Houda Naït El Barj

Website: houdanait.github.io/ Email: hnait@stanford.edu

EDUCATION

Stanford Graduate School of Business

Stanford, CA

PhD student in Economics

London, United Kingdom

University College London

2015-2020

Current

BSc. in Economics with a year abroad, First Class Honours (80.72/100) - Year of exchange at the University of Pennsylvania

Lycée Français de Marrakech

Marrakech, Morocco

Baccalauréat Scientifique - Spécialité en Mathématiques (20.30/20.00)

2012 - 2015

Work Experience

Stanford Institute of Economic Policy Research

Palo Alto, CA

Research Assistant to Professor Matthew Gentzkow

2020-Current

J.P. Morgan

London, United Kingdom

Trader - Emerging Markets Debt

May 2019-June 2020

CORE Economics

London, United Kingdom

Content Editor

2017-2018

European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN)

Geneva, Switzerland Summer 2016

Research Intern

Scholarships, Honours and Awards

•	EDGE	Fellowshir) -	Stanford	University
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Current

• UCL Record Holder for Highest Grade in Econometrics Sequence (98.00/100)

2018

Hume-Lloyd Economics Sessional Prize, UCL (both years)

• Academic Excellence - King Mohamed VI Scholarship

2016 - 20172015-2019

• Excellence-Major Scholarship from French Ministry of Education

2012 - 2015

Concours Général de Physique-Chimie, laureate

2015

2nd Highest Grade in the World in French Scientific Baccalaureate (Ranked 2/12,519)

2015

Research

1. "Utilitarian Beliefs on Social Networks: Explaining the Emergence of Hatred" (Work in Progress) We study the dynamics of opinions in a setting where a leader has a payoff that depends on agents' beliefs and where agents derive psychological utility from their beliefs. Agents sample a signal that maximises their utility and then communicate with each other through a network formed by disjoint social groups. The leader has a choice to target a finite set of social groups with a specific signal to influence their beliefs and maximise his returns. Heterogeneity in agents' preferences allows us to analyse the evolution of opinions as a dynamical system with asymmetric forces. We apply our model to explain the emergence of hatred and the spread of racism in a society. We show that when information is restricted, the equilibrium level of hatred is determined solely by the belief of the most extremist agent in the group regardless of the inherent structure of the network. On the contrary, when information is dense, the

space is completely polarised in equilibrium with the presence of multiple "local truths" which oscillate in periodic cycles. We find that when preferences are uniformly distributed, the equilibrium level of hatred depends solely on the value of the practical punishment associated with holding a hate belief. Our finding suggests that an optimal policy to reduce hatred should focus on increasing the cost associated with holding a racist belief.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Volunteer work in Colombia and Lebanon
 Worked with local charities to help displaced populations and refugees

France Culture: Les Chemins de la Philosophie

Radio Script Writer

OTHER

• Citizenship: Morocco

• Languages: Berber (native), Arabic (native), French (native), Spanish (fluent), English (fluent), Russian (professional working proficiency)