

# The AGORA

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

Summer 2009

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2008-2009

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## From the Chair's Desk



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This will serve as my final column as chair of the section. As such, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate myself on a job well done: I convinced rational choice sociology's very best to run for section offices. Because the section did not hold elections last year, we voted on both a chair and chair-elect. Pamela Oliver (Wisconsin) will be section chair effective at the close of the business meeting at this year's ASA. At that point, you will be in far more capable hands. Section members also chose a new chair-elect (David Willer, University of South Carolina) and two new council members (Christine Horne, Washington State and James Kitts, Columbia). Please join me in welcoming these new section officers.

Also join me in congratulating our section award winners. The prize committee chose Carter Butts (and his co-author, David Rode) as this year's James Coleman Paper Award winner. Blaine Robbins is this year's Graduate Student Paper Award winner. The prizes will be awarded at this year's business meeting, on the last day of ASA. Our section reception is scheduled for the prior evening (August 10th). Please stop by the reception, where you will be able to buy either of the award winners a drink. And thanks again to the hard work of prize committee members, Edgar Kiser, Andreas Flache, Jane Sell, and Ted Welser. They also deserve drinks.

On a final meeting related point, mark your calendar for four rational choice sessions. Two sessions, put together by Guillermina Jasso are scheduled for Monday August 10th. And two additional sessions (one organized by James Kitts and another by Dave Willer) will take place the next day (our section



Chair's column (continued)

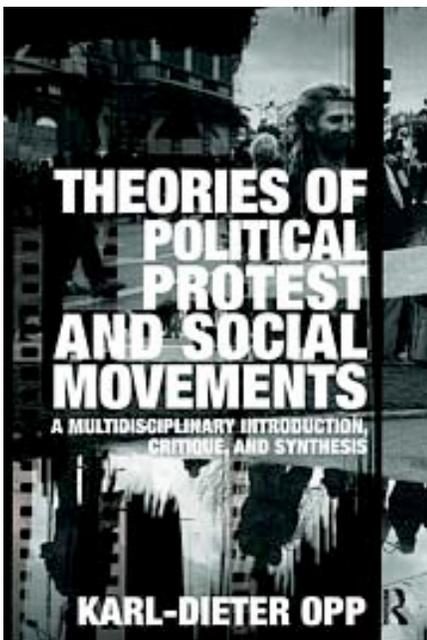
day). I sincerely cannot remember such an exciting roster of rational choice papers at any ASA.

Finally, I would like to thank Jane Sell for reigniting the Agora. The newsletter serves as an important tool for keeping us all up-to-date on what others are doing, and it sends all the right messages to ASA. A year or so ago, Jane agreed to edit the section newsletter on a temporary basis in order to get it up and running again. If you are willing to take over, please let her know.

I look forward to seeing everyone in San Francisco, and wish you a happy and productive summer.

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## Books of Interest

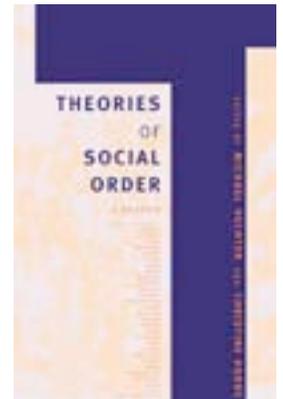


**Karl-Dieter Opp. 2009: Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements. A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique and Synthesis. London and New York: Routledge.**

The book presents and discusses in detail the current theoretical approaches that aim at explaining political protest and social movements. For readers of this newsletter the proposed synthesis of the theoretical approaches is of major interest: the structural-cognitive model. The basic idea is that the macro factors emphasized in the approaches such as political opportunities only affect collective action phenomena if they change the motivations of individual actors. Their behavior, then, translates into social phenomena like social movements. This is actually a micro-macro approach. The basic theoretical orientation is a wide ("thick") rational choice theory. This synthesis is based on detailed theoretical analyses and reconstructions of the implicit background theories and methodologies of the approaches.

**Michael Hechter and Christine Horne. 2009. Theories of Social Order: A Reader, 2nd edition. Stanford Social Sciences.**  
([www.socialorder.com](http://www.socialorder.com))

This newly expanded and reorganized reader provides a compelling explanation of what arguably remains the single most important problem in social theory: the problem of social order. Contending that theory's purpose in the social sciences lies in its ability to explain real-world phenomena, *Theories of Social Order* presents classic texts alongside contemporary theoretical extensions and recent empirical applications.



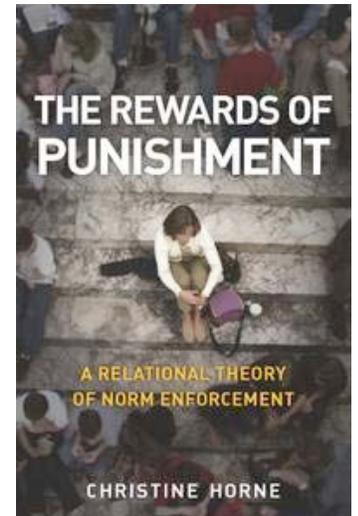
Readings focus around five key social structures that affect social order: individuals, hierarchies, markets, groups, and networks. The editors' unique approach – focusing on theories rather than theorists – encourages students to compare various factors and mechanisms, seek common analytical themes, and develop a deeper theoretical understanding of the problem of social order. By pairing alternative explanations with empirical research, it helps students grasp the essential lesson that social theory must have empirical implications. This critical lesson emphasizes the relevance of theory to real life, the research enterprise, and the development of better social policies. Added readings in the second edition highlight the extent to which the problem of social order is of interest across the sciences and demonstrate the relevance of social order in understanding gender and ethnic group dynamics.

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**Christine Horne. 2009. *The Rewards of Punishment: A Relational Theory of Norm Enforcement*. Stanford University Press.**

*The Rewards of Punishment* describes a new social theory of norms to provide a compelling explanation of why people punish. Identifying mechanisms that link interdependence with norm enforcement, it reveals how social relationships lead people to enforce norms, even when doing so makes little apparent sense.

This book tells the whole story, from ideas to experiments, to real-world applications. In addition to addressing long-standing theoretical puzzles – such as why harmful behavior is not always punished, why individuals enforce norms in ways that actually hurt the group, why people enforce norms that benefit others rather than themselves, why groups punish behavior that has only trivial effects, and why atypical behaviors are sometimes punished and sometimes not – it explores the implications of the theory for substantive issues, including norms regulating sex, crime, and international human rights.



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## Call for Abstracts

Research Committee 45 (Rational Choice) of the International Sociological Association sponsors eight sessions at the XVII World Congress of Sociology in Gothenburg, Sweden on July 11-17, 2010. The deadline for abstracts is October 31, 2009. Please take a look at <http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2010/rc/rc45.htm> for details.

Yoshimichi Sato, President of RC45

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## Board, 2006-2010

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## Exciting Intellectual Discussion at the First ISA Forum of Sociology in Barcelona:

### A Report on RC45 Sessions at the Forum

Yoshimichi Sato (President of RC45, Tohoku University)

The First ISA Forum of Sociology was held in Barcelona, Spain on September 5-8, 2008. RC45 sponsored four sessions at the Forum, in which participants enjoyed excellent presentations and vibrant discussions. The titles of the sessions and the papers presented are shown below. Although sessions were relatively small-sized, speakers and the audience created intellectually cozy ambience in which they exchanged various ideas to advance the frontiers of rational choice theory by, for example, incorporating the concept of identity into the theory. Some participants had dinner together at a local restaurant after all the sessions and enjoyed lively conversation and delicious local foods.

The best student paper award was given to Ana Leon-Mejia and Rania F. Valeeva. The board members of RC45 expect that the award will encourage them to advance their research projects.

#### Session 1: Revisiting Rationality

Chair: Hanno Scholtz

Fernando Aguiar and Andrés de Francisco Can Rational Choice Cope with Identity?

Fernando Aguiar, Pablo Brañas-Garza, María Paz Espinosa, and Luis M. Miller Selfish Altruists: The Role of Identity

Discussants: José A. Noguera and Kazuo Seiyama

#### Session 2: Rationality, Equality, and Institutions

Chair: Yoshimichi Sato

Kazuo Seiyama: Fair and Efficient Egalitarian Norm under Rationality

Hiroyasu Nagata “Decision by Majority” and “Equality”

José A. Noguera Rational Choice Theory, Social Justice, and Institutional Design

Georg P. Mueller Bribing as a Rational Strategy of the Rich: On the Interdependence between Corruption and Income Inequality

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## **ISA Forum of Sociology in Barcelona (contin- ued)**

### **Session 3: Bargaining, So- cial Support, and Health Needs**

Chair: Georg P. Mueller

Katrin Auspurg, Martin Abra-  
ham, and Thomas Hinz Should  
We Stay or Should We Go? A  
Bargaining Approach to Loca-  
tional Decisions within Dual-  
Earner Partnerships

Ana Leon-Mejia and Luis M.  
Miller 'THE DEVIL IS IN  
THE DETAILS': Sex Differ-  
ences in Simple Bargaining  
Games

Sonja Vogt, Jeroen Weesie, Vin-  
cent Buskens, and Werner Raub  
Behavioral Dynamics of Social  
Support

Rania F. Valeeva The Role of  
Education and Social Trust for  
Choices of Health Resources

Ceremony of the best student  
paper award



### **Session 4: Competition and Inequality**

Chair: Sonja Vogt

Antonio M. Jaime Castillo Inequality of Income, Expectations  
of Social Mobility and Demand for Redistribution

Yoshimichi Sato Rational Choice of Survival Strategies in the  
Labor Market: A Comparative Study of Career Aspirations in  
Japan, Korea, and Taiwan

**THE NEW POLITICS OF COMMUNITY**

104th Annual Meeting  
August 8-11, 2009 | San Francisco, CA

See ASA schedule for Rational  
Choice sections on next page



## **ASA Preliminary Schedule:**

### **Rational Choice I.**

Scheduled Time: Mon, Aug 10 - 8:30am - 10:10am Building: Parc 55 Hotel

**Session Organizer:** Guillermina Jasso (New York University)

Exploring the Impact of Gender and Social Status on the Collegiate Sexual Market

\*Alison Carol Kaplan Fogarty (Stanford University)

Embedded Trust: An Experiment on Learning and Control Effects

\*Werner Raub, Vincent W. Buskens

Social Capital and Inequality: An Agent-based Model of Trust, Opportunity, and Structural Holes

\*Yoshimichi Sato (Tohoku University)

A Rational yet Sociological solution to the Paradox of Not Voting

\*Einar Overbye (Oslo University College)

Putting a Spin on It: How Candidates With Seemingly Losing Ideological Positions Can Still Win

\*Scott L. Feld (Purdue University), Bernard Grofman (University of California, Irvine)

### **Rational Choice II**

Scheduled Time: Mon, Aug 10 - 4:30pm - 6:10pm Building: Parc 55 Hotel

**Session Organizer:** Guillermina Jasso (New York University)

A Behavioral Micro-foundation for Cross-sectional Network Models

\*Carter T. Butts (University of California-Irvine)

Enlightenment and Resistance: Modeling the Cultural Sources of Dynamic, Recombinant Conflicts

\*David L. Sallach

Persistent Heterogeneous Identities and Evolutionary Stable Parochial Cooperation

\*Jae-Woo Kim (University of California, Riverside)

The prisoner's dilemma game as a misleading and incomplete model of social dilemmas

Jacob Dijkstra (University of Groningen), \*Marcel Van Assen

What Can We Learn from Simulated Agents in Exchange Networks

C. Dudley Girard (Shippensburg State University), \*David Willer (University of South Carolina)

Logics of Practice, Rational Choice and Historical Change

\*Ivan Ermakoff (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

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Scheduled Time: Tue, Aug 11 - 10:30am - 12:10pm Building: Hilton San Francisco

**Building Rational Choice Theories**

**Session Organizer: James A. Kitts (Columbia University)**

President: James A. Kitts (Columbia University)

Social Exchange and Time-discounting

\*Nobuyuki Takahashi (Hokkaido University)

Social Value Orientations in Exchange

\*Eric Charles Gladstone (The University of South Carolina), Nick Berigan (University of South Carolina), David Willer (University of South Carolina)

Trust and Structural Shifts in Modes of Exchange

\*Coye V. Cheshire (University of California-Berkeley), Alexandra M. Gerbasi (California State University-Northridge), Karen S. Cook (Stanford University), Sarah K. Harkness (Stanford University)

Who Pursues Social Status? The Relationship Between Material Generosity and Status Seeking

\*Robb Willer (University of California-Berkeley), Matthew Feinberg (University of California-Berkeley), Brent Simpson (University of South Carolina), Francis Flynn (Stanford University)

Discussant: Arnout van de Rijt (State University of New York-Stony Brook)

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Scheduled Time: Tue, Aug 11 - 12:30pm - 2:10pm Building: Hilton San Francisco

**Testing Rational Choice Theories**

**Session Organizer: David Willer (University of South Carolina)**

President: Nick Berigan (University of South Carolina)

A Theory of One Path toward Collective Action Participation

\*Christine Sue Witkowski (University of South Carolina), Shane Thye (University of South Carolina)

Developing Beliefs About Structure

\*Pamela E. Emanuelson (University of South Carolina)

Do Values Matter? Values and Altruistic Behavior in Games

\*Lin Tao (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Evil Tidings – Are Reorganizations more Successful if Employees are Informed Early?

\*Rafael P.M. Wittek (University of Groningen), Peter Muhlau (Trinity College Dublin)

Judgment on Other's Trustworthiness: an fMRI Study

\*Motoki Watabe (Waseda University), Hiroshi Ban (Kyoto University), Hiroki Yamamoto (Kyoto University)

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