming simultaneously SCANCOR director and bringing in a new focus, priorities and networks of new strangers. Despite his great international reputation, initially he himself was a stranger for the Scandinavians. He took SCANCOR's strangeness to a whole new level through innovations, such as the SCANCOR's travelling Ph.D. workshop and its Stanford-rooted Postdoctoral program. The latter allows a much deeper and stronger engagement on the part of early career Scandinavian scholars with experienced academics at Stanford University. The former has permitted further internationalization of SCANCOR, through the traveling of its Ph.D. workshop deeper into "Southern Scandinavia," akin to the Vienna Philharmonics on tour, diffusing the SCANCOR spirit and ideas.

In 2010, another stranger, Mitchell Stevens, took over from Woody Powell as SCANCOR Director, being until then a relative outsider to the Scandinavian community and also a newcomer at Stanford's School of Education, which he had joined from New York University just a year before his SCAN-

COR appointment. He brings in new research interests, passions and priorities, such as for example the digital revolution in education, and networks with the potential to further enrich and expand the SCANCOR conversation, and once again reproduce its generative strangeness.

Third, strangers are omnipresent at SCANCOR by design, through its "liquid" membership, and come in different degrees and kinds of strangeness. "Southern Scandinavians," both from current or former associate institutions, such as Mannheim, Maastricht, ESSEC, IESE, and WU Vienna, as well as individual guests, represent the most immediate and visible manifestation of strangeness as well as its highest degree. However, fellows coming from the Nordic countries are not much less strangers themselves. While they walk a path that has been walked before by colleagues at their home institutions, thus making the unfamiliar more familiar and setting some expectations, they join a cohort at SCANCOR that at the time of their arrival is already partially constituted. Hence, they step into a group that already exists.

Stanford University Ph.D. students, as well as Stanford permanent and visiting faculty can also be considered SCANCOR strangers to some degree, though of course they are also "locals" in the Stanford University's neighborhood, i.e. residents in its numerous schools and departments. They have the freedom to come and go, while the most committed of them remain in the SCANCOR "orbit," repeatedly hosting and engaging with SCANCOR fellows and friends (e.g. Dick Scott and John Meyer) and organizing joint seminars and other activities (e.g. Steve Barley and his WTO group).

Our study of the fellow reports submitted upon the conclusion of their visit revealed that fellows who come to SCANCOR adhere to two main modes of strangers' engagement – "escape" and "travel." The escape mode is taking time out of Scandinavia to "finish stuff" (e.g. books, dissertation, articles) and hence is focused towards concrete output and less dedicated to establishing relationships or exploration of new ideas. The travel mode has as a focal point for residency at Stanford the establishment and nurturing of relationships and getting inspiration for new projects from different scholarly domains. As both activities require a lot of energy and focus, SCANCOR fellows are rarely able to combine the two in a balanced way, with one pattern usually dominating the other. Both modes, however, by providing distance from entrenched routines, established hierarchies, and taken-for-granted flows of life facilitate change, stimulate new ideas, encourage new identities and contribute to rethinking and reshaping the fellows' careers.

DISCUSSION: SCANCOR AS A HOSPITABLE ORGANIZATION

Asked about what comes first to mind when mentioning SCANCOR, a "Southern Scandinavian" fellow responded "you immediately feel at home," which for a stranger is a sign of "the highest degree of familiarity and intimacy" (Schütz 1945:370). Our exploration of fellows' reports and personal accounts, as well as our experiences with SCANCOR confirm that this is not an isolated response but, rather, SCANCOR's characteristic approach to newcomers and strangers.

Our study of the mechanisms that allow SCANCOR to combine openness and pluralism with exclusivity and homogeneity revealed a distinctive organizational template, which we labeled the hospitable organization – a form of organizing that is welcoming and generous to strangers and their ideas, and quickly makes them feel like kin, while remaining open for the next intake of strangeness. As described in the preceding paragraphs, any arriving SCANCOR fellows, be they Northern or Southern, first timers or frequent visitors, are strangers to some degree, as the cohort they enter is new to them every time. Below we define this organizational form and elaborate five mechanisms that contribute to its functioning and vitality: (1) unified form for diverse content; (2) minimum structure for maximum collaboration; (3) inclusive exclusivity, (4) decreased visibility for increased freedom, and (5) mixing degrees of strangeness for normality.

(1) Unified form for diverse content. SCANCOR has a unified approach to receiving and socializing newcomers, which resembles the operation of fashion. Fashion, as a concept, is predictable and taken-for-granted precisely due to its ongoing content change. Similarly, SCANCOR is unified and predictable in its ongoing welcoming and socializing of strangers to make them feel like kin. For Schütz (1945), being at home means sharing a system of relevances. In a hospitable organization, plurality and heterogeneity become the unifying, homogenous system of relevances that is shared by staff, fellows, and alumni. Furthermore, its uniformity is institutionalized, making the welcoming and socializing routinized and, through that, stabilizing the pluralistic aspects of the organization. In stabilizing diversity, "it is nevertheless important to create a joint language/concepts – a forum for the exchange of ideas" (SCANCOR Board minutes, 1990).

(2) Minimum structure for maximum collaboration. SCANCOR feels effortless and easy to navigate, with a minimum of structure. Yet there is a lot of invisible organizing and effort involved in its smooth operation, a lot of "plumbing," as Jim March would say, by SCANCOR directors and board members to secure and manage resources and membership for the "poetry" of creative interactions to happen. Key support in the "plumbing" is provided by SCANCOR's administrators – both at Stanford University and Copenhagen Business School – who offer an ongoing care for the seamless function-

ing of the community. Further, the local administrators' engagement with the strangers is above and beyond the call of duty or the confines of their positions. They get involved not only with the fellows' interests within and beyond academia, but also with their families, recommending schools for their children, suggesting interesting trips, or events and other festivities, so that they can make the most of their stay at Stanford and the area.

The feeling of structural lightness is also achieved by having most activities conducted "with a minimum of central planning or management," preserving and supplementing as much as possible the distinctive features of the existing informal network (March 1988:3) of which the formal organization is part. "Minimum organization," however, should not be mistaken for "laissez-faire." Weekly research seminars structure some of the interactions, the rest being left open to the scholars' curiosity, interests and initiative. Additional structures are added only when it is inevitable for the smooth running of the "research hotel."

Otherwise, in the words of Barbara Beuche (1995:1), the consortium's former administrative manager at Stanford University, SCANCOR operates as "an informal cooperative in that everyone pitches in and helps to keep the place functioning smoothly, although very little is ever said to define such cooperation. Each individual is attentive to the needs of the office as a whole. … When there is a bureaucratic snag, we try to get together to figure out how to cut the red tape. When the wine glasses are empty, someone volunteers to wash them."

(3) Inclusive exclusivity. With the exception of some years, there have been "more people that want to use the facilities than they allow for" (SCANCOR Board minutes, 1990:2). The competition and selection gives the visiting fellows a feeling of being special and creates a link and community feeling – synchronically and diachronically – among the "lucky ones." Apart from guaranteeing an inflow of new ideas that never runs dry, in a diverse environment, no stranger seems too strange and obliged to adapt to dominating views and attempts for hegemony. Eagerly welcomed and allowed to be themselves, most scholars immediately feel at home and even when they "check out," they "never leave" (The Eagles). For example, names of all SCANCOR fellows are listed on the website, with their affiliation at the time and the period of their stay. SCANCOR fellows return frequently for short visits and immerse themselves in the SCANCOR unique free spirit, as if they have never departed. As reported in the 1990 Minutes from SCANCOR Board meeting, "Everybody seems to fit into the environment pretty fast."

(4) Decreased visibility for increased freedom. Visibility is the ability to be noticed. SCANCOR has further sustained its space of freedom by remaining rather unnoticeable and operating somewhat "under the radar" both at Stanford University and in relation to its funding and participating insti-

tutions. It has stayed away from the broadcasting of overarching goals or overt strategies, encouraging fellows' self-organization and informal structure with limited formal activities and numerous opportunities for invisible interactions across the Stanford University campus, and joining others at one's interest, discretion, and pace. While keeping a distinctive, unifying Scandinavian character, it has refrained from developing a dominant research identity anchored in a focus on specific problems and programs, constraining values and rigid structures, one that promotes an institutional order, or combines several orders at the expense of silencing others. Through its loose coupling to multiple institutions, it has sustained the capacity to bring in strangers and make them feel at home, allowing for openness of interpretations and affiliations.

(5) Mixing degrees of strangeness for normality. Normality is about being usual, typical, and expected, while strangeness is about the opposite. How can the two then be appeased? From our own experience, this feeling of seeming "normality" comes from the "mélange of spirits" (March 1995:5), or the mixing of different degrees of "strangeness" – the Northern Northerners who as "true locals" give a center of Scandinavian gravity and distinct flavor to the place; the Stanford professors and Ph.D. students who provide SCANCOR fellows with numerous "anchor" points and open doors across campus, and the Southern Scandinavians who – with their strange imported habits – cause rather invisible drifts, translating what they think are Scandinavian behaviors into their own languages and cultures. The "mixing" itself happens at formal seminars and events, but mostly at numerous informal occasions, which range from the Friday wine and cheese "institution," to the outdoor meals, conversations and celebrations. All these are expected, and create a feeling of "normality." What makes the mixing unique is the deliberate, temporary relaxation of rules and commitments that characterize our fast-paced, deadline driven daily working environments. This allows fellows and guests to indulge with playfulness and generosity in lengthy discussions on and beyond their academic work.

SCANCOR'S VITALITY

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (2013), vitality is the capacity to live and develop, to be lively and animated. It is about strength, activity, vigor, vibrancy, energy, but also endurance. Translated into the context of organizations, it needs routines and stability along with an ongoing transformation.

The hospitality of SCANCOR contributes to its vitality as an organization, allowing it to balance its stability with ongoing transformation. Stability is achieved through institutionalization, i.e. the "emergence of a work-

based institutional system from a kin-based one" (Zucker 1983), for which institutional work is of the essence (Boxenbaum and Strandgaard Pedersen, 2009). The informal scholarly networks between Stanford University and Scandinavia were "stabilized" into a formal organization, as a complement rather than a substitute for their activities. However, the formal structure was designed and programmed as a hospitable organization with mechanisms to receive, welcome, and quickly make newcomers feel at home. Hence, along with its institutionalization, a parallel, inverse development was taking place – the creation and reproduction of a kin-based system from a work-based one, balancing the two processes.

Several transformations take place with strangers when at SCANCOR. First, most of them quickly feel like kin, the reason for this also being the Nordic way of free association, independent of status or rank. As a consequence of their contact with a hospitable organization and its pluralism, strangers fit in. Their feeling at home enriches, renews, questions, and displaces SCANCOR in new directions, and allows it to maintain vitality. Second, strangers themselves become "locals" when they act as hosts when SCANCOR's initiatives travel to other locations. For example, in the case of SCANCOR's Ph.D. workshops, international faculty members who might not have spent time at SCANCOR act as hosts on SCANCOR's behalf to Ph.D. students from different countries. They imagine and create new possibilities for what SCANCOR is and could be, perpetuating the myth in new and unexpected directions.

Third, strangers who have felt like kin at SCANCOR become home-comers, once their visiting period expires, transforming (again) into strangers in their own host institutions. In the 1990 Board meeting's minutes, Jim March is noted as having suggested that it would "be interesting to know, how people perceived the process after having returned back home," pointing to the significance of the process of homecoming. "To a certain extent," Schütz (1945) argues, "each homecomer has tasted the magic fruit of strangeness, be it sweet or bitter" and has been transformed by the experience. Some of these transformations are acknowledged in the fellows' exit reports. However, these usually refer to the period of stay at SCANCOR and do not capture the opportunities and challenges faced in homecoming.

Homecoming after SCANCOR, at least from our experience, is about a difficult adjustment back to a fast-paced, deadline-driven, goal-oriented working environment, after the indulgence in a "slow time" of generous conversations about research and life, and mind-stretching and horizon-opening events across Stanford University campus. Further, it involves pining for the energy in and around Palo Alto, where Stanford University is located and, consequently, where SCANCOR hosts its fellows and guests. One can hardly find a land more fertile for ideas and possibilities than the heart of Silicon

Valley, buzzing with creativity and entrepreneurial spirit from the famed HP garage, Google, Facebook, Apple, IDEO, Tesla, and many more; the land in which the feeling of freedom is in the air, as the Stanford University's German motto *Die Luft der Freiheit weht* suggests. Last but not least, it also includes a craving for the SCANCOR hospitality, akin to Danish *hygge* or Norwegian *kos*, which is about the creation of a warm and enjoyable atmosphere among good friends, with lengthy conversations about things big and small.

Hence, during a visit at SCANCOR, we as Southern Scandinavians grow fond of what we perceive (yet have trouble defining) as Scandinavian ways of doing and being. We develop sustained curiosity and a refined taste for the Nordic, from the ambiguous lure of Viking Organizational Theory to the addictiveness of Nordic Noir, the umbrella label for famed Scandinavian crime novels and TV thrillers. We also grow a little more aware of subtle and more pronounced differences across *Norden* and its deeply intertwined history. Upon arrival at our home institutions we readily spread the excitement about and inspirations from what we have encountered in this "Little Scandinavia" (Kreiner, this issue) and, at least in the beginning, take advantage of opportunities to question and redefine our own ways of doing and being, translating some of the Scandinavian idea(l)s into actions and sometimes also getting lost in the translation. To keep in touch with Scandinavia and continue to feel that particular sense of (be)longing, we seek research collaborations with other Scandinavian fellows and may eventually even affiliate with Scandinavian universities, as two of us have done. We also enter a rather permanent state of wandering, longing for and working on the next rejuvenating experience of strangeness.

CONCLUSION

This paper introduced and developed the notion of the hospitable organization, which is receptive and welcoming to strangers, and makes them feel like kin, and introduced mechanisms through which it operates and sustains its vitality. Hospitable organizations may face challenges to their existence if they professionalize too much the welcoming attitude, to the extent that it loses authenticity. They may also lose their attractiveness if, beyond the welcoming, there are no opportunities for intellectual discoveries and serendipitous encounters, as well as for exposure to a rather homogeneous, distinctive character or set of ideas. Lastly, they can be threatened by instrumental strangers who come to the "research hotel" for the career boost and the networks but not for the serendipity-driven, boundary-trespassing, and the socially-supported-by loose-networks-of-interactions discoveries.

The hospitable organization and its mechanisms have implications not only for research communities like SCANCOR. They can be a useful tem-

plate for creative and innovative organizations that need to be pluralistic and mix degrees of strangeness for the creative sparks to fly, yet need a unifying and distinctive anchoring identity to stabilize and realize their discoveries. They can also be a generative idea for large multinational corporations whose employees travel across geographies, subsidiaries and branches, and – once expatriated – need to be welcomed back home. Further research is needed to extend (and challenge) the notion of the hospitable organization and its influence on the organizational vitality and future(s) in these and other contexts.

As for SCANCOR's future, if it sustains its hospitable organization, it will continue being a "magnet place" (Farrell 2001) for strangers' "emerging fantasies" and an "open invitation to imagination" (March 1989:5).

Acknowledgements

The "spark" for this paper came from an observation by Woody Powell on our unique condition as strangers at SCANCOR. We are grateful to him for the inspiration as well as to the Special issue guest editors, reviewers and other generous readers for their helpful comments. Silviya Svejenova thanks ESADE Business School, where she was employed at the time of her visit to SCANCOR, for the support that made it possible.

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APPENDIX 1 SCANCOR'S DIVERSITY

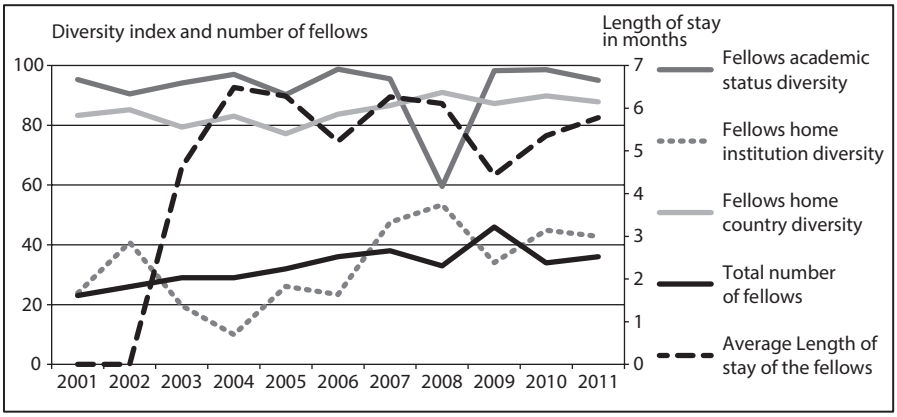

Figure 1 Overall Growth and Increasing Diversity

Note: This figure represents the evolution of three types of indicators. A first line represents the (growing) total number of fellows. A second line displays the average (and stable) length of stay of the fellows. A third set of indicators displays the evolution of SCANCOR Blau's index of diversity (on a 100 point basis) for the academic status (stable), home institution (growing) and home country (growing) of the welcomed fellows.

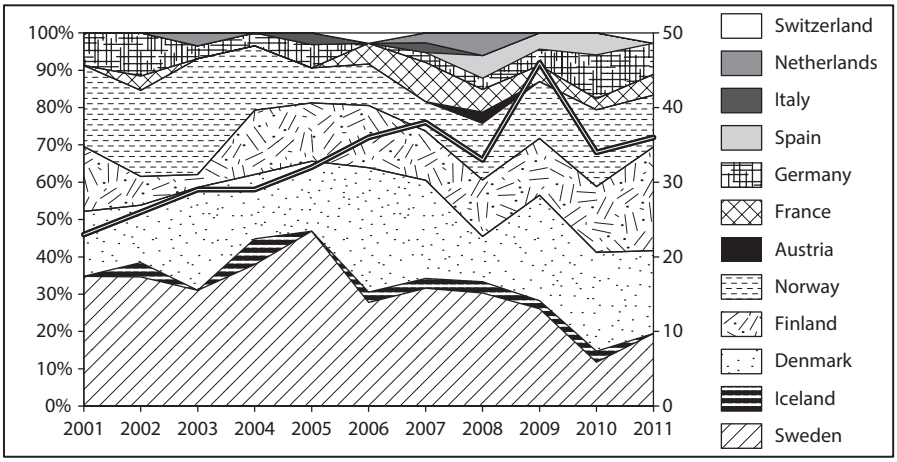

Figure 2 Diversity of "Northern" and "Southern" Scandinavians

Note: This figure represents the evolution in percent of the home country of the welcomed fellows. As SCANCOR grows, the diversity in home countries being represented at SCANCOR grows.

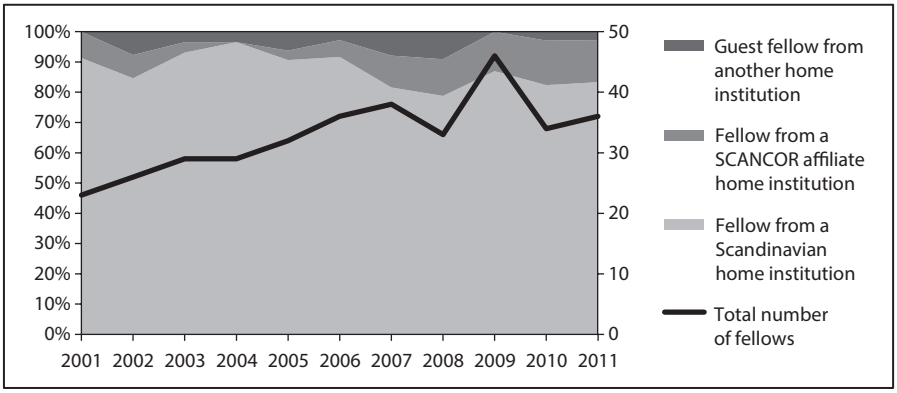

Figure 3 Increasing the diversity of home institutions

Note: This figure represents the evolution in percent of the institutional home of the welcomed fellows. As SCANCOR grows, the diversity in home institutions being represented at SCANCOR grows.

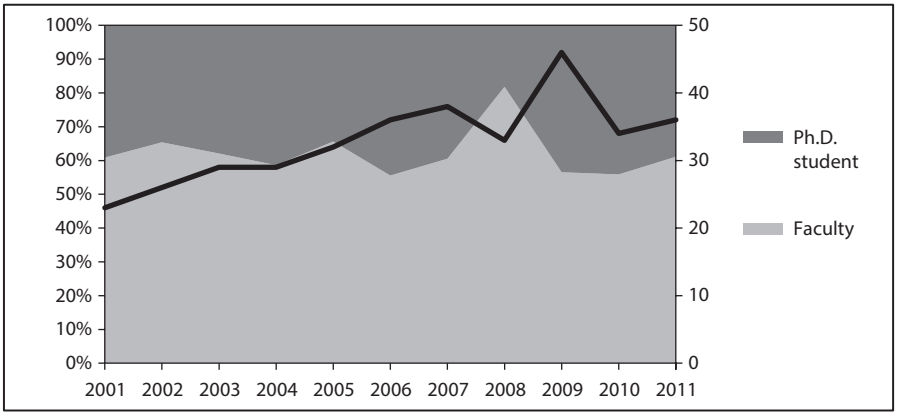

Figure 4 Fellows' Academic Status

Note: This figure represents the evolution in percent of the academic status of the welcomed fellows, differentiating Ph.D. students from Faculty members. As the community grows, the balance between Ph.D. students and Faculty is maintained.

ABSTRACT

In this paper we seek to unravel an empirical conundrum: What are the mechanisms that enable pluralism in a homogeneous organization, and how do they contribute to its vitality? We address the conundrum by examining the case of SCANCOR and providing an outsiders-as-insiders', i.e. a strangers' view of it, particularly of its pluralism and strangeness. Drawing insights from

the case, we put forward a notion and a template previously not discussed in the literature – *the hospitable organization* – which, when institutionalized, allows the balancing of uniformity and exclusivity with pluralism and openness to strangers. We posit five mechanisms that facilitate the functioning of hospitable organizations and contribute to sustaining their vitality: (1) unified form for diverse content; (2) minimum structure for maximum collaboration; (3) inclusive exclusivity, (4) decreased visibility for increased freedom, and (5) mixing degrees of strangeness for normality. We add to the study of organizations by putting forward some preliminary ideas on the hospitable organization and discussing conditions for its applicability to other organizing situations, beyond the case of SCANCOR. We also extend the notions of stranger and home-comer to the context of formal organizations.

ABSTRAKT

I denne artikkelen ønsker vi å finne ut av en empirisk gåte: hva er mekanismene som gjør pluralisme mulig i homogene organisasjoner, og hvordan bidrar de til vitalitet? Vi søker svar ved å undersøke SCANCOR som case og se det fra de fremmede og outsidernes synsvinkel. Vi lanserer et begrep og en forståelse som tidligere ikke har vært diskutert i litteraturen – den gjestfrie organisasjon – som når den er institusjonalisert gjør det mulig å balansere ensartethet og eksklusivitet med pluralisme og åpenhet i forhold til fremmede. Vi lanserer fem mekanismer som fasiliterer slike organisasjoner og bidrar til å opprettholde vitaliteten deres: 1) ensartet form for diversifisert innhold 2) minimumsstruktur for maksimal deltakelse 3) inklusiv eksklusivitet 4) mindre synlighet for å oppnå større frihet og 5) blande ulike grader av fremmedhet for å oppnå normalitet. Vi bidrar til studiet av organisasjoner ved å legge fram noen foreløpige ideer for den gjestfrie organisasjonen og diskuterer i hvilken grad den også kan være gyldig i andre organisasjonssituasjoner uavhengig av SCANCOR. Vi utvider også begrepene fremmed og hjemvendende til den konteksten som formelle organisasjoner representerer.

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SCANCOR and Norwegian Public Administration Research Development

SCANCOR og utviklingen av norsk statsvitenskapelig forskning

TOM CHRISTENSEN AND PER LÆGREID

Nøkkelord: Skandinavisk institusjonalisme, forskningsmessig entreprenørskap, organisasjons-teori, offentlig administrasjonsforskning.
Keywords: Scandinavian institutionalism, scientific entrepreneurship, organization theory, PA research

INTRODUCTION

The tradition of Scandinavian Organizational Theory, by some referred to as Scandinavian Institutionalism (Czarniawska and Sevon 1996, Boxenbaum and Strandgaard Pedersen 2009), has developed through a dynamic relationship between organizational theory entrepreneurs in Scandinavia and at Stanford University. The latter has been recognized as probably the leading research community in the world for some time now (Lægreid 2007). This dynamic relationship has not only been a personal one, but also an institutional one, since SCANCOR has served as an institutional framework for gathering organizational theory researchers from different departments/centers at Stanford and Scandinavian universities and business schools. Over the years 32 Norwegian Political Science scholars from 10 different institutions have carried out 47 long-term research visits at SCANCOR. The Stanford organisational researchers have led the way in theory development, in collaboration with some leading scholars from Scandinavia, while the Scandinavian researchers have applied the theories in both public and private organizations. The focus in this article is on the dynamic relationship between Stanford/SCANCOR organizational research and political science research in Norway.

The questions we would cover are the following:

- How is the Norwegian research in political science and public administration (PA) more specifically positioned in the tradition of Scandinavian Organization Theory?
- How has the organization theory research at Stanford and SCANCOR influenced political science research in Norway?
- What is the influence of Norwegian political science research on SCANCOR?

NORWEGIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH AND THE SCANDINAVIAN ORGANIZATION THEORY TRADITION

The Scandinavian Organization Theory tradition seems to reflect some major trends in the development of organization theory in the US in general, but also more specifically at Stanford University and SCANCOR. The first feature is the focus on bounded rationality, emphasizing the constraints on rationality in decision-making processes (March and Simon 1958). The second feature is the focus on broader social and cultural processes, i.e. on the logic of appropriateness, elaborating on the logic of consequence (March and Olsen 1984), which is both connected to central features of "old institutionalism" from sociology (Selznick 1957) and to social-constructivist macro theories on symbols and myths (Meyer and Rowan 1977). The third feature is the movement beyond the old institutionalism in political science that tended to focus on the legacy from law and formal, legal and constitutional arrangements to organizational analyses and how "living" organizations and institutions change and work in practice (Olsen 1978).

The Carnegie Tech School tradition of organization theory represented by Herbert Simon, James G. March and Richard M. Cyert has historically been a major connection for Scandinavian organization researchers (Engwall 2003). The concept of bounded rationality is a major contribution from this group, and it has influenced Scandinavian organizational research to a great extent. The principal person in this tradition seen from a Scandinavian point of view is James G. March. Through his more than 40 years of cooperation with Johan P. Olsen, through the development of an informal network of Scandinavian and Stanford scholars in the 1970s and 1980s and through the establishment of the research center SCANCOR at Stanford University in 1989, he has more than anyone else inspired Scandinavian organization theory. Together with his colleagues John W. Meyer, Richard W. Scott and Walter W. Powell at Stanford, James G. March has developed and nurtured an exchange of theories and research findings in a multi-disciplinary environment at Stanford that has enriched American and European scholarship generally and Nordic social sciences especially. This cooperation is not a one-way street, from the USA to Scandinavia. To an increasing degree, leading Scandinavian scholars such as Johan P. Olsen, Nils Brunsson and Bar-

bara Czarniawska have made important contributions to the international community of organization studies (see e.g. Egeberg and Lægreid 1999).

During the 1970s the focus on bounded rationality was supplemented by emerging institutional theories, a feature that since then has been a dominant and increasingly elaborate Scandinavian feature. Czarniavska and Sevon (2003) have labeled the Scandinavian way of studying organizations the "Viking" approach. The main features of this approach are as follows: the ambiguity of organizational choice; that talk and action might be loosely coupled; that the logic of appropriateness is seen as complementary to the logic of consequentiality; that identities and interests are not given exogenously but develop within institutions; that history is inefficient; that a combination of change and stability becomes an organizational norm; that imitation, diffusion and translation of organizational forms and practice are widespread; and that integration and disintegration constitute a main tension in organizations (March and Olsen 1976, March and Olsen 1989, Brunsson and Olsen 1993, Brunsson 1989).

Organizational design and planned change are constrained by historical institutional culture as well as external pressure from the institutional and technical environment (Christensen and Lægreid 2001, Olsen 1992). We have experienced 30 years of the dismantling of organization theory and a central claim is that students of organizations have to go beyond the distinction between markets and hierarchies as well as beyond models of environmental determinism and rational design (Brunsson and Olsen 1988). By applying different "mechanisms of hope" one can continue to hope for the rational organization in the processes of organizational reforms (Brunsson 2006).

It might be difficult to find strong support for a type of organization theory that is distinctively Scandinavian (Kreiner 2007). But the claim can be made that Nordic organization scholarship has been remote enough to evade the "paradigm police" and connected enough to influence the more vulnerable elements of the non-Nordic research community (March 2003). Thoenig (2007) points out the following features from the Scandinavian approach to organizational studies: a publication practice able to combine a global and a local approach; strong disciplinary roots combined with interdisciplinary openness; a combination of paradigmatic approaches and empirical pluralism; and processes of co-constructed identities.

One special feature of Scandinavian organization theory is the interest in the practice of organizing, facilitated by a distinctiveness particular to Scandinavian organizations, in the way of openness and transparency, and easy access to organizations, especially in the public sector (Czarniawska and Sevon 2003, Kreiner 2007). This trend also enhances a process-oriented approach to organization studies. The cognitive, neo-institutional and cultural approaches have had a strong foothold in the Scandinavian way of

studying organizations, and a large number of detailed, embedded studies of organizations have been done (Lægreid 2007). Scandinavian institutionalism revolves around the concepts of loose coupling, sense-making and translation (Boxenbaum and Strandgaard Pedersen 2009), but also the logic of appropriateness (March and Olsen 1989). The ideas of loose coupling go back to the Garbage Can model and are explored further in later studies (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972, Brunsson 1989, Brunsson and Olsen 1993). Sense-making is a core idea in *Ambiguity and Choice* (March and Olsen 1976), later further explored by Czarniawska and Sevon (1996), Sahlin-Andersson (1996, 2001) and Røvik (1996, 2007) who also address the issue of translation.

Institutional theories and studies of public institutions constitute one specific feature of Scandinavian organization studies (Thoenig 2003, Christensen and Lægreid 2004). The latter differs from its American heritage in being more process-oriented, applying qualitative approaches, and by focusing more on how ideas about organizing are shaped, diffused and translated (Johansson 2002). Many scholars are embedded in a constructivist tradition, but most of them take a moderate stance and avoid the pure subjectivist position.

Another special feature of the Scandinavian way of studying organizations is the explicit combination of a theoretical ambition and detailed empirical studies of "living" organizations, such as the spread of institutional fashion (Czarniawska and Sevon 1996) and the micro level nuances of administrative reforms (Olsen and Peters 1996, Christensen and Lægreid 2001). The empirical-analytical approach to the study of organizations has been more prominent than the normative approach and the empirical contributions of Scandinavian scholars in organizational studies have been highly significant.

A third feature of the Scandinavian-SCANCOR connection is the challenge of the generic path in organization theory, claiming that there is a universal way of organizing and that there are some general features of formal organizations that transcend time, countries, tasks, sectors and disciplines. The Scandinavian approach challenges such all-embracing macro theories and claims that the historical-institutional context must be taken into consideration (Czarniawska and Sevon 2003, March and Olsen 1989, Christensen and Lægreid 2013). The embeddeness in political-administrative traditions is a major constraint on how organizations are created, how they change and how they work in practice. Meso-level theory that includes contextual features must therefore be applied. The Scandinavian tradition approaches the analysis of research findings as a contextual rather than a normative act (Lægreid 2007).

So what is distinctly Norwegian within the Scandinavian tradition of organization theory? The Norwegian approach to organizational studies has a stronger focus on the public sector, less of a focus on ideas from economics

and efficiency in individual organizations and organizational strategies, and a stronger focus on institutional environment (Christensen, Lægreid, Roness and Røvik 2007). In contrast to the continental European and the US tradition, political science and public administration in Norway are not viewed as separate disciplines but integrated into one discipline. The Norwegian approach describes a research tradition based on organization theory and democratic theory and it paints a picture of public organizations integrated into a complex political and societal network of organized interests and clients (March and Olsen 1995, Christensen and Lægreid 1998). Olsen (2007) labeled this special combination of organization theory, public administration and democratic governance the "Bergen approach." In Norway more than in the other countries organization theory has been used to study public organizations. The interest in the organizational basis for politics has been a special characteristic of the Norwegian combination of political science and organization theory inspired by the collaboration with Stanford. The main question is how different institutions affect citizens' living conditions and contribute to a legitimate governance system (Olsen 2012). Administrative institutions and staffs affect policy design, preparation and implementation of decisions and thereby, whose values, interests and world views will be taken into consideration. Thus the public administration plays a political role that is often hidden behind the "politic-administration" dichotomy. The main argument is that political institutions matter and that an organization theory-based, broad approach can be applied to understand the mixed-order of a compound political-administrative system (Olsen 2010).

This also underlines the feature that, compared to political science in other Scandinavian countries, the Norwegian political science research based on organization theory has been the most ambitious empirically speaking. (Beck Jørgensen 1996). In Norway there has been a strong tradition of studying public administration by bringing together administrative practice, organization theory and democratic theory, a tradition lost in the USA (March 1997). The empirical analyses of organizational design have dominated, but there are also normative and prescriptive analyses (Roness 2005, Christensen et al. 2010). An organizational perspective on decision making in formal public organizations by addressing formal structure, but also demography and organizational locus have developed (Lægreid and Olsen 1978, Egeberg 2012). Thus the implications and relevance of their work for societal and civic purposes has been a concern, with respect to the selection of research topics and the interest for prescriptive models in political science.

This approach is seen through the theoretical foundation of a number of large research programs, such as the first Power Study in the 1970s, which has been characterized as the big leap forward in Norwegian political science

(Kuhnle 1986) and from which four young research fellows later became professors of political science, Other programs worth mentioning here include the Norwegian Research Centre in Organization and Management in Bergen (1987–2001) and an advanced research program on the Europeanization of the nation-state (ARENA) at the University of Oslo from 1994 onward, and a range of large survey projects in the central civil service sector, key textbooks and an extensive list of international publications. Organizing political institutions, the organizational dimensions of politics, and studies of reforms, change and continuity in public sector organizations have all been major research interests (Egeberg and Lægreid 1999, Roness and Sætren 2009, Sverdrup and Trondal 2008).

In Norway organization theory has featured more prominently in political science departments than in business schools, and more so than in the other Scandinavian countries. The balance between the different strands of Scandinavian organization theory has been somewhat different than in the other Scandinavian countries, with bounded rationality featuring more prominently as a basic perspective over a long period of time, supplemented by the more typical institutional approaches. The main elements of the garbage can model, the main "streams" of actors, problems, solutions and choice opportunities, have been used most extensively in Norway as the basic analytical elements or tools in many PA studies, as an elaboration of bounded rationality.

THE SCANCOR/STANFORD INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH IN NORWAY

Influencing a research tradition, like political science research in Norway, will always entail employing the combined contribution of research entrepreneurs, personal contacts and institutional development. This is also definitely the case for how PA research has been developing, inspired here by Stanford and SCANCOR. It all started out in the 1950s, when Knut Dahl Jacobsen, later a professor at the universities in Oslo and Bergen, was inspired by the Carnegie Tech group and bounded rationality. He challenged the legal constitutional legacy in political science and early on carried out major, ground-breaking and innovative studies of the central civil service sector in Norway (Jacobsen 1960, 1964). He was the founding father of PA research in Norway and played an important part in the development of the higher education institutions that were teaching and doing research on public administration and policy.

Johan P. Olsen has been one of the most influential researchers in the field of public administration and organization theory since the beginning of the 1970s. He became a professor in Bergen in 1972 and he was a leader

of the Study of the Distribution of Power in Norway, which was the most important individual research project on the generation of empirical knowledge on the political-administrative system of governance in Norway. In the 1980s, Olsen also served as a research director on the Swedish Power Project, and he played an important part in the establishment of the Norwegian Research Centre in Organization and Management in Bergen in 1987. In 1993, Olsen established ARENA at the University of Oslo, which is a research program on the Europeanization of the nation state. He has more than anyone else contributed to the international reputation of Norwegian public administration research.

When Johan P. Olsen met James G. March for the first time in Irvine, California in 1968, a unique collaboration started. March visited Bergen and Copenhagen in 1970–71 and when he moved to Stanford in 1971 and participated in developing the organization theory and research community there with W.R. Scott and J. Meyer, this both represented a unique connection to the world-leading organization theory group, and brought together theories of bounded rationality with more culturally and socially inspired organization theories. The cooperation that started then between March and Olsen has been of invaluable importance for the development of organization research in Norway, and in the Scandinavian countries more in general, but also has wider influence.

March and Olsen have co-authored three seminal books (*Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations, Rediscovering Institutions* and *Democratic Governance*) and close to 20 articles which have changed the way we think about organizations, institutions and democratic governance. Their publications are among the most cited in their fields. One example is their article "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life" (1984) which appeared in the foremost leading scholarly journal of political science, the American Political Science Review, and is one of the most cited articles in this journal with more than 3000 citations on Google Scholar.

Through these publications they have offered new insights on democratic governance and how political-administrative systems work and change. They have made major contributions to the international research community in political science, organization theory and public administration. The topics that have been essential in their scholarly works include organizational decision-making and learning, processes of organizational and institutional change and the influence of institutions on policy-making and identity formation, democratic governance and design. They have devoted much of their professional efforts to the ways organizations and political institutions work, and the processes through which they are organized and reorganized.

The fruitful collaboration between James G. March and Johan P. Olsen has had a major impact on the study of political institutions, governance and

public policy. They have greatly influenced the study of organizations, both in Scandinavia, Europe and the USA. They have gone beyond the existing paradigms and revealed new ways of looking at organizational decision-making and the political process. In 1972 they formulated the Garbage Can Model of decision-making in organizations together with the late Michael Cohen: the article explaining this idea has been cited 6714 times. This model established a basis for studying loosely coupled organizations and non-routine decisions. The role that simultaneity, ambiguity and symbols might play for decision outcomes was highlighted. It has also become a leading theoretical framework among policy scholars. One example is the article on implementation and ambiguity (Baier, March and Sætren 1986).

A second result of the fruitful cooperation between March and Olsen is their work on experiential learning under ambiguity (1975), which challenged the dominant idea of a rational learning cycle. The third of their major contributions is the development of a broad institutional perspective on political life launched in the mid 1980s through the concept of "the New Institutionalism." It was founded on three basic ideas: that human action is based on a logic of appropriateness, that meaning is constructed through political and societal processes, and that institutions normally adapt more slowly than their environments.

March and Olsen have developed theoretically oriented and empirically based studies of political institutions and democratic governance through an explicit combination of theories of decision-making in formal organizations and democratic theory. This special mixture of political science, organization theory and a strong empirical focus has given their research on political institutions and political life innovative features which are internationally acknowledged. One indication of this is that their book *Rediscovering Institutions. The Organizational Basis for Politics* (1989) has 7449 citations on Google Scholar.

March and Olsen see organizations as complex systems and collective action as socially embedded configurations. Their scholarship represents a combination of how political-administrative institutions actually work, how they might work and how they should work. Organizations, policies and polities are treated as interlinked dynamic phenomena. Their research paints a picture of public organizations integrated into a complex political and societal network of organized interests and clients. They focus on the potential for democratic governance by combining environmental features, purposeful actors and historically developed institutions. Instead of purifying explanations based on one dominant dynamic, the challenge has been to develop more complex assumptions regarding how institutions are structured, how they work and how they are transformed.

March and Olsen's scholarly work has inspired a Norwegian approach to public administration research which typifies a communal conception of democratic governance, celebrating the sovereign demos as a corporation of equal citizens, while more recent administrative reforms represent an individualistic conception, celebrating the autonomous individual (Olsen 1992, 2007). The communal conception understands a democratic polity as a configuration of relatively enduring institutions, rules and roles. The individualistic conception sees political life as organized around the interaction of autonomous individual actors pursuing prior preferences by calculating future outcomes (March and Olsen 1989, 1995).

In their work on democratic governance, organization theory, public administration, leadership, modern democracy, modern bureaucracy, public sector reform, institutional change and the Europeanization of the nation-state, they have persistently called for theories of organization which are consistent with the complex empirical realities of change and which clarify the process underlying the contextual details. Their observations, ideas and theories have been a continuous source of inspiration not only for students of political science but also students of organizations, sociology, and economics.

As indicated, March and Olsen greatly influenced Norwegian PA research early on by developing and using bounded rationality and garbage can model theories, but also by challenging the legal-constitutional legacy in political science (Egeberg and Lægreid 1999, March and Olsen 1976). Their particular contribution over the course of the decades to follow has been the introduction of a broad institutional perspective in analyses of the political-administrative system's organization and functioning (March and Olsen 1989 and 1995). This perspective is mainly formulated as an alternative to economic perspectives in political science and public administration, but can also be seen as an elaboration on the theory of bounded rationality and the garbage can model (Roness 2001). March and Olsen emphasize that politics has both an instrumental and a symbolic or "creation of meaning" side, and they stress the important distinction between aggregative and integrative processes in politics. The focus turned more to the development of identity and discretion for democratic governance (March and Olsen 1995). In this regard, they specifically emphasize the development of political capabilities, as well as political accounts and adaptiveness.

Olsen has not only been important in developing theory in collaboration with March, but also more specifically in inspiring PA research in Norway by developing models for empirical research that combine different strands of organization theory. One example of this is Olsen's (1988) different government or state models, of an instrumental and cultural flavor. Institutional-cultural theories, which view public organizations as

"institutionalized organizations," have been increasingly used in empirical studies of public administration (Christensen and Lægreid 2001, Christensen and Peters 1999).

Another more social-constructive school has also inspired Norwegian researchers in their studies of public sector reforms. Often labeled the myth or fashion/fad perspective, these theoretical ideas focus on the "institutional environment." Røvik (1998) in particular has developed such a perspective on studies of changes in public administration and emphasizes that organizations are "multi-standard organizations," combining institutional components from different "organization fields." Christensen and Lægreid (2001, 2007) have developed and used a transformative perspective on public reforms, by discussing the dynamic relationship between environmental, structural and cultural factors. In a book on organization theory for the public sector, public administration scholars try to integrate an instrumental, a cultural and a myth-based perspective on public organizations underlining the specific features of public sector organizations in contrast to private sector organizations (Christensen, Lægreid, Roness and Røvik 2007). Inspired by March and Olsen's garbage can model and their institutional approach, as well as the ideas of bounded rationality, Roness (1997) wrote a book on theories and strategies for studies of organizational change processes.

Over the past few years we have witnessed an increasing pluralism in theoretical perspectives and frames of reference in the study of public organizations and institutions in Norway. The study of public administration still has a stronghold at the universities but has spread to colleges, external research institutes and also to business schools focusing especially on public management issues. The study on public administration and management in Norway has attracted many students who have moved into the civil service and resulted in many research projects that have developed new theoretical and empirical insights on how the political-administrative system in Norway works in practice and changes over time.

Studies of administrative policies and politics have shown that reform processes in Norway have often been characterized by compromise and an apolitical rhetoric, creating incremental results. The link between talk and action (March 1984, Brunsson 1989), and between general attitudes, specific solutions and actual implementation, has not always been a very close one. Even though general, comprehensive programs of administrative policy have been formulated, a segmented public administration has to a large extent created segmented reforms. Compared to the political-administrative doctrines in effect in the central administration until the 1970s, with strong centralization, standardization and rule-following, studies have shown a development in the last decade towards relatively more devolution, increased flexibility, more management by objectives and results, and increased

market-orientation (Christensen and Lægreid 2011, 2012). The result is a more complex and fragmented state. Now studies are emerging that show a reassertion of the centre and an increased emphasis on coordination (Christensen and Lægreid 2007).

In the last decade, more attention has been given to studies of the internationalization of political processes, understood as the development of more extensive networks of transactions and organizations among countries. Traditional studies of foreign policy decision-making processes have been supplemented by transnational policy perspectives and the idea that a fourth system level exists, in addition to the traditional three domestic administrative levels. There is a growing interest in the implications of globalization and internationalization for public administration, and a central set of questions analyzed in the ARENA program includes to what extent and in what ways processes of Europeanization influence national institutions of governance in small countries like Norway (Egeberg 2006, Olsen 2007). The domestic, administrative institutions have adapted to European integration in an incremental and differentiated manner, and supranational allegiances have become supplements to domestic and national identities and role perceptions (Curtin and Egeberg 2009, Trondal 2010).

The realization that it is impossible to understand the development of the Norwegian public administration from an internal, domestic point of view alone has led to a greater interest in comparative studies between countries. Examples here inspired by SCANCOR are studies of European cooperation (Blichner and Sangolt 1994), diplomacy (Batora 2005), popular trust (Askvik 2007), hospital reforms (Hagen and Vrangbæk 2009, Kjekshus and Hagen 2007), official statistics in Norway and Great Britain (Sangolt 1997), studies of universities and higher education in Europe (Bleiklie et al. 2009, Brandser 2007, Gornitzka et al. 2005), studies of hospital reforms in Scandinavia (Byrkjeflot et al. 2012), studies of welfare administration (Askim et al. 2011) and studies of governance of public sector organizations in Europe – agencification, autonomization, proliferation, coordination, control and performance (Lægreid and Verhoest 2010, Verhoest et al. 2010, Verhoest et al. 2012).

Governance in Norway and the USA has been studied comparatively as have the consequences of Europeanization on central public administration in the Nordic countries (Christensen and Peters 1999; Jacobsson, Lægreid and Pedersen 2004). Christensen, Lægreid and associates (2001, 2007) have compared New Public Management reforms in Australia, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden and also the dynamics between autonomy and regulation (2006). They have shown variety in process and effects based on a transformative approach combining of environmental, polity and cultural constraints.

Also leadership and management studies in Norwegian public administration have been inspired by the SCANCOR connection. Examples of this

are Torodd Strand's book on leadership, organization and culture (2007) and Bjarne Espedal's publications on leadership (2009).

The focus so far has been mostly on the important collaboration between March and Olsen, and the inspiring effects on PA research in Norway. When we turn our attention more specifically to the influence of SCANCOR since 1989, they also feature prominently – March as a director and Olsen as a board member over a long period of time – meaning that the research traditions they have represented have been strongly institutionalized at SCANCOR. Staying at SCANCOR has inspired PA researchers from Norway in many ways. First, they have been systematically exposed to the leading organization theory community in the world, both at Stanford in a broader sense and at SCANCOR more specifically. This has both pushed PA researchers in Norway in a more theoretically embedded direction, which is their trademark in a comparative perspective, and also socialized them to a demanding academic culture that is different from back home. Second, they have been inspired to systematically seek out different organization theory perspectives, such as the importance of theoretical pluralism. Third, they have been exposed to theories and empirical data from the private sector, because of a strong representation at SCANCOR of researchers from business schools. This has led to new insights theoretically and empirically, maybe in particular regarding the limitations of using rationally oriented organization theory on studies of public organizations, which has inspired "translations" of such theory so it is more suitable.

SCANCOR has been a melting-pot for both Scandinavian researchers and Stanfordians, giving the visiting scholars the inspiration offered by a larger milieu. W.R. Scott has through his active interaction with scholars at SCANCOR, his adjunct professorship period at the University of Tromsø, and his participation at seminars, inspired Norwegian PA researchers in different ways. First, his textbook on organization theory shows his valuable "taxonomy" competence, sorting out the main trends and schools in organization theory (Scott and Davis 2006). This has provided Norwegian researchers with a firm historical and theoretical basis for their studies. The book also underlines the importance of theoretical pluralism. Second, Scott has probably been the one working most systematically at Stanford with ideas from "old institutionalism" in sociology, which is evident in his textbook on organizations and institutions (Scott 2013). This is particularly important because this part of institutionalism has had a tendency to disappear somewhat in the constructivist-inspired macro theories of institutionalism. Especially his distinction between the regulative, the normative and the cognitive pillars of institutionalism has inspired many Norwegian scholars. Third, Scott's book on health systems in the Bay Area is perhaps the most

impressive empirical study made by an organization theorist at Stanford and has inspired many PA researchers in Norway (Scott 2000).

John W. Meyer has also through his active collaboration with SCANCOR been important for PA researchers in Norway working with more macro-oriented institutional theories. His seminal article with Rowan from 1977 (Meyer and Rowan 1977) has had a strong influence on clarifying the distinction between technical and institutional environments. This was followed up on, in the 1980s, in his collaboration with Scott (Meyer and Scott 1983). During the last two decades Meyer has developed his theories more in a global direction, stressing the spreading of formalized and rationalized organizations around the world (Meyer 2002 and 2009, Meyer, Drori and Hwang 2006, Christensen 2012). He has also inspired educational research in Norway through his collaboration with Chiqui Ramirez (Meyer and Ramirez 2000, Ramirez and Christensen 2013). Meyer has through this new strand of research managed to combine ideas from cultural/institutional theory with bounded rationality. Also the study of the branding of public sector organizations is heavily influenced by Stanford scholars (Byrkjeflot and Angell 2007, Wæraas and Solbakk 2009, Moldenæs 2011).

Also Woody Powell's work as director of SCANCOR, as an active organizer of and participant in Ph.D. courses, as well as being responsible for the post doc program at SCANCOR have been a big source of inspiration for Norwegian scholars. Especially his work on isomorphism with DiMaggio and his work on organizational fields and network theory have been influential (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, Padgett and Powell 2012).

A more general influence on PA scholars of Stanford and SCANCOR organizational research is seen also in the importance of organization theory in developing international research networks, whether connected to international organizations or not. One example of this is the SOG research group under IPSA, which has existed for three decades. Another is the work in groups and panels under the European Group of Public Administration over a long period of time. A third is the active participation in the European Group of Organizational Studies (EGOS) on the part of both Stanford and Norwegian scholars. A fourth example is different international comparative research projects such as the collaboration between 25 countries on *The Comparative Public Organization Data Base for Research and Analysis* (COBRA) and *the Comparative research into current trends in public sector organizations* (CRIPO) program under the EU, that focuses on agencification, autonomy, control and performance in the civil service; the international comparative research project on *Coordination for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future (COCOPS),* funded by the EU's Seventh Framework Programme and involving 10 universities in 10 European countries; and

Transforming Universities in Europe (TRUE) comparing university reforms in 8 countries.

THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATION RESEARCH IN NORWAY

It is rather evident, as stressed above, that the influence of the Stanford and SCANCOR research community on the development of the Norwegian PA research has been considerable. But given this allegedly asymmetrical relationship, in what ways may Norwegian PA scholars have contributed to Stanford and SCANCOR organization research? First, as indicated, Johan P. Olsen has had a strong influence theoretically through the collaboration with March, but also more directly through several generations of PA researchers in Norway who have visited SCANCOR. Second, what they have brought to Stanford and SCANCOR is, theoretically speaking, a more typical multi-theoretical approach. Third, Norwegian political science researchers have also brought a stronger focus on the study of public administration, democratic governance and politics. Inspired by Olsen, many of them have stressed the use of "theories of the middle-range" and contextual constraints, and how organization theory might be operationalized. They have brought the historical-institutional context back in, and in general, pointed to the usefulness of meso-level theories that take the different contextual features into consideration. This feature also reflects the fact that researchers' access to data in the Norwegian context is rather unique and effortless and has been a great advantage for Norwegian researchers. It also says something about the status of this research in a high-trust society.

Over time, the strong Stanford and SCANCOR connection has been supplemented by increased inspiration from European scholars. One good example is the study of increased European integration represented by ARENA, Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo, which has developed a strong European connection through several big European comparative projects headed by Johan P. Olsen, Morten Egeberg, Erik Oddvar Eriksen and John Erik Fossum. But also European scholars such as Geert Bouckaert, Jurgen Habermas, Christopher Hood, Werner Jann, Beate Kohler-Koch, Bruno Latour, Christopher Pollitt and Claudio Radaelli as well as B. Guy Peters and the Berkeley connection to scholars like Neil Fligstein and Trond Pettersen have inspired many Norwegian researchers in political science and organization studies over the past decade.

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ABSTRAKT

Spørsmålene som dekkes i denne artikkelen er hvordan norsk forskning i statsvitenskap og offentlig administrasjon mer spesifikt er posisjonert i den skandinaviske organisasjonsteori-tradisjonen; hvordan organisasjonsteoretisk forskning på Stanford og SCANCOR har influert statsvitenskapelig forskning i Norge; og hva den norske innflytelsen på SCANCOR består i. Vi påpeker hvordan forskningsmessig entreprenørskap, institusjonell utvikling og analytisk utvikling er sammenvevet. Samarbeidet mellom James G. March og Johan P. Olsen har vært helt avgjørende både for utviklingen av skandinavisk institusjonalisme mer generelt og for utviklingen av en dominerende forskningsretning innen studier av offentlig administrasjon i Norge, men de har også vært instrumentelle for etableringen av SCANCOR og for å ha samlet og utviklet norske forskere på SCANCOR. Norske forskere

innen offentlig administrasjon har brakt teoretisk variasjon til SCANCOR, men også mer empirisk fokus på offentlig sektor.

ABSTRACT
The questions covered in this article address how Norwegian political science and public administration (PA) research is positioned more specifically in the tradition of Scandinavian Organization Theory, how the organization theory research at Stanford and SCANCOR has influenced the political science research in Norway, and the nature of the influence of Norwegian political science research on SCANCOR. We point out how scientific entrepreneurships, institutional development and analytical development are interwoven. The collaboration of James G. March and Johan P. Olsen has been crucial both for developing Scandinavian Institutionalism in general and for developing a dominant direction of PA research in Norway, but also instrumental in establishing SCANCOR, and for gathering and developing Norwegian PA researchers at SCANCOR. Norwegian PA researchers have brought theoretical variety to SCANCOR and a greater focus on and use of organization theory in research on the public sector.

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A Feast of the Fog of Reality

KRISTIAN KREINER

INTRODUCTION

If you have ever visited the Scandinavian Consortium of Organizational Research at Stanford University (SCANCOR), you may have noticed some old maps of Scandinavia on the walls. Those maps are certainly decorative, but they may also be sending a more subtle, keyed message. On the surface, being placed in the Halls of Science (i.e., in Stanford University) they may symbolize progress in terms of evidence and accuracy: we have better maps today that allow us to navigate the world more safely. However, navigating life itself does not depend on accurate maps. That truth is recognized everywhere, but is perhaps more celebrated in Scandinavia than elsewhere. In cultural studies, Scandinavians are sometimes singled out as people with a high tolerance for ambiguity. In both a literal and a symbolic sense, and in both a political and a practical sense, we Scandinavians live in a fog of reality – and apparently happily so, even if melancholy also has a hold on most of us.

Perhaps the point of the old and inaccurate maps on the walls of SCANCOR is to remind us that we should derive aesthetic pleasure and intellectual inspiration from maps, but also that we should never try to navigate our lives with them. To elaborate on this interpretation, I will use the novel *Babette's Feast* by the Danish storyteller Karen Blixen (a.k.a. Isak Dinesen). The novel is about a feast, a lavish dinner in the middle of nowhere in Norway, but it is also about a feast of human dilemmas and choices.

The novel's theme is far from novel. It circles around classic existential ambivalence. "*We tremble before making our choices in life, and after having made them again tremble in fear of having chosen wrong,*" declares General Loewenhielm in his dinner speech at Babette's feast. What a feast! Karen Blixen artistically illustrates the creative ways in which we inhabit not just one reality, but multiple realities at the same time. Life consists of the mixing of incompatible worlds: in the novel, worlds of nature and belief, worlds of fine arts and pious Puritanism, worlds of French cuisine and Norwegian subsistence. The tale of simple individuals living in barren circumstances

proves frighteningly deep, contradictory, and paradoxical. It is in the individual and collective coping with incompatible realities that the novel explores the various passions of people. This is no simple territory that should or even could be mapped accurately.

But let me reset these reflections by putting the novel on the map.

BERLEVAAG

For reasons that need not concern us here, Babette (a culinary genius who was once a celebrated cook at the legendary Café Anglais in Paris) ends up as a maid in Berlevaag, a small town at the end of one of Norway's many fjords. The fjord is characterized as "a long narrow arm of sea between tall mountains." There we find a small religious sect, founded by a great prophet known as the Dean. Long after his death he is still running the lives of the people of Berlevaag, not least his two beautiful and talented daughters, Martine and Philippa, whom he came to dominate by making himself dependent on them as his right and left hands. It is in the house of Martine and Philippa that Babette is a maid.

Like many Deans in Academia, the Dean in Berlevaag had taught his disciples to renounce the pleasures of this world. How then does it come about that his disciples celebrate his memory by consuming turtle soup, *Blinis Demidoff*, and *Cailles en Sarcophage*, and drinking Amontillado and Veuve Cliqout? It is indeed strange, and, as with so many other things in Berlevaag, "… it might even seem to call for an explanation," as the narrator observes.

Appropriately enough, you will be both surprised and reassured by her explanations. They illluminate the fundamental creativity with which we may manage to live full lives – for better or worse – no matter what iron cages and barren circumstances we may be born, forced or voluntarily enter into. I will give a few illustrations of such creativity in Berlevaag.

THE AGENCY OF TONGUES

What calls for an explanation is the fact that for one single night these puritans let Babette recreate Café Anglais in Berlevaag with the members of the sect serving as its patrons. Why would they allow Babette to cast a different light on their lives by giving them a glimpse of the grandeur of Parisian esthetics and decadence when they had already "seen the light"? Let me speak on behalf of the novel by saying that had that been the purpose the feast would never have happened. The sect would not have agreed to being illuminated and, more importantly, Babette would not have wasted her efforts and the last of her money on such a fruitless aim. The event is rationalized ingeniously to allow Babette to reenact Café Anglais and the

sect to celebrate the Dean's values of restrain and purity. In a wonderfully creative and clever manner, they find a way of eating cake and having it too. The members of the sect decide to take part in the Feast senselessly, to control their tongues rather than be controlled by them:

> The tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. The tongue can no man tame … On the day of our master [the Dean's 100 year birthday] we will cleanse our tongues of all taste and purify them of all delight or disgust of the senses, keeping and preserving them for the higher things of praise and thanksgiving. (p. 54)

It is like Ulysses and the Sirens, but with ropes made of faith and the infamous rocks of Lorelei proving to be friendly shores. That little tongue proves to be more of an actant than we are allowed to admit in many academic circles. Even if they may not taste it, let alone enjoy and appreciate it, the Veuve Cliqout has its effects. It loosens their tongues, enabling them to say things that could never have been said otherwise. Of course, they are not tamed by their tongues; they are *set free* by them – with a little help from the turtle and the wine.

Is that not what we understand by creativity? To turn things which are constraints into enablers, not necessarily by design and intention, and never entirely by themselves, but nevertheless showing the way to another world as a result?

THE AMBIGUITY OF REASSURANCE

Many times before, the tongue had played tricks with the characters in the novel. This had happened to General Lorens Loewenhielm in a way that changed his life. In his youth, his blasé attitude about life and career made his parents send him away to a village near Berlevaag. When he met Martine he so was struck by her beauty that all his tender words stuck in his throat. After several unsuccessful attempts to declare his feelings, he fled Berlevaag and dedicated himself to his military career, much to his mother's delight, though she never knew, of course, "by which queer, winding roads her son had reached his happy moral standpoint."

After a splendid and successful career, the general returns to Berlevaag to reassure himself that he has made the right choices in life, only – as you will have guessed – to conclude that he has not! He realizes that day that emotionally Martine has been with him every day of his life.

Not unlike the rest of us, he had spent his life producing data and facts in order to forget the truth. The row of decorations on his breast remains a fact, but now we realize that they have failed to make him forget Martine. Rather, they *reminded* him of her. With a little extra help from the turtle and

wine, he learns that night that "… in this world anything is possible." Such an insight comes only from imagination and creativity.

THE FRIGHTENING GLIMPSE OF A CHOICE

Another great character who happened to be visiting Berlevaag much earlier while the Dean was still alive is Archille Papin, an international opera celebrity. Having nothing better to do, he goes to church and hears Philippa sing. Sidetracked by the beauty of her voice, he becomes her teacher to prepare her for the great opera stages of the world. All goes well until they practice the seduction duet between Don Giovanni and Zerlina, in which it is scripted that Don Giovanni kisses Zerlina. Scandalized, Philippa refuses to take any more lessons and Papin leaves the town with a sense that a great talent has been wasted. When gray, lonely and forgotten by all those who once applauded him, he eventually acknowledges to himself that Philippa "may have chosen the better part of life" – though he was probably not correct, since Philippa did not choose. Rather, she shied away from confronting a choice. Papin thought that Philippa made "the artist pay" for playing his role as Don Giovanni, while her sister thought it was the kiss itself that awoke illegitimate feelings in her. But what perhaps frightened Philippa most was something in her own nature: singing opera gave her a glimpse of a choice (between Berlevaag and the stages of the world, between Papin and her predestination) that so frightened her that she refused to confront the symbol of choice, Papin, again. Perhaps he awakened in her the idea of rationality that she intuitively knew would ruin her life.

GOD'S PATHS

Perhaps what most calls for an explanation is the fact that Philippa's protestant father, the Dean, allowed a papist, Archille Papin, into his home to teach his daughter to sing opera. But God himself comes to his rescue in this case, because the lack of reason and justification that the Dean sees for admitting Papin into his home comes to reflect human ignorance, not God's will. The Dean's reasoning finds expression in this simple phrase:

> God's paths run across the sea and snowy mountains, where man's eye sees no track. (p. 23)

This is ambiguity at its best – as a license for exploration and an escape from rationality. This is creativity. These are the processes of the Garbage Can model of decision making that produce meaning and causal relationships where randomness and fortuity prevail. Yes, indeed we may be trembling when we cannot see the paths and the tracks to follow, but off-piste living is

an option for those who have acquired the appropriate faith, inner gaze and creative skill. On this occasion, the Dean uses faith to legitimize and license rather than to constrain, seeing virtue where others might easily have seen behavioral inconsistency and human weakness.

CONCLUSION

Living and acting in the fog of reality entails fundamental leaps of faith. *Babette's Feast* celebrates the ambiguities and complexities of life by mixing contexts and categories, and by showing the ingenuity and imaginativeness of the human spirit. Attraction harbors repulsion, closeness can be entertained at a distance, constraints enable, and for a faithful human being the barren landscape is filled with the tracks of God. The novel reminds us that love may be more important than decorations, truth more important than data, and faith a better strategy in the pursuit of happiness than making destiny a matter of choice.

Institutionally, SCANCOR may enact some of this complexity in the context of Stanford University. Visitors come from all over the world, but all are counted as Scandinavians. Looming in a central location on campus, it has never really been a part of the university. Its scholars are *visiting* scholars, in other words, on the periphery, and like Papin and Loewenhielm, neither in nor out, neither member nor stranger. They take part in the academic life of Stanford mostly for the pleasure of it, taking classes without getting credits and participating in seminars anonymously. To Stanford University, SCANCOR is a foreigner, an immigrant that has nonetheless served its purpose as a host to prominent Stanford professors.

In fact, SCANCOR was created to host not only anonymous visiting scholars, but also their interaction with Professor James G. March. To all those who knew Jim at that time, it was no surprise that he would become the first director of this Little Scandinavia at Stanford University. To everybody else, it must have been a shock. It would take more than common sense to see that Babette was not out of place in Berlevaag, and the same goes for Jim at SCANCOR. But we knew back then, and know today, that Jim feels comfortable in "our" fog of reality, and that as a scholar he is less motivated by the ordinary scientific disposition to clear away a fog upon encountering one. Rather, he has helped us to explore life's inherent ambiguity, searching for ways to express, understand, and celebrate its virtues.

There are many similarities between Berlevaag and SCANCOR. But there are also differences. Babette's feast was a unique event, but the feasts at SCANCOR are recurrent. The food and wine at Stanford are seldom exquisite – more often than not rice and chop suey from a street vendor. It is during the institutionalized lunch conversations with Jim under the

Californian sun that such simple dishes come to taste like turtle soup, *Blinis Demidoff* and *Cailles en Sarcophage*. Intellectually, we play tricks with our tongues not to cleanse them of all taste, but to train them to taste more than the street vendor intended. For all these years, Jim may very well have chosen the role of Don Quixote in insisting on the beauty of Dulcinea as embodied in generations of visiting scholars. But unlike the plain country girl who fled the knight-errant, the SCANCOR scholars who were treated as intellectual royalty came back for more.

The ancient maps on the walls at SCANCOR may mean little to most people, but they are more than institutional decorations. They are traces of God's paths, of scholarship founded on friendship, of the beauty of imperfection, and they remind us that the quest for insight and wisdom should derive inspiration, but never take direction from a map.

ABSTRAKT

Ved hjælp af en fortolkning af Babettes Gæstebud giver jeg eksempler på livsmønstre i den skandinaviske kultur, hvor mennesker ikke bare må leve med, men også har lært at udnytte uklarheden og usikkerheden. Novellen bruges som nøgle til at forstå nogle implicitte kvaliteter ved SCANCOR som institution.

ABSTRACT

An analysis of *Babette's Feast* is used to illustrate the living pragmatics of people who not only tolerate but also celebrate ambiguity and uncertainty. The novel is used as a key to understanding some subtleties of SCANCOR as an institution.

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Through a Glass Lightly

Gjennom et vindu

WALTER W. POWELL

Keywords: transparency, institutions, varieties of capitalism, collaboration, Nordic model
Nøkkelord: åpenhet, institusjoner, varianter av kapitalisme, samarbeid, den nordiske modellen

The essays in this issue focus on the enduring relationships between Scandinavian researchers and SCANCOR, highlighting the many connections that have been fostered at Stanford University. I take a different approach and reflect on what I have learned from Nordic scholarship and the Nordic countries. And here I do not just mean Mikkeler beer, Henning Mankell and Jo Nesbø mysteries, Finnish artistry with glass, Nordic noir TV shows, or *Borgen*, the exceptional political drama that was my addiction this summer. In addition to hedonic pleasures, there is much to appreciate and learn from the social democracies of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, and their distinctive combinations of efficiency and egalitarianism.

When I became Director of SCANCOR in 1999, my prior contacts with Scandinavia had been somewhat limited. I gave the Uppsala Lectures in Business Studies at the University of Uppsala in the spring of 1997, and had the pleasure of spending a month in Sweden then. I visited and attended conferences in Scandinavia as early as 1978, but had not formed deep friendships. Becoming Director of SCANCOR gave me the opportunity to travel to Scandinavia three or four times a year and spend longer stretches of time with Nordic researchers. To be sure, I was previously aware of the Swedish "markets-as-networks" research program that focused on the networks of relationships that typified product development and distribution chains (Hagg & Johanson, 1983; Johanson & Mattson, 1987; Håkansson & Johanson, 1993). The early Hagg and Johanson paper on networks was shared with me by Harrison White, who had come across it, and their writing very much influenced my "Neither Markets Nor Hierarchy" paper (Powell, 1990). At the

invitation of Jan Johanson and Håkan Håkansson, I attended a very interesting conference on trust in the small village of Sigtuna, Sweden, which gave me further exposure to a very different and distinctive style of research as well as conference organizing.

Prior to visiting Uppsala in 1997 I was, of course, familiar with the writings of Nils Brunsson (1989; Brunsson & Jacobson, 2000) and Barbara Czarniawska (1997; Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996; Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). Their work reflected both an appreciation of US writings on institutional theory, and a concerted effort to develop a process-oriented alternative that focused on how ideas about organizing are shaped, edited, and translated as they diffuse into new settings. In Uppsala, I also met Kerstin Sahlin and Lars Engwall and learned more about the particular brand of institutional theory that had developed in Sweden. Their respective work paid more attention to the carriers of managerial practices – the business press, consultants, academic gurus, and even transnational organizations. One of the first conferences organized at SCANCOR during my stewardship focused on how management ideas are molded, transformed and expanded by these professional carriers, and the papers from this meeting resulted in a fine book (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall, 2002). I realized at our conference that there was much to learn from this line of scholarship. For example, the current focus in US research on ranking systems was anticipated by Linda Wedlin's work on ranking European business schools (Wedlin, 2006). In steering a path between US templates, European demands for accountability, and a burgeoning global educational market, the young European business schools were constructing their own identities through processes of partial imitation and local translation (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008). For me, the core insight I took away from this stream of work was that strong forces of isomorphism can lead to heterogeneity when practices are implemented in diverse settings.

In contrast to the United States, organizational research in the Nordic countries has always included political science in its orbit. This inclusion, which is largely absent in the US (a striking omission, in my view, considering that one of the founders of organization theory, Herbert Simon, began his career in the field of public administration), has several notable consequences. One, adding considerations of political participation to organizational research signals a commitment to equality and participation that is the signature of Nordic life. Two, the inclusion of political science reflects the much larger role of state institutions and public bodies in the organizational life of these countries. Three, researchers in Scandinavia have remarkably easy access to organizations, especially (but not only) in the public sector. This general belief in accessibility and transparency on the part of organizations no doubt enhances a more process-oriented, decision-making focus in

organizational research, as analysts have greater access to the internal affairs of the organizations they study. Another notable feature is the expectation that researchers will repay the access with discussions of the implications of the work for the practitioners under study. In Norway, Johan Olsen has long emphasized the connections between democratic governance and organization theory (Olsen, 1983; March & Olsen, 1995). This attention to public sector organizations and their integration into the structure of the economy is an important antidote to US organizational research, where firms are typically the dominant unit of analysis and many scholars routinely use the term "firm" to also describe bureaus, movements, and nonprofit organizations, without critically thinking about what such a transposition signals.

My own early encounters with this Scandinavian commitment to transparency and candor came in two forms, one as a tourist and the other as a colleague. My first exposure to such opacity was during a visit to the Vasa museum in Stockholm. This maritime museum has a brilliant display of a 17th century warship that sank in Stockholm harbor on its maiden voyage in 1628, just a few moments after leaving the quay before thousands of shocked onlookers. The Royal warship was built for King Gustavus II Adolphus, who insisted that the ship have more guns and ornamentation than the Dutch master shipbuilder originally planned. The ship had 64 cannons, the most of any ship in the world at the time. It was explained to the popular King that all the extra weight would create instability and a gravity problem, but he insisted, as he desperately needed the powerful warship to wage war against Poland. The sinking was a calamity, not just for the lives lost, also because 5% of Sweden's GNP had been spent on building the ship. It was a serious economic disaster. How did the large warship sink in her own harbor? Who was to blame? A Council of the Realm was immediately created to answer these questions. The King had assumed the throne at age 17 in 1611, and gained great respect as a courageous young warrior in wars with Denmark and Russia. Sweden had been a small, impoverished country, at the mercy of the Danes, but by the 1630s it had become one of the strongest countries in Northern and Central Europe. The King invested heavily in building an army and a powerful navy to protect Sweden and control the Baltic Sea. The striking feature of the inquest into the ship's sinking was that a committee appointed by the King did not find the designer of the great vessel to be at fault. Even in the Middle Ages, when a royal monarch was looking for a scapegoat for this extraordinarily expensive and humiliating naval catastrophe, a committee did not punish the wrong people. I was equally astounded that among those who could have been charged was the widow of the shipbuilder. He had died during the construction, and his wife assumed the general contractor role in charge of the building of the massive ship, along with a young assistant shipbuilder. She seemed to be a likely scapegoat,

along with the ship's captain who had been immediately arrested. But none were determined to be at fault, as they had followed the King's specifications. A subsequent, second Naval Court of Inquiry, chaired by the King's half-brother, continued in the fall to try to respond to the King's demands to find the guilty parties. This wider court included 17 persons, six of whom were members of the previous inquiry, and several high-ranking naval officers. Of course, the King could not be found guilty; but nor was anyone else. After two tribunals, no one was made a scapegoat and punished. The warship was raised from Stockholm Harbor in April 1961, remarkably well preserved in the brackish water. It can be seen today at the museum located not far from where it was originally built and capsized.

My second encounter with openness came from a Danish Research Council's request to review several grant proposals. The Research Council's request seemed fairly straightforward until I read the following note which said if I accept, "according to Danish law, your identity will be made known to the applicant as part of a right to reply process." Moreover, the request continued with a section on anonymity, confidentiality, and openness. This section stated, "please note that you cannot be anonymous as a reviewer in Denmark. Research plans and personal data including proposals are confidential by nature and should not be accessible to others than the reviewer and must be disposed of immediately after the assessment process is completed. Confidentially must also be maintained. However, the public can request access to all documents in the public sector." The Danish grant evaluation process is in many respects the reverse of reviewing in the United States. The reviewer's job is to maintain confidentiality of the applicant, but the applicant has access to the reviewer's identity and opinions and the opportunity to respond to them.

These two examples, one a turning point in Sweden's imperial history and the other a small feature of contemporary academic life in Denmark, capture the stamp of Nordic associational life in which people interact with one another independent of status and rank in a manner that is unusual in the rest of Europe or North America.

I turn now from these personal reflections to considerations of the so-called Nordic model, a design that seeks an egalitarian road to affluence. What is striking to me is the extent to which the Nordic countries do not accept the familiar claims that there must be a trade-off between efficiency and equality, a mindset that is entrenched in much of the rest of the world. In the 1980s, the Scandinavian countries were not particularly well off, with living standards behind France and England. And in the early 1990s, when times were good for the rest of Europe, the Nordic countries faced crises. Both Finland and Sweden had sharp recessions, possible bank failures, and currency devaluations, Norway had yet to mine its oil wealth, and Denmark

faced high tax burdens. Many analysts argued that taxes were too high, welfare provision too generous, unions too strong, and entrepreneurship too rare. Twenty-five years later, these countries are known globally for combining prosperity and equality. Thus, most citizens in these countries have lived in an era in which their lives and their families' prospects have gotten better, a pronounced contrast to other Western countries. What are the institutional arrangements that permitted this adaptation and profound transformation?

In the extensive scholarly literatures on welfare states and varieties of capitalism (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Boyer & Hollingsworth, 1997; Hall & Soskice, 2001) the Nordic countries are considered examples of coordinated market economies. The central idea of this prolific line of research is that the institutions of politics and economics – industrial relations, banking and finance, corporate governance, and social policy regimes – are linked to one another and result in a coherent ensemble that produces a durable social order. One insight that follows is that all the participants have a stake in the survival of one another. For example, in countries with a strong vocational training program for workers, employers organize their production strategies around having a high-skill and high-wage labor force (Streeck 1992; Thelen 2004). These institutional arrangements have deep roots in the political histories of the capitalist democracies and the divergent ways that countries have responded to economic and political crises. The resulting political-economic arrangements are, depending on one's theoretical perspective, either resilient because they define how citizens engage with politics and economics and create social cohesion, or path dependent because they represent stable outcomes in which the various participants realize their individual gains through cooperation.

The continuum along which the Anglo-American model of free market capitalism is contrasted with the more corporatist economies of Germany, the Netherlands, southern Europe, and the Scandinavian countries is the degree of coordination, which ranges from the purportedly decentralized system of the US to the highly integrated models of Scandinavia. This line of research was extremely useful in illuminating how countries responded differently to the pressures of globalization and international economic influences in the 1990s and early 21st century, resisting convergence and developing solutions that are embedded in their local political histories. The economic crises brought on by the 2008 collapse of the banking sector worldwide posed a new challenge to the varieties of capitalism research tradition. In a recent essay, Kathleen Thelen (2012) suggests eschewing the single dimension of coordination and adding political coalition formation to the analytical mix. Her conceptual move is in part motivated by trying to understand how countries such as the Nordic ones have combined eco-

nomic liberalization with a continuing commitment to high levels of equality. Thelen suggests that egalitarian capitalism survives not when it is tied to a golden past but when new political coalitions are reconfigured. The thrust of her argument, though sympathetic to the varieties of capitalism thesis, emphasizes the ability of nations to recombine old arrangements in ways that are responsive to contemporary demands. Although she does not go this far, I think such recombinations bring even more varied models of collaboration to the political-economic landscape.

This literature offers a rich seam to tap in thinking about the organizational and political landscapes of contemporary Scandinavia. To viewers from afar, the Nordic countries look very much alike – small countries, relatively homogenous, very prosperous, well educated, with strong social welfare provision. And there are many reasons to bundle the countries together; they all score at the top of the global table on a number of important indicators – high economic freedom ratings, very high rates of social mobility, exceptionally high scores on women's opportunity measures, global leaders in the impact of the Internet on e-government and e-commerce, and low government debt (*The Economist*, Feb. 2, 2013). Not to mention that the Nordic countries also score very high on the new happiness indicators, and why not, when cities such as Helsinki and Copenhagen are routinely ranked as among the most livable cities in the world. In the UN World Happiness Report 2013, the five happiest countries are Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Netherlands and Sweden. The UN report says happiness is closely related to "social equality, trust, and quality of governance."

But viewed up close, as I have had the good fortune to do for more than a decade, the Nordic model seems to be much more variegated, and contrasts appear, rooted in differing responses to the economic and political challenges of the current century, and sharp differences in natural resource endowments. Take schooling, for example. Finland is currently the envy of the world, as the OECD's PISA studies (Program for International Student Assessment) of student learning have Finland ranked at the top of the world. No other Scandinavian country is in the top ten. And Finland is actually rather frugal in education spending, as education spending there is somewhat less than the US, ranked 17th; moreover, teacher salaries are not particularly high. Schools in the other Nordic countries simply do not compare to Finland. In contrast to the Finnish approach, Sweden has pursued all manner of neo-liberal initiatives to improve schooling, adopting vouchers for school choice to a degree that would make Milton Friedman proud. Sweden has perhaps gone further than any European country in embracing consumer choice for its citizens, allowing them to use government funds to buy such public services as education and health from whichever providers, private or public, they prefer. Today, in Sweden, the majority of new kinder-

gartens and medical clinics are being built by private firms, a topic of considerable debate this political season. But all this shopping around has not transformed schooling. The Finns, without reliance on the testing and standardization that characterizes either South Korea or the US, or the voucher system of Sweden, have produced a virtuous cycle in which teaching is a respected profession, teachers are well prepared and thus given more autonomy in the classroom, and consequently enjoy their jobs more and have long job tenures (Sahlberg, 2011). Students, in turn, reciprocate by taking school seriously. Sweden and Finland are alike, however, when it comes to research and development investment. These two countries, with their large science and engineering labor forces, are among the world leaders in terms of rate of spending on R&D. Denmark and Norway are less R&D intensive, not surprising given their different resource bases in farming and oil, respectively.

Finland is a multilingual country, and Russian and Swedish are heard often on the streets of Helsinki. Sweden has long been receptive to refugees seeking asylum from political repression and conflict zones, and has a large Muslim population, albeit one that is segregated in urban enclaves. Norway and Denmark are less diverse and more resistant to immigration, but this too is changing. All of the countries have far right parties, too, though none seem opposed to the welfare state. The debates are over who has access to the system. Finland was quick to adopt the euro in 1999; none of the others followed. Although Denmark and Sweden are also members of the European Union, Norway is not. And with its considerable oil wealth, Norway is in many respects an outlier, a country that has long relied on the state to manage its abundant natural resources – forests, fish, waterfalls, minerals, oil. The political-economic regime looks more like China's state capitalism than that of its Nordic cousins. Danish capitalism has deep roots in agriculture and pig farming. Even today, it is the largest meat exporter in the world. Its contemporary firms look much like the *mittelstand*, the small to medium-sized enterprises so prevalent in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. Sweden remains the land of great family dynasties from the 19th century, and the Wallenbergs continue to loom large. Finland was the land of Nokia, but its recent sale to Microsoft has triggered a wake-up call. But neither Finland nor Sweden are fixated on the past. Sweden let Saab fail, and sold Volvo to the Chinese; Finns see the collapse of the Nokia empire as an opportunity to build new things.

Rather than viewing the Nordic countries as alike in their policies and endowments, which they increasingly are not, it is perhaps better to view them as similar in their pragmatist orientation. The inputs to organizational life, be it in politics or economics, have evolved in ways that are self-reinforcing. Thus it is important to understand the Scandinavian countries not as following a path dependent trajectory, but as places where organizational life

has co-evolved with belief systems and the skills to respond to crises (Kristensen, 2011). Among these I would stress the ability to form coalitions and engage in collaboration with ostensible competitors; a high sense of trust or faith that the public sector will do well by its citizens; and the simple recognition that countries in which women work and families are given easy access to child care and family leave are countries that prosper.

Scandinavian countries have made an art form out of forming minority governments out of three, four or more parties. Whether it is red-green, center-right, or center-left coalitions, the art of collaboration has been practiced as a matter of course. Fredrik Reinfeldt, Sweden's first non-socialist prime minister to win re-election since the 1970s, leads a moderate-right coalition that has cut taxes and lowered government debt markedly. In Denmark, a four party liberal coalition government was formed in 2011 with a narrow 50.3% of the vote. In June 2011, Jyrki Katainen formed a six party left-center coalition in Finland. A conservative prime minister, Erna Solberg, just assembled a coalition in Norway. "Iron Erna," as the former Girl Scout leader is called, is Norway's first conservative prime minister since 1990. Whatever their respective political regimes, these are parliamentary democracies where getting on with one's political adversaries is seen as necessary. As politics splinters in many other countries, the political systems seem paralyzed, but not in Scandinavia. To an outsider like me, this skill seems baked into the political sphere, as a generalized commitment to cooperation appears easy. Whether it is because Finnish independence and the right to vote for women happened together in the early 20th century, or that citizenship rights for health care and unemployment came early across all the Nordic countries, there is a widespread sense that government works for its citizens. Moene & Wallerstein (1993) have referred to a linkage of expectation and policies as a "mutual gift exchange" (see also Moene & Wallerstein, 2003). This level of trust in the public sector and the expectation that it should be held to high standards of performance produces both commitment and the flexibility needed to make changes in times of trouble and reform.

The Danish have coined a term, "Flexicurity," to describe a labor market policy they have developed that combines freedom for employers to shed jobs when necessary and hire outsiders when needed with labor market guarantees and training for workers looking for jobs. Denmark has a very high rate of job turnover, but this labor market volatility is buttressed by government support for retraining and job search assistance. This combination of flexible employment with social support is not viewed as a concession by either labor or capital but as an accommodation, precisely the kind that generates benefits for all the parties (Pontusson, 2009). Similarly, the Nordic countries all have very high rates of female labor force participation. These countries also have public care for children and the elderly. These services

enable women to work, and female employment boosts the tax rolls and leads to prosperity. The ensuing economic growth helps fund the expenses for parental leave, day care, and eldercare. The same policies that in other industrial nations are difficult to rally support for and hard to fund are part of an institutional compact in Scandinavia, where politics and beliefs join together and mutually reinforce one another.

To end on a personal note, when Jim March called me in 1998 and inquired whether I would be interested in moving to Stanford and taking on the position with SCANCOR, I had little idea what was in store. But through time spent with Kristian Kreiner, Risto Tainio, Kerstin Sahlin, and Per Lægreid, the SCANCOR board members at the time I joined, I learned a lot about patience, compromise, and equality. We had fascinating discussions about merit and worth and fairness. Most of all, I learned that how decisions are made is often more important than their outcomes, a lesson that I suppose Jim March, Johan Olsen, and Michael Cohen could have taught me earlier, but I had to travel to Scandinavia to actually absorb it.

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ABSTRACT
This essay is an effort to reflect on distinctive features of Nordic scholarship and Scandinavian countries which I observed during my tenure as SCANCOR director. Rather than view the Nordic model as a product of intentional design, I analyze it as the co-creation of beliefs, pragmatic accommodations, and institutional practices.

ABSTRAKT
Dette essayet er et forsøk på å reflektere over noen distinkte karaktertrekk ved Nordisk forskning og de Skandinaviske land som jeg observerte i min tid som SCANCOR direktør. I stedet for å oppfatte den Nordiske modellen som et resultat av intensjonalt design analyserer jeg den som ko-produksjon av tro, pragmatiske tillempinger og institusjonelle praksiser.

AUTHOR PRESENTATION

Walter W. Powell is Professor of Education (and) Sociology, Organizational Behavior, Management Science and Engineering, Public Policy, and Communication at Stanford University. His interests focus on the processes through which knowledge is transferred across organizations, and the role of networks in facilitating or hindering innovation and of institutions in codifying ideas. His most recent book, with John Padgett, is The Emergence of Organizations and Markets (Princeton U. Press, 2012). He holds honorary degrees from Uppsala University, Copenhagen Business School, and the Helsinki School of Economics, and is a foreign member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Science.

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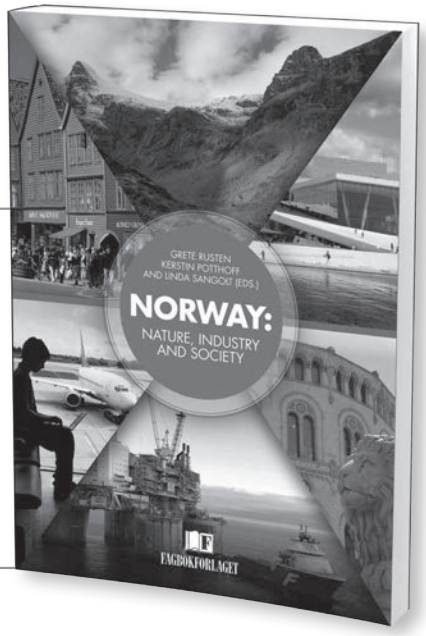
NORWAY: NATURE, INDUSTRY AND SOCIETY



This book offers a fresh perspective on how this small country in the far north of Europe has developed and emerged as a modern society. The identity of the country can be seen as balancing culturally between urban and rural, and ideologically between market and social democratic values. The authors are researchers in geography, social science, economics and political science at major universities, university colleges and research institutions in Norway.

Professionals, students, tourists and other adults who visit or move to Norway will gain valuable insight and useful knowledge from reading this book.

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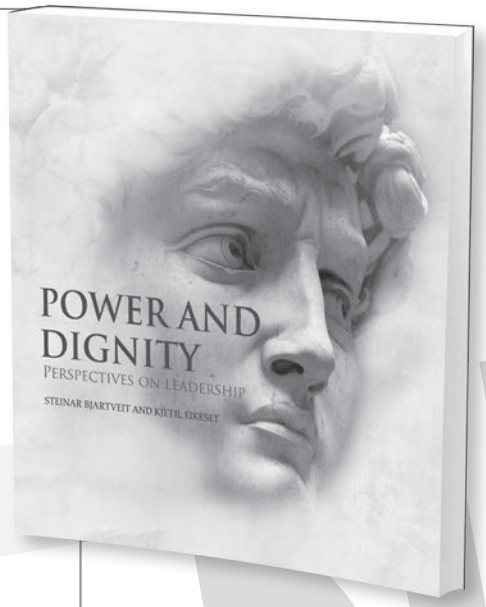
POWER AND DIGNITY
PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP



Several questions have always plagued leaders and managers. Does a leader need a personal vision in order to achieve excellent results? How does one create innovation? How should leaders relate to power? Is there an element of dignity in the leadership role? Human beings have been contemplating these notions throughout the ages, yet few eras have generated such strong pronouncements on them as the Renaissance in Florence. The authors aim to provide insights into our era by leading the reader through narratives from the Renaissance and contrasting them with our own time.

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