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LEMMA
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SÉMINAIRE

CAN TECHNOLOGY FREE TIME? EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM AN AI CHATBOT HELPING CASEWORKERS SOLVE EMPLOYERS' HIRING DIFFICULTIES - ROLAND RATHELOT

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Roland is a Professor of Economics, Institut Polytechnique de Paris (ENSAE) and CREST. He is a CEPR fellow and editor at the Economic Journal. Roland's research interests lie in labor

economics and applied econometrics, with a focus on job search, hiring, and discrimination.

Co-authors: Jeremias Klaeui, Joseph Barreau, et Manon Bouju

***Abstract**:*
In late 2024, the French public employment service introduced a new AI tool to support caseworkers dedicated to assisting client recruiters in their hiring decisions. Caseworkers support employers through two channels: screening applications from job seekers who apply on their own, and sourcing candidates who have not applied. The tool was designed to help caseworkers when sourcing candidates, and save them time for other tasks. We leverage the randomised implementation of this intervention to measure its impact on job-filling probabilities. We find that the intervention successfully increased the probability of filling posted jobs by between 10 and 15 per cent. While the intervention was intended solely to facilitate the sourcing of job seekers who had not initially applied for the job, we find that the increase in hires comes from both job seekers who were sourced and job seekers who had applied on their own and were screened by the caseworker. Our interpretation is that the AI tool freed up caseworkers' time, allowing them to devote more time to screening applications (and other tasks).

***Abstract**:*
When governments subsidize private education through per-enrollment payments, schools are incentivized to inflate the internal grades that govern student progression — keeping students enrolled, and preserving the subsidies they generate, without improving genuine learning. We document this mechanism with administrative data from Mali. Using within-school, cross-exam authority variation as our identification strategy, we show that grade inflation is pervasive in private high schools, leading to poor graduation outcomes and large efficiency costs. We build a structural model of student progression and school grading policy in which learning is based on a chain of prerequisites disrupted by grade inflation. We estimate the model using the public sector as a truthful benchmark, quantify the human capital cost of grade inflation and evaluate the benefits associated with alternative subsidy schemes.

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