

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 2021



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From the Chair's Desk (ASA)

Stephen Benard



I hope you are all enjoying a restful and/or productive summer, after the long year that we've been through. Despite the challenging year, we have some things to celebrate as a section. Our session organizers have put together a fantastic slate for ASA this year, including sessions on combatting political polarization, computational approaches to rational choice, and environmental decision-making. Prior to the environmental decision-making session, we have our section business meeting on Tuesday, August 10, 4:15 to 4:45pm EDT, VAM, Room 32. All section members are welcome.

I'm also happy to report that we passed our ASA probation review (required due to our section's small size), and so are not currently on probation. At the same time, our small size and declining membership continue to be our biggest challenges for the future. I'm convinced that the important, exciting work we do could be broadly appealing to a range of sociologists. I'm also convinced that our joint knowledge of choice, networks, collective action, and other topics will help us solve this problem.

One thing you can do immediately is encourage a student to join the section. Our intrepid membership committee (Rafael Wittek, Kristen Tzoc, and Feliz Garip) has created an online form for faculty to sponsor student memberships, and students to request

memberships, available here. Currently, we have more people willing to sponsor memberships than people who have requested sponsorship (which I suppose is itself an interesting puzzle for rational choice scholars). So, if you have a student interested in joining the section, there are free section memberships for the taking: please direct them to this link.

In exciting news, please join me in welcoming our new Chair-elect, Neha Gondal, our new council member, Milena Tsvetkova, and our new student representative, Kristinn Már. Thank you to all section members who agreed to run in the section elections, and all those who voted. I would also like to thank the council members rotating off, Michael Mäs and Kristen Tzoc, for their service to the section. Finally, I would also like to thank our nominations committee Gianluca Manzo, Fabien Accominotti, Ivan Irmakoff, Arnout van de Rijt, and Werner Raub for their work recruiting an excellent and competitive field.

I hope you all continue to enjoy your summer. It has been an honor to serve as chair, and I look forward to continuing to serve next year in the role of past chair.

116th ASA Virtual Annual Meeting, August 6-10, 2021



Combating Political Polarization

Tue, August 10, 11:00am to 12:25pm EDT

Panelists:

Kathleen M. Carley, Carnegie Mellon University
Daniel DellaPosta, Pennsylvania State University
Andreas Flache, University of Groningen
Sven Banisch, Max Planck Institute for Mathematics in the Sciences

Computational Approaches to Rational Choice

Tue, August 10, 12:45 to 2:10pm EDT

Fair Diffusion on Networks

Jeffrey Kennedy Sachs, Yale University

Seeing is Believing: Gender Stereotypes are Stronger in Images than in Text

Douglas Richard Guilbeault, University of California-Berkeley

Solene Delecourt, University of California-Berkeley
"To rest on your laurels": Status dynamics and cooperation in a large online community

Mario D. Molina, New York University Abu Dhabi
What Kind of Work is Prestigious? The Embodiment of Occupational Status

Dustin S. Stoltz, Lehigh University

Section on Rationality and Society Business Meeting

Tue, August 10, 4:15 to 4:45pm EDT

Environmental Decision Making, Consumption, and Public Goods: Rationality and Decision Making at the Policy Interface

Tue, August 10, 4:45 to 5:40pm EDT

Mind the gap? How neutralization theory can explain the concern-behavior gap in environmental decision making

Guido Franz Mehlkop, University of Erfurt

Robert Neumann, University of Technology Dresden

The Shadow of Utility: How Consumption Choice affects the Choice to Cooperate

Michael C Hahn, Stanford University

Jered Abernathy, University of South Carolina

Brent Simpson, University of South Carolina-Columbia

2021 Rationality and Society James S. Coleman Outstanding Article Award



The 2021 Rationality and Society James S. Coleman Outstanding Article Award goes to Vincenz Frey and Arnout van de Rijt for their *Management Science* article "Social Influence Undermines the Wisdom of the Crowd in Sequential Decision Making." This article studies how individual judgements made with knowledge of what others have already chosen can drive collective intelligence astray. In alignment with James Coleman's paradigm, the authors uncover a tension

between the micro and macro levels and reveal that what the existing literature has shown to be good for individuals on average, is in fact bad for groups. Uniquely sociological, this perspective jolts the field researching the wisdom of crowds, an actively growing and interdisciplinary field, into an entirely new and productive direction. The authors develop a simple and elegant logistic choice model to derive predictions, which they then test with cleverly designed lab and online experiments. The committee were particularly impressed with the conceptual clarity, meticulous design, and logical exposition of the article. These offer a how-to template for all of us in the field of rationality and society.

The awards committee would also like to give an honorable mention to Yen-Sheng Chiang for his *Journal of Conflict Resolution* article “Indirect Reciprocity for Mitigating Intergroup Hostility: A Vignette Experiment and an Agent-based Model on Intergroup Relations between Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese.” The article outlines all possible relational mechanisms in the triad between an actor, an ingroup member, and an outgroup member and uses a vignette study to identify which are most prominent; it then develops an agent-based model to extrapolate the long-term consequences of the empirical findings. The article stands out by embedding the empirical study of general social mechanisms in an important and pertinent problem, concerning the relations between Mainland China and Taiwan.

Committee: Patrick Bergemann (chair), Jenny Davis, and Milena Tsvetkova

2021 Rationality and Society section award for Best Paper by a Graduate Student

The committee decided not to give an award this year.

Committee: Minjae Kim (chair), Barum Park, and David Kretschmer.

Call for Volunteers

Stephen Benard

Our fantastic webmaster, Wojtek Przepiorka, will be stepping down soon, and the section is looking for a volunteer to handle some light tasks related to our

website. If you would be willing to serve in this capacity, please contact me at sbenard@indiana.edu. Also, many thanks for Wojtek for his contributions to our section!

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,

In the last February 23-28, 2021, the ISA Forum of Sociology was held online, the first ever virtual ISA conference. I would say it was success. Why? The ISA executives did their best not to stop academic exchanges in the difficult world.

RC45 had six paper sessions and a business meeting. I really appreciate all those who were there as presenters, session organizers, chairs, and audience. Facing an unfamiliar online format, though, we enjoyed innovative papers and following vibrant discussion as always. With no major technical problems as far as I understand.

At the business meeting, Statutes and Bylaws revision was approved. Many thanks to all the participants for discussion and Masa for those bureaucratic works! The revision includes two major changes to assure efficient management and stable member counts.

1. Shortening election period from "5 months" to "2 months."

2. Introducing "life membership" for members aged 70 or higher.

See the new ones at

<https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/research-networks/research-committees/rc45-rational-choice/rc45-statutes>.

What comes next? Yes, the World Congress of Sociology. At this moment, it is expected to be held on-site in Melbourne, Australia. Note that on May 1, 2021, the Assembly of Councils of the ISA has reached the decision to postpone it from 2022 to June 25-July 1, 2023. The Assembly also extended RC boards and ISA mandates until the next Congress.

Consequently, the next ISA Forum will also be delayed by a year to June or July 2025. It remains undecided, however, whether the Forum takes place "on-site" or "online."

Here are some important deadlines.

1. September 1-15, 2022, Call for Sessions.
2. October 1-31, 2022, Abstracts submission.

See

<https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/world-congress/melbourne-2023/deadlines-2023> for details.

My deepest thanks go to our editors, Masa and Wojtek. Wojtek leaves the position after this issue. I cannot appreciate more for his 3 years' creativity and responsibility since 2018.

Call for Volunteers

Jun Kobayashi

As Wojtek leaves an RC45 editorial role, we look for a volunteer after him. Working with Masa Kanai on the ASA side, she/he will edit this joint newsletter twice a year on the ISA RC45 side. This can provide a rare opportunity to connect yourself with the field. If interested, e-mail me at jun.kobayashi@fh.seikei.ac.jp.

Recent Publications of Interest

Articles:

Bruggeman, Jeroen, and Rense Corten. 2021. "Social Cohesion and Cooperation for Public Goods." *Connections*. 41(1): 1-6.

<https://doi.org/10.21307/connections-2019.020>

Bulz, Nicolae. 2021. "A Part of a Long Term (Re)Search: from Our Knowledge Society Towards a Still Possible Consciousness Society. Learn to Live

'Together' (June 3, 2021)." Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3855012> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3855012>

Hofstra, Bas, Rense Corten, and Frank van Tubergen. 2021 "Beyond the Core: Who Has Larger Social Networks?" *Social Forces*. 99(3): 1274-1305. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soaa031>

Jasso, Guillermina. 2021. "Inequality and Justice." Pp. 209-243 in Seth Abrutyn and Kevin McCaffree (eds.), *Theoretical Sociology: The Future of a Disciplinary Foundation*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Jasso, Guillermina. 2021. "Analyzing Migration Restriction Regimes." *Frontiers in Sociology* 6:610432. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.610432>

Kas, Judith, Rense Corten, and Arnout van de Rijt. 2021. "The role of reputation systems in digital discrimination." *Socio-Economic Review*. mwab012. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwab012>

Kimura, Kunihiro. 2020. "Can the Signaling Game Serve as a Model of Statistical Discrimination in Hiring?" *Sociological Theory and Methods*. 35(1):14-32. <https://doi.org/10.11218/ojjams.35.14>

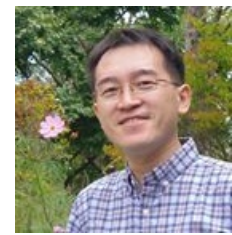
Kley, Stefanie. 2021. "How material deprivation impacted economic stress across European countries during the great recession. A lesson on social comparisons." *Acta Sociologica*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00016993211001121>

Editors' note

Wojtek leaves his position as a co-editor from RC45 after this issue. His interviews have reminded us of many challenges and opportunities in the rational choice sociology. Thanks, Wojtek for your great contribution! (Masa)



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