

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

Winter 2019/Spring 2020



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From the Chair's Desk (ASA)

Pamela Emanuelson



With the 2019 Annual Meeting in New York concluded, I am honored to lead our section into the coming year. I extend my sincerest thanks to our outgoing council members and Past Chair, Jun Kobayashi for organizing two engaging sessions at the New York Annual Meeting. Looking to the prior year, the section has demonstrated its vitality by producing two issues of the AGORA, two paper sessions and receiving a large number of high-quality submissions to the section's awards.

At the 2019 section business meeting members voted to make several significant changes to the section's awards. The article and book award have been renamed the James S. Coleman Outstanding Article Award and the James S. Coleman Outstanding Book Award respectively. Currently, the book award and article award are given in alternating years. Recognizing that much of the quality work done in the section is published in journals, it was proposed that the James S. Coleman Article Award be given every year. To increase the number of quality submissions to the book award, it was proposed that the award be given every third year and that qualifying submissions be published within the prior five years. The section council is working hard to include these changes and bring the section's by-laws up-to-date. Please, anticipate voting on these proposed by-law changes during the 2020 ASA elections.

Congratulations to last year's award winners Thijs

Bal, Mathijs de Vaan, Arnout van de Rijt (Outstanding Article Award) and Antonio Sirianni (Graduate Student Best Paper Award). Our annual award announcement is included in this edition of the newsletter. Please consider nominating your own work (or someone else's) for consideration. This year, we are seeking nominations for the Outstanding Book Award and the Graduate Student Paper Award. Nominations should be sent directly to award committee chairs by March 1st 2019. Thank you to Jane Sell (j-sell@tamu.edu) and Yoshimichi Sato (yoshimichi.sato.a5@tohoku.ac.jp) for agreeing to chair the book award and graduate paper award committees respectively.

Looking forward to the 2020 Annual Meeting in San Francisco, I am excited about the section's activities. Currently, we are planning two open paper sessions. As always, we are seeking new members. To that end, an hour of our allotted business meeting time is dedicated to a Joint paper session with the Altruism, Morality and Social Solidarity section entitled, "Rationality, Norms and Social Action."

Our cooperation with other sections and organizations continue. Our past chair, Jun Kobayashi and others are currently organizing the Seventh Joint U.S.-Japan Preconference on Mathematical Sociology and Rational Choice for August 7, 2020. It will be co-sponsored by the Mathematical Sociology and Rationality and Society sections of the ASA, ISA RC45 on Rational Choice and the Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology. Please look forward to future announcements and calls for contribution.

Lastly, our section in cooperation with Animals and Society and Altruism, Morality and Social Solidarity will be co-hosting a 50-minute highlight session focusing on the recent publication *Blueprint: The Evolutionary Origins of a Good Society* by Nick Christakis. Christakis argues that humans evolved a "social suite" of "features priming out capacity for love, friendship, cooperation, learning and even our ability to recognize the uniqueness of other individuals." Across the book's twelve chapters, Christakis provides supportive evidence from research on accidental communities, utopian communities, and online communities, on couples, on other species, and on friendship networks, genetics, and culture.

As always, the section council is open to your feedback, suggestions, comments or concerns. We

are here to serve the section to the best of our abilities. Until the next edition of AGORA, please have a wonderful holiday.

Pamela Emanuelson, Chair

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

Jun Kobayashi, organizer



A joint pre-conference will be held as follows. It welcomes any topics in the field, including preliminary results and work in progress. It provides the opportunity to share and exchange your ideas. Young scholars and students are especially encouraged to apply. Most papers have good chances to be accepted as long as they study the field in the broadest sense. Call for abstracts will be announced shortly. Why don't you join us celebrating its 20th anniversary in beautiful summer San Francisco?

Date: August 7, 2020 (a day before ASA meeting)

Venue: ASA meeting place in San Francisco (Hilton San Francisco Union Square or Parc 55)

Cosponsors: ASA Rationality and Society Section, ASA Mathematical Sociology Section, Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology, and ISA Research Committee 45 on Rational Choice

Organizers: Jun Kobayashi (Seikei University), Richard Edward Gardner (UC Irvine), Kikuko Nagayoshi (Tohoku University), Kazuhiro Kezuka (Tokyo Institute of Technology), and Gianluca Manzo (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)

Award Announcement from the Rationality and Society Section



2020 Rationality and Society James Coleman Award for Outstanding Book

The Rationality and Society section announces the award for an innovative book published in 2018-2019. Nominations, including self-nominations, are encouraged for theoretical or empirical works in the sociological rational choice tradition broadly construed, including alternative decision theoretic frameworks and applications of theory to empirical problems. Nominators should be members in good standing of the American Sociological Association. Coauthored works are eligible. The deadline for nominations is **March 1, 2020**.

Nominations should be made by email to Jane Sell (j-sell@tamu.edu) and should include the following information: (1) Nominator's name, institutional affiliation, and contact information; (2) Author's name, institutional affiliation, and contact information; (3) Book title, year of publication, and the publisher's name and address; (4) A brief statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) by the nominator of the reason the book deserves this award; and (5) Contact information (name, email address, telephone number) of the person who will make the arrangements to have copies of the book sent directly to the three awards committee members. The Chair of the awards committee will give the names and addresses of committee members to this contact person. Do not send multiple copies of the book to the committee chair.

2020 Rationality and Society section award for Best Paper by a Graduate Student

Nominations, including self-nominations, are encouraged for theoretical or empirical works in the rational choice tradition broadly construed, including computational-sociology studies, analytical-sociology approaches, and applications of theory to empirical problems. Eligible authors are students currently

enrolled in a graduate program who will not have received the PhD at the time of the 2020 ASA meeting. Multi-authored papers are eligible if none of the authors has a PhD.

Nominations should be submitted by email to Yoshimichi Sato (yoshimichi.sato.a5@tohoku.ac.jp) by **March 1, 2020**. Nominations should include two electronic files: (1) A cover page with the paper title, paper abstract, author's name(s), institutional affiliation and institutional address, the name of the author's faculty advisor, and full contact information including preferred email address, telephone number(s) and mailing address. (2) The nominated paper, double-spaced, beginning with title and abstract but with author's name and other identifying information removed.

Committee members:

Yoshimichi Sato (chair)
Antonio Sirianni
Katrin Auspurg

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,

Hope everyone is spending happy holidays. Year 2020 has just started and RC45 plans two major activities this year.

First one is, of course, the fourth ISA Forum of Sociology in Porto Alegre in southern Brazil. It is held from 14 to 18 July 2020.

The end of September was the due date of paper submission. Statistics says that 8,624 abstracts have been accepted and 978 rejected. RC45 features, among them, 20 papers (all in oral presentation) in the following five sessions (four papers in each session). In addition to those sessions, we have a business meeting as usual. Time and date are unscheduled.

Sessions of RC45 on Rational Choice (Program Coordinator: Jun Kobayashi)

1. **Social Interactions and Social Inequalities**
(Session Organizer and Chair: Gianluca Manzo)
2. **Causes and Consequences of Corruption: Theoretical Models and Empirical Evidence**
(Session Organizer: Wojtek Przepiorka, Chair: Hiroko Osaki)

3. **Wellbeing in the Context of Rational Choice**
(Session Organizer: Carola Hommerich, Chair: Naoki Sudo)

4. **Computational Social Science, Social Capital, and Rational Choice**
(Session Organizers: Yoshimichi Sato and Hiroki Takikawa, Chair: Yoshimichi Sato)

5. **RC45 Open Oral Session on Advances in Rational Choice Research**
(Session Organizer and Chair: Jun Kobayashi)

6. **RC45 Business Meeting**

I am proud that we have a collection of cutting-edge papers in diverse but well-organized sessions. Many thanks to those who submitted abstracts and those who volunteered to organize or preside sessions. Without such cooperative behaviors, our program could not be implemented. If you present a paper in Brazil, do not forget to register by March 19, 2020.

Second event is a joint pre-conference in San Francisco in August, one day before the annual ASA meeting (see an article in this issue for details). You may remember that we planned it last year in New York. Very unfortunately, the American Sociological Association could not provide space for it. The organizers thus decided to postpone it until the next year, that is, August 7, 2020.

This time we celebrate its 20th anniversary. The first conference was launched in 2000 in Honolulu, Hawaii, when I was a grad student at the University of Chicago. I remember I first met Carter Butts, James Kitts, and Brent Simpson (who were either students or assistant professors at that time) in Honolulu. Since then, the conference has continued in Vancouver, Sapporo, Los Angeles, Denver, and Seattle. I organized, along with colleagues, Los Angeles and Seattle.

Personally, this summer is somewhat special for me. Tokyo, my hometown, hosts Summer Olympic and Paralympic games in July. About a month before, the annual meeting of the International Network of Analytical Sociologists will take place in Tokyo in May 30-31, 2020 (INAS 13th Annual Conference). Some of you may be interested. Details can be obtained at <https://www2.sal.tohoku.ac.jp/~inas2020/>. My colleagues, including myself, are organizing and

busy preparing for it.

It is a common misconception, by the way, that rational choice theory treats strictly limited domains of sociology. This is not true. We are united based on a specific theory (rational choice theory). In fact, we are one of the only three theory-driven RCs (others are RC36 alienation theory and research and RC51 sociocybernetics).

This implies that we can apply our theory to any empirical fields, such as family, culture, or inequality. In this sense, we are more like salt or vinegar in cooking---it can be applied to any cooking materials like meat, fish, or vegetables. We may, I expect, ignite debates in various empirical areas.

To close my message, I would express my deepest appreciation to Wojtek and Masa for their wonderful editorship of this issue.

Call for Applications: RC45 Travel Grants for IV ISA Forum of Sociology

RC45 will provide a total of 840 euros of Travel Grants to active participants in the RC45's sessions at the upcoming IV ISA Forum of Sociology in Brazil on July 14-18, 2020.

Application for the grant must be submitted via <https://forms.gle/6C2hagg8KmKUzk8QA> by **March 31, 2020**.

Eligibility for application (all conditions must be satisfied)

- ✧ To be an active participant in one or more of RC45 sessions at the Forum.
- ✧ To have completed a registration to the Forum by March 19, 2020 (early registration).
- ✧ To be an RC45 member in good standing as of March 31, 2020.

Selection policies (lexicographically applied)

1. Category C members > Category B members > Category A members
2. Student members > Regular/Life members
3. Presenting authors > Session Chairs > Session Organizers > Non-presenting authors

Notes

- ✧ Grand holders are up to three people. The grants are equally divided among the grant holders.
- ✧ Result of the selection will be notified by April 15, 2020.
- ✧ The grant will be remitted to the grant holder's PayPal account after the Forum. Grant holders who do not attend the Forum are ineligible to receive the fund.
- ✧ Those who apply for this RC45 Travel Grants can also apply for ISA's Registration Grants for the IV ISA Forum of Sociology. The successful ISA Registration Grant holders are eligible to receive RC45 Travel Grants.

Interview: Thomas Hinz interviewed by Wojtek Przepiorka



WP: The Academy of Sociology was founded in July 2017 with the aim to promote analytical-empirical sociology. The academy now has over 250 members and constitutes an alternative organizational body to the long-standing sociological associations in the German speaking areas of Europe. You are one of the founding members and you were the academy's chairman for the first two years. Could you tell us a bit more about the rationale for founding the academy?

TH: Of course, you have to think very thoroughly about founding a new association from scratch. This requires many resources in terms of time and work. In addition, you can anticipate serious resistance of colleagues because you clearly signal that you are no longer satisfied with the "big tent" organization, German Sociological Association (DGS). In short, there were two main reasons to finally strike another match: First, the "big tent" existed more and more as

lip service praising "pluralism". In fact, the DGS no longer represented analytical-empirical sociology appropriately with regard to its main conferences, to board membership, to research data policy etc. Second, the analytical-empirical orientation can potentially do more when it comes to the analysis of urgent questions in societies. The Academy of Sociology offers to bring in the expertise of its members and stimulate evidence-based politics.

WP: What does analytical-empirical sociology stand for?

TH: Analytical-empirical sociology builds on clear theory and necessarily confronts theoretical statements with empirical results. It is very important that research is transparent and uses adequate methods. It is open to all appropriate conceptual, theoretical and empirical approaches, methods and procedures. And, I think it stimulates a cumulative development of existing knowledge in the social sciences. As already mentioned, using analytical-empirical sociology, researchers can contribute to scientifically founded evidence-based policies. An example would be Dominik Hangartner's (ETH Zurich) excellent research on the integration of asylum seekers into the Swiss labor market.

WP: What effect has the academy had on the sociological landscape in Europe? I recall some people embracing the academy with great enthusiasm while others feared it would lead to more cleavages within the discipline.

TH: I see the foundation of the academy in Germany as a signal from those colleagues who want to strengthen the scientific orientation of sociology in general. My impression is that there are similar discussions in the US. Take for example the paper of Jonathan Turner in "The American Sociologist" (2019). He argues from his long-term experience with the discipline that the more "political" the discipline of sociology becomes (in the sense of promoting activism etc.) the more irrelevant it gets when it comes to addressing and potentially solving social problems. In Europe, I know many colleagues who share such thoughts on the future of sociology as well. Given this situation, some trouble within the discipline seems to be unavoidable.

WP: Let me ask you a last question. You already mentioned the work of Dominik Hangartner and colleagues, which has been influential in our coping with the refugee crises in Europe. What are the other

big challenges European societies are facing and analytical-empirical sociology should feel empowered to tackle?

TH: Just to name one: not only in Europe social inequality within societies is growing. I find it a challenging task to better understand how this trend translates into political mobilization and policy outcomes. At my university, we have just started a research cluster "The Politics of Inequality" on these questions. More challenges are mentioned by Nan Dirk de Graaf and Dingeman Wiertz in their excellent book on "Societal Problems as Public Bads" (published 2019 by Routledge) covering among other topics corruption, crime, religious fundamentalism, financial crises, and environmental degradation. They offer a lucid perspective of analytical-empirical sociology to analyze them.

Thomas Hinz received a PhD in Sociology, Social Psychology, and Statistics from LMU Munich in 1997. Since 2004 he is a full professor of empirical social research at the University of Konstanz. Together with around 50 colleagues mostly from Germany, he founded the Academy of Sociology in 2017 as an academic association to promote analytical empirical sociology (<https://akademie-soziologie.de/en/>). He served as chairman until 2019 and organized the academy's second international conference on "Digital Societies" (<https://digitalsocieties2019.net>). Thomas' research interests cover labor market processes, social inequality, and survey research. Together with Katrin Auspurg, he published Factorial Survey Experiments in the Sage Series Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences (2015, #175). He is currently a board member of the research cluster "The Politics of Inequality" at the University of Konstanz (<https://www.exc.uni-konstanz.de/en/inequality/>).

The interview was conducted via e-mail between December 10, 2019 and February 9, 2020.

**Students on the Market:
Maoxin Ye (Tohoku University)**



Maoxin Ye is a Ph.D. candidate of the Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Tohoku University. He has been studying the sociology of disasters during his Ph.D. program. One of his published articles co-authored with Professor Aldrich focused on the mitigating influence of community social capital on disaster-related mortality. Additionally, it found that this kind of impact is only effective among communities with lower socioeconomic status and older people, rather than richer communities and younger people. Now, his dissertation for the Ph.D. degree dedicates to fill the theoretical and empirical vacancies of the studies concerning the sociology of disasters.

**Call for Abstracts:
13th Annual INAS Conference 2020**



Analytical sociology is a general approach to explaining the social world. The mode of explanation is to specify in clear and precise ways the mechanisms through which social phenomena are brought about. Parts of analytical sociology focus on action and interaction as the cogs and wheels of social processes, while others consider the dynamic social processes that these actions and interactions bring about.

The 13th INAS conference will be held at Gakushuin University in Tokyo. We welcome papers using any qualitative or quantitative methods that allow for the study of social mechanisms and the complex social dynamics they give rise to. In addition, we welcome purely theoretical papers dealing with central aspects of the explanatory approach of analytical sociology. The theme of the conference is “social mechanisms of diversity” in the broadest sense possible.

Abstract submission: Abstracts should be 300-400 words and must be submitted no later than **March 31, 2020** via <https://forms.gle/YYae2QC14UaEdJHr8>.

Acceptance decision: April 10, 2020

Presentation format: 10-15 minutes oral presentation and 5 minutes discussion

Notes:

- ✧ Registration fee is free. Lunch and coffee will be served (for free).
- ✧ All participants in the conference must make a registration by May 15, 2020. Accepted papers with none of (co)author(s) completing a registration by May 15 will be deleted from the final program.
- ✧ Limited number of small travel grants may be available to students (depending on external funding).

Venue: Gakushuin University, Tokyo, Japan (<https://www.univ.gakushuin.ac.jp/en/access.html>)

Keynote speakers: Michael Hechter (Arizona State University), Mary C. Brinton (Harvard University)



Organizers: Jun Kobayashi (Seikei University), Yoshimichi Sato (Tohoku University), Naoki Sudo (Gakushuin University), Masayuki Kanai (Senshu University), Hiroki Takikawa (Tohoku University)

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

Recent Publications of Interest

- Corten, Rense. 2019. "Social Dilemmas in the Sharing Economy." Pp. 278-89 in *Handbook of the Sharing Economy*, edited by Russell W. Belk, Giana M. Eckhardt, and Fleura Bardhi. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Ermakoff, Ivan. 2019. "Causality and History: modes of causal investigation in historical social sciences," *The Annual Review of Sociology* 45.
- Ermakoff, Ivan. 2019. "Review of What is an Event? By Robin Wagner-Pacifici. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press." *Contemporary Sociology*, 48(2): 136-142.
- Ermakoff, Ivan and Marko Grdesic. 2019. "Institutions and Demotions: Collective Leadership in Authoritarian Regimes," *Theory and Society* 48(4): 559-587.
- Horne, Christine and Wojtek Przepiorka. 2019. "Technology Use and Norm Change in Online Privacy: Experimental Evidence from Vignette Studies." *Information, Communication & Society* (in press) DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2019.1684542.
- Jasso, Guillermina. 2019. "Distributive Justice." In George Ritzer (ed.), *Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Second Edition. Oxford, UK: Wiley Blackwell.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosd078.pub2>
- Kas, Judith, Rense Corten, and Arnout van de Rijt. 2019. "Reputations in Mixed-Role Markets: A Theory and an Experimental Test." *Social Science Research* (in press).
- Mueller, Georg P. 2019. "A Field Theoretical Model of the Polish Emigration to Other European Countries," *Polish Sociological Review* 207 (3), pp. 323-335, DOI:10.26412/psr207.05 (open access).
- Przepiorka, Wojtek and Andreas Diekmann. 2020. "Binding Contracts, Non-Binding Promises and Social Feedback in the Intertemporal Common-Pool Resource Game". *Games* 11(1):5. doi: 10.3390/g11010005.
- Przepiorka, Wojtek, Charlotte Rutten, Vincent Buskens and Aron Szekely. 2020. "How Dominance Hierarchies Emerge from Conflict: A Game Theoretic Model and Experimental Evidence." *Social Science Research* 86:102393. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2019.102393.

Editors' note

A new section "Students on the Market" starts. Fresh and innovative ideas often come from emerging scholars, and sound balance of generations is always key for successful disciplines. Self-nominations and recommendations are always welcome! (Masa and Wojtek)



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