



A TWENTY-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE ON THE PRICE OF ANARCHY

<https://20poa.github.io>

WORKSHOP PROGRAM AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme
of the European Union



INVITED SPEAKERS

Giorgos Christodoulou	(U. Liverpool)
Elias Koutsoupias	(U. Oxford)
Christos Papadimitriou	(Columbia U.)
Tim Roughgarden	(Columbia U.)
Eva Tardos	(Cornell U.)

Vittorio Bilò	(U. Salento)
Philip Brown	(U. Colorado)
Bo Chen	(U. Warwick)
Roberto Cominetti	(U. Adolfo Ibañez)
Bart De Keijzer	(U. Essex)
Diodato Ferraioli	(U. Salerno)
Martin Gairing	(U. Liverpool)
Vasilis Gkatzelis	(Drexel U.)
Nikolai Gravin	(ITCS, U. Shanghai)
Tobias Harks	(U. Augsburg)
Martin Hoefer	(Goethe U. Frankfurt)
Max Klimm	(Humboldt U. Berlin)
Brendan Lucier	(Microsoft Research)
Rolf Möhring	(TU Berlin and U. Hefei)
Evdokia Nikolova	(UT Austin)
Guido Schäfer	(CWI Amsterdam)
Marc Schröder	(RWTH U. Aachen)
Alkmini Sgouritsa	(MPI)
Tristan Tomala	(HEC Paris)

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

	TUE, JULY 2	WED, JULY 3	THU, JULY 4	FRI, JULY 5
10:00 – 11:00	C. Papadimitriou	G. Christodoulou	T. Roughgarden	E. Koutsoupias
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:30 – 11:55	P. Brown	R. Cominetti	B. De Keijzer	V. Bilò
11:55 – 12:20	T. Harks	R. Möhring	E. Nikolova	M. Gairing
12:20 – 12:45	G. Schäfer	M. Schröder	T. Tomala	M. Hoefer
12:45 – 15:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	<i>Lunch break</i>	<i>Lunch break</i>	<i>Lunch break</i>
15:00 – 16:00	E. Tardos	FLASH TALKS S. Boodaghians V. Dose A. Filos-Ratsikas E. Macault B. Monnot M. Quattropani A. Tsikiridis A. Voudouris	ROUND TABLE	N. Gravin G. Piliouras
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Coffee break</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>	Conference ends
16:30 – 16:55	B. Chen		M. Klimm	
16:55 – 17:20	D. Ferraioli	POSTER SESSION	B. Lucier	
17:20 – 17:45	V. Gkatzelis		A. Sgouritsa	

WELCOME FROM THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to Chania for the Twenty-Year Retrospective Workshop on the Price of Anarchy (PoA20)! We hope you will enjoy both the exciting technical program of the event as well as the beautiful island of Crete in July.

The purpose of this meeting is to bring together students, researchers and practitioners that are active in the broad area of algorithmic game theory, and to create a fertile forum for presenting research results, exchanging ideas, and initiating collaborations. As organizers, we hope there will be more to come in the future, and that this will be the first of many retrospectives on the subject.

This meeting is co-organized by the European Network for Game Theory (COST Action CA16228). COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a pan-European intergovernmental framework whose mission is to enable break-through scientific and technological developments leading to new concepts and products and thereby contribute to strengthening Europe's research and innovation capacities (for more information, see www.cost.eu).

We are likewise grateful to our academic and industrial sponsors, as listed on the cover of this booklet: the French National Research Agency (ANR) that provided generous financial support through the JCJC project ORACLESS; the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS); the Gaspard Monge Programme for Optimization (PGMO) and its industrial sponsors, EDF, Orange, and Thales; and, last but not least, the administrative staff of our institutions for their valuable time and support in organizing this event.

This retrospective is bringing together more than 50 researchers and practitioners from all over the globe. Invited talks have been organized into 5 one-hour keynotes and 7 sessions, each consisting of 3 presentations. In addition to these sessions, there will be a poster session on Wednesday afternoon, preceded by a teaser session where each poster presenter will give a short outline of their work.

All talks will be taking place at the Technical University of Crete, a....

On behalf of the organizing committee, we wish you an exciting conference and a great time in Chania!

Ioannis Caragiannis	(University of Patras)
Georgios Chalkiadakis	(Technical University of Crete)
Vangelis Markakis	(Athens University of Economics and Business)
Panayotis Mertikopoulos	(CNRS / LIG)
Georgios Piliouras	(Singapore University of Technology and Design)
Marco Scarsini	(LUISS)

ABSTRACTS

Tuesday, July 2

MORNING KEYNOTE (10:00 – 11:00)

Christos Papadimitriou

10:00 – 11:00

TBA

TBA

MORNING TALKS (11:30 – 12:45)

Philip Brown

11:30 – 11:55

Perverse Incentives for Improving the Price of Anarchy

As a quality certificate for equilibrium outcomes, the price of anarchy seems to be a natural tool for a social planner that is attempting to influence self-interested behavior: if a behavior-influencing scheme improves the price of anarchy for a class of problems, the planner may reasonably claim that the scheme is effective. However, as a worst-case metric, improvements in the price of anarchy need not guarantee improvements on every instance of the class of problems; the possibility remains that deploying a PoA-reducing incentive scheme may actually degrade performance on the majority of instances. That is, the planner may face a tradeoff between improving worst-case outcomes and preserving nominally-optimal outcomes. This talk surveys our recent work on this tradeoff in the context of congestion pricing for nonatomic congestion games. For network-agnostic pricing schemes, we show that any scheme which optimizes the price of anarchy must necessarily create perverse incentives on some problem instances, and that if the class of networks is sufficiently rich, perverse incentives are fundamentally unavoidable.

Tobias Harks

11:55 – 12:20

Pricing in Resource Allocation Games

I will describe connections on some old and new work on pricing in resource allocation games.

Guido Schäfer

12:20 – 12:45

Price of Anarchy and its relatives: It is all about perception

We survey recent results on the price of anarchy and its relatives of strategic games with players exhibiting "complex" preferences. Such games have recently been studied intensively to obtain a better understanding of the impact of altruistic or spiteful behavior, complex social relationships, risk-aversion in uncertain environments, different degrees of player responsiveness, the imposition of taxes in network games, etc. The obtained insights are often surprising or counterintuitive. For example, for congestion games the price of anarchy actually gets worse as players become more altruistic, while it improves as players care less about the congestion caused by others. Conceptually, such "complex games" can be viewed as being derived from a base game through suitable modifications of the players' utility functions. Exploiting the relationship between the base game and the complex game is often key to derive tight bounds on the price of anarchy and still not well-understood for several fundamental games. This also connects to the intriguing question of how to "design" the utility functions of the players to arrive at good equilibria.

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE (15:00 – 16:00)**Éva Tardos**

15:00 – 16:00

TBA

TBA

AFTERNOON TALKS (16:30 – 17:45)**Bo Chen**

16:30 – 16:55

Price of fairness in machine scheduling problems

Motivated by the notion of price of anarchy, we investigate the concept of price of fairness in resource allocation and apply it to two-agent single-machine scheduling problems, in which two agents, each having a set of jobs, compete for use of a single machine to execute their jobs. We consider the situation where one agent aims at minimizing the total of the completion times of his jobs, while the other seeks to minimize the maximum tardiness with respect to a common due date for her jobs. We first explore and propose a definition of utility, then we study both max-min and proportionally fair solutions, providing a tight bound on the price of fairness for each notion of fairness. We extend our study further to the problem in which both agents wish to minimize the total of the completion times of their own jobs.

Diodato Ferraioli

16:55 – 17:20

Controlling Opinion Diffusion on Social Networks

Opinion diffusion is studied on social graphs where agents hold opinions from some discrete set and social pressure leads them to conform to the opinion manifested by neighbors. Within this setting, questions related to which extent a minority/majority can spread the opinion it supports to the other agents are considered. In particular, we show that in case of binary opinions, a large minority exists that can always become a majority, and a bare majority can converge to consensus. Not only, the sets of agents that enable these results can be computed by a polynomial-time algorithm. Interestingly, these results marksthe boundary of tractability, since the influence power of smaller set of agents is shown to depend on certain features of the underlying graphs, which are NP-hard to be identified. We also show the extent at which these results fail when extended to a setting with more than two available opinions per agent.

Based on works appeared at WINE 2015, WINE 2017, AAMAS 2017, IJCAI 2018 (Distinguished Paper), AAMAS 2019.

Vasilis Gkatzelis

17:20 – 17:45

From coordination mechanisms to approximation algorithms in selfish scheduling

We focus on a selfish scheduling setting, where each player owns a job that needs to be processed by one of the available machines. Each player chooses which machine to schedule his job on, aiming to minimize its completion time, and our goal is to design local scheduling policies (or coordination mechanisms) that minimize the weighted sum of completion times across jobs in equilibrium. Our first set of results, which appeared at STOC '11, analyzes three coordination mechanisms that yield potential games and achieve constant price of anarchy bounds. We then discuss more recent results from WINE '17, which reveal a connection between coordination mechanisms and cost-sharing protocols. Using this connection, we interpret the aforementioned coordination mechanisms as Shapley-value-based cost-sharing protocols, providing a unifying justification regarding why these mechanisms induce potential games. More importantly, this connection enables the design of interesting approximation algorithms for the underlying optimization problem, translating price of anarchy bounds to approximation factors.

Wednesday, July 3

MORNING KEYNOTE (10:00 – 11:00)

G. Christodoulou

10:00 – 11:00

TBA

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MORNING TALKS (11:30 – 12:45)

Roberto Cominetti

11:30 – 11:55

When is selfish routing bad? The price of anarchy in light and heavy traffic

In this talk we examine the behavior of the Price-of-Anarchy (PoA) as a function of the traffic inflow in nonatomic routing games with multiple OD pairs. Empirical studies in real-world networks show that the PoA is close to 1 in both light and heavy traffic, thus raising the question: can these observations be justified theoretically?

We first show that this is not always the case: the PoA may remain a positive distance away from 1 for all values of the traffic inflow, even in simple three-link networks with a single OD pair and smooth, convex costs. On the other hand, for a large class of cost functions (including all polynomials), the PoA does converge to 1 in both heavy and light traffic, irrespective of the network topology and the number of OD pairs in the network. We also examine the rate of convergence of the PoA, and we show that it follows a power law whose degree can be computed explicitly when the network's cost functions are polynomials.

This talk is based on joint work with Riccardo Colini-Baldeschi, Panayotis Mertikopoulos, and Marco Scarsini.

Rolf Möhring

11:55 – 12:20

The Price of Anarchy Revisited: Selfish routing need not be bad in high congestion

We consider non-atomic congestion games with continuous and non-decreasing latency functions and investigate the limit of the price of anarchy (PoA) when the total user demand T approaches infinity. First results in this direction have recently been obtained by Colini-Baldeschi et al. and show that the PoA converges to 1

when the growth of the total demand T satisfies certain conditions. We extend their results substantially by developing a unified framework for the limit analysis of the PoA. Among others, we can show that the PoA converges to 1 regardless of the type of growth of T when all latency functions are polynomials. Our new techniques are very flexible and apply also to games with latency functions of other types. In addition, we analyze traffic networks with standard BPR latency functions and show a power law for the convergence speed of the PoA. We also report about a detailed empirical study with real traffic data of Beijing showing that the PoA is indeed 1, and already for a much reduced total user volume.

The lecture is based on joint work with Zijun Wu, Yanyan Chen, and Dachuan Xu.

Marc Schröder

12:20 – 12:45

Price of Anarchy in Stochastic Atomic Congestion Games with Affine Costs

We consider an atomic congestion game with stochastic demand in which each player participates in the game with probability p , and incurs no cost with probability $1-p$. We assume that p is common knowledge among all players and that players are independent. For congestion games with affine costs, we provide an analytic expression for the price of anarchy as a function of p , which is monotonically increasing and converges to the well-known bound of $5/2$ as $p \rightarrow 1$. On the other extreme, for $p < 1/4$ the bound is constant and equal to $4/3$ independently of the game structure and the number of players. We show that these bounds are tight and are attained on routing games with purely linear costs. Additionally, we also obtain tight bounds for the price of stability for all values of p .

FLASH TALKS (15:00 – 16:00)

Alexandros Voudouris *The efficiency of resource allocation mechanisms for budget-constrained users*

Aris Filos-Ratsikas *The Pareto frontier of inefficiency in mechanism design*

Matteo Quattropani *Existence and fairness of equilibria in the deterministic buck passing game*

Valerio Dose *The price of anarchy as a function of the demand*

Barnabé Monnot *Wealth inequality and the price of anarchy*

Shant Boodaghians *Online revenue maximization for server pricing*

Emilien Macaule *Learning in repeated routing games with symmetric incomplete information*

Artem Tsikiridis *Tight welfare guarantees for pure Nash equilibria of the uniform price auction*

POSTER SESSION (16:30 – 17:45)

Thursday, July 4

MORNING KEYNOTE (10:00 – 11:00)

Tim Roughgarden

10:00 – 11:00

TBA

TBA

MORNING TALKS (11:30 – 12:45)

Bart de Keijzer

11:30 – 11:55

Altruism and its Impact on the Price of Anarchy

We study the inefficiency of equilibria for congestion games when players are (partially) altruistic. We model altruistic behavior by assuming that player i 's perceived cost is a convex combination of a_i times his direct cost and a_i times the social cost. Tuning the parameters a_i allows smooth interpolation between purely selfish and purely altruistic behavior. Within this framework, we study primarily altruistic extensions of (atomic and nonatomic) congestion games, but also obtain some results on fair cost-sharing games and valid utility games.

We derive (tight) bounds on the price of anarchy of these games for several solution concepts. Thereto, we suitably adapt the smoothness notion introduced by Roughgarden and show that it captures the essential properties to determine the robust price of anarchy of these games. Our bounds show that for atomic congestion games and cost-sharing games, the robust price of anarchy gets worse with increasing altruism, while for valid utility games, it remains constant and is not affected by altruism.

However, the increase in the price of anarchy is not a universal phenomenon: For general nonatomic congestion games with uniform altruism, the price of anarchy improves with increasing altruism. For atomic and nonatomic symmetric singleton congestion games, we derive bounds on the pure price of anarchy that improve as the average level of altruism increases. (For atomic games, we only derive such bounds when cost functions are linear.) Since the bounds are also strictly lower than the robust price of anarchy, these games exhibit natural examples in which pure Nash equilibria are more efficient than more permissive notions of equilibrium.

Evdokia Nikolova

11:55 – 12:20

Risk-averse selfish routing

I will discuss what happens in a transportation network when travel times are uncertain and users who want to route between their respective sources and destinations are risk-averse. Inspired by the Price of Anarchy, I'll propose a measure of quantifying how much the degree of risk-aversion degrades the system performance (measured as the total expected delay of all users), separately from the effect of selfish routing choices of the users. I will conclude with the effect of user diversity on the quality of the resulting traffic equilibria, and specifically when diversity of user preferences improves outcomes in selfish routing.

Tristan Tomala

12:20 – 12:45

Efficiency of correlation in a bottleneck game

We consider a model of bottleneck congestion in discrete time with a penalty cost for being late. This model can be applied to several situations where agents need to use a capacitated facility in order to complete a task before a hard deadline. A possible example is a situation where commuters use a train service to go from home to office in the early morning. Trains run at regular intervals, take always the same time to cover their itinerary, and have a fixed capacity. Commuters must reach their office in time. This is a hard constraint whose violation involves a heavy penalty. Conditionally on meeting the deadline, commuters want to take the train as late as possible. With the intent of considering strategic choices of departure, we model this situation as a game and we show that it does not have pure Nash equilibria. Then we characterize the best and worst mixed Nash equilibria, and show that they are both inefficient with respect to the social optimum. We then show that there exists a correlated equilibrium that approximates the social optimum when the penalty for missing the deadline is sufficiently large.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION (15:00 – 16:00)**Christodoulou, Koutsoupias, Papadimitriou, Roughgarden, Tardos**

15:00 – 16:00

AFTERNOON TALKS (16:30 – 17:45)**Max Klimm**

16:30 – 16:55

The continuous network design problem

In the continuous network design problem, we are given a graph for which the latency of each edge depends on the ratio of the edge flow and the capacity installed. The goal is to find an optimal investment in edge capacities so as to minimize the sum of the routing costs of the induced Wardrop equilibrium and the investment costs for installing the edge capacities. We revisit a heuristic studied by Marcotte [P. Marcotte, Math. Prog. 1986] and give a closed form of its approximation guarantee for arbitrary latency functions that depends on the anarchy of the set of latency functions. We further propose another approximation algorithm and show that it has the same approximation guarantee. Finally, we show that using the better of the two approximation algorithm results in a strictly improved approximation guarantee for which we again give a closed form expression. For affine latencies,

e.g., the best-of-two approach gives as 49/41-approximation improving on the factor of 5/4 that has been shown before by Marcotte.

Brendan Lucier

16:55 – 17:20

Reducing inefficiency in carbon auctions with large firms

Motivated by emission license auctions, we study the social welfare of uniform price auctions for multiple identical items subject to a social cost of allocation. Due to the mixed-sign objective, the price of anarchy of such auctions can be unbounded, with demand reduction leading to possibly negative welfare at equilibrium. In this talk we will explore simple augmentations to the standard auction format that can help limit the impact of strategic manipulation.

Alkmini Sgouritsa

17:20 – 17:45

TBA

TBA

Friday, July 5

MORNING KEYNOTE (10:00 – 11:00)

Elias Koutsoupias

10:00 – 11:00

Efficiency vs. Inequality

MORNING TALKS (11:30 – 12:45)

Vittorio Bilò

11:30 – 11:55

TBA

TBA

Martin Gairing

11:55 – 12:20

TBA

TBA

Martin Hoefer

12:20 – 12:45

Strategic payments in financial networks

In the standard model for systemic risk by Eisenberg and Noe, a number of financial institutions are embedded in a network of debt relations. We analyze this model from a game-theoretic perspective. Each institution strives to strategically allocate its remaining money to clear as much debt as possible. Depending on the permissible strategies for payments, we study existence of pure and/or strong equilibria. Moreover, we consider a notion of social welfare and provide bounds on prices of anarchy and stability.

AFTERNOON TALKS (15:00 – 16:00)

Nikolai Gravin

16:30 – 16:55

PoA of simultaneous item auctions and Bayesian Mechanism Design

Simultaneous item auctions are simple and practical procedures for allocating items to bidders with potentially complex preferences. In this auction format, the allocation and prices are resolved for each item separately, based solely on the bids submitted on that particular item. The efficiency of Bayes-Nash equilibrium (BNE) outcomes of simultaneous first- and second-price auctions when bidders have complement-free (a.k.a. subadditive) valuations is always a constant fraction of the expected welfare of the optimal allocation. Our proof techniques are different from the typical smoothness arguments and are related to the literature on Bayesian mechanism design. We will discuss these connections in the talk.

Georgios Piliouras

16:55 – 17:20

TBA

TBA

CONFERENCE VENUE

All conference talks will take place at the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department of the Technial University of Crete:

Details here

Practical stuff here.

