



Department SEMINARS

The Inefficiency of Courts of Justice: Industry Structure, Capacity, and Misallocation

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THURSDAY, 6 JULY 2023
12:15 PM

Seminar Room Bruguier Pacini, DEM



A B S T R A C T

We introduce an optimization model that quantifies the trade-off between resource capacity utilization and service time for decision making units (DMU) that operate multiple production services. The model takes into account potential additional caseload that may arise when service time is reduced (and the opportunity cost of using the service is reduced) via a predictive supervised learning model.

We show how the model can be used to measure the impact that alternative policy reform scenarios about resource utilization have into the processing times of the various services. The analysis is conducted both at the DMU granular level and at the system level by taking into account potential reallocation of resources from one DMU to another. The model can accommodate the measurement of performance in (public) service industries such as health, education, etc.

We undertake a quantitative analysis of the efficiency of the population of Italian courts of justice over the period 2005-2012 and explain why this dataset is particularly suited to illustrate our model. If all the four policy scenarios we discuss were implemented, the average processing time for civil and criminal cases would be more than halved, from the current 15.5 months to about 7 months (civil cases).

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