What are the firm-level effects of active labour market policies?
A comparison of hiring subsidies, internships and workfare

Prof. Dr. Pedro S. Martins
University of London

While active labour market policies are generally regarded as potentially useful to reduce individual unemployment spells, little is known about their wider, firm-level effect. Indeed many argue that firms take advantage of ALMPs to churn their workforce, with potentially small aggregate effects on employment and net losses for taxpayers. This paper addresses this question by using triple matched panel data (employer, employee and public employment service) from Portugal, covering the period 2011-2013. We also examine endogeneity issues by exploring variation in the geographical distance between firms and jobcentres and differences in caseworker ratios across jobcentres. Our findings indicate that hiring subsidies in particular but also internships have significantly positive firm-level effects on employment and other variables, while workfare measures tend to be associated with churning.