

## DANTE DONATI

*Last update: July 6, 2026*

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Date and place of birth: 30/08/1991, Italy  
Nationality: Italian  
Columbia Business School  
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<https://sites.google.com/site/dantedonatiphd>  
Married, 2 children

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### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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2023- Assistant Professor, Marketing Division, Columbia Business School  
2022 Instructor, Marketing Division, Columbia Business School

Other affiliations: [CESifo](#)

Research interests: Online Platforms; Digital Marketing; Quantitative Marketing; Economics

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### DOCTORAL STUDIES

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2017-2022 Department of Economics and Business, Universitat Pompeu Fabra  
Ph.D. *Cum Laude* in Economics, Finance and Business  
Committee: Shane Greenstein, Gianmarco León, Joel Waldfogel  
Advisors: Maria Petrova, Gianmarco León, Ruben Durante, Sandro Shelegia

Fall 2020 Department of Economics, Stanford University, Stanford (CA)  
Visiting Research Program, Prof. Matthew Gentzkow

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### PRE-DOCTORAL STUDIES

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2016-2017 Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain. MRes in Economics  
2013-2016 Bocconi University, Milan, Italy. MSc in Economic and Social Sciences  
Final grade: 110/110 *Cum Laude*  
Advisors: Eliana La Ferrara, Nicola Gennaioli, Francesco Giavazzi

2014-2015 Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. Visiting program  
2013 Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, US. Visiting program  
2010-2013 Bocconi University, Milan, Italy. BA in Economic and Social Sciences  
Final grade: 110/110  
Advisor: Francesco Giavazzi

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## TEACHING AND TUTORING

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|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2022-2020-2021 | Digital Marketing (MS, MBA, and EMBA), Columbia Business School                                                                                      |
| 2016-2019      | Online trainings to local and international organizations on the use of new empirical methodologies for the evaluation of social marketing campaigns |
| 2016-2019      | Empirical methods for causal inference (Development Economics), Master course in Economics, Barcelona Graduate School of Economics                   |
| 2016-2019      | Data Analysis, Undergraduate course in International Business Economics, Universitat Pompeu Fabra                                                    |
| 2016-2019      | Probability and Statistics, Undergraduate course in International Business Economics and Global Studies, Universitat Pompeu Fabra                    |
| 2016-2017      | Econometrics, Undergraduate course in International Business Economics, Universitat Pompeu Fabra                                                     |

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## OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

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| 2021-2022 | Passive member of Virtual Lab LLC, 5931 NW Burgundy Drive, Corvallis, OR, USA                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2018      | Co-creator of Virtual Lab ( <a href="https://vlab.digital/">https://vlab.digital/</a> ), an open-source platform for online surveys and evaluation of social media marketing campaigns for the social good                       |
| 2019-2022 | Co-leader of a portfolio of research projects investigating how to evaluate and use online social and behavior change communication campaigns at scale (Partners: Facebook, The World Bank, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) |
| 2015-2020 | Principal Investigator and Consultant, The World Bank, DIME                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2019      | Consultant, Center for Entrepreneurship, OECD, Paris                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2015-2019 | Research Assistant, PIs: Maria Petrova, Marta Reynal-Querol, Nicola Gennaioli                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2014-2016 | Research Assistant for a field RCT, PIs: Abhijit Banerjee, Eliana La Ferrara and Victor Orozco, Ibadan, Nigeria                                                                                                                  |

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## SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AWARDS AND SKILLS

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| 2026      | The Saroj & Vithala Rao Young Scholars Award, Cornell University                                    |
| 2024-2025 | Bernstein Center Research Grant                                                                     |
| 2024-2026 | Russel Sage Foundation Research Grant                                                               |
| 2023-2024 | Digital Future Initiative Research Grant                                                            |
| 2023-2024 | Provost's Grants Program for Junior Faculty who Contribute to the Diversity Goals of the University |
| 2019-2022 | Spanish Ministry of Education, Grant for Pre-Doctoral Contracts for PhD Training (4 years)          |
| 2016      | LEAP Student Grant, Project: "The effect of digital technologies on behavior"                       |
| 2016      | Fondazione Grazioli, MSc Thesis Award, "The roots of domestic terrorism:                            |

evidence from Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria”  
2010-2015 Bocconi University Scholarship

Languages: Italian (native), English (fluent), French (good), Spanish (basic)  
Programming: Stata, R, LaTeX, GIS, Python, Matlab, SurveyCTO

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#### RESEARCH TALKS AT CONFERENCES/SEMINARS AND REFEREE ACTIVITIES

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- 2026 Marketing Science Conference, NOVA (6/11); Quantitative Marketing Workshop, Barcelona Summer Forum (6/8); Theory and Practice in Marketing, ESADE (6/7); Virtual Quantitative Marketing Seminar (5/11); Workshop on Experimentation for Decision-Making, Columbia Business School (5/1); Research Seminar, Duke University (4/29); Young Scholars Marketing Camp, Cornell University (4/24); Research Seminar, The Wharton School (4/23); Research Seminar, University of Alberta (4/17); Imperial Business School Marketing Camp (4/10); BIG AI Conference, MIT (4/2); Political Economy Seminar, Columbia University (3/24); Bass Conference (2/27); MSI AI Forum, UCLA (2/12); Digital Economics Conference, Toulouse School of Economics (1/8)
- 2025 AIML Conference, Columbia Business School (12/06); Workshop on GenAI and Productivity, Columbia Business School (11/21); MIT Code, Boston (11/14); Research Seminar, Simon Business School, Rochester (11/5); Research Lightning Talks, Columbia Business School (10/29); Research Seminar, UC Davis (10/16); Research Seminar, UCL, London (10/3); Keynote Speaker, Workshop on Generative AI in Marketing, Heilbronn (9/30); Attendee, Quantitative Marketing and Economics, Chicago (8/28); Attendee, CEPR Media Workshop, Milan (6/23); Marketing Science Conference, DC (6/13); Committee Member, Workshop on Platform Analytics, UCSD (4/4); Workshop on Frontiers in Measurement and Survey Methods, Naples (5/8); Research Insight Seminar, Columbia Business School (4/2)
- 2024 MarkTech Conference, Columbia Business School (12/13); AIML and Business Analytics Conference, Yale (12/6); Research Seminar, Temple University (11/22); Research Seminar, Manhattan University (9/25); Marketing Science Conference, Sydney (6/28); China India Insights Conference, HKU (6/21); Digital Competition and Tech Regulation, HBS (4/11); Discussant, Workshop on Platform Analytics, UCSD (4/6); Research Seminar, London Business School (2/26); Research Seminar, Yale University (2/15); Research Seminar, Boston University (2/1)
- 2023 Research Seminar, Economics Division, Columbia Business School (10/5); China India Insights Conference, Stanford GSB (9/15); Quantitative Marketing and Economics, Imperial College London (9/2); ISMS Marketing Science Conference, Miami (6/8); PAMLab Seminar, Columbia Business School (5/16); Brown Bag Seminar, Columbia Business School (5/23); 4 Schools Conference, Columbia Business School (4/28); Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Conference, Marketing

- Science, Dallas (3/24); Research Seminar, Marketing Division, Stanford GSB (2/8); Digital Economics Conference, Toulouse School of Economics (1/12)
- 2022 VisitINPS Seminar; European Quant Marketing Seminar; CEPR Media Workshop, Data Colada online seminar; ifo Institute; CESifo Area Conference on Economics of Digitization; Paris Conference on Digital Economics
- 2021 Job Market seminars (Bocconi University, Chicago Booth, Columbia Business School, ESADE Business School); Summer School in Urban Economics; Applied Young Economist Webinar; World Bank workshop on Using social media to change norms and behaviors at scale; ERSA Seminar on Industrial Organization and the Economics of Digital Transformation, Cape Town; UPF Internal Applied Lunch Seminar, Barcelona
- 2020 NBER Economics of Digitization Meeting, Stanford; DIME (World Bank) internal seminar; LEAP-Bocconi development coffee seminar
- 2019 Workshop on Political Economy of Development and Conflict, Barcelona
- 2018 NBER Economics of Digitization Tutorial, Stanford; NBER Economics of Digitization Meeting, Stanford; Digital Economics Conference, Toulouse School of Economics; World Bank workshop on Mass Media Entertainment Education Impact Evaluation, New Delhi; GSE-UPF Media Seminar, Barcelona; Workshop on Political Economy of Development and Conflict, Barcelona
- 2017 Annual Media Economics Workshop, Barcelona; GSE-UPF Media Seminar, Barcelona
- 2016 World Bank workshop on Mass Media Entertainment Education Impact Evaluation, Mexico City

Refereed articles for: Marketing Science, Management Science, Journal of Marketing Research, American Economic Review, Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Development Economics, European Economic Review, American Political Science Review, Health Economics, The World Bank Economic Review, Economic Development and Cultural Change

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#### PUBLISHED PAPERS

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“Generative AI and Firm Productivity: Field Experiments in Online Retail”, joint with Lu Fang (Zhejiang University), Zhe Yuan (Zhejiang University), Kaifu Zhang (Anonymous Platform), and Miklos Sarvary (Columbia University). *Forthcoming, Management Science*. Available at <https://arxiv.org/abs/2510.12049>

“Can Facebook Ads Prevent Malaria? Two Field Experiments in India”, joint with Nandan

- Rao (Virtual Lab and UAB), Victor Orozco (The World Bank) and Ana Maria Muñoz-Boudet (The World Bank). *Forthcoming, Marketing Science*. Available at [https://www.ifo.de/DocDL/cesifo1\\_wp12767.pdf](https://www.ifo.de/DocDL/cesifo1_wp12767.pdf)
- “Digital Twins are Funhouse Mirrors: Five Systematic Distortions”, joint with several co-authors. *Forthcoming, Science Advances*. Available at [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=5518418](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5518418)
- “The Cost of Banning TikTok: Implications for the Digital Advertising Market” (2025), joint with Hortense Fong (Columbia Business School), *PNAS*, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2512043122>
- “The End of Tourist Traps: The Impact of Review Platforms on Quality Upgrading” (2025), *Marketing Science*, <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2023.0482>
- “Lost in the Net? Broadband Internet and Youth Mental Health” (2025), joint with Ruben Durante (UPF), Francesco Sobbrío (University of Rome Tor Vergata) and Dijana Zejcirović (University of Vienna). *Journal of Health Economics*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2025.103017>
- “A Social Media Campaign to Promote COVID-19 Vaccination in Nigeria: Cost-effectiveness Analysis” (2025), joint with Michael William Long, Jeffrey B. Bingenheimer, Khadidiatou Ndiaye, Nandan Rao, Selinam Akaba, Sohail Agha and Doug Evans; *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, <https://publichealth.jmir.org/2026/1/e84540>
- “Randomised experimental evaluation of a social media campaign to promote COVID-19 vaccination in Nigeria” (2024), joint with William D. Evans, Jeffrey B. Bingenheimer, Michael Long, Khadi Ndiaye, Nandan M. Rao, Selinam Akaba, and Sohail Agha; *Journal of Global Health*, [10.7189/jogh.14.05018](https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.14.05018)
- “Mobile Internet access and political outcomes: Evidence from South Africa” (2023), *Journal of Development Economics*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2023.103073>
- “Outcomes of a social media campaign to promote COVID-19 vaccination in Nigeria” (2023), joint with W. Douglas Evans, Jeffrey B. Bingenheimer, Michael Long, Khadidiatou Ndiaye, Nandan M. Rao, Selinam Akaba, Ifeanyi Nsofor, and Sohail Agha; *PLOS One*, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0290757>
- “Development and Evaluation of an Index to Measure the Ability to Get Vaccinated for COVID-19” (2023), joint with William D. Evans, Jeffrey B. Bingenheimer, Michael Long, Khadi Ndiaye, Nandan M. Rao, Selinam Akaba, and Bailey Hoglin; *Vaccines*, <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines11020342>
- “Evaluation of response to incentive recruitment strategies in a social media-based survey” (2023), joint with Megumi Ichimiya, Hope Muller-Tabanera, Jennifer Cantrell, Jeffrey B. Bingenheimer, Raquel Gerard, Elizabeth C. Hair, Nandan Rao, and W. Douglas Evans; *Digital Health*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20552076231178430>
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## WORKING PAPERS

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“The Influence of the Vocal Minority: Evidence from Social Media Comments” (2026), joint with Lena Song (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign). *Under revision*. Available at [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=6529698](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=6529698)

“Adaptive Survey Sampling via Ad Platforms” (2025), joint with Nandan Rao (Virtual Lab and UAB). *Major Revision, Journal of Marketing Research*. Available at [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=5495148](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5495148)

“Marketing Gender Norms: A Social Media Experiment in India” (2023), joint with Victor Orozco (The World Bank) and Nandan Rao (Virtual Lab and UAB). *World Bank Working Papers Series*. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4158065>

“Conducting Surveys and Interventions Entirely Online: A Virtual Lab Practitioner’s Manual”, joint with Nandan Rao (Virtual Lab and UAB) and Victor Orozco (The World Bank). *World Bank Group*. Available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/819191635501106862/pdf/Conducting-Surveys-and-Interventions-Entirely-Online-A-Virtual-Lab-Practitioner-s-Manual.pdf>

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## WORK IN PROGRESS

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“Eating With Your Eyes: How Review Platforms Shape Product Design and Visual Appeal”, joint with Davide Proserpio (USC Marshall).

“LLMs and Search”, joint with Carl Mela (Duke), Srinivas Tunuguntla (Duke), and Patrick Zhang (Columbia)

“You Can’t Always Scroll What You Want: Using Warning Labels to Reduce Social Media Use”, joint with Noah Castelo (University of Alberta)

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