



YCCSA Seminar Series Autumn 2019

An interdisciplinary seminar series hosted by the York Cross-disciplinary Centre for Systems Analysis aimed at researchers from all disciplines

Location of Decision Making in Complex Systems

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**Friday, 06 December 2019
RCH/248, The Lakehouse, 14:00**

Abstract:

How, and actually *where*, decisions are made in organisations is by no means simple. Are they the product of the deep perceptions of managers and leaders? Or is something else at work? The paper will present aspects of my current work looking at how it can be difficult to locate the site of decision making within organisations, and why this can be a problem for democracy and accountability. Particularly if the complexity of the decision making process is in of itself a form of obfuscatory practise. Perhaps the tools of complex systems theory can be applied to unravel organisational decision making, reducing the space in which poor decisions can hide?

The paper will draw on some of the following areas of my interest. The first is the court-martial of Chelsea Manning, the alleged source of the Iraq and Afghanistan war logs. Here I will focus on the conduct of the court-martial itself and some aspects of the subsequent access to the court materials. The second will be the prosecutions of Harlem Suarez (Almlak Alaswd) and Mohamed Osman Mohamud. These two cases share some common features of what could provocatively be described as FBI radicalisation programs, but are at least demonstrations of the significant problems of classification and intervention by *algorithmic* processes. Both of these examples demonstrate forms of systemic decision making, where it is difficult to locate where the decision is being made. What is also interesting is the question as to the degree to which this might be an adaptive feature of the system itself?

The seminar includes a refreshment break to fuel interdisciplinary discussion

**Ron Cooke Hub is on Heslington East Campus – accessible by free bus services
Nos. 66 and UB1 running at frequent intervals from Heslington West.
The YCCSA Seminar room is on the second floor**