

# SEMINAR SERIES / TRINITY 2009

Convenors: Felix Reed-Tsochas, Institute for Science, Innovation and Society;  
Saïd Business School  
Eduardo López, Saïd Business School

Tuesday 09<sup>th</sup> June

12.30 – 2.00pm

James Martin Seminar Room, Saïd Business School

**Dr Delia Baldassarri**

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and the Center for the Study of Democratic Politics,  
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## *Dynamics of Political Polarization*

### ABSTRACT

This article accounts for two puzzling paradoxes. The first paradox is the simultaneous absence and presence of attitude polarization - the fact that global attitude polarization is relatively rare, even though pundits describe it as common. The second paradox is the simultaneous presence and absence of social polarization--the fact that while individuals experienced attitude homogeneity in their interpersonal networks, their networks are characterized by attitude heterogeneity. These paradoxes give rise to numerous scholarly arguments. By developing a formal model of interpersonal influence over attitudes in a context where individuals hold simultaneous positions on multiple issues we show why these arguments are not mutually exclusive and how they meaningfully refer to the same social setting. The results from this model provide a single parsimonious account for both paradoxes. The framework we develop may be generalized to a wider array of problems, including classic problems in collective action.

Ref.: Delia Baldassarri, Peter Bearman 2007 "*Dynamics of Political Polarization*," *American Sociological Review*, 72:784-811.

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 Research Cluster (<http://sbs-xnet.sbs.ox.ac.uk/complexity/>).

Sandwiches and  
drinks will be  
provided

For further information  
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