

Dear colleague Prof O'Brien,

It is with pleasure that I reply to your request of writing a letter of recommendation for Jose Fernando F MENDES.

I first met Jose in 1992 at the university of Geneva when he was a visiting PhD student there. At that time he was studying, under the supervision of Dr M Droz, dynamical critical phenomena of the Blume-Emery-Griffiths model. We met again in Oxford in 1993 where we studied the apparent breaking of hyperscaling in the dynamical scaling of interacting particle models with an infinity of absorbing states. The mechanism we uncovered and the resulting generalized hyperscaling relation has subsequently become a paradigm for this kind of system. I later invited him (in 1996) as a visiting professor to Nancy, where we began the first non-perturbative study of the so-called pair-contact process with diffusion. This model has received in recent years a lot of interest world-wide since its critical properties are very unusual for a system undergoing a non-equilibrium phase transition (despite intensive and ongoing efforts of several groups at Saclay, Orsay, Juelich, Virginia U, Seoul, Budapest, Wuppertal/Wuerzburg, ... that model is still not fully understood). In these collaborations, I greatly appreciated the firm physical sense and great technical competence of Jose and collaborating with him was in every aspect a very enjoyable and productive experience (in fact, I regret that the large distance between Nancy and Porto and his considerable teaching duties there did not permit us to continue).

More recently, Jose concentrated on small-world networks and their evolution. I am myself an outsider to this field, but it is clear that his work greatly contributed to the rapid advance of the subject. This is also witnessed by his recent review article in Adv. Phys. and even more in his book published in 2003 on the topic and which is likely to become a classic. Jose's review talk on networks given at the International Seminar on Nonequilibrium Phase Transitions held at the Max-Planck Institute in Dresden (Germany) in september/october 2003 clearly showed his masterful ability to explain a profound topic to an audience which was not really specialized in this field.

I may add that his work also caught the attention of a larger public (interviews in the leading Portuguese journal 'Publico' and in the Portuguese television).

In summary, I wholeheartedly recommend Jose Fernando Mendes for a professor position at your university.

Sincerely Yours, Prof. Malte Henkel.

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