How much work experience do you need to get your first job?

The macroeconomic implications of bias against labor market entrants

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ABSTRACT

The first step in a worker's career is often particularly hard. Many firms seeking workers require experience in a related field, so a vicious circle is created, whereby an entry level job is required in order to get an entry level job. Consequently, entrant workers have lower job-finding rates and longer unemployment durations than the unemployed who have looked for a job in the past. To study the welfare implications of these observations, we consider a version of the DMP model where firms who match with entrant workers have to incur training costs. As a result, firms are biased against entrant workers, who, in turn, stay unemployed for a prolonged period of time, exposing themselves to a persistent skill loss shock. We use a calibrated version of the model to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of four government interventions whose common goal is to reduce bias against entrant workers. We find that the most effective intervention takes the form of a subsidy that induces firms to rank entrants higher than experienced workers and that this policy brings the economy very close to the constrained efficient outcome.

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1 Introduction

The first step in a worker's career is often particularly hard. Entrant workers have much lower job-finding rates than the unemployed who have looked for a job in the past (Figure 1). Moreover, positions targeted to workers who have just entered the labor market tend to become a rarity. Indicatively, 35% of entry level positions posted since 2017 on LinkedIn required years of experience in a related field (see Section 2.1). So a vicious circle is created, whereby an entry level job is required in order to get an entry level job. These observations raise a number of important questions. First, why would firms choose to exclude from the applicant pool workers who are inexperienced, but may turn out to be extremely able? Second, what are the aggregate welfare implications of this bias against inexperienced workers, given that, by definition, *all* workers in the economy start their careers as inexperienced? This last question becomes especially important once we consider the recent literature in labor economics arguing that market conditions during the start of a worker's career have long lasting effects (Von Wachter, 2020). Finally, one wonders whether there is room for welfare improving government interventions and what form these interventions should take.

To study these questions, we augment the classic Diamond-Mortensen-Pissarides (DMP) model in several directions. First, we assume that firms that hire entrant/ inexperienced workers have to incur training expenses. This creates bias against these workers that we capture with a Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) matching function with ranking. Second, we assume that entrants who stay unemployed for an extended time period are more likely to suffer skill loss. The combination of these two channels creates novel welfare trade offs, since the inherent bias against entrant workers increases their unemployment duration, which, in turn, tends to lower their productivity. In this environment, an obvious market failure arises. Firms that hire inexperienced workers provide a *benefit to society* by helping these workers stay unemployed for a shorter period of time, thus reducing their exposure to the skill loss shock. (A shock which leaves a permanent "scar", thus affecting the entrant workers' productivity when they are hired by other firms later in their career.) However, firms cannot fully internalize this societal contribution, and ultimately choose to discriminate against entrant workers, causing a social welfare loss.

Given this market failure, there is obvious scope for government intervention. Since the root of the inefficiency is the inability of firms to fully recoup the training costs, which results in hiring bias against entrants, we consider government interventions whose common goal is to alleviate the bias and reduce the inexperienced workers' exposure to the skill loss shock. We use a calibrated version of the model to quantitatively study the effectiveness of three government interventions. The first intervention, which we dub "unbiased matching", bans discrimination against inexperienced workers by law. In the second intervention ("government subsidies"), the government raises taxes to subsidize firms that hire inexperienced workers. Finally, the third intervention ("internships") also bans discrimination but additionally explores the possibility that the compensation of entrant workers is determined exogenously by the government.

We find that all three government interventions improve aggregate welfare. This is true even though the aggregate unemployment rate is typically higher under the policy interventions than in the benchmark economy with ranking. To explain the economics behind this result, let us begin with the first intervention, i.e., unbiased matching. Without the ability to discriminate against entrants, firms are effectively forced to incur larger training expenses. As a result, firm entry is discouraged and equilibrium unemployment is higher compared to the baseline economy. Despite this unintended consequence on aggregate unemployment, entrant workers have shorter unemployment spells and are less likely to suffer skill loss. The productivity gains from the latter channel are so large that aggregate welfare increases by 0.58%. The economics behind the second intervention, i.e., government subsidies, is similar, but the welfare increase is smaller (around 0.52%) because the tax needed to finance training subsidies reduces match surplus and further distorts entry.

The third intervention, i.e., internships, achieves all the benefits of the other two, since it also involves unbiased matching, but it suffers less from the downside of discouraged entry. With internships, entrant workers' wages are exogenous and treated as parameters whose level varies. For high enough wages, entrant workers are compensated almost as much as they would under Nash bargaining, and welfare levels are similar to those of Intervention 1. On the other extreme, if entrant wages are too low, firms realize they can hire these workers almost for free, which leads to inefficiently large levels of training and vacancy creation costs. In total, aggregate welfare has an inverse-U shape with respect to the entrants wage level, and it achieves its maximum (0.62% greater than the baseline) when entrants' wages are at intermediate levels. That is, a carefully designed internship scenario achieves the highest welfare among these interventions.

The common thread among the interventions considered so far is that they raise aggregate productivity by abolishing bias against entrant workers and, as a result, lowering their exposure to skill depreciation. In light of this finding, we consider an additional, fourth, intervention, in which the government "goes all the way" subsidizing the hiring of entrant workers so heavily that firms actually prefer to match with these workers rather than the experienced ones. The results of this intervention are striking: it improves aggregate welfare by 1.51%, an improvement almost three times larger than that in the previous interventions. This intervention has the largest impact among all four interventions because it directly confronts the problem of inexperienced workers spending a lot of time in unemployment upon entry.[1] Finally, we examine how close this fourth intervention can bring the economy to its efficient level by comparing it with the allocation of a social planner who also favors entrant workers. The comparison reveals that the fourth intervention brings the economy arbitrarily close to the constrained efficient outcome. The social planner implements a Hosios (1990)-type condition for our environment; however, it turns out that implementing the "correct" ranking (i.e., favoring entrant workers) is an order of magnitude more important than fine-tuning the level of vacancy creation.

A crucial assumption in our framework is that firms devote resources to train entrant workers. These resources capture the fact that the experienced workers have to take time away from production to teach the necessary traits to the entrants. Examples of these traits include the ability to work in teams, follow instructions, understand and complete a task, or how to network. There is a plethora of recent empirical papers documenting the importance of firm-provided training in the labor market. Ma, Nakab, and Vidart (2022), in a cross-country study, document that firm-provided training is a key determinant of workers' human capital. (See Herkenhoff, Lise, Menzio, and Phillips (2024) for a complementary interpretation of the workers' human capital component.) Faccini and Yashiv (2022), using German and Swiss data, estimate that training costs (in the form of opportunity costs incurred by managers and coworkers to make new hires as productive as experienced workers) are the dominant source of all hiring costs. Bertheau, Larsen, and Zhao (2023), using linked survey-administrative data from Denmark, find that one-third of employers consider the time to train new recruits as a major obstacle.

Moreover, there is a literature that highlights the empirical relevance of the externality identified in this paper, namely, the idea that firms underhire inexperienced workers, since they are not fully compensated for the social benefit of the training they provide (Becker, 2009; Acemoglu, 1997; Acemoglu and Pischke, 1999).[2] The literature sometimes refers to this as the "future employer externality"; see Acemoglu (1997) and Lentz and Roys (2024). An important empirical finding in this line of work is that firms provide gen-

[1] It should be pointed out that programs that target entrant workers are particularly popular in Europe. The Youth Employment Initiative, a large EU-sponsored program, directly finances young workers' apprenticeships, traineeships, job placements, and further education within 4 months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. Our model predicts that interventions of this kind generate sizable welfare gains.

[2] Moen and Rosén (2004) and Lentz and Roys (2024) study environments with on-the-job search and examine whether the ability of workers to move to competing firms distorts training incentives. The literature has also studied the provision of firm-specific human capital (see Lentz and Roys 2024 for details), but given our research question we focus on general skills that are transferable across firms.

eral training which is not fully offset by lower wages; see Acemoglu and Pischke (1998), Loewenstein and Spletzer (1998), and Autor (2001). Pallais (2014) aptly surveys this literature and concludes that "...neither the theoretical nor the empirical literature shows that firms recoup the full value of their training investments resulting in their providing the optimal level of training" (p. 3568).

Another important assumption in our model is that entrant workers' skills depreciate in their first unemployment spell. There is compelling empirical evidence documenting that skill loss during the early unemployment spells has persistent negative effects on a worker's career. Arellano-Bover (2022) shows that early career unemployment shocks have negative effects on measured cognitive skills several decades later. Similarly, Dinerstein, Megalokonomou, and Yannelis (2022), using quasi-experimental variation in unemployment duration at the beginning of teachers' careers in Greece, document strong negative effects of the length of unemployment on teachers' performance measured by students' test scores. More generally, there is a large empirical literature, which began with Kahn (2010) and Oreopoulos, Von Wachter, and Heisz (2012), that highlights the persistence of the effects of labor market conditions upon entry for young workers on multiple outcomes later in their careers.[3]

To conclude, we should highlight that it is the *interaction* of firm provided training with skill loss during early unemployment that creates novel implications in our paper. As we explained above, each one of these mechanisms on its own is well-studied and its implications are well-understood. In our model, however, the combination of the two elements creates a novel intertemporal trade-off: to save on training costs, firms hire fewer entrant workers today, which, in turn, lengthens the entrants' unemployment duration and results in lower future aggregate productivity. To the best of our knowledge, we are the first to study the theoretical and quantitative implications of this trade-off.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the model, including a discussion of the matching protocol, and Section 3 analyzes the baseline model with matching bias against inexperienced workers. Section 4 considers three government interventions intended to improve welfare and Section 5 describes the calibration strategy. Section 6 introduces the fourth intervention, discusses the quantitative effects of all policy interventions considered, and solves the social planner's problem, while Section 7 concludes. The accompanying Web Appendix contains proofs of all theoretical results and explores several extensions of the baseline model, including non-permanent skill loss

[3] For references with structural models of skill loss in unemployment, see Pissarides (1992), Ljungqvist and Sargent (1998), Coles and Masters (2000), Ortego-Marti (2016), Flemming (2020), and Kospentaris (2021), among others.

and heterogeneous bargaining powers for entrant and experienced workers.

2 The Model

We consider an extension of the Diamond-Mortensen-Pissarides framework. Time is continuous with an infinite horizon, and all agents discount future at rate r. The labor force is normalized to 1. Workers exit the labor market (retire) at Poisson rate δ, and each retired worker is replaced by a new entrant who enters the labor market as unemployed. The retirement of workers and their subsequent replacement by an entrant is crucial in our model because these new entrants will be a special category, and the length of time they spend as unemployed will have long-term consequences. There is a large mass of *ex ante* homogeneous firms who can enter the labor market with one vacancy. As is standard, the measure of active firms in equilibrium is determined by free entry.

Firms that decide to enter the labor market and search for workers must pay a flow recruiting cost c. Existing jobs are terminated at the job destruction rate λ. Generally, job matches produce an amount p of the numeraire good, but this productivity will be affected by the worker's specific type. Firms that have hired entrant (inexperienced) workers must pay a flow training cost κ until the match dissolves. This is our way of modeling the real-world observation that firms are often biased against workers who do not have any working experience. Maybe these new entrants were brilliant students, but they still need training to become *productive workers*. Thus, a possible interpretation is that κ is the time and effort other colleagues must spend with inexperienced workers "showing them the ropes". After losing their first job, workers become automatically experienced and firms that will hire them in the future will not have to pay the κ cost ever again.[4] (See Section 4.2 of the Web Appendix for a version of the model where workers can gain experience while they are still on their first job.)

Since the effective productivity of an inexperienced worker is lower than that of an experienced worker (with κ representing the differential), firms are biased against inex-

[4] Our "training cost" story is not the only way to capture the bias against inexperienced workers. Another possibility is that employers have asymmetric information about workers' quality. While this is certainly plausible, we think that training is more relevant for our purposes. First, general skills training is an issue that concerns exclusively inexperienced workers, while asymmetric information plagues almost equally experienced and inexperienced workers. Second, a common feature of real-world labor markets is the extensive use of probationary/trial periods during which newly recruited employees' performance is assessed. Since the typical length of such trial periods is as short as 3 months, the cost of hiring a potential "lemon" is not high enough to justify the significant job-finding differences we see in the data. Third, training leads to a simple and tractable model. Finally, as we document in Section 1, it is extremely relevant and easier to quantify, as there is a large literature studying training costs in the labor market.

perienced workers, and we will capture this by using the matching process of Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001). As a result, entrant workers will tend to stay in the unemployment pool for longer periods of time, which is exactly what we see in the data (Figure 1). Another crucial and empirically relevant assumption we make is that entrants who stay unemployed for a prolonged period of time are at risk of suffering skill loss. We assume that this skill loss is permanent and refer to this phenomenon as the "scar". The skill loss of entrant workers takes place stochastically, at Poisson rate γ; when that shock hits an inexperienced worker her productivity declines by an amount $\tilde{\kappa}$, and that skill/productivity loss follows that specific worker for the rest of her life. The literature review in Section 1 outlines the large body of work providing support for the permanent nature of skill loss caused by prolonged early career unemployment. However, in Section 4.1 of the Web Appendix, we explore a version of the model where the skill loss is not permanent.[5]

To fix ideas and offer the reader a mnemonic rule that will help them comprehend the notation that follows, we now provide a description of the various worker types. We will refer to new entrants who just replaced a retired worker as type-0 workers (i.e., they have "0 working experience".) Type-0 workers enter the market as unemployed. If they find their first job quickly, they will become employed type-0 workers, and, as discussed, their effective productivity will be $p - \kappa$. After leaving their first job, type-0 workers permanently become type-1 workers, and their productivity in any future job will be equal to p. However, if type-0 workers stay unemployed for a long period of time, they are more likely to be hit by the skill-loss shock; if this happens (before they found their first job), they will turn into type-$\tilde{0}$ (unemployed) workers. When these types find their first job, they will become type-$\tilde{0}$ employed workers, and their productivity will be equal to $p - \kappa - \tilde{\kappa}$, since these are inexperienced workers who need training (hence the $-\kappa$), *and* they have suffered skill loss (hence the $-\tilde{\kappa}$). Since skill loss is permanent, when type-$\tilde{0}$ workers find and, eventually, lose their first job, they will turn into type-$\tilde{1}$ workers. This means that at any future job their productivity will be equal to $p - \tilde{\kappa}$. (These workers are now experienced, but the skill-loss scar remains.)

To sum up, at any point in time there are $2^3 = 8$ types of workers. First, workers can be unemployed or employed. Next, they can be inexperienced or experienced, where an

[5] We assume that unemployment spells after the first one have no effect on workers' skills. We do so because the impact of unemployment on the skills of experienced workers is well-studied and its inclusion would only make the model unnecessarily complicated. More importantly, there is evidence that skill loss may be of limited importance in older ages. For instance, Cohen, Johnston, and Lindner (2023) find no indication for a decline in skills over the unemployment spell in the overall population in Germany and for the older workers in the US. In the authors' own words, "This suggests that the negative consequences of unemployment might be a more relevant concern *at younger ages*" (p. 5, emphasis added).

experienced worker is one who has held (and lost) at least one job in the past. Finally, workers can be scarred or not scarred, depending on whether they got hit by the skill loss shock when they first entered the labor market. Notation-wise, the number 0 (1) will denote an inexperienced (experienced) worker, and the "tilde" symbol will denote variables related to a worker who suffered skill loss during youth. For example, $\tilde{f}_0$ is the *job-finding rate* of an inexperienced worker who suffered skill loss, $\tilde{f}_1$ is the *job-finding rate* of an experienced worker who suffered skill loss at youth, w_0 is the *wage* of an inexperienced worker who has not suffered skill loss, u_1 is the measure of experienced (non-scarred) *unemployed* workers, $\tilde{e_1}$ is the measure of scarred experienced *employed* workers, and so on.

The matching process we adopt is a generalization of the Blanchard and Diamond (1994) *matching with ranking* proposed by Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001). This specification allows us to capture the fact that firms are biased against inexperienced and scarred workers, as these workers are less productive. (See Section 2.1 for a more detailed discussion of this modeling choice.) This matching function exhibits bias against certain types of unemployed workers who are considered less desirable. The main and very simple idea of this matching technology is that the more productive types of workers get matched first, without being crowded out by the inferior types. When that "first round" of matching has concluded, the less desirable types of workers get a chance to match with firms. Note that in Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) there are only two types of unemployed workers, while in our paper there are four (type 0, $\tilde{0}$, 1, and $\tilde{1}$). However, their simple idea that more desirable workers match first is easily carried over to our analysis.

The firms' ranking of workers is based on workers' productivity, which, in turn, is affected by their experience and whether they are scarred. Type-1 workers are the most productive and, hence, the most desirable. It is also quite clear that type-$\tilde{0}$ workers, who are inexperienced and scarred, are the least desirable. In principle, it is not obvious whether firms would prefer workers of type 0 or workers of type $\tilde{1}$, because their ranking depends on the magnitude of training costs (κ) versus the skill loss ($\tilde{\kappa}$). Since our calibration in Section 5 implies that $\tilde{\kappa} < \kappa$, we assume that firms prefer workers of type $\tilde{1}$ to type 0. In sum, firms rank workers in the following order: type $1 \succ$ type $\tilde{1} \succ$ type $0 \succ$ type $\tilde{0}$.

It turns out that the job-finding rates of the various worker types, implied by the Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) matching process, can be conveniently expressed as functions of the *queue lengths* of the various types. Thus, we define

$$b_1 \equiv \frac{u_1}{v}; \quad \tilde{b_1} \equiv \frac{\tilde{u_1}}{v}; \quad b_0 \equiv \frac{u_0}{v}; \quad \tilde{b_0} \equiv \frac{\tilde{u_0}}{v}, \tag{1}$$

where v is the measure of vacancies in the economy. Notice that the each queue length is simply the unemployment-vacancy ratio for that particular worker type (which is the inverse of the market tightness, typically used in the baseline DMP model). Extending the Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) methodology under a Cobb-Douglas specification in our framework, implies the following job-finding rates for each worker type:[6]

$$
\begin{aligned}
f_1 &= \frac{m(u_1, v)}{u_1} = {b_1}^{\alpha-1}, \\
\tilde{f}_1 &= \frac{m(u_1 + \tilde{u_1}, v) - m(u_1, v)}{\tilde{u_1}} = \frac{(b_1 + \tilde{b}_1)^{\alpha} - b_1^{\alpha}}{\tilde{b}_1}, \\
f_0 &= \frac{m(u_1 + \tilde{u_1} + u_0, v) - m(u_1 + \tilde{u_1}, v)}{u_0} = \frac{(b_1 + \tilde{b}_1 + b_0)^{\alpha} - (b_1 + \tilde{b}_1)^{\alpha}}{b_0}, \\
\tilde{f}_0 &= \frac{m(u_1 + \tilde{u_1} + u_0 + \tilde{u_0}, v) - m(u_1 + \tilde{u_1} + u_0, v)}{\tilde{u_0}} = \frac{(b_1 + \tilde{b}_1 + b_0 + \tilde{b}_0)^{\alpha} - (b_1 + \tilde{b}_1 + b_0)^{\alpha}}{\tilde{b}_0}.
\end{aligned}
$$

The details of these derivations have been relegated to Section 1 of the Web Appendix (where we also report the rates at which firms meet the various worker types).

We close the model with a few standard assumptions. After the matching has concluded and firms have met the various types of workers, the two parties negotiate over the wage using Nash Bargaining. We let $\eta \in [0, 1]$ denote the bargaining power of the worker. All unemployed workers enjoy a benefit z, which we think of as the utility of leisure and/or the value of home production. Notice that, with the exception of productivity and the consequent differences in job-finding rates, all the other parameters of the model $(\eta, z, \lambda, r, \delta)$ are independent of the worker type. This is intentional since we want the results to be driven *only* by differences in the workers' experience and whether they suffered skill loss during their youth, which is the focus of our paper. (That said, in Section 4.3 of the Web Appendix we explore a version of the model where experienced and inexperienced workers have different bargaining powers.)

2.1 Discussion of the Matching Process

Given the description of the environment so far, it is obvious that the core of the model consists of homogeneous firms searching for workers of different types. (These types depend on the worker's history, including the length of their unemployment spell during

[6] Notice how the "ranking" manifests itself in the various job-finding rates. The job-finding rate of the most desirable workers, type 1, is a function only of the queue length for that particular type. But take the next most desirable group, type-$\tilde{1}$ workers: this type's job-finding rate is a function of their own queue length, $\tilde{b_1}$, as well as the queue length of the types that are "above" them in the ranking, b_1. Intuitively, type-$\tilde{1}$ workers are crowded out by each other and by type-1 workers. Similarly, the least desirable type-$\tilde{0}$ workers are crowded out by all other types, including their own.

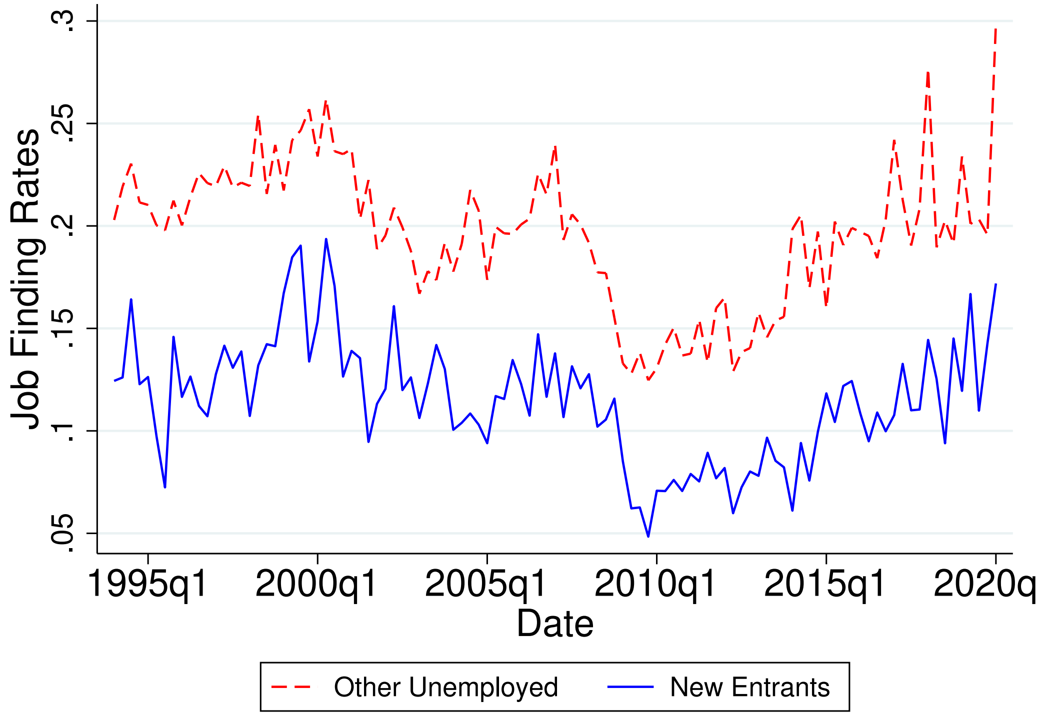

Figure 1. Job-finding rates for unemployed workers 16-24 years old. New entrants are workers who are looking for a job for the first time, while the other unemployed category includes who have looked for and/or held a job in the past. Calculations based on monthly data of the Current Population Survey for 1994 to 2020.

youth and whether they previously held a job.) Deviating from the standard DMP model with homogeneous workers means that we must take a stance on how firms meet with these different types. A natural first attempt may be to consider a model of competitive search, since these models were developed to deal with one-sided market heterogeneity (e.g., see Montgomery 1991). However, it turns out that this modeling choice would not be a good fit for our research question. Instead, we choose to work with the "matching with ranking" model of Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001). The rest of this section aims to justify this modeling choice.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the job-finding rates of entrants are much lower than the job-finding rates of experienced unemployed workers between 16 and 24 years old.[7] The matching with ranking model of Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) provides a natural and tractable way to deliver job-finding rates consistent with this fact. Moreover, there is extensive evidence indicating that many firms rank workers without previous experience

[7] The difference is almost the same for workers between 16 and 64 years old as well. However, almost 85% of entrants is between 16 and 24, hence we present the data for this age group.

lower than experienced applicants. For example, an analysis of almost four million job postings on Linked-In since late 2017 showed that 35% of postings for entry-level positions asked for years of prior relevant work experience.[8] In the working paper version of this paper, we include a short discussion of two alternative matching protocols (competitive search and random search with segmented submarkets) and show that they are inconsistent with these important aspects of the data.

Why does the Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) matching with ranking capture the key aspects of the data when other candidates fail to do so? The Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) specification allows us to model firms' ranking of worker types according to their *current* productivity. In contrast, the alternative matching specifications determine firms' ranking of worker types according to the surplus generated by the workers' improved *future* career prospects. Specifically, the alternative specifications allow firms to grasp an unrealistically large fraction of the future surplus generated due to the higher present job-finding rate of entrant workers. This has two problematic implications: first, it leads to counterfactual job arrival rates and unemployment durations, since it predicts that entrants have higher job-finding rates than experienced workers. Second, there is a large empirical literature (summarized by Pallais 2014) arguing that firms do not recoup the full value of their training investments, which contradicts the implication that firms grasp their fair share of the workers' future surplus. Our "matching with ranking" protocol, under the additional assumption that the ranking is determined by *current* worker productivity, is the only specification that allows the model to be consistent with all these aspects of the data.

There are several features of the actual labor matching process that could explain why firms rank workers according to their current productivity. Ranking according to current productivity is optimal in an environment where firms cannot get their hands on the surplus produced by workers later in their career. This could be because of legal reasons, e.g., minimum wage laws, or practical reasons, e.g., often, workers' compensation is based on heuristic criteria, such as, "pay workers according to their performance".[9] Details aside, if firms cannot capture a fraction of the future surplus that they help create by offering entrant workers their first job, they end up optimally ranking workers based on the current surplus, i.e., their productivity. We think of our "matching with ranking" specification as a *shortcut* that stands in for the aforementioned frictions, and delivers

[8] https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20210916-why-inexperienced-workers-cant-get-entry-level-jobs

[9] It is well-documented that a large fraction of U.S. jobs explicitly pay workers based on their productivity using bonus pay, commissions, or piece-rate contracts; see Lazear (2000) and Lemieux, MacLeod, and Parent (2009).

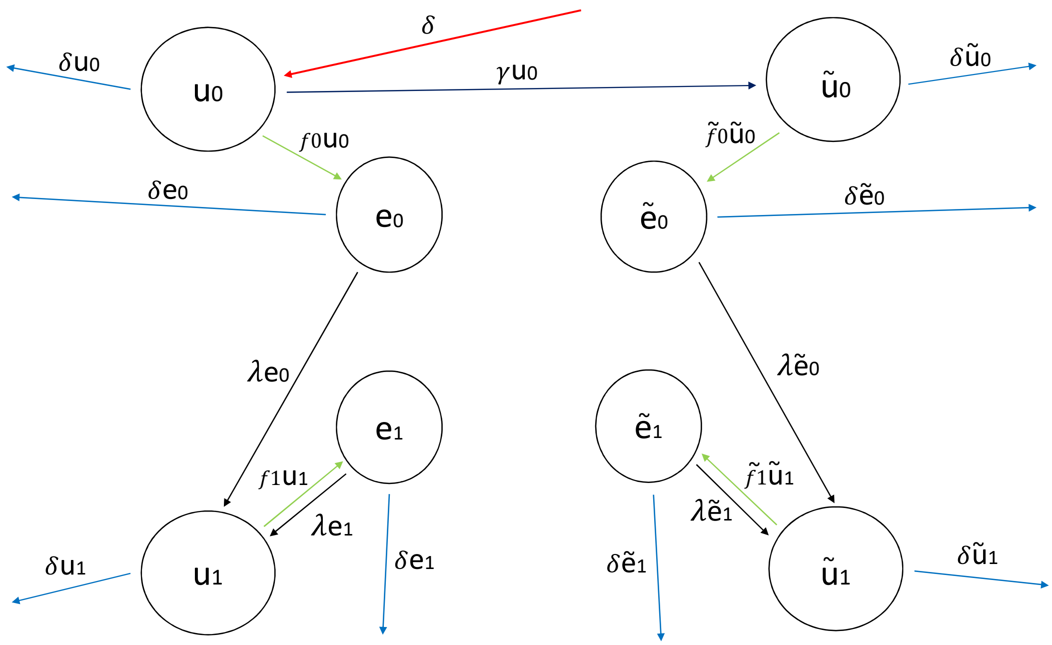

Figure 2. Worker flows in and out of the various states.

empirically relevant theoretical predictions in a tractable way.

3 Analysis of the Model

3.1 Beveridge curves

We begin the analysis of the model with the derivation of the Beveridge curves. It is useful to inspect Figure 2, which illustrates the worker flows in and out of every state. While at first glance the figure may look complicated (workers could be in one of eight possible states), the logic is simple. New entrants come into the labor market as type-0 unemployed workers at rate δ; this is indicated by the red arrow at the top of the graph. Then, at any state of the world, workers could get hit by the retirement shock and exit the labor market; these are the light blue arrows pointing away from the eight "bubbles" representing the various states. There are also four black arrows starting from employment and pointing to unemployment bubbles; clearly, these are flows initiated by the job destruction shock. Notice that job destruction always leads to the bubble of "experienced unemployed", which may be scarred ($\tilde{u_1}$) or not scarred (u_1). Green arrows indicate workers who found a job and are moving from unemployment to employment. As discussed, the rate at which this transition takes place is different for each worker type and governed by the Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) matching process. Finally, the dark blue arrow starting at u_0 and pointing to $\tilde{u_0}$ captures the crucial group of workers who stayed in the "inexperienced unemployed" pool for too long and got hit by the skill loss shock.

Equating the flows in and out of each state, and after some algebra, we can show that the steady state measure of workers in the various states are as follows:

$$u_0 = \frac{\delta}{\delta + \gamma + f_0},$$
$$\tilde{u_0} = \frac{\gamma}{\delta + \tilde{f}_0} \cdot \frac{\delta}{\delta + \gamma + f_0},$$
$$e_0 = \frac{f_0}{\delta + \lambda} \cdot \frac{\delta}{\delta + \gamma + f_0},$$
$$\tilde{e_0} = \frac{\tilde{f}_0}{\delta + \lambda} \cdot \frac{\gamma}{\delta + \tilde{f}_0} \cdot \frac{\delta}{\delta + \gamma + f_0},$$
$$u_1 = \frac{\lambda f_0}{(\gamma + \delta + f_0)(\delta + \lambda + f_1)},$$
$$e_1 = \frac{f_1}{\delta + \lambda} \cdot \frac{\lambda f_0}{(\gamma + \delta + f_0)(\delta + \lambda + f_1)},$$
$$\tilde{u_1} = \frac{\lambda \gamma \tilde{f}_0}{(\delta + \tilde{f}_0)(\gamma + \delta + f_0)(\delta + \lambda + \tilde{f}_1)},$$
$$\tilde{e_1} = \frac{\tilde{f}_1 \lambda \gamma \tilde{f}_0}{(\delta + \lambda)(\delta + \tilde{f}_0)(\gamma + \delta + f_0)(\delta + \lambda + \tilde{f}_1)}.$$

3.2 Value Functions

We move to the steady state value functions and start with the firms. We let q denote the arrival rate of workers to firms and follow the usual notation, e.g., $\tilde{q_0}$ stands for the arrival rate of an inexperienced worker who has suffered skill loss. The various q's are derived in Section 1 of the Web Appendix. The value function of a vacant firm is given by

$$rV = -c + q_0(J_0 - V) + \tilde{q_0}(\tilde{J}_0 - V) + q_1(J_1 - V) + \tilde{q_1}(\tilde{J}_1 - V).$$

Of course, free entry implies that in equilibrium we must have $V = 0$, therefore, we can state the free entry condition as

$$c = q_0 J_0 + \tilde{q_0} \tilde{J}_0 + q_1 J_1 + \tilde{q_1} \tilde{J}_1. \tag{2}$$

We also have four value functions for productive firms in the various states, i.e., for firms who matched with the four different types of workers (type 0, $\tilde{0}$, 1, and $\tilde{1}$). These are given as follows:

$$rJ_0 = p - \kappa - w_0 - \lambda J_0 - \delta J_0, \tag{3}$$

$$r\tilde{J}_0 = p - \kappa - \tilde{\kappa} - \tilde{w}_0 - \lambda \tilde{J}_0 - \delta \tilde{J}_0, \tag{4}$$

$$rJ_1 = p - w_1 - \lambda J_1 - \delta J_1, \tag{5}$$

$$r\tilde{J}_1 = p - \tilde{\kappa} - \tilde{w}_1 - \lambda \tilde{J}_1 - \delta \tilde{J}_1. \tag{6}$$

Next, consider the value functions of workers in the various states. Let U (W) denote the value function of an unemployed (employed) worker. The remaining notation is standard. (For example, $\tilde{W}_1$ is the value function of a worker who is employed, has had some work experience, but was hit by the skill loss shock during her youth.) The value functions for unemployed workers in the various states are given by:

$$rU_0 = z + f_0(W_0 - U_0) + \gamma(\tilde{U}_0 - U_0) - \delta U_0, \tag{7}$$

$$r\tilde{U}_0 = z + \tilde{f}_0(\tilde{W}_0 - \tilde{U}_0) - \delta \tilde{U}_0, \tag{8}$$

$$rU_1 = z + f_1(W_1 - U_1) - \delta U_1, \tag{9}$$

$$r\tilde{U}_1 = z + \tilde{f}_1(\tilde{W}_1 - \tilde{U}_1) - \delta \tilde{U}_1. \tag{10}$$

The value functions for employed workers in the various states are given by:

$$rW_0 = w_0 + \lambda(U_1 - W_0) - \delta W_0, \tag{11}$$

$$r\tilde{W}_0 = \tilde{w}_0 + \lambda(\tilde{U}_1 - \tilde{W}_0) - \delta \tilde{W}_0, \tag{12}$$

$$rW_1 = w_1 + \lambda(U_1 - W_1) - \delta W_1, \tag{13}$$

$$r\tilde{W}_1 = \tilde{w}_1 + \lambda(\tilde{U}_1 - \tilde{W}_1) - \delta \tilde{W}_1. \tag{14}$$

Notice that inexperienced workers who lose their first job now move to the pool of experienced unemployed workers. (That is precisely why the terms U_1 and $\tilde{U}_1$ appear on the right-hand side of equations 11 and 12).

Having described the value functions of all economic agents in detail, we are now ready to study the bargaining problems in the various types of meetings.

3.3 Bargaining problems

Bargaining in a type-1 meeting

We begin with the description of the terms of trade in a meeting between a firm and an unemployed worker of type-1, which, as we shall see, is the simplest case. Solving the standard Nash bargaining problem implies that the following condition must be satisfied:

$$(1-\eta)(W_1 - U_1) = \eta J_1. \tag{15}$$

This condition states that each party will enjoy a fraction of the total surplus of the match, and that fraction will be equal to her bargaining power. Replacing the value functions W_1 and J_1 from (13) and (5), respectively, allows us to write the wage of a type-1 worker as $w_1 = \eta p + (1-\eta)(r+\delta)U_1$. Substituting U_1 from equation (9) into this expression yields

$$w_1 = \eta p + (1-\eta)z + (1-\eta)f_1(W_1 - U_1) = \eta p + (1-\eta)z + \eta f_1 J_1,$$

where the second equality follows from (15). Substituting J_1 one more time from equation (5), and solving for w_1, delivers the final version of our "wage curve" for type-1 workers:

$$w_1 = \frac{\eta p(r+\lambda+\delta+f_1) + (1-\eta)z(r+\lambda+\delta)}{r+\lambda+\delta+\eta f_1}. \tag{16}$$

Clearly, this is a relationship between the wage for type-1 workers and their job arrival rate, which, in turn, depends on firm entry and market tightness.

Bargaining in a type-$\tilde{1}$ meeting

Next, consider the bargaining problem between a firm and a worker who is experienced but suffered skill loss during her youth. Once again, we must have:

$$(1-\eta)(\tilde{W}_1 - \tilde{U}_1) = \eta \tilde{J}_1.$$

As in the case of type-1 workers, we can replace the functions $\tilde{W}_1$ and $\tilde{J}_1$ from (14) and (6) into the last expression. Following identical steps, and after some algebra, one can easily derive the wage curve for type-$\tilde{1}$ workers:

$$\tilde{w_1} = \frac{\eta(p-\tilde{\kappa})(r+\lambda+\delta+\tilde{f}_1) + (1-\eta)z(r+\lambda+\delta)}{r+\lambda+\delta+\eta\tilde{f}_1}. \tag{17}$$

Once again, we obtain a relationship between the wage for type-$\tilde{1}$ workers and their job arrival rate, which, in turn, depends on firm entry and market tightness.

Bargaining in type-$\tilde{0}$ meeting

We now move to the bargaining problem between a firm and an inexperienced worker who suffered skill loss. In this case the surplus sharing rule is given by

$$(1-\eta)(\tilde{W_0}-\tilde{U_0}) = \eta \tilde{J_0}.$$

As is standard, we first replace the value functions $\tilde{W_0}$ and $\tilde{J_0}$ from (12) and (4), respectively, which allows us to write the wage of a type-$\tilde{0}$ worker as

$$\tilde{w_0} = \eta(p-\kappa-\tilde{\kappa}) - \lambda(1-\eta)(\tilde{U_1}-\tilde{U_0}) + (1-\eta)(r+\delta)\tilde{U_0}. \tag{18}$$

Unlike the previous cases, where the wage depended on the value function of unemployment for that specific type (only), here $\tilde{w_0}$ depends on both $\tilde{U_0}$ and $\tilde{U_1}$, and specifically on their difference $\tilde{U_1}-\tilde{U_0}$. To deal with this, subtract (8) from (10) to obtain

$$\tilde{U_1}-\tilde{U_0} = \frac{\tilde{f}_1(\tilde{W_1}-\tilde{U_1}) - \tilde{f}_0(\tilde{W_0}-\tilde{U_0})}{r+\delta}. \tag{19}$$

To obtain a useful expression for the term $\tilde{W_1}-\tilde{U_1}$, that now appears in (19), subtract (10) from (14), to get

$$\tilde{W_1}-\tilde{U_1} = \frac{\tilde{w_1}-z}{r+\delta+\lambda+\tilde{f}_1}. \tag{20}$$

Substitute equation (20) into (19), and the resulting outcome into equation (18), and, after some algebra, one can arrive at the wage curve for the type-$\tilde{0}$ worker, specifically:

$$\begin{aligned}\tilde{w_0} = \frac{1}{r+\delta+\eta\tilde{f}_0}\big[&\eta(p-\kappa-\tilde{\kappa})(r+\delta+\tilde{f}_0)+ \\ &+\frac{(r+\delta+\lambda)(r+\delta+\tilde{f}_1)}{r+\delta+\lambda+\tilde{f}_1}(1-\eta)z - \frac{\lambda(1-\eta)\tilde{f}_1}{r+\delta+\lambda+\tilde{f}_1}\tilde{w_1}\big].\end{aligned} \tag{21}$$

Inspection of the last wage curve reveals that, in this case, the wage for type-$\tilde{0}$ workers is not only a function of this type's job arrival rate (as was the case for type-1 and type-$\tilde{1}$ workers). The wage $\tilde{w_0}$ also depends on the wage that type-$\tilde{1}$ workers make. The intuition is clear. When a type-$\tilde{0}$ worker meets a firm, working for that firm is the step that will allow her to move out of the "inexperienced" state, and earn the wage $\tilde{w_1}$ for the rest of her life. This is precisely, why the term $\tilde{w_1}$ enters equation (21) with a minus: a higher (future) wage $\tilde{w_1}$ induces the type-$\tilde{0}$ worker to be more eager to accept a lower (current) wage $\tilde{w_0}$, since that lower wage comes together with the opportunity of abandoning the bad "inexperienced" stage once and for all.

Bargaining in type-0 meeting

The last type of meeting is the one between a firm and an unskilled worker who has not yet been hit by the skill loss shock. The surplus sharing rule is given by

$$(1-\eta)(W_0 - U_0) = \eta J_0.$$

Following standard steps, substitute W_0 and J_0 from (11) and (3), respectively, to write the wage of a type-0 worker as

$$w_0 = \eta(p-\kappa) - (1-\eta)\lambda(U_1 - U_0) + (1-\eta)(r+\delta)U_0.$$

Just like in the case of type-$\tilde{0}$ workers (and unlike the cases of type-1 and type-$\tilde{1}$ workers), the wage for the types under consideration (also) depends on the differential term $U_1 - U_0$. Since the steps for deriving the final version of the wage curve are virtually identical to the case of type-$\tilde{0}$ workers presented above, we will skip the details and move directly to the final formula:

$$\begin{aligned} w_0 = {} & \frac{r+\delta+\gamma+f_0}{r+\delta+\gamma+\eta f_0}\eta(p-\kappa) + \frac{(r+\lambda+\delta)(r+f_1+\delta)(r+\gamma+\delta)}{(r+\delta)(r+\delta+\gamma+\eta f_0)(r+\delta+\lambda+f_1)}(1-\eta)z + \\ & + \frac{\gamma \tilde{f}_0 \eta(p-\kappa-\tilde{\kappa}-\tilde{w}_0)}{(r+\delta)(r+\delta+\gamma+\eta f_0)} - \frac{(1-\eta)\lambda f_1(r+\gamma+\delta)w_1}{(r+\delta)(r+\delta+\gamma+\eta f_0)(r+\delta+\lambda+f_1)}. \end{aligned} \tag{22}$$

The wage curve for type-0 workers admits an interpretation that is similar to the one following the wage curve for type-$\tilde{0}$ workers, i.e., equation (21). The wage that type-0 workers are willing to accept is not just a function of their job arrival rate: w_0 also depends on w_1 *and* $\tilde{w}_0$. Why w_0 depends on w_1 should now be obvious, given our earlier discussion: the type-0 worker realizes that if she agrees to work for that firm, she will be able to move out of the inexperienced state and earn the wage w_1 henceforth. Why does w_0 also depend on $\tilde{w}_0$? When the type-0 worker agrees to work for the firm with which she has matched, she realizes that she will never again be subject to the skill loss shock. Thus, what the worker *would* have made if she turned down the firm's offer and continued searching (and being subject to the skill loss shock), i.e., the wage $\tilde{w}_0$, enters the currently negotiated wage through her outside option.

3.4 Definition of Steady State Equilibrium

We conclude this section with a formal definition of equilibrium.

Definition 1. A steady state equilibrium in our model is a list of wages for the four types of workers $(w_0, \tilde{w_0}, w_1, \tilde{w_1})$, a measure of vacant firms v, and measures of unemployed and employed workers in the various states $(u_0, \tilde{u_0}, u_1, \tilde{u_1}, e_0, \tilde{e_0}, e_1, \tilde{e_1})$, satisfying the free entry condition (2), the four wage curves (16), (17), (21), and (22), and the eight Beveridge curves reported at the end of Section 3.1.[10]

4 Government Interventions

The discussion so far reveals that our model is characterized by a prominent market failure. Firms that hire entrant workers provide a *public good* to society by transforming them into experienced, and therefore (more) productive workers. However, firms cannot internalize the societal benefits of this public service and choose to discriminate against inexperienced workers. This bias increases the inexperienced workers' unemployment duration, which, in turn, raises their exposure to skill loss, a skill loss which permanently scars the workers, thus affecting their productivity when they are hired by other firms later in their lifetime.

It is obvious that in this environment there is scope for government intervention. Since the root of the inefficiency lies in the firms' decision to underhire inexperienced workers (see also Pallais (2014) and the references therein), we consider three possible government interventions whose common goal is to alleviate bias and reduce the exposure of entrant workers to the skill loss shock, with the intention of increasing welfare. We start with a short description of the idea behind each of these three interventions, and then we analyze them in detail in the rest of this section. A *vis-à-vis* comparison of the effectiveness of each intervention will follow in Section 6.

Intervention 1: "Unbiased matching". We dub the first intervention "unbiased matching", as it describes the case where the government makes it *illegal* for firms to discriminate against any group of workers. Even though one could argue that this intervention is somewhat unrealistic (firms have the right to not hire less productive workers), it is still interesting, from a theoretical point of view, to study a benchmark model without biased matching, which has been a staple of the analysis so far, and appears to be the root of the ongoing inefficiency. Comparing the baseline model with the economy under Intervention 1 can tell us how much welfare can improve if the firms' bias against inexperienced

[10] Implicit in this definition are the queue lengths $(b_0, \tilde{b_0}, b_1, \tilde{b_1})$, defined in equation (1) as functions of the various unemployment measures and v. In turn, these queue lengths are used to determine the various job-finding rates $(f_0, \tilde{f_0}, f_1, \tilde{f_1})$, which appear in the Beveridge curves, as well as the firms' worker-finding rates $(q_0, \tilde{q_0}, q_1, \tilde{q_1})$ (described in Section 1 of the Web Appendix), which appear in the job creation curve.

workers were eradicated. In technical terms, the unbiased matching version of the model simply replaces the Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) matching process with a standard Pissarides (2000) matching function in which all workers meet firms at the same rate.

Intervention 2: "Government subsidies". Our second intervention is one where the government raises funds to subsidize firms who hire less productive workers. Subsidies are designed so that firms are effectively *indifferent* among the various types of workers, so that they *choose* to not discriminate against any type of workers. Thus, one can think of Intervention 2 as a market-based way to achieve what Intervention 1 achieves by law, which is arguably the more empirically relevant approach.[11]

Intervention 3: "Internships". The third intervention explores the possibility that the wage of entrant workers is not determined endogenously in the model, but chosen exogenously by the government. We dub this intervention "internships" because it assumes that inexperienced workers are not compensated based on their true productivity, but they are treated as trainees whose salary is predetermined and exogenous.[12] We think this is a crucial element of an internship, although we realize that other important elements of real-world internships are absent from our model. In any case, the term "internship" here is just a tag that will summarize Intervention 3. This intervention allows firms to employ inexperienced workers at lower salaries, effectively lowering the bias against these workers and mitigating the inefficiency described in the beginning of this section.

4.1 Intervention 1: Unbiased matching

Beveridge Curves

Consider first the Beveridge curves for this version of our model. When it is illegal for firms to discriminate against certain types of workers, all workers match with firms at the same rate. All the Beveridge curves reported at the end of Section 3.1 are still valid, but the various matching rates are now equal. That is, $f_0 = \tilde{f}_0 = f_1 = \tilde{f}_1 = f$, where the common arrival rate f is now given by a standard (unbiased) matching process, i.e.,

$$f = \frac{m(u, v)}{u}, \tag{23}$$

[11] Despite this similarity, the two interventions do not lead to the same equilibrium outcomes and are not equally effective at improving welfare. The key reason is that Intervention 2 must make use of distortionary taxes to eradicate bias. For details, see Section 6.

[12] The fact that inexperienced workers are treated differently than the experienced ones also creates a connection with the "dual labor markets" policies, which specify that some workers are hired under temporary or fixed-term contracts. See Bentolila, Dolado, and Jimeno (2020) and Cahuc (2024).

with u representing the total mass of unemployed workers (of all types).

Value Functions

Next, we move to the value functions under the regime of Intervention 1, starting with the firms. With unbiased matching, the probability that a firm meets a worker of a specific type depends only on that type's relative representation in the pool of unemployed. Letting q denote the arrival rate of a(ny) worker to the typical firm, i.e., $q = m(u, v)/v$, the value function of a vacant firm is given by

$$rV = -c + q\left[\frac{u_0}{u}(J_0 - V) + \frac{\tilde{u_0}}{u}(\tilde{J}_0 - V) + \frac{u_1}{u}(J_1 - V) + \frac{\tilde{u_1}}{u}(\tilde{J}_1 - V)\right].$$

As is standard, free entry implies that in equilibrium $V = 0$, therefore, we can state the free entry condition as

$$c = \frac{q}{u}\left(u_0 J_0 + \tilde{u_0}\tilde{J}_0 + u_1 J_1 + \tilde{u_1}\tilde{J}_1\right). \tag{24}$$

Even though the process through which firms meet workers is different compared to the baseline model of Section 3, once a firm has met a specific type of worker, the value functions for productive firms in the various states remain the same, i.e., they are still given by equations (3)-(6).

Moving on to the workers, the value functions for unemployed workers in the various states are given by:

$$rU_0 = z + f(W_0 - U_0) + \gamma(\tilde{U}_0 - U_0) - \delta U_0, \tag{25}$$
$$r\tilde{U}_0 = z + f(\tilde{W}_0 - \tilde{U}_0) - \delta\tilde{U}_0, \tag{26}$$
$$rU_1 = z + f(W_1 - U_1) - \delta U_1, \tag{27}$$
$$r\tilde{U}_1 = z + f(\tilde{W}_1 - \tilde{U}_1) - \delta\tilde{U}_1. \tag{28}$$

Notice that these expressions are almost identical to the value functions (7)-(10) reported in Section 3.2, with the only difference being that the various arrival rates of that section have now been replaced by the common rate f, defined in equation (23).

The last set of value functions for this model specification concerns employed workers. Since employed workers have already matched with a firm, the different matching process assumed in this section will not affect their employment value functions, which are still given by equations (11)-(14) in Section 3.2.

Bargaining problems

As the discussion so far reveals, the only parts of the analysis that are affected by the adoption of the new (unbiased) matching process are those that take place *before* a firm and a worker match. Consequently, all the derivations of the wage curves in Section 3.3 remain valid, with the only difference being that the various arrival rates will now be replaced by the common arrival rate f. This observation also sheds some light on the economic insights of this intervention. The government, under Intervention 1, does not intervene in the labor market to change the way in which firms and workers produce or negotiate over the wages. It only intervenes by stating that discriminating against any type of worker, at the recruiting stage, is illegal. By doing this, the government ensures that *all* types of workers have the same matching rate, which, in turn, ensures that entrant/inexperienced workers will not stay unemployed for a prolonged period of time, thus risking a skill loss that will scar them for the rest of their career. We will discuss the effectiveness of this intervention, and how it compares to the alternatives, in Section 6.

Given that the derivations of the wage curves in Section 3.3 remain unaltered, we will not repeat them here, and we will only report the wage curves for the four types of workers, reminding the reader that they are identical to ones reported in equations (16), (17), (21), and (22), once one has replaced the various f's with the common arrival rate f defined in equation (23). More precisely, we have:

$$w_1 = \frac{\eta p(r+\delta+\lambda+f) + (1-\eta)z(r+\delta+\lambda)}{r+\delta+\lambda+\eta f}, \tag{29}$$

$$\tilde{w_1} = \frac{\eta(p-\tilde{\kappa})(r+\delta+\lambda+f) + (1-\eta)z(r+\delta+\lambda)}{r+\delta+\lambda+\eta f}, \tag{30}$$

$$\tilde{w_0} = \frac{r+\delta+f}{r+\delta+\eta f}\left[\eta(p-\kappa-\tilde{\kappa}) + \frac{r+\delta+\lambda}{r+\delta+\lambda+f}(1-\eta)z - \frac{\lambda(1-\eta)f}{(r+\delta+\lambda+f)(r+\delta+f)}\tilde{w_1}\right], \tag{31}$$

$$\begin{aligned} w_0 = {} & \frac{r+\delta+\gamma+f}{r+\delta+\gamma+\eta f}\eta(p-\kappa) + \frac{(r+\delta+\lambda)(r+\delta+f)(r+\delta+\gamma)}{(r+\delta)(r+\delta+\gamma+\eta f)(r+\delta+\lambda+f)}(1-\eta)z \\ & + \frac{\gamma f\eta(p-\kappa-\tilde{\kappa}-\tilde{w_0})}{(r+\delta)(r+\delta+\gamma+\eta f)} - \frac{(1-\eta)\lambda f(r+\delta+\gamma)w_1}{(r+\delta)(r+\delta+\gamma+\eta f)(r+\delta+\lambda+f)}. \end{aligned} \tag{32}$$

Definition 2. A steady state equilibrium, under Intervention 1, is a list of wages for the four types of workers $(w_0, \tilde{w_0}, w_1, \tilde{w_1})$, a measure of vacancies v, and measures of unemployed and employed workers in the various states $(u_0, \tilde{u_0}, u_1, \tilde{u_1}, e_0, \tilde{e_0}, e_1, \tilde{e_1})$, satisfying the free entry condition (24), the four wage curves (29), (30), (31), and (32), and eight Beveridge curves, which are the ones reported at the end of Section 3.1, after one replaces the various f's with the common arrival rate f defined in equation (23).

4.2 Intervention 2: Government subsidies

Unlike Intervention 1, where the government could impose unbiased matching by law, here the government raises funds to subsidize firms who hire less productive workers. Specifically, a firm who hires a type-0 worker will receive a (flow) subsidy σ_0, a firm who hires a type-$\tilde{0}$ worker will receive a subsidy $\tilde{\sigma_0}$, and a firm who hires a type-$\tilde{1}$ worker will receive a subsidy $\tilde{\sigma_1}$. To raise funding for these subsidies, every active firm pays a flat (lump-sum) tax equal to τ. The aforementioned subsidies are designed so that firms are *effectively indifferent* among the various types of workers. Thus, one can think of Intervention 2 as a market-based (as opposed to legislative) way of achieving unbiased matching.

Beveridge Curves

Even though under Intervention 2 this happens for different reasons (subsidies rather than anti-discriminating laws), the end result is that firms are indifferent among the various types of workers. This simply means that all workers face identical job-finding rates, and, consequently, all the Beveridge curves remain the same as the ones described in Section 4.1. This, in turn, means that relevant Beveridge curves are the ones reported at the end of Section 3.1, but with $f_0 = \tilde{f}_0 = f_1 = \tilde{f}_1 = f$ (where f was defined in equation (23)).

Value Functions

Next, we move to the value functions under the regime of Intervention 2, starting with the firms. Using our standard notation, the value functions of firms who have matched with the various types of workers are given by

$$rJ_0 = p - \kappa - w_0 + \sigma_0 - \tau - \lambda J_0 - \delta J_0, \tag{33}$$

$$r\tilde{J}_0 = p - \kappa - \tilde{\kappa} - \tilde{w_0} + \tilde{\sigma_0} - \tau - \lambda \tilde{J}_0 - \delta \tilde{J}_0, \tag{34}$$

$$rJ_1 = p - \tau - w_1 - \lambda J_1 - \delta J_1, \tag{35}$$

$$r\tilde{J}_1 = p - \tilde{\kappa} - \tilde{w_1} + \tilde{\sigma_1} - \tau - \lambda \tilde{J}_1 - \delta \tilde{J}_1. \tag{36}$$

However, recall that here the various subsidies are designed to make firms indifferent among the various types of workers. This implies that $J_0 = \tilde{J}_0 = J_1 = \tilde{J}_1 = J$. This greatly simplifies the value function of a vacant firm, which is now given by

$$rV = -c + q(J - V),$$

where, as before, $q = m(u, v)/v$, is the worker-finding rate of the typical firm. Free entry implies that in equilibrium we must have

$$c = qJ. \tag{37}$$

Since all types of workers under Intervention 2 have identical job-finding rates (albeit for different reasons), the value functions for unemployed workers reported in Section 4.1, i.e., equations (25)-(28), remain valid. The value functions for employed workers are also identical to the ones reported in Section 4.1, which, in turn, are identical to the value functions given by equations (11)-(14) in Section 3.2.

Before we move on to the bargaining problems, we present an auxiliary result that will significantly simplify our task.

Lemma 1. *Under Intervention 2 all workers types receive the same wage, i.e.,* $w_0 = \tilde{w_0} = w_1 = \tilde{w_1} = w$.

Proof. See Section 1 of the Web Appendix. □

The proof of the lemma has been relegated to the appendix, but the statement is quite intuitive. Since the government's intervention makes firms indifferent among the various types of workers, it turns out that all the workers will make the same wage in equilibrium. It should also be obvious why Lemma 1 simplifies the analysis: under Intervention 2, we will only have to solve one bargaining problem, instead of four.

Bargaining problem(s)

Since the various J_i terms are all equal to each other, and since the bargaining problem in each type of meeting would imply $(1-\eta)(W_i - U_i) = \eta J_i$, we must have that the various $W_i - U_i$ terms are also equal to each other. Thus, instead of solving four distinct bargaining problems, in this specification of the model we only need to solve one bargaining problem. As one can see in detail in the proof of Lemma 1, the various $W_i - U_i$ terms are all equal to

$$W - U = \frac{w - z}{r + \lambda + \delta + f},$$

where w is the common wage established in Lemma 1. As for the J term, we can simply replace it from the free entry condition, i.e., equation (37). Then, the standard bargaining protocol, prescribing that $(1-\eta)(W - U) = \eta J$, here implies that

$$w = z + \frac{\eta}{1-\eta}\frac{c(r + \delta + \lambda + f)}{q}, \tag{38}$$

which is our (unique) wage curve under Intervention 2.

The size of the tax and the various subsidies

Before we proceed to the definition of equilibrium under Intervention 2, we must characterize the size of the various subsidies and the flat tax. Exploiting equations (33)-(36), and keeping in mind that $J_0 = \tilde{J_0} = J_1 = \tilde{J_1} = J$, we can deduce that

$$p - \kappa - w_0 - \tau + \sigma_0 = p - \kappa - \tilde{\kappa} - \tilde{w_0} - \tau + \tilde{\sigma_0} = p - \tau - w_1 = p - \tilde{\kappa} - \tau - \tilde{w_1} + \tilde{\sigma_1}.$$

But since Lemma 1 has established that all the wages must be equal (and since all firms pay the same flat tax τ), we have:

$$\sigma_0 = \kappa; \quad \tilde{\sigma_0} = \kappa + \tilde{\kappa}; \quad \tilde{\sigma_1} = \tilde{\kappa}. \tag{39}$$

Again, this is intuitive. The only way in which the government can make firms indifferent among the various types of workers is by fully covering the "cost" associated with hiring a less productive type (i.e., anyone other than type-1).

The last item we need to specify is the flat tax rate. A balanced government budget constraint implies that

$$\tau = \frac{\kappa e_0 + (\kappa + \tilde{\kappa})\, \tilde{e_0} + \tilde{\kappa}\tilde{e_1}}{e_0 + \tilde{e_0} + e_1 + \tilde{e_1}}. \tag{40}$$

Definition 3. A steady state equilibrium, under Intervention 2, is a (common) wage, w, for all types of workers, a list of subsidies $(\sigma_0, \tilde{\sigma_0}, \tilde{\sigma_1})$, a flat tax, τ, paid by all active firms, a measure of vacancies v, and measures of unemployed and employed workers in the various states $(u_0, \tilde{u_0}, u_1, \tilde{u_1}, e_0, \tilde{e_0}, e_1, \tilde{e_1})$. The three types of subsidies are described in equation (39), and the tax satisfies equation (40). The remaining equilibrium variables satisfy the free entry condition (37), the wage curve (38), and the eight Beveridge curves reported at the end of Section 3.1, after one replaces the various f's with the common arrival rate f defined in equation (23).

4.3 Intervention 3: Internships

Our third intervention is the one dubbed "internships". Here, we explore the possibility that the wage of entrant/inexperienced workers is not determined endogenously in the model (i.e., by Nash bargaining), but it is chosen exogenously by the government. Let us denote the wages of type-0 and type-$\tilde{0}$ workers by w_0 and $\tilde{w_0}$, respectively. We treat them as exogenous parameters, and in Section 6 we discuss how changes in these two terms affect equilibrium welfare. All experienced workers (of type-1 and type-$\tilde{1}$) will continue to earn wages determined by Nash bargaining.

A question that arises is whether firms still have an incentive to discriminate against certain types of workers. Think, for example, of type-0 workers. These workers must be trained by the firms (their productivity is $p-\kappa$), but their wage is given exogenously by w_0, which could be very low (perhaps even zero). Whether firms would prefer to hire a type-1 to a type-0 worker depends on the size of κ and w_0. In fact, as long as κ is not too large, the government could always choose w_0 to be low enough, so that firms prefer to match with a type-0 worker and discriminate against type-1 workers. Since, for now, we have decided to treat w_0 and $\tilde{w_0}$ as parameters whose value can change (thus tilting the firms' preferences towards the various worker types), we will strive for the maximum degree of flexibility, by assuming that firms *do not discriminate* against any type of worker.[13] This assumption also allows a direct comparison of Intervention 3 with Interventions 1 and 2.

Beveridge Curves

Given our modeling choice to assume no bias in matching, all types of workers face identical job-finding rates, and the Beveridge curves remain the same as in Sections 4.1 and 4.2. This, in turn, means that relevant Beveridge curves are the ones reported at the end of Section 3.1, but with $f_0 = \tilde{f}_0 = f_1 = \tilde{f}_1 = f$ (where f was defined in equation 23).

Value Functions

Next, we move to the value functions under the regime of Intervention 3, starting with the firms. Since we assume unbiased matching, the probability that a firm meets a worker of a specific type depends only on that type's relative representation in the pool of unemployed. Letting q denote the arrival rate of a(ny) worker to the typical firm, as we did under Interventions 1 and 2, the value function of a vacant firm is given by

$$rV = -c + q\left[\frac{u_0}{u}(J_0 - V) + \frac{\tilde{u_0}}{u}(\tilde{J}_0 - V) + \frac{u_1}{u}(J_1 - V) + \frac{\tilde{u_1}}{u}(\tilde{J}_1 - V)\right].$$

Free entry implies that $V = 0$, therefore, we can state the free entry condition as

$$c = \frac{q}{u}\left(u_0 J_0 + \tilde{u_0}\tilde{J}_0 + u_1 J_1 + \tilde{u_1}\tilde{J}_1\right). \tag{41}$$

The value functions for productive firms in the various states are still given by equations (3)-(6), but there is an important difference. In Section 3, equations (3) and (4), the terms w_0 and $\tilde{w_0}$ represented endogenous variables; here the value functions appear identical, but these terms represent exogenous policy parameters.

[13] Our framework would allow us to explore many different versions, including the less standard case where firms discriminate against type-1 workers; this would be relevant if inexperienced workers are not too unproductive, and they are very cheap. Intervention 4, which we study in Section 6.4, is in that spirit.

Moving on to the workers, the value functions for unemployed workers in the various states are still given by equation (25)-(28) in Section 4.1, and the value functions for employed workers in the various states are still described by equations (11)-(14) in Section 3. Again, it is useful to point out that the only (conceptual) difference is that the terms w_0 and $\tilde{w_0}$ appearing in equations (11) and (12) are endogenous variables, while here these same terms are understood to be exogenous policy parameters.

Bargaining problems

As we have explained, under Intervention 3 we only need to solve the bargaining problem in the two types of meetings with experienced workers. Consider first a meeting between a firm and a type-1 worker. As is standard, the Nash protocol requires $(1-\eta)(W_1 - U_1) = \eta J_1$. Replacing W_1 from (13) and J_1 from (5), and following the standard steps, we conclude that the wage curve for type-1 workers, under Intervention 3, is given by

$$w_1 = \frac{\eta p(r+\delta+\lambda+f) + (1-\eta)z(r+\delta+\lambda)}{r+\delta+\lambda+\eta f}. \tag{42}$$

Next, consider a meeting between a firm and a type-$\tilde{1}$ worker. Once again, the Nash bargaining protocol requires $(1-\eta)(\tilde{W_1} - \tilde{U_1}) = \eta \tilde{J_1}$. As in the case of type-1 workers, we can replace the functions $\tilde{W_1}$ and $\tilde{J_1}$ from (14) and (6) into the surplus splitting rule. Following identical steps, and after some algebra, one can easily derive the wage curve for type-$\tilde{1}$ workers, under Intervention 3:

$$\tilde{w_1} = \frac{\eta(p-\tilde{\kappa})(r+\delta+\lambda+f) + (1-\eta)z(r+\delta+\lambda)}{r+\delta+\lambda+\eta f}. \tag{43}$$

Notice that, the two wage curves are identical expect for the fact that they adjust for the worker's productivity, i.e., p versus $p-\tilde{\kappa}$.

Definition 4. A steady state equilibrium, under Intervention 3, consists of two wages for experienced workers $(w_1, \tilde{w_1})$, a measure of vacancies v, and measures of unemployed and employed workers in the various states $(u_0, \tilde{u_0}, u_1, \tilde{u_1}, e_0, \tilde{e_0}, e_1, \tilde{e_1})$, satisfying the free entry condition (41), the two wage curves (42) and (43), and eight Beveridge curves, which are the ones reported at the end of Section 3.1, after one replaces the various f's with the common arrival rate f defined in equation (23).

5 Calibration

We calibrate the benchmark model with ranking at a monthly frequency. Several parameters are set exogenously to their direct empirical counterparts or by following the literature. We normalize the match output p to 1 and set the discount rate r to 0.0042, consistent with an annual interest rate of 5%. We set the elasticity of the aggregate matching function with respect to unemployment α to 0.5, the midpoint of the estimates reported in Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) (following, e.g. Menzio, Telyukova, and Visschers 2016, among many others). Following Shimer (2005), the workers' bargaining weight η is also set equal to the elasticity of the aggregate matching function.

Finally, we set the skill loss shock intensity γ to 1/6, which implies that an unemployed entrant spends on average six months in unemployment before their skills depreciate. We chose the six months interval for two reasons, one conventional and one substantial: first, the definition of "long-term unemployment" according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics is consecutive unemployment of 27 weeks and over. Second, and more substantial, it is well known from the duration dependence literature that the job-finding probability strongly decreases for the first six months in unemployment and flattens out afterwards (see Jarosch and Pilossoph 2019 and Kospentaris 2021 among many others). Hence, based on the job-finding duration profile, it seems that the six months threshold is a discrete event for the transition from short- to long-term unemployment and we treat it as such in our calibration.

Parameter	Description	Value	Source
r	Discount Rate	0.0042	Annual Interest Rate of 5%
p	Match Output	1	Normalization
α	Matching Function Elasticity	0.5	Menzio et al. (2016)
η	Worker Bargaining Power	0.5	Shimer (2005)
γ	Skill Loss Intensity	1/6	Duration Dependence Literature

Table 1: Exogenously Set Parameters.

The remaining six parameters are calibrated through the model and their values are reported in Table 2. The vacancy creation cost c, the worker exit/entry rate δ, and the separation rate λ are chosen to make the model consistent with the following labor market moments, respectively: i) the aggregate unemployment rate ($u_0 + \tilde{u_0} + u_1 + \tilde{u_1}$), ii) the fraction of entrants in the unemployment pool ($(u_0 + \tilde{u_0})/(u_0 + \tilde{u_0} + u_1 + \tilde{u_1})$), and iii) the fraction of long-term unemployed among entrants ($\tilde{u_0}/(u_0 + \tilde{u_0})$). Next, we follow Hall and Milgrom (2008) and set the opportunity cost of employment z to 71% of average worker productivity. Regarding the size of skill loss $\tilde{\kappa}$, we employ the estimates of Ortego-Marti (2016, 2017) which imply a monthly 1.22% drop in worker wages while the worker is unemployed.

Parameter	Description	Value
c	Vacancy Cost	0.4877
δ	Worker Exit Rate	0.0023
λ	Separation Rate	0.0499
z	Unemployment Value	0.6535
$\tilde{\kappa}$	Skill Loss Scar	0.0588
κ	Training Cost	0.1590

Table 2: Internally Calibrated Parameters.

Finally, to discipline the training cost parameter κ we use numbers reported by training professionals for US businesses. The specialist publication *Training Magazine* asks businesses from several industries about their expenses devoted to employee training and reports the results in their Training Industry reports.[14] The annual training expenses per employee were \$ 1,075 in 2017 and reached \$ 1,207 in 2022. To be conservative, we chose κ to match annual training expenses of \$ 1,000 per employee, which is 0.75% of the US GDP. This means that total training expenses are of a similar order of magnitude as total vacancy creation costs which are usually estimated to be 1-2% of GDP (see, e.g., Michaillat and Saez 2021). Using a different calibration strategy, Masui (2023) also estimates training costs to be close to vacancy creation costs, which provides a sanity check for our strategy. As can be seen in Table 3, the model exactly matches the calibration target (the difference between model-implied and data moments is in the order of 10^{-8}).

Target	Data	Model
Unemployment Rate	5.8%	5.8%
Unemployed Entrants/Unemployed	9%	9%
Long-term Unemployed Entrants/ Unemployed Entrants	28%	28%
Value of Non-Employment/Average Productivity	71%	71%
Wage Loss for Six Months Unemployment	7.1%	7.1%
Training Expenses/GDP	0.75%	0.75%

Table 3: Matching the Calibration Targets.

We also report various untargeted moments to support the model's external validity. To begin with, the unemployment rates of the different worker types predicted by the

[14] Available here: `https://trainingmag.com/2022-training-industry-report/`.

model are: $u_0 = 10.7\%$, $\tilde{u}_0 = 10.9\%$, $u_1 = 4.1\%$, and $\tilde{u}_1 = 9.2\%$. Taking the youth unemployment rate as a proxy for the the unemployment rate of inexperienced workers, the model does quite well: the corresponding long run average in the data is 12% (World Development Indicators by the World Bank, 1991-2023).[15] Next, using the outgoing rotation groups in the CPS, we look at the wage differences between the two groups: newly hired experienced workers have on average 12% greater hourly wages compared to the newly hired entrants. Our model can explain why inexperienced workers have lower wages, although it slightly overestimates the differential which is 35%. Specifically, the model does quite well estimating the wage differential between workers of types $\tilde{1}$ and $\tilde{0}$ (21%) but overpredicts the differential between types 1 and 0 (48%); see Table 4. This is intuitive because in the model workers of type 0 are willing to accept very low wages to move out of state 0 as quickly as possible (see Section 6 for additional details). In the real world, however, legal restrictions, such as minimum wage laws, may prevent the wages of entrants to fall below some threshold even if workers were willing to accept such wages.

6 Quantitative Results

In this section, we present the quantitative effects of the government interventions analyzed in Section 4. We focus on the main aggregate variables of interest: i) the aggregate output minus total vacancy costs (Y, which is also our main measure of welfare, since agents are risk neutral), ii) the aggregate unemployment rate (u), iii) the job-finding rate of each worker type ($f_1, \tilde{f}_1, f_0, \tilde{f}_0$), and iv) the wage of each worker type ($w_1, \tilde{w_1}, w_0, \tilde{w_0}$). The quantitative results are presented in Table 5 as percentage differences from the baseline ranking economy and analyzed in the rest of this section.

Before analyzing the results of each government intervention, we summarize the results of the baseline economy in Table 4 (i.e., the model of Section 2 evaluated at the calibrated parameters of Section 5). A few features of the benchmark economy are worth noting. First, the order of the job-finding rates follows the order of the productivity ex-

[15] Unfortunately, the short panel dimension of the CPS does not allow us to compute the appropriate statistics for the unemployment rate of each worker type. Specifically, we cannot distinguish between the unemployed of types 1 and $\tilde{1}$ and it is impossible to compute the masses of employed workers of different types. Regarding the unemployed, we do not have information on the first unemployment spell for experienced workers who are currently unemployed. Hence, we do not know whether an unemployed worker is type 1 or type $\tilde{1}$ in the data. Regarding the employed, the CPS does not keep track of the unemployment history of employed workers who entered the survey as employed. Hence, we cannot distinguish between different groups of employed workers according to their unemployment duration before finding their current job unless we observe them finding a job during their CPS tenure (which constitutes a very small fraction of employed workers).

Y	u	f_1	$\tilde{f}_1$	f_0	$\tilde{f}_0$	w_1	$\tilde{w}_1$	w_0	$\tilde{w}_0$
0.9379	5.8%	1.21	0.51	0.44	0.42	0.9852	0.9152	0.6620	0.7535

Table 4: Baseline Economy: Matching with Ranking.

hibited by the different worker types ($p > p - \tilde{\kappa} > p - \kappa > p - \kappa - \tilde{\kappa}$). There is, however, a discrete jump between the job-finding rate of type-1 workers and the other unemployed, which are relatively close in magnitude. That is, firms strongly prefer to match with experienced workers without a scar than with the other unemployed types. Second, entrant workers of type 0 have particularly low wages compared to the other types. Strikingly, they receive lower wages than their scarred counterparts of type $\tilde{0}$ who also have lower productivity. This is consistent with the intuition we gave in Section 3.3 that entrant workers are eager to leave their current state and, as a result, willing to accept very low wages to incentivize firms to hire them. This force is stronger for type-0 workers because they have more to gain by leaving the entry state as soon as possible to enjoy a career as non-scarred experienced workers, while for type-$\tilde{0}$ workers it is too late.

Variable	Unbiased	Subsidies	Internships	Type-0 Bias	Planner
Y	0.58%	0.52%	0.62%	1.51%	1.52%
u	2.65%	9.96%	-9.53%	7.81%	6.75%
f_1	-31.78%	-36.60%	-22.01%	-37.57%	-36.92%
$\tilde{f}_1$	60.96%	49.59%	83.99%	-23.24%	-22.43%
f_0	88.75%	75.41%	115.77%	374.99%	379.29%
$\tilde{f}_0$	93.27%	79.62%	120.94%	-8.26%	-7.28%
w_1	-0.62%	-2.46%	-0.38%	-1.52%	-
$\tilde{w}_1$	0.94%	4.50%	1.16%	-1.42%	-
w_0	14.43%	45.17%	-2.93%	49.65%	-
$\tilde{w}_0$	1.67%	27.53%	-13.28%	-1.05%	-

Table 5: Quantitative Effects of Interventions and the Constrained Optimum.
Each number is the percentage difference between the value of the variable in the equilibrium with a particular intervention versus the value of the variable in the baseline economy of matching with ranking.

6.1 Unbiased Matching

In this scenario, it is illegal for firms to rank workers of different types. Essentially, there is a common job-finding rate for all workers, given by a standard Cobb-Douglas matching function (equation 23). Intuitively, this intervention forces firms to incur larger training expenses, since they have no way of discriminating against entrants. As a result, entry drops and the aggregate unemployment rate is almost 3% higher than the baseline economy with ranking (second column of Table 5). At the same time, this intervention features a substantially higher welfare level than the ranking economy. The reason is the sizable improvement in the job-finding prospects of entrant workers: f_0 and $\tilde{f}_0$ are 89% and 93% higher than their baseline levels, respectively. This means that entrant workers spend less time in unemployment and thus suffer less from lower skill loss compared to the baseline model. This trumps the productivity losses due to larger training costs and results in a 0.58% increase in aggregate welfare. Finally, the wages of type-0 entrants also improve considerably making them the big winners of this intervention.[16]

6.2 Government Subsidies

As explained in Section 4, this intervention is the market-oriented way of implementing what the ranking ban achieves through legislation: unbiased matching. To incentivize firms to not rank workers in hiring, the government subsidizes training and skill loss costs (see equation 39) and balances its budget with a uniform lump-sum tax τ equal to 1.95% of average match productivity. Given the similarity of outcomes between Interventions 1 and 2, the economics behind the two reforms is also similar: incentivizing firms to hire entrants increases training costs, lowers entry but saves on skill loss and raises aggregate welfare (third column of Table 5). The fact that the government takes away part of the surplus in tax revenue explains the relatively smaller effect on welfare and the job-finding rates of entrants compared to Intervention 1. It is of interest, however, that the wage effects of the two interventions differ: the common wage of Intervention 2 results in larger gains for workers of types $\tilde{1}$, 0, and $\tilde{0}$, as well as larger losses for type 1. In other words, there is a trade-off in terms of job-finding rates and wages which depends on whether unbiased matching is achieved through legislation (with smaller wage but larger job-finding effects) or market-based incentives (with larger wage but smaller job-finding effects).

[16] In terms of levels, wages follow the order of worker productivity ($w_1 > \tilde{w_1} > w_0 > \tilde{w_1}$) but recall that the wage of type-0 workers is by far the lowest in the ranking economy. Hence, in percentage terms, workers of type 0 see the biggest percentage improvement in wages.

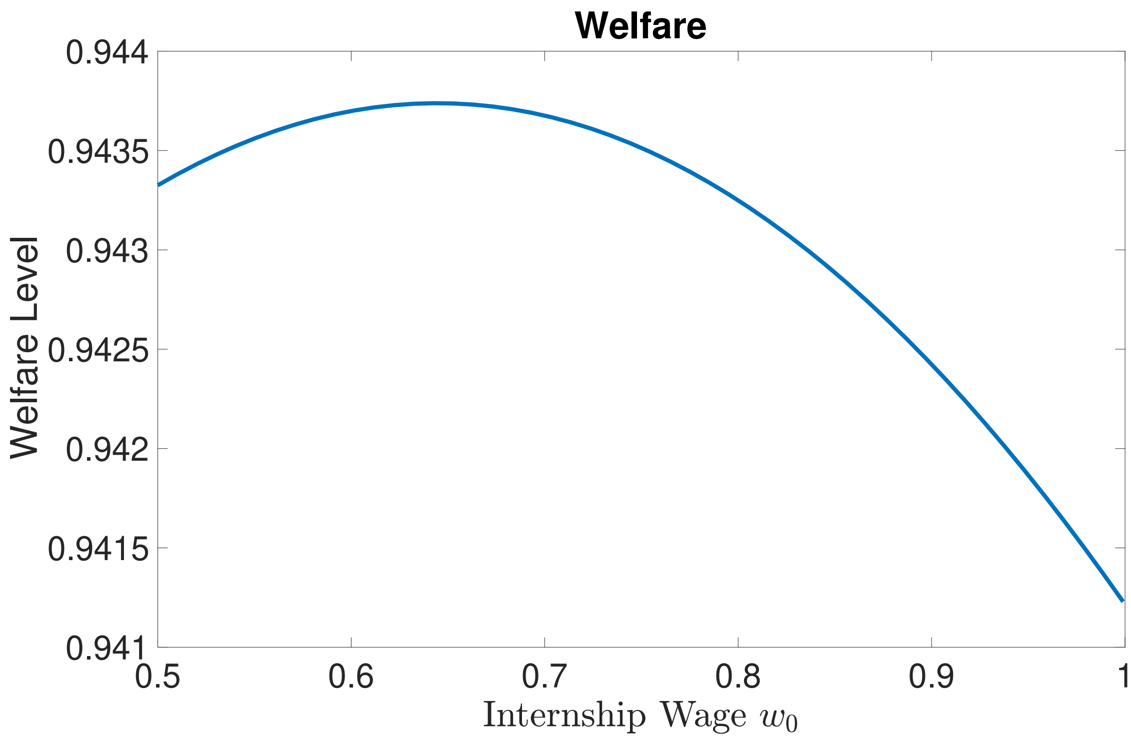

Figure 3. Aggregate Welfare for Various Levels of Entrant Wages.

6.3 Internships

The third intervention we look at is "internships": entrant workers' wages are exogenously fixed and discrimination against entrants is not allowed.[17] To ease the presentation, we fix $\tilde{w}_0 = z$ and show how welfare changes for various values of w_0 (the results in the fourth column of Table 5 are for the value of w_0 that maximizes aggregate welfare). None of the economics of the intervention rests on this assumption though; that is, fixing $\tilde{w}_0$ at some other level or varying both $\tilde{w}_0$ and w_0 would deliver the same insights.

Figure 3 graphs the aggregate welfare for different values of w_0. As the entrants' wage increases, aggregate welfare initially increases but after some critical value decreases, yielding an inverse-U shape. For relatively large values of w_0, the intervention yields familiar insights: entrants are expensive, firms are discouraged to enter to avoid training costs, and wage increases lead to larger skill loss and lower aggregate welfare. For relatively low values of w_0, however, the intervention creates the opposite problem: entrants are too cheap and entry is inefficiently high. As a result, when w_0 increases, ag-

[17] As explained in Section 4.3, there are several reasons behind this choice. Most importantly, it is the most transparent formulation and allows a direct comparison with the first two interventions. It should be noted, however, that our model can easily handle internships with endogenous ranking.

gregate welfare also increases as the economy saves in vacancy creation and training costs (this is the well-known reasoning of Hosios 1990). In total, there is a welfare maximizing level of w_0, which is 3% lower than the corresponding level in the baseline economy.[18]

The most important takeaway is that a carefully designed "internship" achieves the highest welfare level among all three interventions because it delivers the largest increase in the job-finding rate of type-0 workers. At the same time, every worker type gains from internships other than the experienced type-1 workers. All in all, these results offer a rationalization of internships in terms of raising aggregate welfare, which may partially explain the popularity of actual internship positions found in modern labor markets.

6.4 A fourth intervention

The discussion so far conveys that government interventions that eradicate bias against entrant workers can achieve significant welfare improvements through the reduced unemployment duration of these workers, which lowers their exposure to skill depreciation shocks and raises aggregate productivity. In light of this finding, one wonders about the effects of an intervention that "goes all the way" and actually induces firms to be biased *in favor* of entrant workers. A simple way to achieve this is to consider a government that subsidizes type-0 workers generously enough to tilt the firms' ranking in favor of type-0 over type-1 workers. In this environment, matching is still characterized by the Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) specification, but, due to the government's decision to (heavily) subsidize type-0 workers, that worker type is now ranked number one in the firms' preferences. Specifically, we consider a government that provides a subsidy $\sigma_0 = \kappa(1+\rho)$ to every firm that hires a type-0 worker.[19] We treat ρ as a parameter that captures the government's generosity, but, importantly, any $\rho > 0$ implies that firms now rank type-0 workers first. Thus, the firms' ranking of workers is: type $0 \succ$ type $1 \succ$ type $\tilde{1} \succ$ type $\tilde{0}$. The arrival rates, value functions, and various equilibrium conditions under Intervention 4 are described in Section 2 of the Web Appendix for the interested reader. We dub this intervention "type-0 bias" and present its effects in the fifth column of Table 5.[20]

The results of this intervention are striking: it improves aggregate welfare by 1.51%,

[18] In the discussion of Interventions 1 and 2, we highlighted that equilibrium welfare is higher despite the fact that the aggregate unemployment rate is higher than the benchmark economy. This result is not universally true under Intervention 3: unemployment in the model with ranking is higher than in the model with Internships if and only if w_0 is lower than 75% of p.

[19] Since the subsidy pays for itself, we assume that every firm who is actively producing must pay a flat tax, so $\tau = \kappa(1+\rho)e_0/(e_0 + \tilde{e_0} + e_1 + \tilde{e_1})$, which is the direct analogue of equation (40).

[20] For this exercise we have set $\rho = 5\%$ because it is small enough to not distort entry incentives too much but still sizable to incentivize firms to hire type-0 workers.

an improvement almost three times larger than the one achieved with the previous interventions. The reason for this sizable improvement is of course the treatment of type-0 workers, whose job-finding rate increases by an order of magnitude. On the contrary, all other worker types lose from the intervention, since both their job-finding rates and wages substantially decrease, while aggregate unemployment also increases. The success of Intervention 4 lies on the fact that it directly confronts the problem of type-0 workers spending a lot of time in unemployment upon entry. As a result, it has the largest impact on the economy's aggregate productivity among all four interventions.

It is worth mentioning that even though programs of this kind are not popular in the US, they are actually quite common in Europe. The Youth Employment Initiative, for example, is one of the main financial resources of the European Union to support young people who are not in education or employment. The total budget of the Youth Employment Initiative was €8.9 billion for the period 2014-2020 to directly finance young workers' apprenticeships, traineeships, job placements, and further education within 4 months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.[21] Moreover, there are several vocational and training programs directed to inexperienced workers in several European countries: the German *Duale Ausbildung*, for example, combines on-the-job training with classroom education at vocational schools. In similar spirit, it is quite common to combine apprenticeships with vocational education and training programs. As an example, the French government has supported the increase of apprenticeship contracts, from 283,500 in 2015 to 809,000 contracts in 2022.[22] Based on our results, interventions of this kind are expected to have large welfare gains, even though they may raise the unemployment rates of other worker groups.

Having shown that Intervention 4 (type-0 bias) yields sizable welfare gains, it is natural to ask how close it brings the economy to its efficient level. As a benchmark of efficiency, we consider the problem of a social planner who chooses the aggregate measure of vacancies, while being constrained by the matching technology, which in our case is the Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) matching with ranking. Importantly, however, the ranking the planner is subject to ought to be *aligned* with the ranking described under Intervention 4, since this is the spirit of our exercise. The details of the social planner's problem and its solution are presented in Section 3 of the Web Appendix. Here we illustrate the main results.

[21] The details of the program are available here: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=9793&furtherNews=yes.

[22] More details can be found here: https://www.centre-inffo.fr/content/uploads/2023/03/fpc-en-france-2023-a4-en-march-2023.pdf.

The quantitative implications of the planner's allocation are shown in the last column of Table 5. The main takeaway from these results is that the planner implements what Intervention 4 does: raises the job-finding rate of type-0 workers by an order of magnitude to save their skills from depreciation. To make this happen, the planner has to give priority to entrants compared to the other unemployed, something Intervention 4 achieves by subsidizing firms to rank type-0 workers above the other unemployed. As a result, the job-finding rates of the other worker types are substantially lower in the constrained efficient allocation than in the baseline economy. Table 5 demonstrates that Intervention 4 brings the economy particularly close to the constrained efficient outcome. Intuitively, the social planner implements a Hosios-type condition for our environment; however, it becomes apparent that implementing the "correct" ranking is an order of magnitude more important than fine-tuning the level of vacancy creation.

7 Conclusion

We develop a DMP model where entrant workers must be trained by firms, and if they stay unemployed for a prolonged period of time they are subject to a permanent "scar" in their productivity. Depending on their history (how much time they spent in unemployment during their first unemployment spell and whether they previously held a job), unemployed workers attain one of four types that differ in productivity, and homogeneous firms search for these different worker types. We adopt the Petrongolo and Pissarides (2001) "matching with ranking" process, assuming that firms exhibit bias against the workers with the lowest productivity, i.e., entrants. The adoption of this matching specification allows our model to capture the stylized fact that motivates this paper: entrant workers have lower job-finding rates and longer unemployment spells.

In our model, firms that hire entrant workers provide a *public good* by reducing these workers' unemployment spells, thus mitigating their exposure to the skill loss shock and reducing the mass of "scarred" workers in the unemployment pool (and the probability that other firms will match with them in the future). However, firms cannot fully internalize this societal contribution, and ultimately discriminate against entrant workers, causing a social welfare loss. Given this market failure, there is obvious scope for government intervention, aimed to alleviating bias against entrant workers. In a calibrated version of the model, we quantify the effectiveness of three government interventions: "unbiased matching", "government subsidies", and "internships". We find that all three interventions improve aggregate welfare, even though the aggregate unemployment rate is typically higher under the interventions than in the benchmark economy with ranking/bias. The key behind this result is that all government interventions effectively induce firms to incur larger training expenses, thus discouraging entry and increasing unemployment. Despite this unintended consequence on aggregate unemployment, entrant workers have shorter unemployment spells and, as a result, are less likely to suffer skill loss. The productivity gains from the latter channel are so large that aggregate welfare ultimately increases.

Taking this reasoning to its extreme, we consider a fourth intervention in which the government subsidizes the hiring of entrant workers so heavily that firms actually rank these workers higher than the experienced ones. This intervention delivers a substantial improvement in aggregate welfare (roughly three times larger than the other three interventions) because it directly confronts the problem of inexperienced workers spending a lot of time in unemployment upon entry. Hence, our analysis predicts that programs that promote the training and job-placement of young workers, such as the Youth Employment Initiative in the EU, generate sizable welfare gains. Finally, we examine how close this fourth intervention can bring the economy to its efficient level, by comparing the equilibrium welfare with the welfare achieved in an appropriately chosen social planner's problem. We find that the fourth intervention brings the economy arbitrarily close to the constrained efficient outcome.

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