Artificial Intelligence and Unemployment

Michael Christopher – S224830467

In this essay, I will analyse the argument that widespread unemployment will inevitably come from artificial intelligence (AI) and decide whether this is an ethical problem that requires society's response. Although there has long been a concern that automation will replace human labour, the potential of modern AI gives this problem fresh urgency. The main argument I evaluate is that the emergence of AI, especially in routine and semi-cognitive jobs, presents a structural change in labour markets that compromises human dignity and long-term job stability. Mutascu (2021) claims that although AI may lead to new types of employment, the transition costs and inequalities it causes could result in serious ethical and social problems. AI also plays a major role in worker substitution in some economic areas.

I'll start by outlining the main argument, which is that labour in many kinds of industries is being replaced by artificial intelligence (AI), which is an important threat to human employment. Drawing on Sandybayev's (2018) analysis, I will describe how the traditional structure of labour markets is challenged by AI's growing potential to automate both manual and cognitive jobs. After that, I will discuss important arguments against the idea that widespread unemployment is unavoidable, such as the argument that AI can also create new job types and increase the economy (Qin et al., 2024). I will next evaluate if these new chances are enough to counteract the negative effects of displacement, especially regarding inequality and social justice. Lastly, I will discuss the ethical responsibility of institutions and governments to guarantee fair transitions for workers and suggest ethically acceptable solutions that can lessen the disruptive impacts of AI. This structure will make it possible to critically and fairly examine how AI will affect employment.

This study focuses on the main argument that the development of artificial intelligence (AI) would unavoidably result in mass unemployment, which raises serious ethical, social, and philosophical issues. The basic idea starts with the finding that AI systems are progressively handling jobs that were previously only completed by humans, ranging from simple manufacturing operations to sophisticated cognitive processes like medical diagnosis and legal reasoning. This kind of technological replacement has often concerned philosophers and ethicists since it puts at risk not only economic systems but also the dignity and purpose of human labour itself (Santoni de Sio, 2024). It is believed that as AI advances, whole industries may be automated, resulting in structural unemployment, a type of job loss that traditional retraining and reskilling techniques cannot address (Dall'Anese, 2020). Campa (2014) provides a worldwide scenario analysis that supports the concern that innovation might not result in creating additional jobs by showing that the rate of technical

advancement far exceeds the creation of new work opportunities. Gezgin (2023) adds to this concern by exploring how AI can tear apart society and create a divide between those who are knowledgeable about technology and those who are not. By concentrating wealth and decision-making authority in the hands of those in control of AI technologies, de Oliveira Fornasier (2021) argues that AI contradicts fundamental concepts of fair distribution, making the ethical aspect of this argument particularly important. Happiness for people in a society where one's livelihood depends on continuing to be useful to robots is a philosophical dilemma, not just about economics. In the end, this argument is a philosophical and pressing topic that asks us to consider not only the future of labor but also the future of human identity in a society that is becoming increasingly computerized.

The argument centred on AI-induced unemployment has an important flaw in that it relies on a deterministic perspective of technological advancement and its socioeconomic effects. Many people believe that AI will eventually replace human labour, which will result in a large loss of jobs. However, this viewpoint ignores the difficulties of legislative intervention and economic adaptation (Lima et al., 2021). For example, as AI advances, new job opportunities can arise to somewhat balance the losses. Furthermore, Wang and Wong (2025) claim that institutional, political, and legal reactions, as well as technological capabilities, play a role in labour displacement. Therefore, if the argument ignores these intervening elements, it can be invalidated.

In conclusion, this essay has looked at the ethical and philosophical consequences of AI, paying particular attention to how it can lead to technological unemployment. I started by outlining the main arguments that AI will result in widespread job displacement, emphasising the importance and urgency of this concern. But by critically analysing the basic assumptions of these arguments, I showed that, regardless of their validity, these concerns are based on a deterministic framework that oversimplifies the socioeconomic interaction between labour and technology. I have argued that the conclusion that AI will inevitably lead to widespread unemployment is neither inevitable nor philosophically sound by considering potential counterarguments, such as the flexibility of labor markets, the emergence of new job sectors, and the significant influence of policy and education. This analysis shows that a broader point of view is required, one that avoids both techno-optimism and techno-pessimism. Rather, a well-rounded philosophical viewpoint needs to be mindful of the moral obligation to direct AI development in a fair and inclusive manner. Asking whether AI will replace workers is only one aspect of the philosophical problem; another is determining what kind of future we should create with these technologies. Given this, the discussion about AI and unemployment shifts from forecasting to normative guidance—how we, as moral beings and members of society, should react to the opportunities and problems AI poses.

References:

Campa, R. (2014). Technological growth and unemployment: A global scenario analysis. *Journal of Ethics and Emerging Technologies*, *24*(1), 86-103.

Dall'Anese, D. (2020). The impact of Artificial Intelligence on unemployment: a systematic literature review.

de Oliveira Fornasier, M. (2021). Artificial intelligence and labor: ethical, legal and socioeconomic issues. *Revista da Faculdade Mineira de Direito*, *24*(47), 396-421.

Gezgin, U. B. (2023). Sociology of artificial intelligence: how AI will transform work, unemployment and our future. In *Current Approaches in Social Sciences* (pp. 45-60). Özgür Yayın Dağıtım Ltd. Şti..

Mutascu, M. (2021). Artificial intelligence and unemployment: New insights. *Economic Analysis and Policy*, *69*, 653-667.

Lima, Y., Barbosa, C. E., dos Santos, H. S., & de Souza, J. M. (2021). Understanding technological unemployment: a review of causes, consequences, and solutions. *Societies*, *11*(2), 50.

Qin, M., Wan, Y., Dou, J., & Su, C. W. (2024). Artificial intelligence: intensifying or mitigating unemployment?. *Technology in Society*, *79*, 102755.

Sandybayev, A. (2018, November). Artificial intelligence: are we all going to be unemployed?. In *2018 Fifth HCT Information Technology Trends (ITT)* (pp. 23-27). IEEE.

Santoni de Sio, F. (2024). Artificial intelligence and the future of work: Mapping the ethical issues. *The Journal of Ethics*, *28*(3), 407-427.

Wang, P., & Wong, T. N. (2025). *Artificial Intelligence and Technological Unemployment* (No. w33867). National Bureau of Economic Research.