

Basel, 23.09.2015



This is a letter of recommendation for Mohammed Ait Lahcen.

It is a true pleasure for me to write a letter of recommendation for my student Mohammed Ait Lahcen who is applying for the Zurich Initiative on Computational Economics (ZICE) 2016. I know Mohammed Ait Lahcen in my role as his PhD thesis advisor within the PhD program for Applied Economics at the University of Basel. I first met him a year ago when applied for the above mentioned PhD program. I quickly realized that he has the talent, the skills, and the motivation necessary for writing a high quality Ph.D. thesis. After a few month working with him, I can already say that Mohammed is one of my best students I ever had. I strongly believe that his skills and motivation will allow him to successfully pursue an academic career.

Mohammed holds a Master of Science degree in Economics from the University of Lausanne and a Bachelor degree in Finance and Accounting from ISCAE Business School, Casablanca, Morocco. He had a first experience in the finance industry before pursuing a PhD degree. As part of our PhD program, Mohammed is currently enrolled in the Swiss Doctoral Program in Economics at the Study Center Gerzensee. This program provides core training in macroeconomics, microeconomics and econometrics in line with what is offered in the top US universities.

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Last term, Mohammed was the teaching assistant for my Master's course in Monetary Economics. He was responsible for offering tutorial sessions, holding office hours, attending and grading students' presentations, and writing and correcting the final exam. During his TA work, he demonstrated the ability to work independently with great enthusiasm and performed his duties in a diligent and professional manner to the students' satisfaction.

In his Master thesis, Mohammed Ait Lahcen introduced an informal sector into a small open economy New-Keynesian DSGE model. The goal was to assess the shock absorbing properties of informal sectors in developing countries. His current research is also oriented towards Development Macroeconomics. He is building a theoretical framework to understand the relationship between inflation and unemployment in the presence of a sizeable informal sector. To do that, he plans to integrate both an informal production sector and informal employment into a search theoretic framework. I strongly believe this line of research is very promising and that it will offer a better understanding of the interactions between the formal and informal sectors in developing economies.

Let me summarize. Mohamed is a highly skilled, hardworking, and creative young economist. He has also a very good understanding of the formal tools we use in economic research. He has the potential to become one of the leading economists in Development Macroeconomics in Europe. Furthermore, he is a very pleasant person to work with. I can, therefore, recommend him without hesitation for the Zurich Initiative on Computational Economics (ZICE) 2016.

Sincerely,

Aleksander Berentsen

