

**Lecture with Computer Exercises:**

**Modelling and Simulating Social Systems with MATLAB**

Project Report

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| Insert Title Here  … |

Name 1 & Name 2

Zürich

Date

**IMPORTANT**

**You MUST include the ETH declaration of originality here; it is available for download on the course website or at**

**http://www.ethz.ch/faculty/exams/plagiarism/index\_EN;**

**It can be printed as pdf and should be filled out in handwriting.**

**Agreement for free-download**

We hereby agree to make our source code of this project freely available for download from the web pages of the SOMS chair. Furthermore, we assure that all source code is written by ourselves and is not violating any copyright restrictions.

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| Name 1 | Name 2 |

# Table of content

# Abstract

# Individual contributions

# Introduction and Motivations

Obesity is a major health concern in the world and especially in the US. In the US, it is estimated that obesity causes annual mortality of around 300'000 deaths per year [1] despite the difficulty to precisely evaluate death directly linked to obesity. A Body Mass Index higher than 30 corresponds to obesity according to World Health Organization standards. WHO implemented in 2004 the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health [2]. While WHO recognizes the importance of "supportive environments and communities" to fight obesity, most proposed solutions rather focus on an individual basis such as limiting the quantity of fat absorbed, increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables or practising physical activity. Few emphasis is put on the potential obesity spreads through social networks. Hill et al. [3] have studied the social contagion of obesity which differs from traditional epidemiological disease. Hill et al. have introduced a new model (SISa) derived from the classic SIS disease model in which they allow for automatic non-social infection. Smith and Christakis [4] among others have revealed the importance of the social environment associated with the physical environment as a factor of good health hinting at public health interventions which should elaborated in harmony with the social network. Before Hill et al., epidemiological were applied to study social contagion and may fail to capture automatic infection. Hill et al. extend economic diffusion models by including the possibility of recovery. We will apply the SISa model to a new dataset collected by Aharony et al. [5] which contains one of the largest mobile data experiments done in academia to test the validity of the model and estimate the model parameters. We follow Hill et al. to determine how contacts with non obese and obese people influence the transition to another state.

To fight obesity, adequate public health policies must be designed to decide if obesity has to be tackled as a clinical issue (i.e. on an individual basis) or as a public health intervention which could better exploit the network phenomena to spread positive behaviour to fight obesity.

We evaluate different social intervention schemes proposed by Aharony et al. We use a subset of the "Friends and Family" dataset where Aharony et al. have deployed a sensing system over 15 months to follow 130 adult members and collected their physical activity, their weight and their friendship status. They implemented three intervention schemes: (i) Control: people are rewarded according to their own physical activity (ii) Peer-review: people are rewarded according to their own physical activity and can see the physical activity of two "buddies" reciprocally, and (iii) Peer-Reward: people monitor both their buddies and personal physical activity but are rewarded solely according to the cumulative physical activity of their "buddies". Contrary to most fitness-related studies which recruit people who want to increase their physical activity, this study was designed as a non competitive game where a non active person can earn the same reward as an active person.

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| **Number of subjects in each condition** | |
| Condition | Initial |
| Control | 18 |
| Peer-review | 45 |
| Peer-reward | 45 |

Table Number of subjects in each intervention scheme

We created an adjacency matrix based on the self perceived network friendship where each participant rated every other participant on a scale from 0 (not familiar) to 7 (very close) at different step in time.

# Description of the Model

# Implementation

# Simulation Results and Discussion

# Summary and Outlook

# References

[1] Flegal, K. M., Williamson, D. F., Pamuk, E. R., & Rosenberg, H. M. (2004). Estimating deaths attributable to obesity in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, *94*(9), 1486.

[2] http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/en/

[3] Hill, A. L., Rand, D. G., Nowak, M. A., & Christakis, N. A. (2010). Infectious disease modeling of social contagion in networks. *PLoS computational biology*, *6*(11), e1000968.

[4] Smith, K. P., & Christakis, N. A. (2008). Social networks and health. *Annu. Rev. Sociol*, 34, 405-429.

[5] Aharony, N., Pan, W., Ip, C., Khayal, I., & Pentland, A. (2011). Social fMRI: Investigating and shaping social mechanisms in the real world. *Pervasive and Mobile Computing*, *7*(6), 643-659.