

**RESEARCH SEED MEMO**  
**AOM Philadelphia PDW**

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**Seed:** How do AI-assisted human capital evaluations reshape opportunity?

Organizations and markets distribute opportunity through various types of evaluations (e.g., hiring, investment, promotion). How these evaluations are completed is rapidly changing. Resume screeners, interview scorers, performance-rating tools, talent-review dashboards, etc. are working their way into evaluations across professional contexts. Some evaluators are deferring to them entirely (e.g., fully automated hiring) while others are leaning on them at the margin.

There are some reasons to be optimistic. If criteria can be standardized then idiosyncratic human bias can be removed. This leads to opportunity opening up to the people a biased evaluator would have passed over. I think that this account misses two things that matter more for who actually gets ahead. (1) Convergence. When evaluators lean on similar models and similar data, and consider the same archetype of what a strong candidate looks like, evaluations will homogenize. The variation across evaluators will narrow and the non-obvious candidate will be skipped over. Merit will be defined as whatever the tool rewards. (2) Adaptation. Once people know an AI is judging them (in some form), they optimize for the measured signal. This leads to resumes being written for the parser, portfolios built around rewarded markers, and pitches shaped to score well on a given measurement. The victors are the set of people who has the time and savvy to reverse-engineer the system.

These two dynamics also feed into one another. Homogeneous criteria are easier to game, and in turn, widespread gaming creates the data that is used to train the next model. The critical question is not whether a particular tool is biased, but does how AI-assisted evaluation shape who gets opportunity (especially once we account for convergence and adaptation)? When does it widen the set of those who are deemed qualified? When does it narrow the set of those who are deemed qualified?

Consider doing the following before the workshop:

- Read some of the research on AI-assisted and algorithmic evaluation in professional contexts (e.g., hiring, performance rating, funding). How much of it is focused on whether the AI/algorithm is biased? How much of it is focused on the response to such tools?
- Research some of the off-the-shelf tools: What are people using? What are vendors selling to them? How are they being advertised?
- What can we learn from different (and new) evaluation technology that has emerged over time, such as standardized testing, credit scoring, formal screening criteria, public rankings, etc.? What do these tools (and related research) teach us about evaluation processes, gaming, and who wins?