Application for NBER Digitization Tutorial, March 17-18, 2021

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Graduate studies:

Ph.D. (2018 - in progress), New York University, Economics

Primary field: *Industrial Organization*

Secondary field: *Experimental Economics*

M.Sc. (2015 - 2017), Bocconi University, Economics and Social Sciences

I have completed all of my graduate field coursework. I am currently in the third year of the Ph.D. program, I am taking extra-field classes in Applied Econometrics and Economics of Innovation and I'm simultaneously starting to work on my third year paper. On top of the standard Ph.D. sequences in microeconomics, econometrics and macroeconomics, I have taken method courses and seminars in empirical and theoretical industrial organization and experimental economics. I have also taken methods classes in optimal transport theory (optimization and equilibrium) and the economics of attention, as well as seminars in econometrics and reinforcement learning.

Research interests:

I am applying to the Digitization Tutorial because of my increasing interest in the interplay between digital economies, industry dynamics and consumer dynamics, especially through the lenses of learning, innovation, automatization and attention. I learnt from past student attendees how much of an incredible opportunity the Tutorial is to become more familiar with these strands of research, and I became eager to attend myself and learn more about this academic community.

My research interests developed in several directions over the past few years. I'm interested in information, its diffusion and its impact on in industry dynamics, as well as innovation and competition in the digital economy. These interests are driven by policy relevant research questions. My initial interest in information was directed towards the analysis of media markets and polarization from a behavioral economics perspective. While at Bocconi, I developed an experimental framework with Salvo Nunnari to better understand how people decide to acquire information when it is presented with some slant, with the goal to shed light on how much readers are able to weight the slanted framing of most news sources when internalizing the information they receive.

At NYU, I've started to work on my third year paper under the supervision of Andrew Caplin. I plan to develop a structural model of inattention in insurance markets to rationalize in a

comprehensive framework switching costs for economies without search costs, consumer inertia and limited consideration. I am interested in understanding better how consumer inattention alters sellers' incentives, a feature which is shared by insurance markets and digital providers. I would like to take this line of research further, to investigate if and how inattention to current products pushes the supply side to innovate more.

Additionally, I work with Hunt Allcott at Microsoft Research on establishing a framework to evaluate corporate social impact grounded on economic theory and flexible enough to evaluate different industries on common metrics.

Below, I include additional information on the status and an overview of these projects.

Research projects:

Audi Alteram Partem: an Experiment on Selective Exposure to Information with Salvo Nunnari (working paper)

This paper presents a model of selective exposure to information and an experiment to test its predictions. An agent interested in learning about an uncertain state of the world can acquire information from one of two sources which have opposite biases: when informed on the state, they report it truthfully; when uninformed, they report their favorite state. When sources have the same reliability, a Bayesian agent is better off seeking confirmatory information. On the other hand, it is optimal to seek con- tradictory information if and only if the source biased against the prior is sufficiently more reliable. We test these predictions with an online experiment. When sources are symmetrically reliable, subjects are more likely to seek confirmatory information but they listen to the other side too frequently. When sources are asymmetrically reliable, subjects are more likely to consult the more reliable source even when prior beliefs are strongly unbalanced and listening to the less reliable source is more informative. Moreover, subjects follow contradictory advice sub-optimally; are too trusting of in- formation in line with a source bias; and too skeptic of information misaligned with a source bias. Our experiment suggests that biases in information processing and simple heuristics — e.g., listen to the more reliable source — are important drivers of the endogenous acquisition of information.

An Economic View of Corporate Social Impact with Hunt Allcott and Brandon Tan, work in progress

How should we evaluate a company's social and environmental impact? Do the harms from climate change mean that oil companies are bad for the world, on net? What kinds of companies generate the most positive social impact per dollar of investment? We are developing an economic framework that we will use to estimate corporate social impact for companies across an array of industries, including oil and gas, consumer packaged goods, automobiles, and airlines.