

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 2012

From the Chair's Desk:

Yoshimichi Sato

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We will have the following sessions and meetings in Denver. Please come to them. Especially, your attendance at the business meeting (Sunday at 11:30) is crucially important for ASA's evaluation of our activities. So please mark its date and time on your calendar. I really look forward to seeing you in Denver.

August 16 (Thursday) 8:45 am-5:50 pm:

**The Fifth Joint Japan-North America
Mathematical Sociology Conference**

**Rationality and Society Schedule for ASA:
Sunday, August 19th**

10:30-11:30am

Council Meeting: 7:45am

[Sun, Aug 19 - 8:30am - 10:10am](#)

Rationality Meets Altruism

Session Organizer: [Yoshimichi Sato \(Tohoku University\)](#)

Presider: [Jun Kobayashi \(Seikei University\)](#)

[Paying It Forward: A Testable Model of Strategic Altruism](#)

*[Kieran Bezila \(Northwestern University\)](#)

[The Interplay Between Personality and Structure: Do Prosocials Exploit in Exchange or Are They Exploited?](#)

*[Danielle Lewis \(University of South Carolina\)](#),
[Michael Hahn \(University of South Carolina\)](#),
[Michael Peterson \(University of South Carolina\)](#),
[Sheldon Sumpter \(University of South Carolina\)](#),
[David Willer \(University of South Carolina\)](#)

[Trust as Signal: A Theory of Strategic Initiation of Trust Relations](#)

*[Lin Tao \(The Chinese University-Hong Kong\)](#),
[Tony Tam \(Chinese University-Hong Kong\)](#)

[Testing the External Validity of Giving in the Dictator Game](#)

*[Axel Franzen \(University of Bern\)](#), [Dr. Sonja Pointner \(University of Bern\)](#)

Discussant: [Rafael P.M. Wittek \(University of Groningen\)](#)

Frontiers of Rational Choice Theory

This session features student award winners from past years.

Session Organizer: [Jane Sell \(Texas A&M University\)](#)

Do Religious Cognitions Promote Prosociality?

*[Ashley Lauren Harrell \(University of South Carolina\)](#)

Religious Human Capital Specificity: Predicting Member Retention and Commitment

*[Katie E. Corcoran \(University of Washington\)](#)

Knowledge and Power

*[Pamela E. Emanuelson \(University of South Carolina\)](#), *[David Willer \(University of South Carolina\)](#)

Discussant: [Howard T. Welser \(Ohio University\)](#)

11:30-12:10pm

[Section on Rationality and Society Business Meeting](#)

6:30-8:30pm

[Joint Reception: Section on Rationality and Society; Section on Mathematical Sociology; Section on Sociology of Evolution, Biology and Society](#)

August 20 (Monday) 12:30-2:10pm

Regular Session: Rational Choice

Session Organizer: *Brent Simpson*, University of South Carolina

Presider: *Ashley Lauren Harrell*, University of South Carolina



(Rational Choice, Regular Session-continued)

A Game Theoretical Model of Trust: Signaling and Mobility

*Jae-Woo Kim, Tohoku University

Formation of Armed Self-defense Groups During Irregular Civil Wars.

*Daniel Blocq, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Jiabin Wu, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Intermediaries in Trust: An Experimental Study on Incentives and Norms.

*Giangiacomo Bravo, University of Torino and Collegio Carlo Alberto; Flaminio Squazzoni, University of Brescia; Károly Takács, Corvinus University-Budapest

Reputation Systems, Aggression, and Deterrence in Social Interaction.

*Stephen Benard, Indiana University

Testing the External Validity of Giving in the Dictator Game.

*Axel Franzen, University of Bern; Dr. Sonja Pointner, University of Bern

Note from the Editors:

In this newsletter, we begin featuring some of the members of our section. We have some short introductions to graduate students and we have somewhat longer “Member Portraits” of different members of our section or of ISA. Please send us information regarding graduate students or other members you would like to feature. Additionally, please send us commentary, new books, new grants, etc of interest to our members.

Jun Kobayashi, Jane Sell

Member

Portrait: Nick Berigan



Nick Berigan will graduate with his PhD from the University of South Carolina in August 2012. Nick will begin employment as a Visiting Assistant Professor at East Tennessee State University in the fall. His research focuses on how factors such as trust, fairness, and culture impact cooperation in collective action settings. Nick’s research has previously appeared in *Social Psychology Quarterly* (co-authored with Kyle Irwin), and will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* (co-authored with David Willer and Eric Gladstone) and in *Handbook of Social Resource Theory* (co-authored with Barry Markovsky, edited by Kjell Törnblom and Ali Kazemi).

His dissertation looked at how the salient feature of contributions affect altruistic punishment in asymmetric public goods dilemmas. Consistent with his prior research with Barry Markovsky, the findings indicated that appealing to “doing your best” made subjects look at wealthier group members more favorably, and poorer group members less favorably, compared to appealing to the actual value of contributions. Nick’s dissertation findings further indicated that subjects spent more money to punish wealthier group members when absolute contributions were made salient compared to relative contributions. Meanwhile, subjects spent more money to punish poorer group members when relative contributions were salient compared to absolute conditions.

In his current research, Nick is working with Kyle Irwin to address how culture and the presence of monitoring impact trust and cooperation in “real world” social dilemmas. In the future, he is interested in expanding his previous research on how rules of fairness affect perceptions of free-riding, and actors’ responses to these perceptions. Nick is also interested in how partner selection in collective action settings promotes the emergence of a social structure within the group.

Graduate Student Snippets:

Yusuke Inagaki is a student of the Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Tohoku University. He has been studying the generating process of trust in general others and will present a paper entitled

“The Power of Kizuna: Social Capital and Recovery in the Great East Japan Earthquake” at the Fifth Joint Japan-North America Mathematical Sociology Conference in Denver.



Nobuo Suzuki is a student of the Graduate School, Tohoku University. He has been studying the formative mechanism of social capital and will present a paper entitled “The Formation Conditions of New Social Networks” at the Fifth Joint Japan-North America Mathematical Sociology Conference in Denver.



Yosuke Kira, a doctoral student at the Graduate School, Tohoku University, has been studying the cooperation in social dilemma situations with cooperative game and evolutionary game approaches. He will present a paper entitled “Why Communication Promotes Cooperation in Social Dilemmas” at the conference in Denver.





Rational Choice Section,
International Sociological
Association, 2012

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From the President's
Desk: **Hanno Scholtz**

Dear Colleagues,

The Second ISA Forum of Sociology is fastly approaching, and we look forward to seeing many old and many new faces in Buenos Aires.

Our ISA Research Committee, RC45 Rational Choice, is one of the smallest committees. RC45 has in the past been much more geographically confined to the old industrial core of North America, Western Europe, and Japan. To cite the call for papers of one of our sessions in Buenos Aires, choice-oriented theory has had hard times in Latin America and in the Global South in general. The Cold War era witnessed a relative decline of Latin America and Asia which was by no means a choice, of neither these societies nor their citizens. In turn, in many Latin American (less so Asian) societies, rational choice sociology has been identified with the active and successful actors of these historical changes, who by many scholars were analyzed as one collective actor, be it the "U.S. hegemony" or the "Global North." In many Asian (less so Latin American) societies, research which used the individual actor as its analytical base was perceived as oriented against value orientations and collective identities and propagating an individualism which would eventually destroy connections and the social capital they bear.

Given this situation, the ISA Forum in Buenos Aires was a special challenge and is a special chance for RC45 and for Rational Choice theory in general. We have organized a program which in relation to other committees is small. However, the Spanish-speaking world contributes every second presentation. It is present to an extent which we have had never before in the the history of RC45. The above-cited call described that “the last decades have witnessed a complete reversal of the depicted macro trends, with resulting self-confidence rising in those parts of the former semi-periphery which turned into emerging markets and new regional powers. In turn, sociology acknowledges a renewed interest in choice-oriented and agency-centered analysis in the Global South.” In our Buenos Aires sessions, we will see how these developments shape the future of international Rational Choice sociology in the coming years.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at Buenos Aires, in our sessions, and especially at our business meeting there!

Member Portrait: Katrin Auspurg



Katrin Auspurg recently finished her PhD at the University of Konstanz, Germany (sociology, minor psychology). Currently she is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Konstanz, and a Research Associate at

the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex (GB). In her dissertation (“Analysis of Social Inequality: Conceptual Considerations and Empirical Evidence”) she

looked at mechanisms underlying social inequalities in research fields like sociology of the family, social justice research, and sociology of science. A special feature of her dissertation was the application and further development of innovative research methods like factorial survey methods.

Her main research interests are in survey methodology, discrimination, and social inequality. In her current projects, she is researching different theories of discrimination and segregation in housing markets. Empirical testing is based on a field experiment that is unique in the amount of information on rental units and ethnic composition of neighborhoods. Another research project focuses on the interaction of inequalities in the family and the labor market by analyzing job-related migration decisions based on a factorial survey. Finally, Katrin is adding to the methodological knowledge on experimental survey methods like choice experiments and factorial surveys by studying diverse methodological issues of these methods.

Recent publications include: Auspurg, K., Hinz, Th. (2011) “What Fuels Publication Bias? Theoretical and Empirical Analyses of Risk Factors Using the Caliper Test.” *Journal of Economics and Statistics* 231, 636-660; Abraham, M., Auspurg, K., Hinz, Th. (2010) “Migration Decisions Within Dual-Earner Partnerships: A Test of Bargaining Theory.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72, 876-892; Sauer, C., Auspurg, K., Hinz, Th., Liebig, S. (2011) “The Application of Factorial Surveys in General Population Samples: The Effects of Respondent Age and Education on Response Times and Response Consistency.” *Survey Research Methods* 5, 89-102.

For more information:

<http://www.soziologie.uni-konstanz.de/en/professuren/prof-dr-thomas-hinz/staff/dr-katrin-auspurg/>.

