

Michaelmas Term 2008

CABDyN SEMINAR SERIES
Saïd Business School, University of Oxford



Convenors:

Felix Reed-Tsochas, *James Martin Institute, Saïd Business School*

Eduardo López, *Saïd Business School*



Our meetings intend to provide a forum for rigorous research (in a broad range of disciplines) focusing on complex adaptive systems, using methods and techniques such as agent-based modelling and complex network analysis. Since potential areas of application for such approaches can be located across the social, natural and engineering sciences, our aim is to involve participants from a wide range of departments in Oxford. We welcome talks which focus on particular areas of application and associated technical issues, but also encourage contributions which address more fundamental conceptual or mathematical problems. The CABDyN Seminar Series is one of the activities of the CABDyN Complexity Centre (<http://sbs-xnet.sbs.ox.ac.uk/complexity/>).

Tuesday 4th November, 12.30 – 2.00 pm

Seminar Room B, Saïd Business School

Dr Meredith Rolfe
Oxford University Centre for Corporate Reputation
Saïd Business School

***‘Voting Together:
how social networks affect the emergent norm of voter turnout’***

ABSTRACT

This talk addresses the two core questions of voter turnout. Political scientists still have no good answer to the question of why rational, self-interested actors would ever vote in an election in which they were highly unlikely to influence the outcome. A more successful literature asks why some people (e.g., college-degree holders, regular church-goers and citizens in national as opposed to local elections) vote more often than others. I argue that a new, carefully constructed answer to the first question leads to a dramatically revised response to the second. Combining insights from psychology, anthropology and sociology with non-linear dynamics, I treat political participation as a socially defined practice instead of an individual choice over personal payoffs.

Building from this alternative to the rational choice paradigm, the social theory of participation shows how potential voters who move in larger social circles, particularly those including politicians and other political actors, are most influenced by the flurry of electoral activity prodding citizens to vote and increasing political discussion.

Sandwiches and drinks will be provided

For further information contact info.cabdyn@sbs.ox.ac.uk

Seminar webpage: http://sbs-xnet.sbs.ox.ac.uk/complexity/complexity_seminars.asp