

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 2014



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From the Chair's Desk

Andreas Flache



Dear members of the ASA Rationality & Society section,

This week, the Annual Meeting of the ASA will start in San Francisco. This time the overall theme is "Hard times. The Impact of Economic Inequality on Families and Individuals." This topic is of the highest societal relevance not only for the U.S. scholars in our section, but also for the colleagues from Europe, Japan and elsewhere. In this issue you will find an overview of the section activities at the Annual Meeting that shows how Rationality & Society links to the overall theme, presenting an exciting menu of sessions and papers



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that address the emergence and implications of societal inequality from the perspective of individual rationality.

I thank my colleagues Arnout van de Rijt and Jacob Dijkstra for helping to put this great program together! We will have two section sessions, addressing the topics of “Sustainable Cooperation” (organized by myself), “Arbitrary Inequality?” (organized by Arnout van de Rijt) and the regular session on “Rational Choice” (organized by Jacob Dijkstra). In addition, at the business meeting of our section we have important questions to discuss and we have time for celebration and networking at the joint section reception, together with our colleagues from Mathematical Sociology and Evolution, Biology & Society. Maybe most importantly, at the business meeting we will announce the winners of the best student paper and best book awards. Be prepared for excellent work to receive the praise it deserves! And let us thank the members of the award committees (chaired by Marcel van Assen and Rob Willer) for their efforts to find the best out of a set of strong candidates.

At the business meeting, a number of newly elected section officers will start their terms and take over responsibility in our section. Our new section chair will be Anthony Paik (University of Massachusetts-Amherst) and the new chair elect is Arnout van de Rijt (Stony Brook University). We also will have a new treasurer, Robert Shelly from Ohio University. Finally, Jun Kobayashi (Seikei University) will be a new council member for a 2-year period. On behalf of the section I wish all of them rewarding and successful terms. Let me also thank those section officers who hand their offices over for their efforts in the past which were essential to keep Rationality & Society going. Stephen Benard and Shane Thye leave

the council, Davide Barrera hands over the office of treasurer and Rafael Wittek will no longer be our past chair after the Annual Meeting.

I sincerely hope and I am looking forward to see all of you at the events of our section in San Francisco. I wish all of you a safe trip to San Francisco and a great conference,



ASA 2014 annual meeting in San Francisco
Section on Rationality and Society Session
Program

1. Sat, August 16, 10:30am to 12:10pm
Section session. Sustainable Cooperation and Individual Interests in a Changing World (program 87)

Hilton San Francisco Union Square, Lobby Level, Golden Gate 8, Lobby Level

Session Organizer: Andreas Flache, University of Groningen

President: Anthony Paik, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Discussant: Jacob Dijkstra, University of Groningen

Session topic:

Cooperation is fundamental for society, yet precarious in the face of conflicting individual interests. Much progress has been made in understanding cooperation. Yet, relatively little is known about what makes cooperation sustainable in a changing social context. Papers address theoretically and empirically how cooperation can emerge, be sustained or decline in changing societal contexts.

Papers:

Explaining Social Change Using a Dynamic Network Model. *Yamilette Chacon, University of South Carolina; Pamela E. Emanuelson, North Dakota State University*

The Shadow of Consumption. *Michael Constantin Hahn, Stanford University; Brent Simpson, University of South Carolina*

The Social Production of Property and its Coercive Enforcement. *Pamela E. Emanuelson, North Dakota State University; David Willer, University of South Carolina; Richard Chacon, Winthrop University; Yamilette Chacon and Danielle Lewis, University of South Carolina.*

2. Sat, August 16, 2:30 to 3:30pm

Section session (one-hour). Arbitrary Inequality? Rich-get-richer Effects and the Accumulation of Economic Disadvantage (program 131)

Hilton San Francisco Union Square, Lobby Level, Golden Gate 8, Lobby Level

Session Organizer: Arnout van de Rijt, State University of New York-Stony Brook

Presider: Rembrand Michael Koning, Stanford University

Session topic:

Much of inequality research is aimed at identifying characteristics of people that really shouldn't affect their economic success, but do nonetheless. However, even very similar individuals often attain drastically different economic outcomes. One explanation is pre-existing variability along unobserved dimensions that is gradually revealed through differential achievement. Alternatively, positive feedback operating on arbitrary initial advantages may increasingly set apart winners from losers, producing an ever growing gap between the haves and the

have-nots. This session focuses on state-of-the-art research in the rational choice tradition aimed at identifying social mechanisms that may generate such arbitrary inequality.

Papers:

Testing Gould: How Status Ambiguity Causes Risk Taking. The Case of Formula 1. *Henning Piezunka, Stanford University; Matthew S. Bothner, University of Chicago*

Interaction-based Amplifiers and Asymmetric Distributions: Principles and Examples. *Gianluca Manzo, University of Paris-Sorbonne; Delia Baldassarri, New York University.*

3. Sat, August 16, 3:30 to 4:10pm

Section on Rationality and Society Business Meeting (program 131)

Hilton San Francisco Union Square, Lobby Level, Golden Gate 8, Lobby Level

Report on section activities, discussion of future activities

Announcement and presentation of best book and best student paper awards

4. Sat, August 16, 6:30 to 8:30pm

Section reception (with Sections on Evolution, Biology and Society and Mathematical Sociology)

Hilton San Francisco Union Square, Lobby Level, Golden Gate 7, Lobby Level

5. Sun, August 17, 12:30 to 2:10pm

Regular Session. Rational Choice (program 272)

Hilton San Francisco Union Square, Lobby Level, Golden Gate 7, Lobby Level

Session Organizer & Presider: Jacob Dijkstra, University of Groningen

Papers:

Putting Power in the Right Hands: A Person x Situation

Approach to Leadership and Collective Action.

Ashley Lauren Harrell and *Brent Simpson*,

University of South Carolina

Social Influence and Collective Action: An Experiment

of a Simulated Social Protest. *Blaine G. Robbins*,

Steven Pfaff; *Ross L. Matsueda*, and *Richard J.*

Callahan, University of Washington

Success Breeds Success: Evidence from Field

Experiments. *Arnout van de Rijt*, State University

of New York-Stony Brook; *Soong Moon Kang*,

University College-London; *Michael Restivo*, and

Akshay Patil, State University of New York-Stony

Brook

The Network Antidote: An Agent-Based Model of

Discrimination in Labor Markets. *Károly Takács*,

Corvinus University-Budapest; *Flaminio*

Squazzoni, University of Brescua; *Giangiaco*

Bravo, Linnaeus University

Editors' note

We are expecting the ASA annual meeting in San Francisco this week. Andreas organized exciting four sessions as well as the business meeting and a reception. All section activities are held in Saturday and Sunday. I spent several months at Stanford University last year. So, I bet summer San Francisco will give us pleasant and relaxing time. Hope to see you soon. (Jun)



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