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

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 6th, 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 6th, 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.

From ASA Section Officers 2021-22

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Gianluca Manzo, Sorbonne University
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Stephen Benard, Indiana University-Bloomington
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Milena Tsvetkova, London School of Economics
Newsletter editor
Masayuki Kanai, Senshu University
Webmaster
Lucas Sage, Sorbonne University
New website coming soon.

From ISA Research Committee Board 2018-23

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Newsletter editor
Lucas Sage, Sorbonne University
Webmaster
Atsushi Ishida, Kwansei Gakuin University
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 Yunsu 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 Siriani (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 5th, 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 9th, 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.
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

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:

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!
Conferences:
The Seventh Joint US-Japan Conference on Mathematical Sociology and Rational Choice Program

Date: August 5th, 2022
Place: Los Angeles Convention Center (LACC), Floor: Level 1, 152

Timeline:
10:00-10:05 Opening Remarks
Presenter: James A. Kitts (University of Massachusetts)

11:00-12:20 Oral Presentation
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..."
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.

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.

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 24th of June at Sorbonne University.

**Positions:**

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

**Recent Publications of Interest:**

**Articles:**


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.

Contents:
INTRODUCTION
1. Rigorous sociology
   Werner Raub, Nan Dirk de Graaf, and Klarita Gërxhani

PART I RESEARCH PROGRAMS
2. Order from chaos: sociology as a population science
   Michelle Jackson
3. Analytical sociology
   Gianluca Manzo
4. Computational approaches in rigorous sociology: agent-based computational modeling and computational social science
   Andreas Flache, Michael Mäs, and Marijn A. Keijzer
5. Stochastic network modeling as generative social science
   Christian E.G. Steglich and Tom A.B. Snijders
6. Rational choice sociology: heuristic potential, applications, and limitations
   Andreas Diekmann

PART II NEW AND ONGOING DEVELOPMENTS IN SELECTED FIELDS
7. Cultural capital and educational inequality: an assessment of the state of the art
   Mads Meier Jæger
8. Integration in migration societies
   Frank Kalter
9. Social networks: effects and formation
   Vincent Buskens, Rense Corten, and Werner Raub
10. Gender inequality, households, and work
    Eva Jaspers, Tanja van der Lippe, and Marie Evertsson
11. Validation strategies in historical sociology (and beyond)
    Ivan Ermakoff
12. Rigorous ethnography
    Federico Varese
13. Evolution, biology, and society
    Rosemary L. Hopcroft, Joseph Dippong, Hexuan
Liu, and Rachel Kail
14. Sociogenomics: theoretical and empirical challenges of integrating molecular genetics into sociological thinking
   Melinda C. Mills

PART III METHODS
15. Causal inference with observational data
   Richard Breen
16. Longitudinal designs and models for causal inference
   Markus Gangl
17. Experimental sociology
   Klarita Gërshani and Luis Miller

PART IV RIGOROUS SOCIOLOGY IN ACTION: SHOWCASES
18. Explaining educational differentials: towards a formal rational action theory
   Richard Breen and John H. Goldthorpe
19. ‘Explaining educational differentials’ revisited: an evaluation of rigorous theoretical foundations and empirical findings
   Rolf Becker
20. Structural holes and good ideas
   Ronald S. Burt
21. Network mechanisms in innovation: borrowing and sparking ideas around structural holes
   Balazs Vedres
22. Experimental study of inequality and unpredictability in an artificial cultural market
   Matthew J. Salganik, Peter Sheridan Dodds, and Duncan J. Watts
23. Self-correcting dynamics in social influence processes
   Arnout van de Rijt

PART V FURTHER PERSPECTIVES
24. The climate crisis: what sociology can contribute
   Dingeman Wiertz and Nan Dirk de Graaf
25. Roots of sociology as a science: some history of ideas
   Thomas Voss
26. How to increase reproducibility and credibility of sociological research
   Katrin Auspurg and Josef Brüderl

Index


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.

Contents:
List of Acronyms
List of Tables
Preface
The Book in a Nutshell
Introduction
The Book’s Question
The Book’s Structure

PART I: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CLARIFICATIONS
1. The Diversity of Views on Causality and Mechanisms
   1.1. Causal Inference
1.2. Dependence and Production Accounts of Causality
1.3. Horizontal and Vertical Accounts of Mechanisms
1.4. Causality and Mechanism Accounts, and ABM’s Perception
2. Agent-based Models and the Vertical View on Mechanism
   2.1. ABMs and Object-oriented Programming
   2.2. ABMs and Heterogeneity
   2.3. ABMs and Micro-foundations
   2.4. ABMs and Interdependence
   2.5. ABMs and Time
   2.6. ABMs and Multi-level Settings
   2.7. Variables within Statistical Methods and ABMs
3. The Diversity of Agent-based Models
   3.1. Abstract versus Data-driven ABMs: An Old Opposition
   3.2. Abstract versus Data-driven ABMs: Recent Trends
   3.3. Theoretical, Input, and Output Realism
   3.4. Different Paths to More Realistic ABMs

PART 2: DATA AND ARGUMENTS IN CAUSAL INFERENCE
4. Agent-based Models and Causal Inference
   4.1. ABMs as Inferential Devices
   4.2. In Practice Limitations
   4.3. From-Within-the-Method Reliability Tools
5. Causal Inference in Experimental and Observational Methods
   5.1. Causal Inference: Cautionary Tales
   5.2. In Practice Untestable Assumptions
   5.3. In Principle Untestable Assumptions
   5.4. Are ABMs, Experimental and Observational Methods Fundamentally Similar?
   5.5. A Common Logic: “Abduction”
6. Method Diversity and Causal Inference
   6.1. Causal Pluralism, Causal Exclusivism, and Evidential Pluralism
   6.2. A Pragmatist Account of Evidence
   6.3. Evidential Pluralism and “Coherentism”
   6.4. When is Diverse Evidence Most Relevant?
   6.5. Examples of Method Synergies
Coda
   1. Possible Objections
   2. Summary
References
Index

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)