

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST



Network Science Center at West Point

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

NOVEMBER 2011

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West Point Negotiation Project Explores Conflict Prevention

By Cadets Andrew Oswald and
Luke Hutchison

Rend Sumaidaie, the CEO of Cambridge Matrix, spoke to 90 cadets on the topic of conflict resolution during a recent lunch event hosted by the West Point Negotiation Project. Ms. Sumaidaie is a dual Iraqi-British citizen and an entrepreneur.

Sumaidaie captivated the packed room as she shared her conflict resolution experience from the Danish "Cartoon Crisis" of 2005-2006 that erupted after derogatory cartoons of the prophet Muhammad were published. Two extremist groups, one a Militant Islamist group and the other a Neo-Nazi group in support of free speech had planned counter-protests in hopes of inciting a full scale riot.

Ms. Sumaidaie explained that she began by studying the relationships within the groups and gathered background information on the key leaders. She then sought to uncover the underlying interests of both parties, and then met with leaders from both groups. Finally, she was able to find common ground and convince each group to look at the situation from the other group's viewpoint.

In the end, these two very polarized groups discovered that their underlying interests were not in conflict – they both wanted the ability to freely speak their beliefs and spread their message. She used this common interest to show them that both groups' long-term interests would be better served by demon-

strating peacefully and by avoiding confrontation.

"As future leaders of an Army currently in combat, it's almost inevitable we'll come across a situation in which we will have to be a mediator between conflicting parties," said Yearling Derek West. "Miss Rend Sumaidaie provided an excellent anecdote on dealing with conflict resolution that could be related to any situation."

The West Point Negotiation Project was formed in 2009 to enhance the ability of US Army small unit leaders to conduct effective negotiations in the complex and challenging situations they face in war and peace. To learn more about WPNP, visit www.wpnp.org.

Spain Conferences Offer Great Insight

Net-Works 2011

Margaret Moten attended the Net-Works 2011 Conference in El Escorial, Spain. The conference focused on the structure and applications of complex networks. Many of the presenters came from physics backgrounds and the topics ranged from the evolutionary dynamics of the public goods game to uncovering the hidden geometry behind complex networks to understanding the network structure of insect-plant pollination interactions. As an economist studying capital market networks, she found it fascinating to learn about the myriad applications of network science.

Dr. Alex Arenas, from the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, presented an insightful talk about human mobility

and the large scale spreading of infectious diseases. His model incorporated scenarios of self-initiated behavior changes into individual mobility patterns. His results were quite surprising. He found that when individuals decided not to travel to an area where an infection had occurred, the incidence of disease spreading actually increased. Thus, real-time information availability and associated behavior changes may have a negative effect on disease mitigation and containment.

J. Borge-Holthoefer presented another interesting talk: a quantitative analysis of the structure and dynamic patterns emerging from online social network activity around the May 15th Movement in Spain. The

Movement involved a series of protests that erupted in 58 Spanish cities beginning on that date in 2011. Social networks played an important role in instigating and facilitating the demonstrations, which were much like those of the Arab Spring. Mr. Borge-Holthoefer modeled the network of twitter activity surrounding the protest and determined it to be a scale-free network with communities at the mesoscale. The network's dynamics exhibited robustness and power law distributions. He also noted that the patterns of information spreading were asymmetric, so information sources and sinks were clearly delineated.

SIMUL 2011

Dr Chris Arney attended the Third International Conference on Advances in System Simulation (SIMUL 2011) in Barcelona, Spain. His presentation, authored with Kristin Arney, was entitled "Simulating Counterinsurgency and Coalition Strategies". While military simulations were not a major topic in the conference, there was considerable interest in the talk and the use of social science to model military operations.

Topics at the Simulation Conference centered around processes of validating models and the mathematical education of students to improve problem solving and modeling. There was a panel discussion that covered "Why should one trust your model?" and the "Pedagogy of Modeling and Simulation: A Scaffold Approach?" These sessions were allowed to proceed

until late into the evening to accommodate the interest and discuss the issues of these two topics. Much of the discussion was about network mathematics or how, when, and where do students learn about the mathematical structures, processes, and metrics associated with network graphs. Our experiences here at West Point were of great interest to the group.

Important Dates:

Abstracts for Sunbelt conference are due by 30 Nov 2011

RSiena Presentation—10 Nov 12:00-14:00

Upcoming Brown bag lunches - Nov. 16 and Nov. 30

Current Publications:

Current Publications are on NSC website under [Publications](#) tab or linked below:

[Qatar's Rise: a Global Interest](#)

[Jeshi la Wananchi la](#)

[A Proposed Methodology to Classify Frontier Capital Markets](#)

