

The AGORA

Newsletter of the Rationality and Society Section of the American Sociological Association and the Research Committee 45 on Rational Choice of the International Sociological Association

Summer 2020



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From the Chair's Desk (ASA)

Pamela Emanuelson



As the unprecedented 2019/2020 ASA term winds to a close, I am proud to report that our section has not remained idle. Though ASA canceled the annual in-person meeting, I have been in a unique position to see our section's continued vitality. Before COVID-19 halted the annual meeting, the section planned two sessions. During the business meeting, the section will award both the James S. Coleman best book award and the best graduate student paper award. A committee worked successfully to refine the by-laws. We have now set up a new rotation for awards, and have named both our book and article award after James Coleman.

Unfortunately, not all news can be rosy in such turbulent times. Our planned joint session with Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity fell through. Submissions only came from members of our section. Furthermore, while all our submissions to both sections were excellent, the presenters elected not to participate in ASA's virtual meeting. Given our section's multi-national membership, the challenges posed were too high.

Still, our in-coming officers are exceptional, and I look forward to the 2021 conference. Thank you to everyone who offered to run. You gave the membership the best type of difficult choice, the one with no adverse outcome for the section. Congratulations to our in-coming chair-elect, Gianluca Manzo, in-coming secretary/treasurer Antonio Sirianni, in-coming council member Carter Butts and our first,

ever student representative Kristen Tzoc. My sincerest thanks to our out-going members, including past-chair Jun Kobayashi, out-going secretary/treasurer Masayuki Kanai, and out-going council member Emily Ann Erikson.

Despite the current challenges, I am still planning the section business meeting. In addition to updating everyone on section activities, I believe it would behoove us to look to the future. I look forward to discussing possible new directions for the section. **Our meeting will occur via Zoom on Monday, August 10th, between 10:30-11:10 am Central Time (US and Canada).** Join the Zoom meeting at <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72447349249?pwd=V1Z3NGp2M0IyckN0UFRxMjEraTFOU09> (Meeting ID: 724 4734 9249; Passcode: RatChoice).

Some of you might know, a movement started within ASA sections to donate section reception funds to the ASA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) in support of minority scholars. Though we are a small section with limited funds, the council voted unanimously to show our support by donating \$550 of this year's reception funds to MFP.

It was my honor and pleasure to work on behalf of our small but vigorous section. May you all take care in these troubling times. I look forward to seeing you in the future.

115th ASA Annual Meeting, *Virtual Engagement Event*, August 8-11, 2020



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 ASA annual *in-person* meeting was cancelled. Instead, a virtual engagement event takes place on August 8-11. Section on Rationality and Society is holding a *virtual business meeting* as follows.

Section on Rationality and Society Business Meeting: Monday, August 10, 8:30-9:10am PDT
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72447349249?pwd=V1Z3NGp2M0IyckN0UFRxMjEraTFOU09>
(Meeting ID: 724 4734 9249; Passcode: RatChoice)

2020 Rationality and Society James Coleman Award for Outstanding Book



The James Coleman Outstanding Book Award will be given to **Patrick Bergemann** for his book:

Judge Thy Neighbor: Denunciations in the Spanish Inquisition, Romanov Russia, and Nazi Germany, Columbia University Press, 2019.

Patrick Bergemann asks what would bring people to denounce others? He examines various theoretical models to bear on very different cases: the Spanish Inquisition, Romanov Russia and Nazi Germany. One likely reason that people would denounce others is that coercive (or at times positive) incentives from regimes might be involved. Indeed, these types of incentives are often evoked and shape actions. However, he also demonstrates that this is not the only answer. Denunciations can promote community social control by local individuals and groups.

The book amasses a great amount of data to test different hypotheses. At the same time, we are provided with detailed accounts of specific incidences. The result is a truly fascinating analysis of denunciations.

Committee: Jane Sell (chair), Mathijs De Vaan, and Eugene Johnsen

2020 Rationality and Society Section Award for Best Paper by a Graduate Student

The selection committee is pleased to announce that the award goes to **David Kretschmer's** paper entitled "**Structural constraints to out-group interaction produce in-group preferences: A model of asymmetric learning and relationship formation.**"

Committee: Yoshimichi Sato (chair), Katrin Auspurg, and Antonio Sirianni.

The Seventh Joint U.S.-Japan Preconference on Mathematical Sociology and Rational Choice Postponed

The Sections on Rationality and Society and Mathematical Sociology, the Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology, and the International Sociological Association Research Committee 45 planned to cosponsor the Seventh Joint U.S.-Japan Preconference on Mathematical Sociology and Rational Choice. However, as you know, the 2020 ASA Annual Meeting in San Francisco has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After careful consideration, the organizers decided to postpone the preconference until the next year. The new plan is to hold it on August 6, 2021, a day before the annual ASA meeting, in Chicago. We regret the change but look forward to seeing you all in Chicago!

(Jun Kobayashi, Richard Edward Gardner, Kikuko Nagayoshi, Kazuhiro Kezuka, and Gianluca Manzo, organizers)

The general objective of Research Committee 45 on Rational Choice is to advance the development of Rational Choice Theory. This includes its application to various explanatory problems across social science disciplines, its empirical test, its theoretical development and comparison with alternative approaches. The RC tries to achieve this general objective by promoting the international exchange of scientific information across disciplinary borders.

From the President's Desk

Jun Kobayashi



Dear colleagues,

No doubt you are experiencing unprecedented hard times since the beginning of the year---due to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

How has the global pandemic affected our Research Committee activities? It directly hit two essential events of RC45 in this summer. First, of course, the fourth ISA Forum of Sociology in Porto Alegre has been postponed. The new dates are February 23-27, 2021.

The Forum was supposed to be held from July 14 to 18 this summer. RC45 prepared for the following five oral sessions with cutting-edge 20 papers.

1. Causes and Consequences of Corruption: Theoretical Models and Empirical Evidence (Session Organizer: Wojtek Przepiorka, Chair: Hiroko Osaki)
2. Social Interactions and Social Inequalities (Session Organizer and Chair: Gianluca Manzo)
3. RC45 Open Oral Session on Advances in Rational Choice Research (Session Organizer and Chair: Jun Kobayashi)

4. Wellbeing in the Context of Rational Choice (Session Organizer: Carola Hommerich, Chair: Naoki Sudo)
5. Computational Social Science, Social Capital, and Rational Choice (Session Organizer: Yoshimichi Sato and Hiroki Takikawa, Chair: Yoshimichi Sato)

Note that all the abstracts selected for the Forum in July 2020 remain valid for the Forum in February 2021. So, if your paper was already accepted, you need to do nothing. Never forget, though, to keep watching the Forum website at <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/forum/porto-alegre-2021>.

A second impact was on a joint conference with the American Sociological Association Sections on Rationality and Society and Mathematical Sociology and the Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology. RC45 cosponsored "The Seventh Joint U.S.-Japan Preconference on Mathematical Sociology and Rational Choice" as a preconference of the American Sociological Association annual meeting in San Francisco this summer.

Yet the meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic. Accordingly, the preconference was postponed until the next year as the conference is strictly linked to the meeting (see an article in this issue for details). The new plan is on August 6, 2021, a day before the annual ASA meeting, in Chicago.

The virus has transformed everything. We stay home. Classes are held online. So are daily communications. Academic meetings are cancelled. We all must be busy adapting to the "new normalcy."

What are expected to rational choice sociology now? Even in these uneasy days (rather especially now?), the role of rational choice sociology cannot be overemphasized. The current situation provides, unintentionally, a long-term, large-scale social experiments. As a result, it raises new research questions like: How can we conduct social lives without face-to-face contacts? Can virtual communications replace real ones? Does it strengthen or weaken our social ties in the long run?

Rational choice sociology may offer a bird's-eye view. Why? It starts from a clear assumption of humans---people are more or less rational. This simplicity and clarity may disentangle complicated puzzles we face now. In this sense, rational choice theory is like a lighthouse. It indicates a direction from

a fixed point.

As always, my thanks go to Masa and Wojtek for editing this issue. "Students on the Market" begins. Do not hesitate to ask them if interested.

Stay safe and hope to see you in Brazil!

**Students on the Market:
Kristen Tzoc (Boston University)**



Kristen Tzoc is a third year Ph.D student in sociology at Boston University. Her research interests center inequalities focused on health, higher education, and the labor market. One of her ongoing projects explores the effect of (un)met adolescent occupational goals on early adulthood mental health. In a second, she investigates college job fairs as an instantiation of stratification in inter-organizational relationships at the moment of entry into the labor market. She will serve as Student Council Representative for Rationality and Society for the 2020-21 year.

**13th Annual INAS Conference Postponed until
May 29-30, 2021**



The 13th Annual Conference of the International Network of Analytical Sociologists will take place in

Tokyo, Japan, in 2021. Some general information is as follows:

Dates: May 29-30, 2021

Venue: Senshu University, Tokyo

Keynote speakers: Mary Brinton and Michael Hechter



The organizers: Jun Kobayashi, Yoshimichi Sato, Naoki Sudo, Masayuki Kanai, and Hiroki Takikawa

Website: <https://www2.sal.tohoku.ac.jp/~inas2020/>

This edition of the INAS has been postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and was formerly planned to take place on May 30-31, 2020.

Recent Publications of Interest

Articles:

Jasso, Guillermina. 2019. "Factorial Survey." In Paul Anthony Atkinson, Sara Delamont, and Richard Williams (eds.), *Sage Encyclopedia of Research Methods*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036888176>

Jasso, Guillermina. 2020. "Is and Ought: From Ideas to Theory to Empirics." Pp. 105-127 in Alexander Max Bauer and Malte Ingo Meyerhuber (eds.), *Empirical Research and Normative Theory*. Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter.

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110613797-008>

Jasso, Guillermina, and Mark R. Rosenzweig. In press. "What is the Size and Legal Composition of the US Foreign-Born Population?" *International Migration Review*. Prepublished 21 January 2020.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0197918319893287>

Jasso, Guillermina. In press. "New Results Linking Inequality and Justice." *Journal of Mathematical Sociology*. Prepublished 26 March 2020.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0022250X.2020.1715970>

Kimura, Kunihiko. 2020. "Japanese Women's Attitudes Toward Childrearing: Text Analysis and Multidimensional Scaling." Pp.423-438 in *Advanced Studies in Behaviormetrics and Data Science: Essays in Honor of Akinori Okada*, edited by Tadashi Imaizumi, Atsuhiko Nakayama, and Satoru

Yokoyama. *Behaviormetrics: Quantitative Approaches to Human Behavior*, vol 5. Singapore: Springer.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-2700-5_26

Manzo, Gianluca. 2020. "Complex Social Networks are Missing in the Dominant COVID-19 Epidemic Models." *Sociologica*. 14(1): 31-49.

<https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1971-8853/10839>

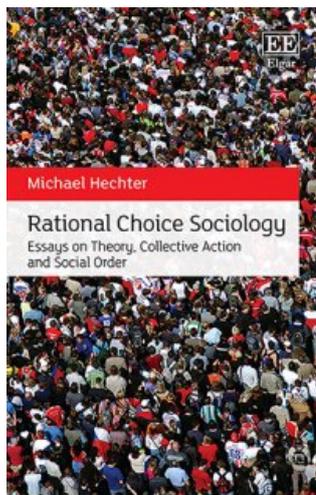
Przepiorka, Wojtek, and Ozan Aksoy. 2020. "Does herding undermine the trust enhancing effect of reputation? An empirical investigation with online-auction data." *Social Forces*: forthcoming.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soaa057>

Przepiorka, Wojtek, and Christine Horne. 2020. "How can consumer trust in energy utilities be increased? The effectiveness of prosocial, pro-environmental, and service-oriented investments as signals of trustworthiness." *Organization & Environment* 33(2):262-84.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026618803729>

Books:



Hechter, Michael. 2019. *Rational Choice Sociology: Essays on Theory, Collective Action and Social Order*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Pub.

Description:

Whereas rational choice theory has enjoyed considerable success in economics and political science, due to its emphasis on individual behavior sociologists have long doubted its capacity to account for non-market social outcomes. Whereas they have conceded that rational choice theory may be an appropriate tool to understand strictly economic phenomena – that is, the kinds of social interactions

that occur in the *gesellschaft* – many sociologists have contended that the theory is wholly unsuitable for the analysis of the kinds of social interactions in the *gemeinschaft* – such as those occurring in families, in social groups of all kinds, and in society at large. In a variety of non-technical chapters, *Rational Choice Sociology* shows that a sociological version of rational choice theory indeed can make valuable contributions to the analysis of a wide variety of non-market outcomes, including those concerning social norms, family dynamics, crime, rebellion, state formation and social order.

Contents:

Introduction Michael Hechter

PART I THEORY

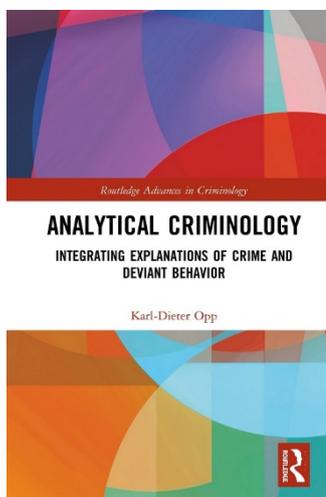
- 1 Michael Hechter and Satoshi Kanazawa (1997), 'Sociological Rational Choice Theory', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23, 191–214
- 2 Debra Friedman, Michael Hechter and Satoshi Kanazawa (1994), 'A Theory of the Value of Children', *Demography*, 31(3), August, 375–401
- 3 Debra Friedman, Michael Hechter and Derek Kreager (2008), 'A Theory of the Value of Grandchildren', *Rationality and Society*, 20(1), February, 31–63

PART II COLLECTIVE ACTION

- 4 Michael Hechter (1978), 'Group Formation and the Cultural Division of Labor', *American Journal of Sociology*, 84(2), September, 293–318
- 5 David Siroky and Michael Hechter (2016), 'Ethnicity, Class, and Civil War: The Role of Hierarchy, Segmentation, and Cross-cutting Cleavages', *Civil Wars*, 18(1), January, 1–17
- 6 Michael Hechter (2004), 'From Class to Culture', *American Journal of Sociology*, 110 (2), September, 400–445
- 7 Michael Hechter, Steven Pfaff and Patrick Underwood (2016), 'Grievances and the Genesis of Rebellion: Mutiny in the Royal Navy, 1740 to 1820', *American Sociological Review*, 81(1), February, 165–89
- 8 Steven Pfaff, Michael Hechter and Katie E. Corcoran (2016), 'The Problem of Solidarity in Insurgent Collective Action: The Nore Mutiny of 1797', *Social Science History*, 40 (2), Summer, 247–70

PART III SOCIAL ORDER

- 9 Michael Hechter and William Brustein (1980), 'Regional Modes of Production and Patterns of State Formation in Western Europe', *American Journal of Sociology*, 85 (5), March, 1061–94
- 10 Michael Hechter and Satoshi Kanazawa (1993), 'Group Solidarity and Social Order in Japan', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 5 (4), October, 455–93
- 11 Sun-Ki Chai and Michael Hechter (1998), 'A Theory of the State and of Social Order', *Homo Oeconomicus*, XV (1), 1–26
- 12 Michael Hechter (2018), 'Norms in the Evolution of Social Order', *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 85 (1), Spring, 23–51



Opp, Karl-Dieter. 2020. Analytical Criminology: Integrating Explanations of Crime and Deviant Behavior. London: Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429026980>

Description:

There are more than 20 theories that explain crime. Each theory has weaknesses, and no scholar knows which theory is best. To remedy this unsatisfactory situation a new research program of comparative theory testing is proposed. Comparing the theories *with each other* has not yet been successful. The alternative, suggested in this book, is to show how criminological theories must be modified if they are compared with a *general behavioral theory*. The book shows under which conditions the major criminological theories provide valid explanations of crime. The latter thus become *integrated* as parts of the general theory.

The general theory that is chosen is a version of

the theory of rational action. This is not the problematic version discussed in the literature, but states the real conditions of decision making and, thus, explains when people actually violate the law or remain law-abiding.

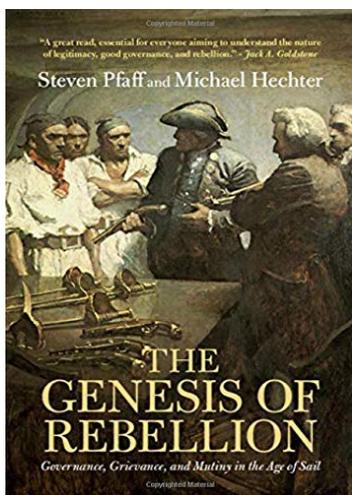
The general theory is a component of a theoretical approach that explains individual behavior in interaction with societal (macro) conditions. This micro-macro approach is summarized in a proposed *structural-cognitive model*. This is part of the new program of *Analytical Criminology*. It suggests empirical theory comparison, process explanations, and micro-macro explanations.

The book is not only written for readers who are interested in theories of crime and deviant behavior. It is also a treatise in "analytical" (i.e., rigorous) theory construction and empirical theory comparison.

Contents:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 The concept of crime, the definition of "theory," and the characteristics of a good theory
- 3 The theory chaos in criminology
- 4 The explanation of individual behavior in the social context: the wide version of rational choice theory as the theoretical foundation of Analytical Criminology
- 5 How criminological theories can and should be integrated. The program of comparative theory integration and theory testing
- 6 Linking individual and society: structural individualism and micro-macro modeling
- 7 Integrating rational choice theory and criminological theories: some examples
 1. Introduction
 2. Anomie theory
 3. General strain theory
 4. Edwin H. Sutherland's differential association theory
 5. The social structure social learning theory by Ronald Akers
 6. Self-control theory
 7. Some propositions of the labeling approach
 8. Social disorganization, collective efficacy and crime
 9. Situational action theory
 10. The origin and working of the Sicilian Mafia: a comparison of a rational choice explanation with criminological theories

- 8 Analytical Criminology: core elements of a research program
- 9 General conclusions, omissions and further research



Pfaff, Steven and Michael Hechter. 2020. *The Genesis of Rebellion: Governance, Grievance, and Mutiny in the Age of Sail*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108149853>

Description:

The Age of Sail has long fascinated readers, writers, and the general public. Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad, Jack London et al. treated ships at sea as microcosms; Petri dishes in which larger themes of authority, conflict and order emerge. In this fascinating book, Pfaff and Hechter explore mutiny as a manifestation of collective action and contentious politics. The authors use narrative evidence and statistical analysis to trace the processes by which governance failed, social order decayed, and seamen mobilized. Their findings highlight the complexities of governance, showing that it was not mere deprivation, but how seamen interpreted that deprivation, which stoked the grievances that motivated rebellion. Using the Age of Sail as a lens to examine topics still relevant

today - what motivates people to rebel against deprivation and poor governance - *The Genesis of Rebellion: Governance, Grievance, and Mutiny in the Age of Sail* helps us understand the emergence of populism and rejection of the establishment.

Contents:

1. The genesis of rebellion
2. Governance and social order in the Age of Sail
3. One and all: the anatomy of mutiny
4. Why seamen rebelled: the causes of mutiny
5. Insurgency and solidarity: the mass mutinies at Spithead and the Nore
6. Discipline, punishment and the fear of insurrection
7. The consequences of mutiny
8. Conclusion and implications

Editors' note

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically transformed our routine in research and education. Unfortunately, we could not find an interviewee for the current issue of AGORA during the turbulence. However, the pandemic has brought about not only the “new normalcy” in our daily life but also novel research agendas such as expanding inequalities in our discipline. We look forward to sharing our responses to the challenges in the next issue.
 (Wojtek and Masa)



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