

# 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 2022**

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## From the Chair's Desk (ASA)

Gianluca Manzo



Dear Rationality and Society section fellows,

In a few weeks, we have the opportunity to meet again in person in Los Angeles. Once more, our section shows its vitality with various and very stimulating scientific programs.

In particular, Milena Tsvetkova invites us to a paper session on *Computational and Empirical Approaches to Micro-Macro Dynamics* (August 6<sup>th</sup>, 10:00-11.30am, LACC) presenting various works on social network effects on norms (Daniel DellaPosta and colleagues) and moral attitudes (Cassie McMillan and colleagues), residential and school segregation (Elly Field and Elizabeth Bruch), status hierarchies (Neha Gondal), and the diffusion of innovations on digital platforms (Antonio Sirianni and Kimberly Rogers). On the other hand, Willie Jasso invites us to a panel session on *ASA Rational Choice at 28* (August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2:00-3:00pm, LACC) where Michael Hechter, Eva Meyerson, Jeylan Mortimer and Karl-Dieter Opp will reflect upon the kind of sociology that our section was able to foster since its creation about 30 years ago.

I see this panel discussion as an especially important opportunity to deepen our understanding of the reasons behind what seems a structural problem of our section, namely its persistent particularly low membership. The contrast between the section's vitality and its small size is a topic that we will have the chance to discuss further during the section *business meeting*

(August 6<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-3:30pm, LACC), which just follows Jasso’s panel section.

The *business meeting* is also usually the place where the section pays tribute to innovative research through presenting the section prizes. In particular, this year, the *James S. Coleman Outstanding Article Award* was given to Diego Leal for his paper “Network Inequalities and International Migration in the Americas” published in *American Journal of Sociology* in 2021 whereas the *Award for Best Paper by a Graduate Student* was given to Yunsub Lee for his unpublished manuscript “Power-dependence relations within Structural Holes and Network Closure: Evidence from different survival mechanisms of actors and directors in the U.S. film industry”. The gracious evaluative work made by the two prize committees –respectively composed of Arnout van de Rijt (Chair), Jane Sell, and Milena Tsvetkova, and, on the other hand, of Yoshimichi Sato (Chair), Mary Brinton, and Werner Raub– should also be acknowledged.

As to the *business meeting*, please let me finally mention that this is the place where the changes in our section leadership will officially start. In this respect, as a result of 2021 elections, I will be replaced by Neha Gondal, our new section chair for 2022-2023; on the other hand, as a result of this year elections, we will welcome the new incoming officers, namely Emily Erikson (Chair-elect), Wojtek Przepiorka (Secretary/Treasurer), Karen Hegtvedt (Council Member), and Ana Macanovic (Student Representative), who respectively replaced the following outgoing officers: Stephen Benard (Past Chair), Antonio Sirianni (Secretary/Treasurer), Carter Butts (Council Member), and Kristinn Mar (Student Representative). They should all be praised for the services they offered to the section during the past one to three years, and so should the members of this year nomination committee, namely Neha Gondal, Anthony Paik, Charles Gomez, Filiz Garip and Milena Tsvetkova.

The contribution of our section to the ASA meeting in LA also manifests in a pre-conference (August 5<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am-4:00pm) that we jointly organized with the *Mathematical Sociology* section, the *Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology*, and the *Rational Choice* Research Committee of the *International Sociological Association* with the goal to reinforce interactions between action-oriented sociology, social network analysis, mathematical, computational, and experimental sociology. James Kitts

will be our keynote speaker, and eight research papers as well as twelve posters will be presented by a variety of junior and senior scholars from US and Japanese universities (Please see the detailed program below).

As suggested by Jasso’s panel session, it is fair to say that a section’s intellectual identity and attractiveness partly rely on the section history. The interaction between our section and *Mathematical Sociology* section is part of that history. For this reason, I also allow myself to draw your attention to a panel session within the Math Soc section (August 9<sup>th</sup>, 10:00-11:00am, JW Marriott) where Carter Butts, Willie Jasso, John Skvoretz (the organizer), and myself will reflect upon the legacy of Tom Fararo, who, among many other writings, co-edited, with James Coleman, in 1992, the now widely quoted book *Rational Choice Theory: Advocacy and Critique*.

A final sign of the great vitality of our section is that this year section reception will be part of a large, and very interdisciplinary, joint event with the following sections: Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity; Mathematical Sociology; Sociology of Emotions; Social Psychology; Evolution, Biology, and Society; and Communication, Information Technologies, and Media Sociology. This will be on August 8 (6:30-9:30pm), offsite, at *Strada Eateria & Bar*. Jessica Collet should be warmly thanked for the great coordination work she did in the organization of this event.

Last but not least, please let me emphasize how honoured I was to have the chance to modestly contribute to the life of our small but always impressively lively section by acting as chair during the last year. I do hope I will have the chance to see many of you in person in LA.



### **2022 Rationality and Society James S. Coleman Outstanding Article Award**

The 2022 Rationality and Society James S. Coleman Outstanding Article Award goes to Diego Leal for his article “Network Inequalities and International Migration in the Americas,” published in the *American*

Journal of Sociology in 2021. Its main macro-level proposition is that the directed network of migration flows between countries will exhibit a linear hierarchy. The article specifies a compelling “Coleman boat” by articulating the micro-level mechanisms through which the transitive triads come about that give rise to the hierarchy at the macro-level. Among these are perceptions of country attractiveness, vacancy chains, and demographic changes linking previous in-migration to subsequent out-migration. The article tests this theory by means of counting of triads theorized to be common and rare as well as through advanced social network analysis techniques including temporal exponential random graph models. The committee was particularly impressed with how the author manages to identify clear, generalizable mechanisms while at the same time deeply engaging with scholarship on the specific topic of application.

Committee Members:

Arnout van de Rijt (Chair), European University Institute

Jane Sell, Texas A&M University

Milena Tsvetkova, London School of Economics

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### **2022 Rationality and Society section award for Best Paper by a Graduate Student**

The 2022 Rationality and Society section award for Best Paper by a Graduate Student goes to Yunsub Lee (PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, Cornell University) for his article "Power-dependence relations within Structural Holes and Network Closure: Evidence from different survival mechanisms of actors and directors in the U.S. film industry".

Committee Members:

Yoshimichi Sato (Chair), Tohoku University

Mary Brinton, Harvard University

Werner Raub, Utrecht University

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,

Do you know RC45 events this summer? We have two.

The first one is, as the next ISA World Congress of Sociology is fast approaching, abstract submission. The Congress is held from June 25 to July 1 next year in Melbourne, Australia. RC45 hosts the following seven diverse and challenging sessions (plus the business meeting). Many thanks to those who proposed them. All are oral (thus no poster nor invited) sessions in English. Session dates are undecided.

1. RC45 Open Oral Session on Advances in Rational Choice Research

Organizer: Jun KOBAYASHI

2. Rational Choice and Unintended Consequences amid Social Crisis

Organizer: Naoki SUDO

3. Evolution of Social Norms and Cooperation

Organizer: Andreas DIEKMANN

4. Dynamics of Capitals and Social Inequality from the Rational Choice Perspective

Organizer: Masayuki KANAI

5. Computational Social Science and Rational Choice  
Organizer: Rense CORTEN, Yoshimichi SATO, Bas HOFSTRA, Hiroki TAKIKAWA

6. Micro Macro Link in Action and Relation Systems

Organizer: Kazuto MISUMI

7. What makes sociology credible?

Organizer: Gianluca MANZO

8. RC45 Business Meeting

See session descriptions at:

<https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2023/webprogram/abstract/AbstractList.aspx?abstractID=111111>. Also see deadlines and rules for submitters at: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/world-congress/melbourne-2023/deadlines-2023>.

Submission system has already opened from July 1 until September 30. There cannot be a better opportunity to share your latest findings with the global community. Encourage your colleagues and students as well.

Note that the Congress will be in a hybrid format: Sessions mix in-person and online presenters. So, you can enjoy the sunshine of a southern hemisphere city, or you can be relaxed to send research results from your hometown. It is up to you.

The second event is the Joint US-Japan Conference on Mathematical Sociology and Rational Choice. Working with the ASA Section on Rationality and Society, Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology, and the ASA Section on Mathematical Sociology, RC45 cosponsors it. I am one of co-organizers as the RC45 President.

Held as a pre-conference of the American Sociological Association annual meeting in LA on August 5, the conference showcases cutting-edge 8 oral papers and 11 posters. Its venue is the same place as the ASA meeting at Los Angeles Convention Center (Floor Level 1, 152).

Those important dates are highlighted below:

July 1, 2022, ISA World Congress abstract submission opens

August 5, Joint US-Japan Conference on Mathematical Sociology and Rational Choice

September 30, ISA World Congress abstract submission closes

June 25 to July 1, 2023, ISA World Congress

As always, my deepest thanks go to our editors, Lucas and Masa. Have safe and fruitful summer!

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## Conferences:

### The Seventh Joint US-Japan Conference on Mathematical Sociology and Rational Choice Program

**Date:** August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Place:** Los Angeles Convention Center (LACC), Floor: Level 1, 152

#### Timeline:

10:00-10:05 Opening Remarks

10:05-10:50 Keynote Speech

Presenter: James A. Kitts (University of Massachusetts)

11:00-12:20 Oral Presentation

1. João M. Souto Maior (New York University) "Black-White Advanced Enrollment Inequalities and the Racial Composition of Schools: an Agent-based Modeling Investigation"
2. Tomohiro Kitamura (Keio University) and Hirohisa Takenoshita (Keio University) "Why Do Parents Invest on Their Children's Education: Explanation by using Mathematical Model"
3. Peng Huang (University of California, Irvine) and Carter T. Butts (University of California, Irvine) "Rooted America: Immobility and Segregation of the Inter-county Migration Networks"
4. Kazuhiro Kezuka (Tokyo Institute of Technology) "The Puzzle of the Japanese View of Religion: Modifying Church and Sect Model and Applying ISSP 2018 Data"

13:20-14:20 Poster Sessions

1. Hiroshi Ishida (University of Tokyo) "Does College Education Promote Social Mobility? Evaluating College as the Great Equalizer Hypothesis in Japan"
2. Elizabeth Roberto (Rice University) "Segregation and the built environment: A Novel Measurement Approach"
3. Teruki Sanada (Doshisha University) "Has Shadow Education Become Popular?"
4. Yurie Momose (University of Tokyo) "Life

Course Study on Adult Health and Social Exclusion in Japan"

5. Hiroki Takikawa (University of Tokyo) and Zeyu Lyu (University of Tokyo) "Differences in response to behavior restriction policies under the COVID-19 epidemic in Japan in terms of gender, age group, and income level of the residence."
6. Kikuko Nagayoshi (University of Tokyo), Takashi Yoshida (Shizuoka University), and Hirohisa Takenoshita (Keio University) "Legitimation of Wage Inequality by Gender in Japan: Why Japanese Women Accept Wage Gap by Gender?"
7. Selena M. Livas (The University of California, Irvine) "International environmental treaties from a network perspective"
8. Loring J. Thomas (University of California, Irvine) and Carter T. Butts (University of California, Irvine) "Modelling Endogenous Vertex and Edge Dynamics using ERGM and Generalized Location Systems"
9. Carter T. Butts (University of California, Irvine) "Models for Networks with Cross-boundary Demographic Exchange"
10. Zhemeng Xie (Tohoku University) "Measuring the changes of sociological methods through word embedding"

14:30-15:50 Oral Presentation 2

1. Sabrina Mai (University of California, Irvine), Scott L. Renshaw (University of California, Irvine), Carter T. Butts (University of California, Irvine), and Jeannette Sutton (University at Albany, SUNY) "Changing Topics: Causal Narrative Networks of COVID-19 Communications"
2. Zeyu Lyu (University of Tokyo) "Analysis of Affective Polarization in Social Media"
3. Takakuwa Ranka (Tokyo Institute of Technology) "'Menhera' and selfie: from SNS hashtag analysis"
4. Scott L. Renshaw (University of California, Irvine), Selena M. Livas (University of California, Irvine), Miruna G. Petrescu-Prahova (University of Washington), and Carter T. Butts (University of California, Irvine), "Modeling Complex Interactions in a Disrupted Environment: Relational Events in the WTC

Response"

15:50-15:55 Best Paper Awards

15:55-16:00 Closing Remarks

**Cosponsors:**

ASA Section on Rationality and Society, Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology, and ASA Section on Mathematical Sociology, ISA Research Committee on Rational Choice

**Co-organizers:**

Kikuko Nagayoshi (University of Tokyo), Gianluca Manzo (Sorbonne University), Jun Kobayashi (Seikei University), Richard Edward Gardner (UC Irvine), Kazuhiro Kezuka (Tokyo Institute of Technology)

**The Annual Conference of Experimental Sociology**

**Date:** August 31 – September 2

**Place:** Utrecht

<https://aces2022.sites.uu.nl/>

The Annual Conference of Experimental Sociology (ACES) gives the stage to scholars doing sociologically relevant research using experiments broadly construed. After its inception meeting in Vienna in 2018, followed by meetings in Florence (2019) and Ascona (2021), ACES 2022 will take place at Utrecht University. In this fourth edition, ACES opens its doors to a broader audience interested in cutting-edge approaches in experimental sociology, including survey, laboratory, field and online experiments. ACES aims to promote the use of the gold standard of scientific inquiry in sociology as well as the critical discussion of its limitations. Milena Tsvetkova, Assistant Professor of Computational Social Science at the Department of Methodology at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and Brent Simpson, Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of South Carolina, will be our keynote speakers. ACES 2022 is locally organized by Vincent Buskens, Rense Corten and Wojtek Przepiorka.

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**Students on the Market:  
Carlos de Matos Fernandes  
Groningen University (ICS)**



Carlos de Matos Fernandes is a fourth-year Ph. D. student at the Department of Sociology and the Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS) at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. His Ph. D. project revolves around cooperation. He zooms in on how individual-level features and social mechanisms in conjugate affect cooperation levels both on the individual and collective levels. Individual features comprise social value orientations and personality traits. Conversely, meritocratic matching, social learning, and network selection are the social mechanisms of interest. He studies these processes using agent-based modeling and network analysis. He published work in the Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation, Judgment and Decision Making, and the Research Handbook on Analytical Sociology.

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**Dissertation completed:**

**Irene Pañeda Fernández** defended her dissertation "Misfortune and redistributive preferences" (supervisor: Arnout van de Rijt) on 28 January 2022 at the EUI. The thesis theorizes the conditions under which adverse events increase support for redistribution. It tests these arguments using experiments that create situations of bad luck and by analyzing data from surveys conducted before and after natural disasters, exploiting timing, exposure and geographical distance from affected areas for causal inference. <https://www.eui.eu/news-hub?id=misfortune-and-redistributive-preferences>

**Lucas Sage** defended his dissertation entitled "So similar but so different. Explaining wage differences

between observably similar individuals” (supervisors: Gianluca Manzo & Stefani Scherer) on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June at Sorbonne University.

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### Positions:

**Arnout van de Rijt** took the position of Editor-in-Chief at *Sociological Science* on January 1, 2022.

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### Recent Publications of Interest:

#### Articles:

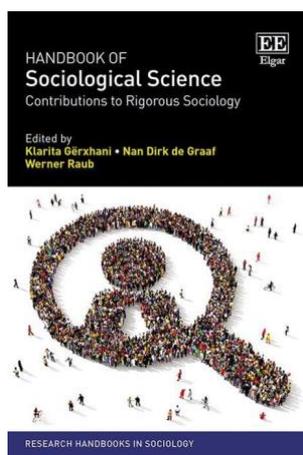
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## Books:



**Gërzhani, Klarita, Nan D. de Graaf, and Werner Raub. 2022. *Handbook of Sociological Science: Contributions to Rigorous Sociology*. Edward Elgar Publishing.**

### Description:

The Handbook of Sociological Science offers a refreshing, integrated perspective on research programs and ongoing developments in sociological science. It highlights key shared theoretical and methodological features, thereby contributing to progress and cumulative growth of sociological knowledge.

Reflecting ‘unity in diversity’, chapters explore a wide variety of research fields, ranging from cultural capital, migration, social networks, gender inequality, historical sociology and ethnography to the intersection of sociology and the life sciences. Examining basic methodological standards for theory construction and empirical research, the Handbook exemplifies commonalities between research programmes within these fields.

The contributors also explore rigorous sociology related to theory construction, empirical research, and methods, including statistical modelling and the integration of theoretical and empirical research. Forward-thinking and original, the Handbook concludes by illustrating the common core of rigorous sociology, how it can contribute to understanding societal problems and to policy making, and how research into sociological science can continue to thrive in the future.

Accessible and engaging, this Handbook will be invaluable for scholars and researchers of sociology and sociological theory, research methods in sociology and social policy, and comparative social policy. Exploring

new developments and applications, it will also act as a useful reference guide for policy makers. The Handbook will likewise be an important resource for teaching advanced courses and training graduate students.

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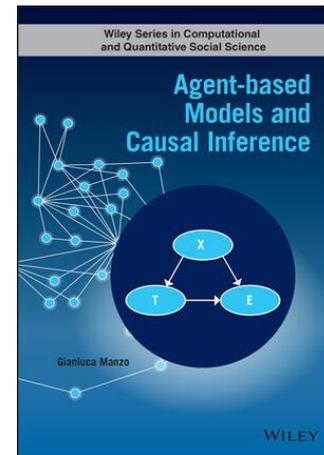
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**Manzo, Gianluca. 2022. *Agent-Based Models and Causal Inference*. Wiley.**

#### **Christopher Winship's endorsement:**

Scholars of causal inference have given little credence to the possibility that ABMs could be an important tool in warranting causal claims. Manzo's book makes a convincing case that this is a mistake. The book starts by describing the impressive progress that ABMs have made as a credible methodology in the last several decades. It then goes on to compare the inferential threats to ABMs versus the traditional methods of RCTs, regression, and instrumental variables showing that they have a common vulnerability of being based on untestable assumptions. The book concludes by looking at four examples where an analysis based on ABMs complements and augments the evidence for specific causal claims provided by other methods. Manzo has done a most convincing job of showing that ABMs can be an important resource in any researcher's tool kit.

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**Editors' note**

A new version of the section's website is coming soon. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have ideas (Lucas). In the meantime we wish you all a pleasant and relaxing summer! (Lucas & Masa)



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