

What should be done to distribute the wealth created by AI Innovation fairly?

Artificial Intelligence will likely bring about massive increases in productivity while also cutting labor costs and increasing the efficient use of resources. Many people optimistically believe that this boon to production will usher in a golden age wherein human beings of all social strata will be guaranteed a dignified life and have immense amounts of free time to pursue interests for the love thereof rather than because they serve an economic interest. However given the historical precedents, the globally hegemonic liberal ideology, and the dominant politics of austerity I believe there are serious reasons to have doubts about this optimistic and perhaps even naive outlook.

Throughout human history advances in technology have resulted in advances in productivity. Perhaps most notably we can look to the industrial revolution which began in Europe around 1760 and lasted about 100 years. While it is well known that living standards improved broadly as a result of the industrial revolution it's also widely acknowledged that inequality also increased [1]. Further, perhaps more glaringly, Juliet Schor's research has shown that Americans nowadays actually work more hours and more days than did medieval European peasants prior to the industrial revolution despite modern productivity being far higher than that of medieval Europe [2]. These examples highlight how increases in productivity do not necessarily translate into equitable improvements for all - how a rising tide may lift all boats, but some boats apparently are lifted far more than others.

Modern politics and economics take inequality for granted, an assumed default which is not viewed as a problem to be fixed but one to merely be managed [3]. Individualist aspirations towards opulent wealth are inculcated into us through our culture at every turn, from rap music videos to MTV Cribs to celebrity billionaire worship [4]. Meanwhile even the supposedly progressive Democratic party's then nominee Joe Biden told a room full of rich donors that if he were to be elected "nothing would fundamentally change" back in 2019 while on the campaign trail [5]. Capitalism, as a mode of production, relies principally on market forces to indicate where there are unmet or overmet demands, however the invisible hand of the market is notoriously slow in these indications, resulting in what economists call the business cycle [6]. These cycles are symptomatic of capitalism's recurrent overproduction crisis - where humanity used to suffer from scarcity we now suffer from plenty - our civilization's productive capacity can produce so much that these commodities cannot be sold at a profit, resulting in the market signals in the form of slowed sales, economic downturn, unemployment, etc [7]. All of this is to say that our culture, the prevailing political atmosphere, and the general organization of our economy are not at all presently equipped to readily integrate A.I. in such a way as to equitably distribute the productive surplus that A.I. will produce, let alone coordinate A.I.'s productivity in a rational, humanistic, and ecologically sustainable way.

At present commodities' use-values, that is the particular characteristics of a commodity that enable them to satisfy human need, are subordinate to commodities' exchange-value, that is the price the commodity can realize in the market. This is to say that human need is satisfied only insofar as it is profitable. At present there is not even a nominal pretense of rational, long-term planning in the economy, instead market forces interpreted to prioritize profitable quarterly earnings reports are the driving force behind our society's economic decisions. So what is to be done? In order to ensure that A.I.'s productive capabilities are harnessed not just for the few, but for the many; in order to ensure that A.I. is employed rationally, in a coordinated way to meet human need rather than create corporate profits, we need a revolutionary shift in our cultural, political, and economic priorities and structures - in short we need socialism.

Sources:

- [1] [Economic inequality and growth before the industrial revolution: the case of the Low Countries \(fourteenth to nineteenth centuries\)](#)
- [2] [Medieval Peasants Worked Less And Vacationed More Than Modern Americans Do](#)
- [3] [Is Economic Inequality Really a Problem?](#)
- [4] [Science Reveals The Face Of God And It Looks Like Elon Musk](#)
- [5] [Joe Biden to rich donors: "Nothing would fundamentally change" if he's elected](#)
- [6] [What is a Business Cycle?](#)
- [7] [Capitalism's Overproduction Problem: A Primer](#)