

Post-Labor Economics

The Great Decoupling

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Presented by Jose Miranda

- **Trend:** GDP goes up, wages go down.
- **Premise:** jobs will mostly get automated away eventually.

How to survive (and thrive) when this happens?

How can society remain balanced when power related to labor is lost?



Technofeudalism

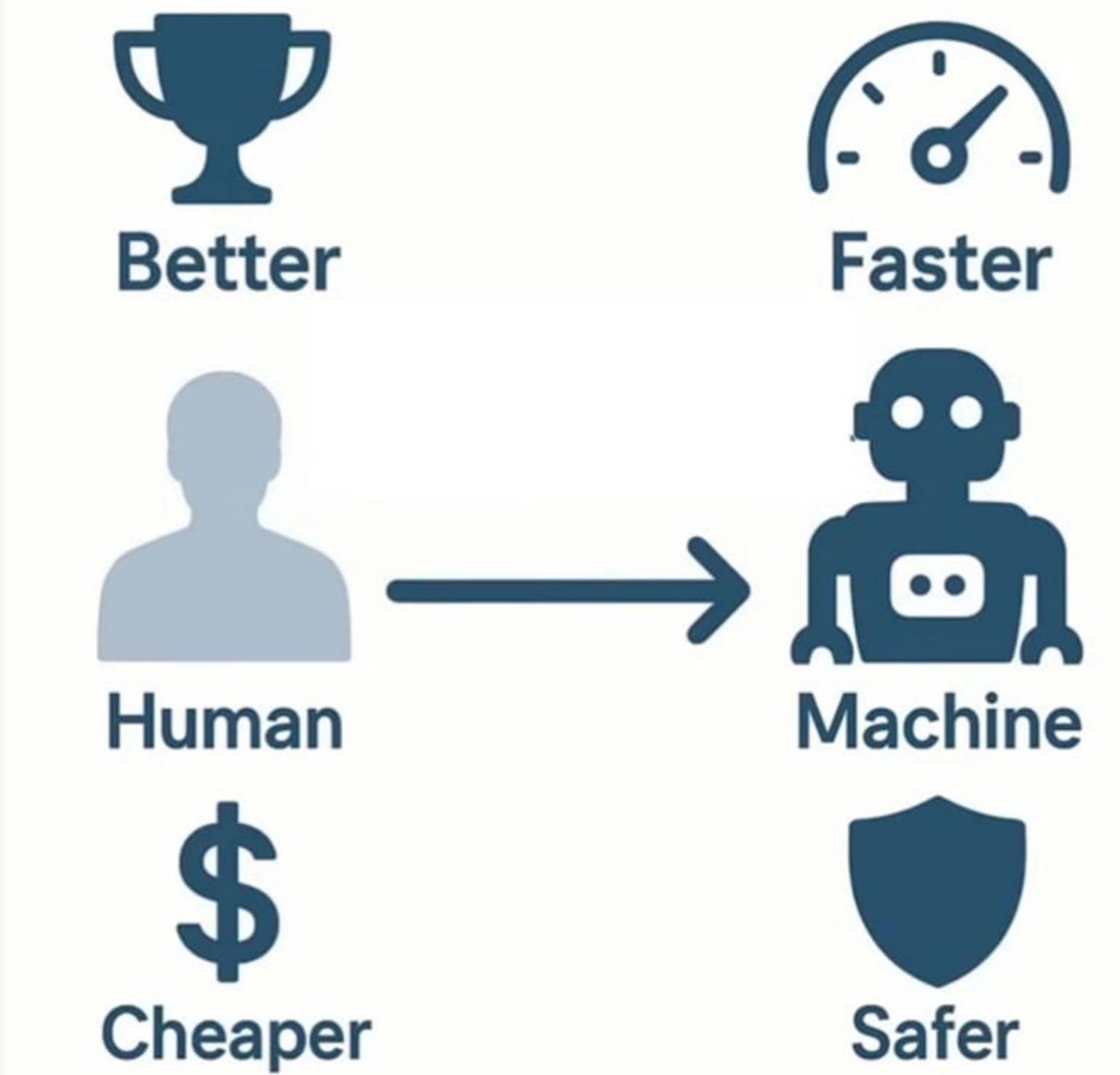


Solarpunk

Post-Labor Economics - The Great Decoupling

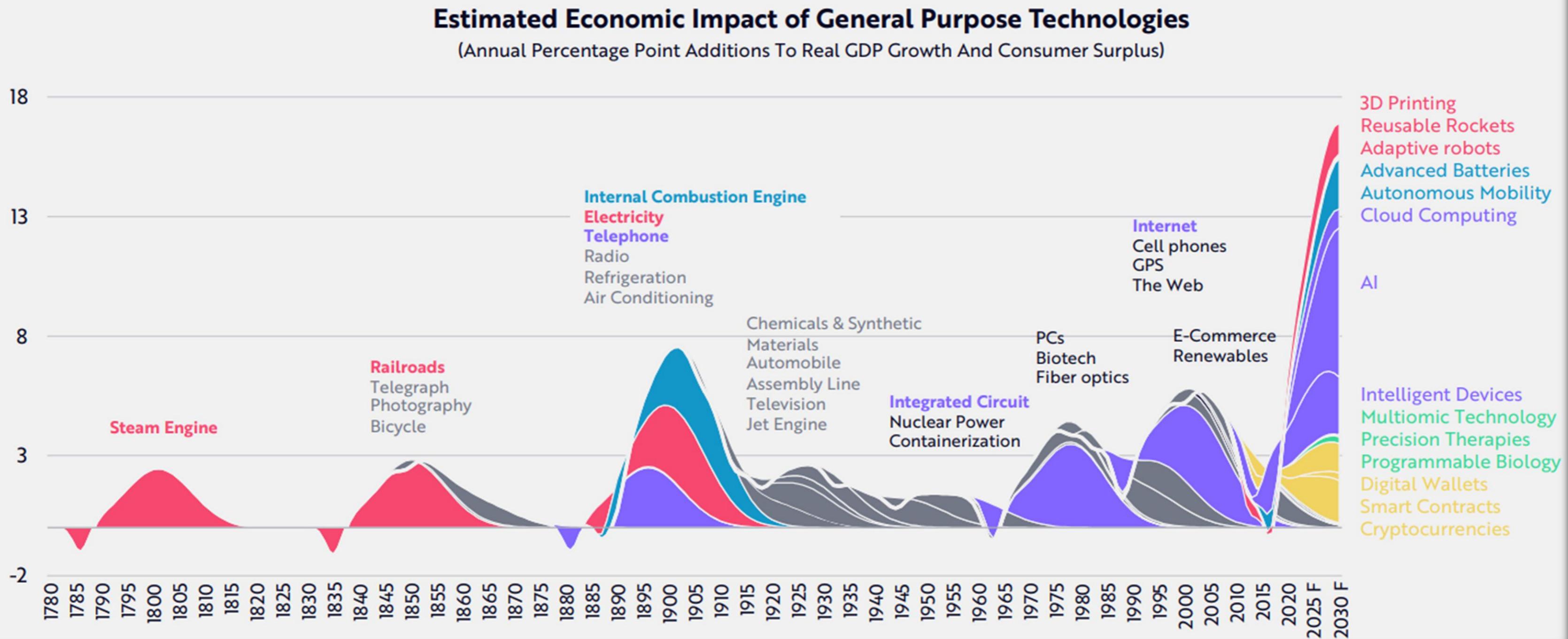
- An emerging framework that argues that advanced automation (AI, robotics and other technologies) will decouple economic output from human labour. The exchange of wages for labor will no longer drive the economy. Instead, ownership of productive assets, capital and data will generate wealth, while more and more human skills (strength, dexterity, cognition and even empathy) are replicated by machines.
- This framework is both a descriptive attempt to understand why labor participation has been falling for decades and a prescriptive attempt to redesign economic systems so that prosperity, meaning and social stability can be maintained when work is no longer the main source of income. Unlike earlier automation waves, PLE argues that cognition itself is being automated, making the coming transition fundamentally different and requiring new property arrangements, metrics and policies, as the outcomes of this transition are path-dependent.

Automation can be defined as “labor saving technology”, anything that acts as a force multiplier and allows one person to do the job of many.

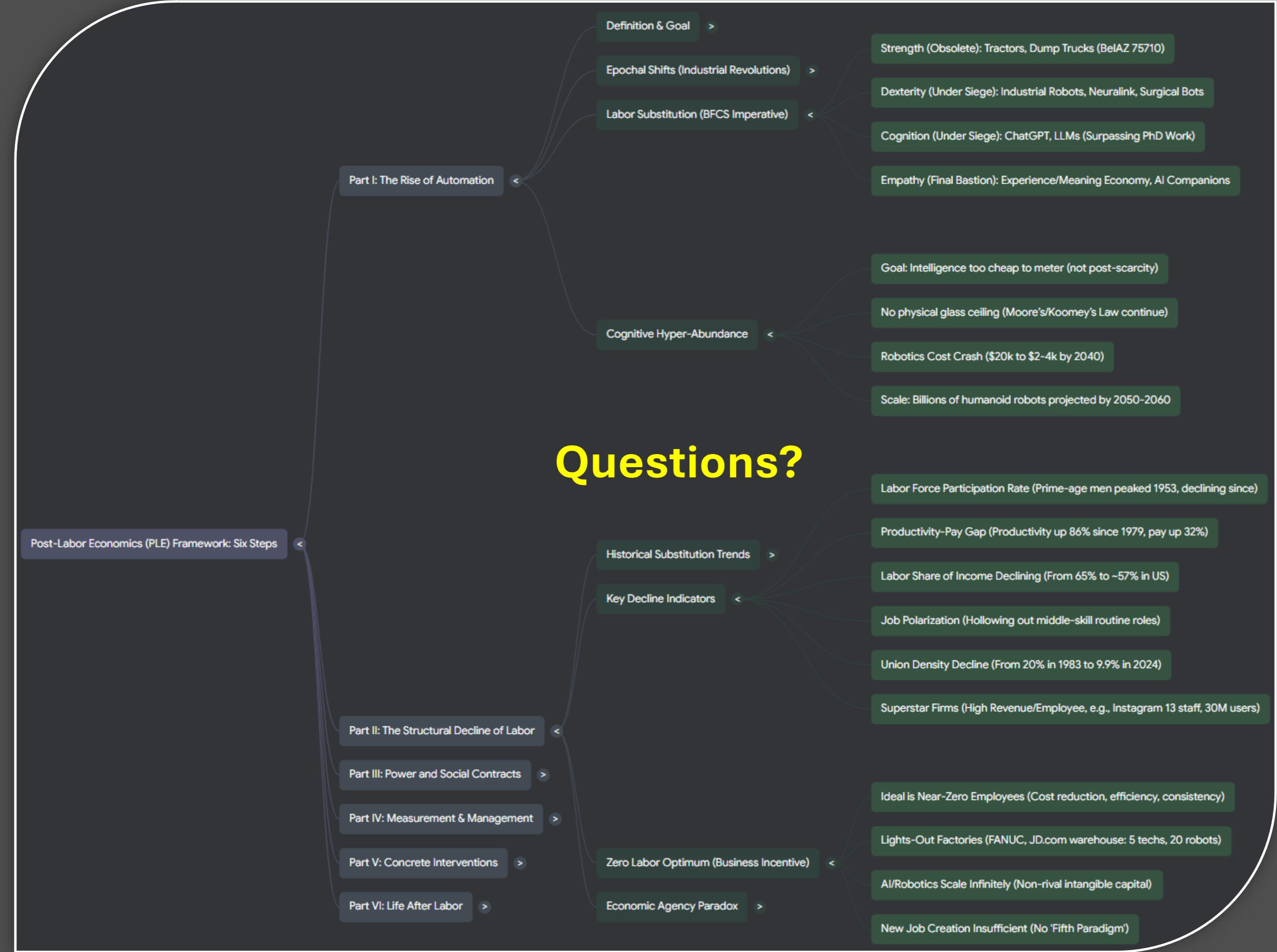


| Epoch/Era | Innovation | Labor Substituted/Displaced | Impact |
|---|---|---|---|
| Information Revolution | Printing Press (c. 1440) | Scribes and Copyists (Cognition/Dexterity). | Produced 20 million volumes by 1500, 200 times faster, cheaper, and with superior quality. Led to resistance, such as the Ottoman Empire banning it for two centuries to protect scribes. Sparked the Renaissance, fueled the Reformation, and laid the groundwork for modern education and science. |
| First Industrial Revolution (18th–19th Century) | Steam Engine | Manual labor, replacing dependence on water sources and human/animal muscle. | Mechanized textile looms, pumps, and transport. |
| | Mechanical Reaper (1830s) | Scythe-wielding farmers/Seasonal laborers (Strength/Dexterity). | A horse-drawn machine that could harvest wheat faster than a team of farmers, slashing costs and boosting production. |
| | Industrial Sewing Machine (1850s) | Hand-stitching tailors and seamstresses (Dexterity). | Enabled continuous, rapid production, completing in under a minute what took thirty minutes by hand, transforming tailoring into a factory process and provoking riots in France in 1830. |
| Second Industrial Revolution (Late 19th–Early 20th Century) | Internal Combustion Tractor | Farmhands, plowmen, and animal power (Strength). | Accelerated agricultural automation, slashing the U.S. farm workforce from 41% in 1900 to about 2% by 2000 . |
| | Automatic Telephone Exchange (1888) | Switchboard Operators (Dexterity/Cognition). | Used electrical signals to connect calls without manual intervention, largely making operators (often women) redundant by the mid-20th century. |
| | Typewriter (1870s) | Professional copyists and clerks with flawless handwriting (Dexterity/Cognition). | Accelerated writing, enhanced legibility, and paved the way for further office automation. |
| Computerization/Information Age (Mid-20th Century – today) | Industrial Robots (Unimate, 1961) | Workers lifting hot metal on assembly lines (Strength/Dexterity). | Marked the dawn of robotic manufacturing, performing dangerous, repetitive work tirelessly. |
| | Personal Computers Digital spreadsheets | Bookkeepers, file clerks, and typing pools (Cognition/Dexterity). | Automated record-keeping, vanishing roles like typists and travel agents. |

Converging Technologies Are Generating A Historic Technological Wave



| Area of Automation | GPT | Capability Targeted | Impact |
|--------------------|---|--|--|
| Cognitive Labor | Generative AI (e.g., GPT-5) | Cognition (problem-solving, creativity, planning). | Surpassed humans on dozens of benchmarks, democratizing genius-level problem-solving, and is now too cheap to meter. |
| | AI in Professions | Cognition (analysis, drafting, diagnostics). | AI reviews legal documents, analyzes medical images (spotting cancers as well as radiologists), trades stocks, drafts reports, and writes code. |
| | Robotic Process Automation (RPA) | Cognition/Dexterity (data entry, clerical work). | Handles back-office drudgery like data entry and invoice processing in finance and healthcare, leading to steep cuts in clerical staff, a workforce share that dropped from 12.8% in 1980 to 6.8% by 2022. |
| Physical/Dexterity | Amazon/JD.com Warehouses | Dexterity (picking, packing, sorting). | Amazon deployed over 1 million robots by July 2025. JD.com operates automated warehouses with five technicians overseeing twenty robots, replacing roughly 500 traditional roles. |
| | Lights-Out Factories (FANUC) | Strength/Dexterity. | Robots build other robots with zero human oversight for up to 30 days, decoupling production from people. |
| | Precision Robotics | Dexterity (fine motor skills, surgery). | Neuralink's neurosurgical bot inserts ultra-fine electrodes into brains with micron accuracy, a feat beyond human surgeons. |
| Empathy/Service | AI Companions/Chatbots | Empathy (relationships, emotional support). | AI companions like Replika provide therapeutic chats to millions, available 24/7, reducing loneliness in seniors by 40% in trials (ElliQ). Chatbots handle 70% of customer service inquiries. |
| | Retail/Food Service | Dexterity/Cognition (cashiering, cooking). | Self-checkout kiosks and robotic kitchens reduce the need for cashiers and counter staff. |



Economic Agency Paradox

Automation promises freedom but undermines consumer purchasing power, **risking collapse as jobs vanish but spending remains vital.**

Aggregate Demand: Economies depend on broad consumer power to sustain growth.

Labor Substitution: Competition drives firms to automate, displacing workers.

Economic Death Spiral: Falling wages cut spending, causing failures and stagnation.

Distribution Problem: The challenge is allocating purchasing power without wages.

In decentralized markets, labor-based wealth distribution breaks down when demand for labor disappears.



Economic agency is the ability to shape financial destiny through rights and institutions.

Labor Rights: Work, organize, and negotiate for wages and stability.

Property Rights: Asset ownership builds wealth and security.

Voting Rights: Democracy lets citizens shape policy and opportunity.

Social Contract: Society protects these rights via rules and institutions.

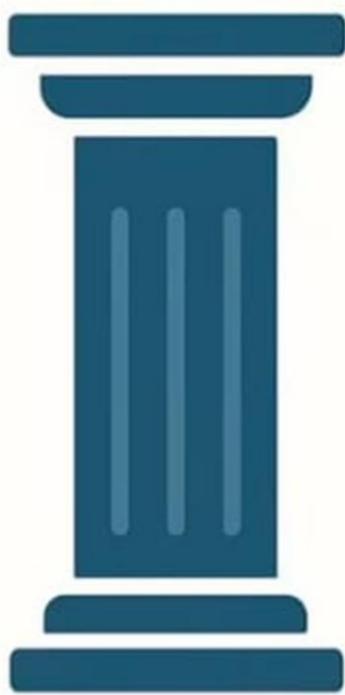
Automation Threat: When machines outcompete humans, the right to work loses value as labor demand vanishes.

Levers of Power

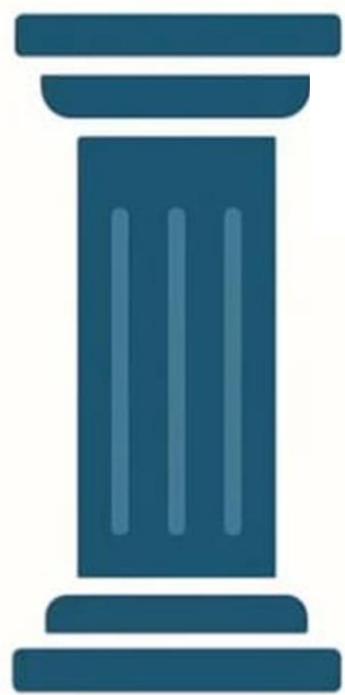
Pillars of economic agency



**Labor
Rights**



**Property
Rights**



**Democratic
Rights**

Post-Labor Economics is a system where wages are no longer the main driver of the economy. **Understanding the incentives of key stakeholders reveals how this transition will play out.**

Consumers: Need agency through wages, assets, and democracy to meaningfully engage in society and markets.

Businesses: Want minimal employees but still need paying customers.

Government: Must preserve taxes, stability, and global standing, preferably with limited intervention.

Banks: Function as economic infrastructure connecting all stakeholders. Depend on depositors and transactions to function.

Labor Substitution: When automation becomes better, faster, cheaper, and safer than humans, widespread replacement will collapse the wage-labor social contract.



Consumer power comes from three main sources that must be rebalanced in an automated economy.

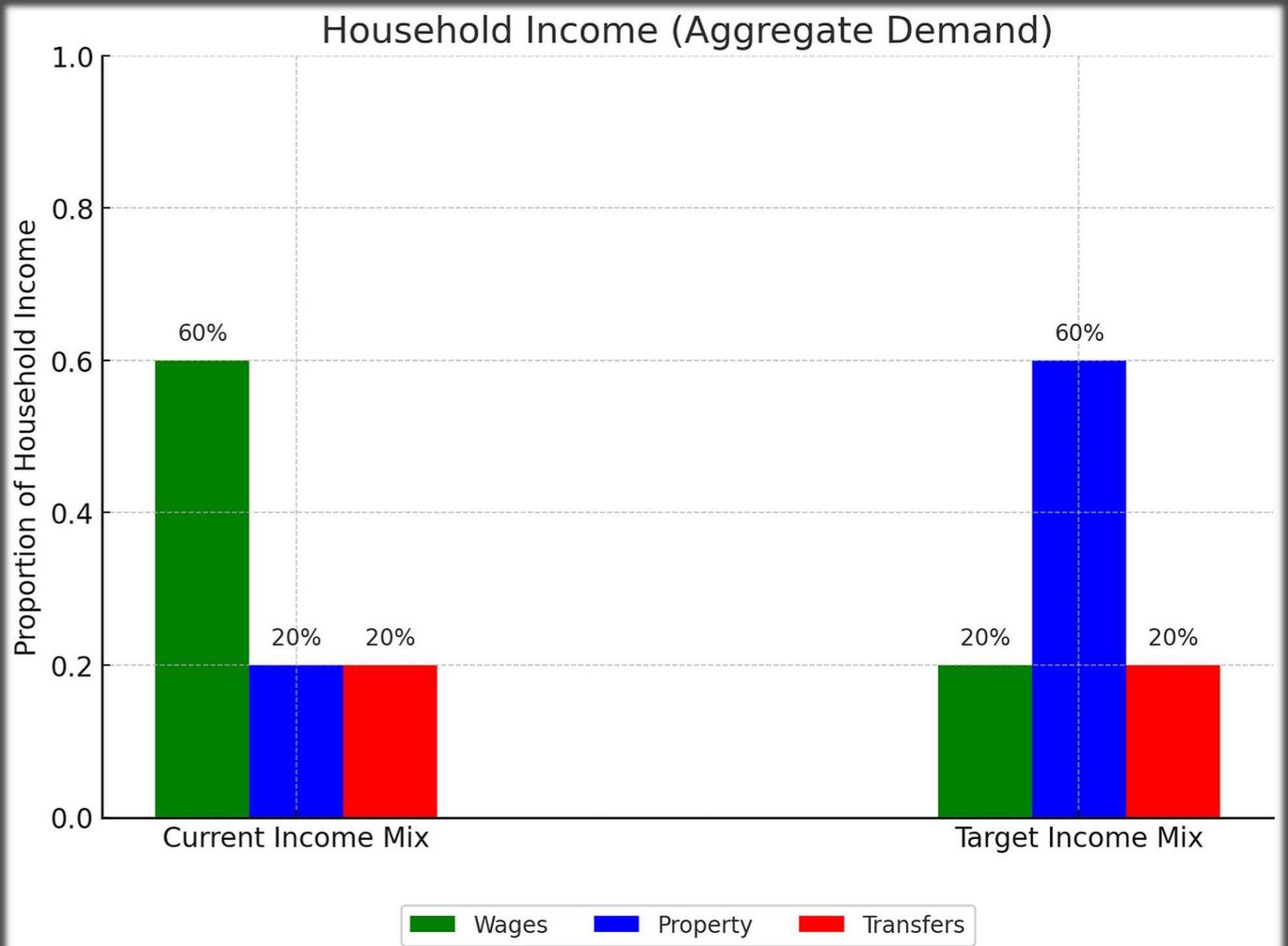
Wages: About 60% of total consumer demand, but shrinking with displacement.

Property: Asset ownership generates roughly 20% via dividends, rents, and gains.

Transfers: About 19% from government programs (retirement, unemployment, SNAP, tax credits, and more).

Ratio Shift: Automation slashes wages, destabilizing demand.

Adjustment: Stability requires boosting property income and transfers as compensatory sources of consumer demand.



Universal Basic Income represents an essential but incomplete solution to automation displacement, providing a minimum economic floor while requiring substantial tax increases to fund implementation.

Central Control: Government administration creates problematic **financial dependency** and **excessive state influence** over citizen economic freedom.

Market Distortions: Pure UBI implementation undermines critical price signals by treating recipients identically regardless of circumstances or location.

Inflation Risk: Increased currency velocity without corresponding production growth threatens purchasing power erosion through inflationary pressure.

Tax Flight: Excessive taxation required for funding risks triggering capital exodus and talent migration to more favorable jurisdictions.

Multi-level Approach: Distributing UBI responsibility across municipal, state, and federal authorities could mitigate systemic risks and implementation challenges.

BASIC INCOME IS MONEY THAT IS:

UNCONDITIONAL

No work requirements.
Money is provided independent of employment status.

UNIVERSAL

Everyone gets it.
Money is provided independent of income status.

INDIVIDUAL

Money is provided to each individual within a household, not the head of the household.

PERIODIC

Money is provided on a regular dependable basis, be it hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.

Cash programs risk distortion and capture, while broad private ownership keeps incentives clear and local.

Central Authority: Large federal trusts can become political and rent-seeking targets.

Market Distortions: Blanket UBI masks local mismatches in production and consumption.

Information Loss: Central payouts erase price signals and blind local economies.

Economic Subsidiarity: Local entities create stronger property-income streams when empowered.

Fiscal Drag: Expanding transfers demand higher taxes or debt, draining investment capital.

Share of counties whose residents receive at least 25% of income from government aid

Annually; 1970–2022



Data: Economic Innovation Group. Chart: Axios Visuals

Since Property will be the most important source of income, alternative ownership structures must expand dramatically to maintain economic agency when wages collapse. Numerous proven models exist to distribute asset ownership broadly across the population.

Trusts: Public and private trust structures enable collective ownership of capital assets, sharing returns across broad beneficiary populations.

Wealth Funds: Sovereign and community wealth funds create public endowments generating returns for citizens without relying on wage income.

Stock Options: ESOP and customer equity programs systematically transfer ownership shares to stakeholders over time.

Cashback Programs: Loyalty systems, cooperatives, and local incentives create alternative ownership mechanisms that return value to participants and customers.

Cooperatives: Royalties from carbon sequestration, spectrum, solar, data center, and other infrastructure cooperatives.



Market-based models offer superior alternatives to central planning by preserving agency and broadening ownership.

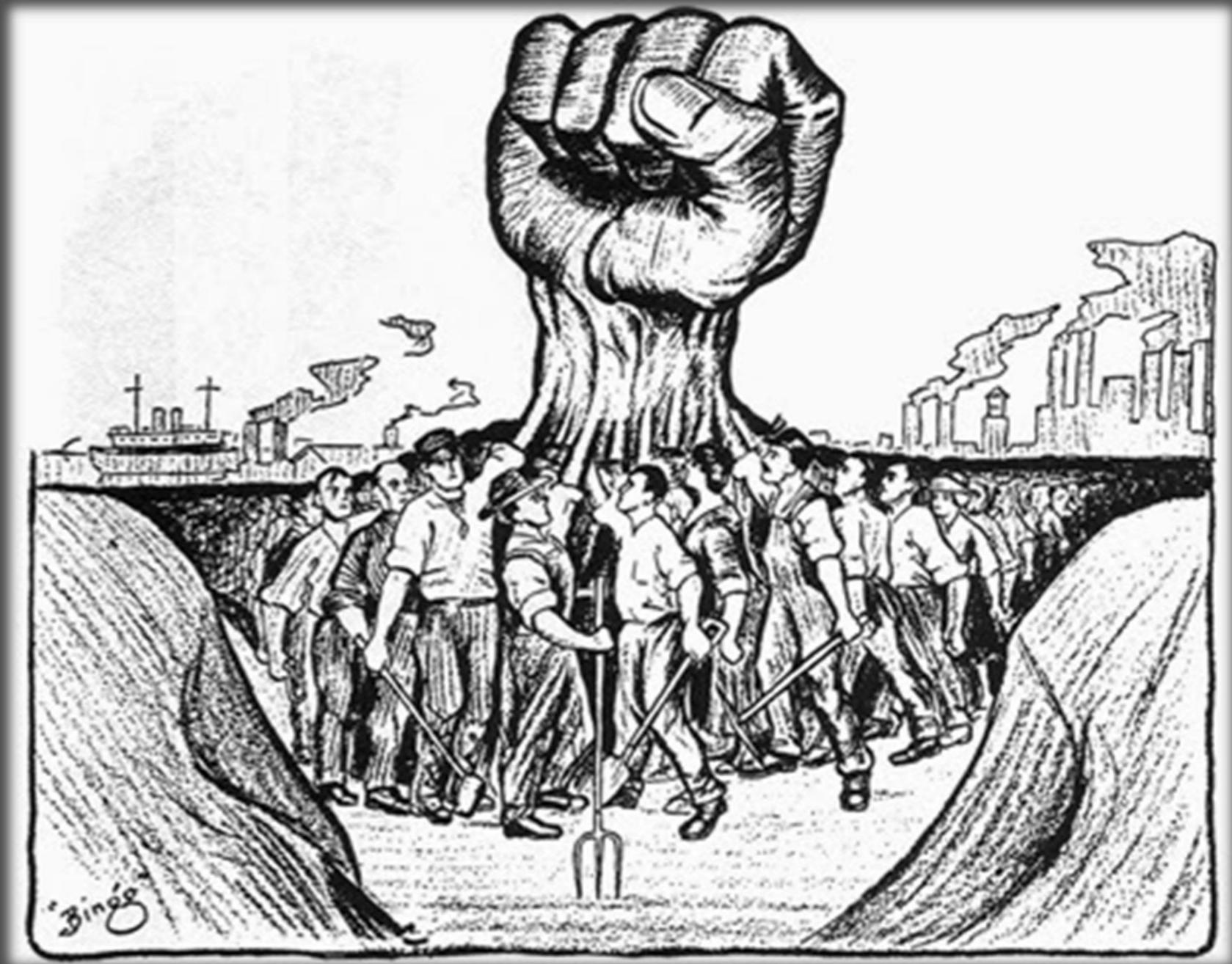
Property Primacy: Strong private property rights (land, businesses, stocks, etc) form the foundation of all economically successful nations and must be expanded to include more citizens.

Market Solutions: Competition allocates resources more efficiently than government.

Coordination: New frameworks must replace the wage-labor contract as automation eliminates traditional employment relationships.

Participatory Ownership: Collective power lets individuals aggregate resources and acquire meaningful ownership stakes.

Voluntary Adoption: Solutions must attract all parties —banks, businesses, governments, and consumers—through mutual benefit rather than mandate.



Counties are the ideal scale for post-labor initiatives.

Ideal Scale: Small enough to implement changes and **experiment** freely, yet large enough to generate economic data and serve as **scalable models**.

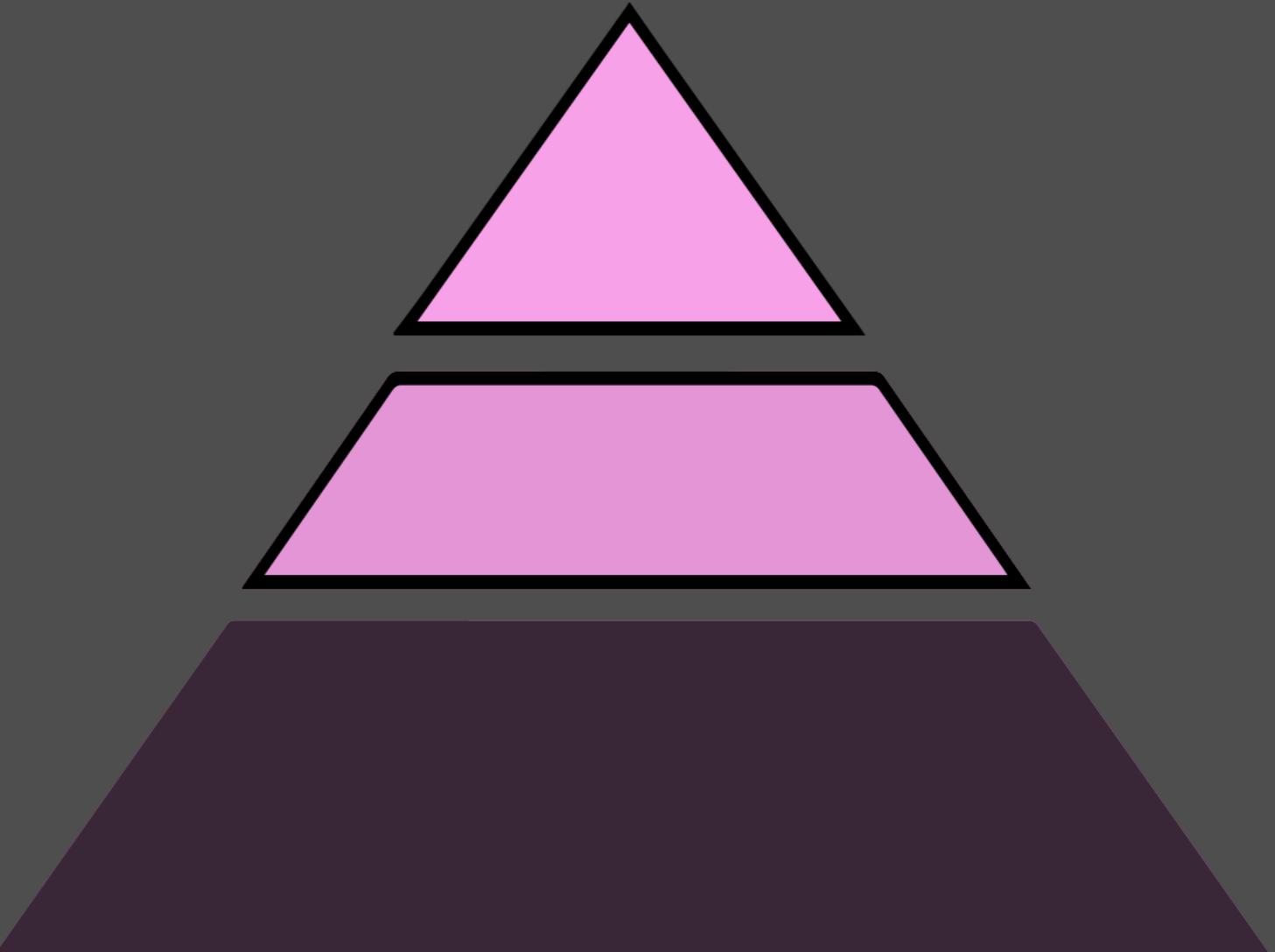
Asset Control: Counties directly own revenue-generating assets including land, utility franchises, infrastructure easements, and zoning authority that can feed Community Endowment Funds.

Existing Infrastructure: Implementation leverages established county systems for property records, tax assessment, residency verification, and dividend disbursement without building from scratch.

Subsidiarity Local authorities, businesses, and banks design property-income streams suited to their assets.

Testing Ground: The political diversity across counties enables cross-partisan validation of post-labor models while revealing region-specific opportunities like solar co-ops or timber royalties.

Community Legitimacy: Local governance builds trust when residents receive economic benefits. Distributing ownership **at the county level prevents techno-feudal concentration** by rooting power in democratic communities.



Every economic breakthrough began with a new metric. **Post-labor gauges must track demand resilience, not just output. AI and robotics now erode wage share, making legacy gauges dangerously incomplete. The best KPIs both diagnose current health and prescribe corrective action.**

Economic Agency Index (EAI): Scores household power from ownership, wages, and transfers (0–100). It reveals which regions can sustain demand as labor income wanes.

$$\text{EAI} = \text{Property} + \beta \cdot \text{Wages} - \text{Transfers}$$

The Economic Agency Index complements GDP, inflation, confidence, and labor metrics by showing ownership-based demand.

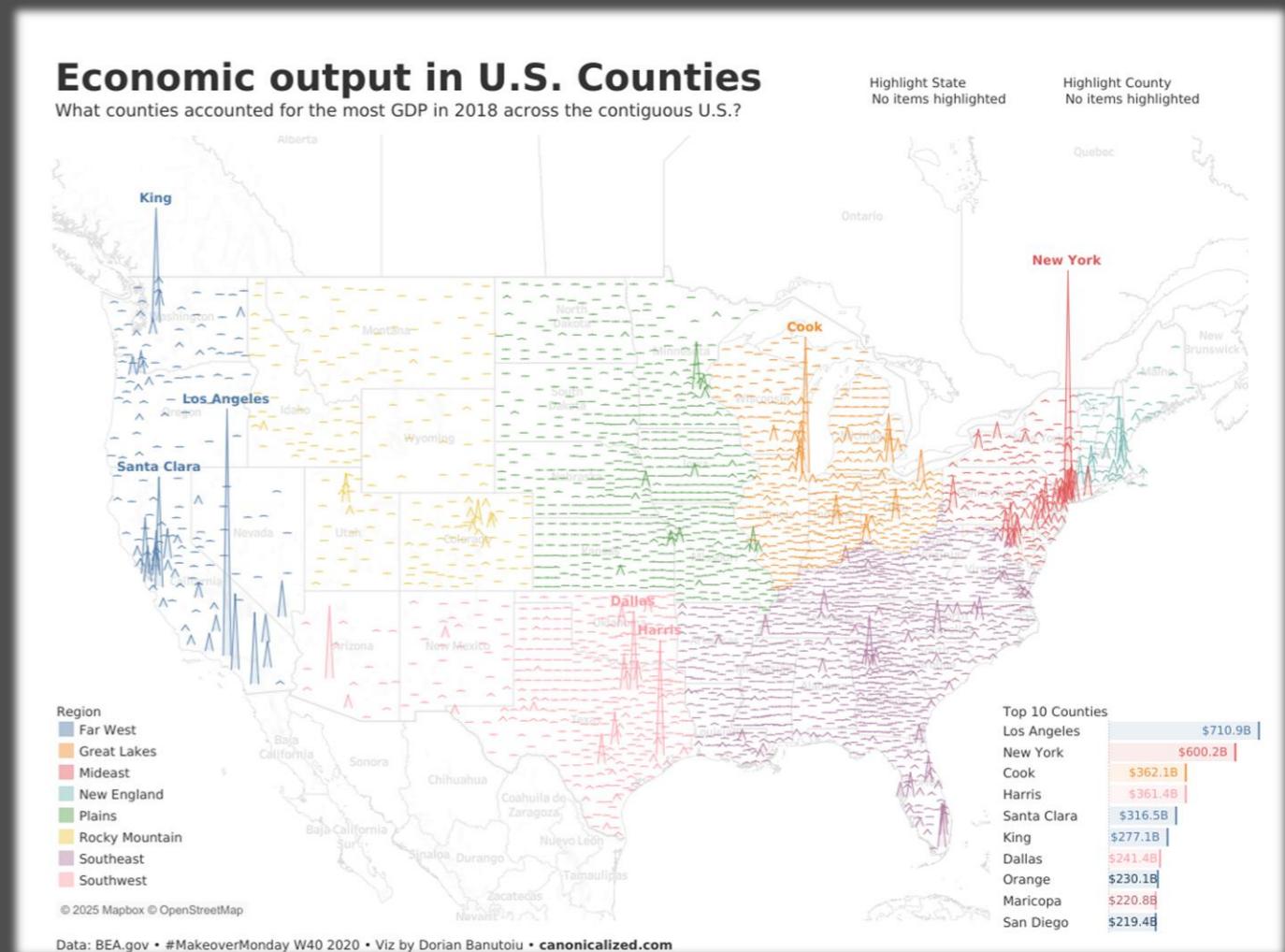
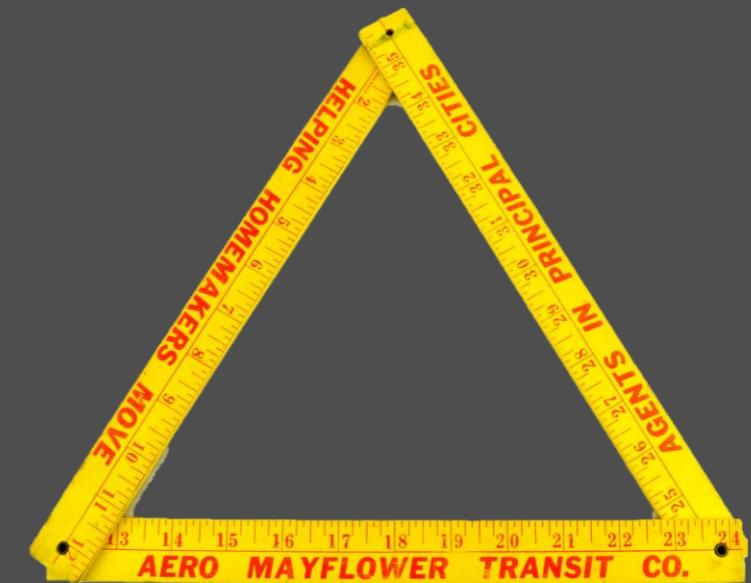
GDP: Measures output but hides income sources.

Inflation: Tracks prices but not household buying power.

Consumer Confidence: Gauges sentiment, not real incomes.

Unemployment: Flags labor slack but misses non-wage income.

EAI: County-level view of ownership demand, guiding targeted pilots like ESOPs or land dividends.



Banks can channel ownership income directly into loans and savings, making dividends everyday cash flow. **This integration leverages existing compliance muscle, sparks product innovation, and keeps government in a light-touch referee role.**

Dividend Seeking: Retail apps and loan dashboards steer customers to assets that generate predictable payouts, automatically sweeping those dividends against mortgage or credit balances.

Regulatory Flattening: Banks handle “Know Your Customer”, custody, and taxes, cutting red tape from customer participation in the economy.

Innovation Facilitation: New instruments like dividend streams and tokenized funds broaden access.

Competition Incentives: Lenders compete on transparency and yields, lowering costs.

Minimal Government: Oversight only; households keep returns minus market costs.



Broader ownership aligns the interests of finance, firms, and governments around resilient demand, with the EAI making benefits visible.

Banks: Dividends and rents stabilize credit and support new loans.

Counties: Converting assets to dividends grows tax bases and attracts talent.

Companies: ESOPs and patron equity boost loyalty and raise EAI scores.

Aggregate Demand: Ownership income sustains spending for all stakeholders.

Win-Win-Win: Even absent automation pressure, wider private property stakes smooth shocks and let national prosperity scale with GDP.

It also prevents techno-feudalism by preserving consumer power and community stakes.

Elite Capture: Asset monopolies bankrupt their own customers and erode their own revenue streams.

Consumer Demand: Broad purchasing power sustains profits, incentivizing shared ownership.

Techno-Feudalism: “Own nothing” models centralize control; EAI pushes equity.

Exotic Tech: Crypto can assist, but policy and democratic will matter most.

Obvious Tension: With labor bargaining power fading, society must choose between endless transfers or genuine private-property inclusion.

Early capital injections create the cash-flow groundwork on which lasting dividend streams can grow. By blending public bonding, private philanthropy, and smart incentives, counties jump-start wealth funds that quickly snowball into self-sustaining payouts.

Seed Capital: Green bonds, philanthropy, and grants fund initial assets.

UBI Floor: Modest income ensures demand, letting dividends amplify cash flow.

Wealth Funds: County, state, and federal endowments pay regular dividends that both stabilize demand and bankroll further asset acquisition.

Tax Incentives: Qualified Ownership Donation (QOD) credits spur companies to gift dividend-paying shares into community funds.

CCUs: County Capital Units let wealthy residents seed funds with tradable stakes.



Transparent data rails enable dashboards and dividend flows, with open APIs as the foundation. **By standardizing open APIs first, we let future AI and smart-contract layers plug in without rewiring the whole financial system.**

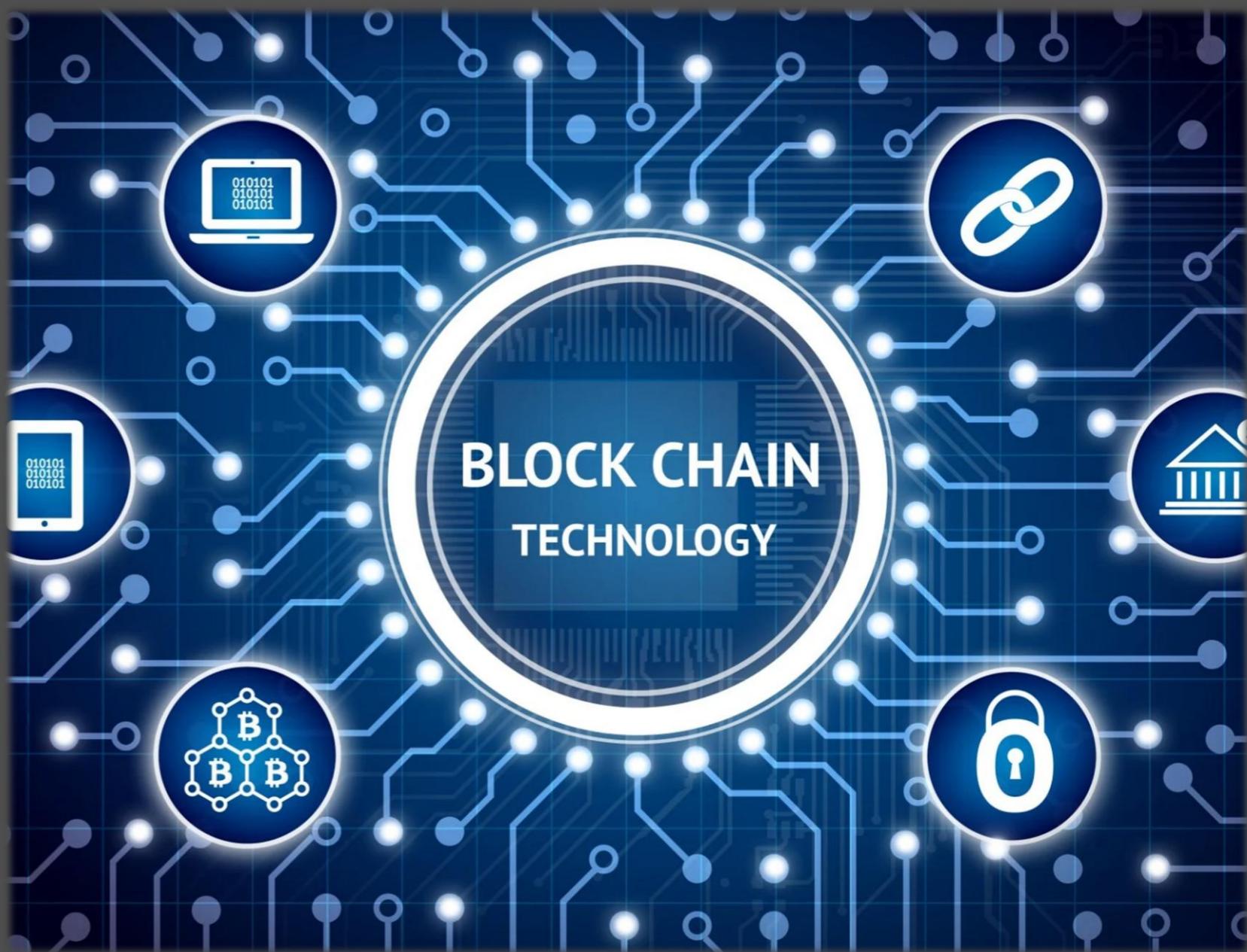
Information Dashboards: County-level EAI reporting, KPI monitoring, and real-time tracking come before any policy experiments can run.

Banking Rails: API-driven networks and agent frameworks tie banks, wallets, and endowments together—an easier lift as AI automates back-office code.

Exotic Technology: Blockchain, DAOs, and crypto tokens aren't required but can add auditability once democratic buy-in and legal scaffolding exist.

Anticipated Innovation: Humanoid robots and white-collar AI free talent to build these platforms even faster, accelerating deployment.

Transparency & Usability: Clear data and simple UX build trust and adoption.



Start with a few pioneer counties to test, refine, and prove the model. **Success is measured by EAI gains, dividend ratios, and resident satisfaction, paving a clear path from county wins to state and federal adoption.**

Candidate Counties: 3–5 diverse regions launch with KPIs and ownership pilots.

Iterative Refinement: Feedback loops spread best practices as more counties join.

Milestones: Cohorts target double-digit property income growth.

State Scaling: Proven county playbooks graduate to statewide initiatives, standardizing data reporting and endowment structures.

Federal Scaling: Best practices shape national guidelines and incentives, extending ownership pipelines wherever appropriate.



Strong guardrails preserve local benefit and public trust as ownership pipelines scale. **Clear voting rules, full transparency, and claw-back tools keep funds from drifting into capture or self-destructive cash-outs.**

Anti-Capture Safeguards: County residents hold majority voting power, ensuring benefits remain rooted in the community.

Dividend Claw-Backs: Rules revoke payouts from “dividend tourism” or corrupt jurisdictions instead of resorting to costly bail-outs.

Transparency Mandates: Bond-backed or state-supported funds must publish audited ledgers and real-time dashboards.

Voting & Property Rights: Simple, public documentation spells out how units can be sold, transferred, or voted.

Self-Harm Guardrails: Withdrawal limits and cooling-off periods deter reckless cash-outs that could hollow household wealth.



Even strong plans can fail if risks aren't managed. **These five risk channels explain how the transition could stall or even reverse—and why each must be monitored from day one.**

Rapid Automation Surge: AI and robotics may scale faster than adaptation pathways, leaving income gaps.

Elite Wealth Capture: Regulatory or corporate push-back could hoard rents, starving dividends even as consumer demand collapses.

Policy Paralysis: Government inaction or status-quo clinging—often driven by partisan gridlock—can freeze trigger responses and strand workers.

Slow-Boil Complacency: Gradual, invisible displacement lulls society into believing “the market will adjust,” repeating two decades of wage stagnation.

Demagogic Backlash: Voter panic may empower leaders who promise to “bring jobs back,” derailing structural fixes with nostalgic but impossible pledges.





Each quadrant—households, firms, banks, government—brings a unique lever to fortify the post-labor bridge once cheap money and checks run dry. **Aligning their incentives turns stop-gap tools into a self-reinforcing transition.**

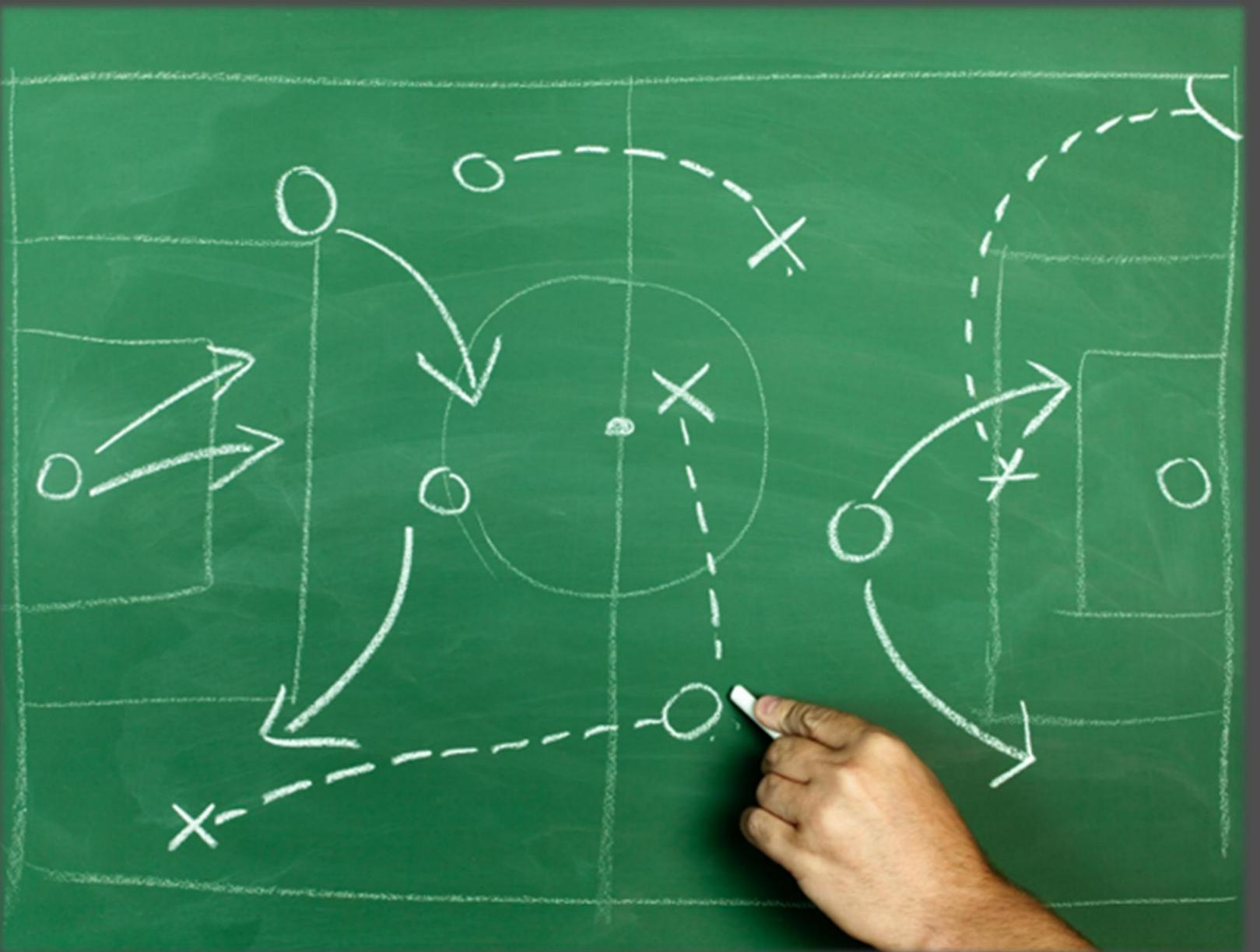
Households: Join county wealth funds and **advocate for trigger-based UBI to anchor political momentum.**

Firms: Donate equity for tax credits, pilot four-day work weeks, and pre-commit to share automation gains.

Banks: Offer dividend-backed consumer credit and package wealth-fund shares as low-risk assets for institutional buyers.

Government: Legislate the trigger dashboard, authorize tax-incentive share grants, and mandate pace-matching hour caps when alerts fire.

Coalition Synergy: Alignment slows wage decline, stabilizes demand, and scales dividends without bailouts.



A property-anchored economy doesn't just plug the post-labor gap; it seeds greener choices, tighter communities, and shock-proof prosperity. **As ownership diffuses, households gain time and capital to invest where it matters.**

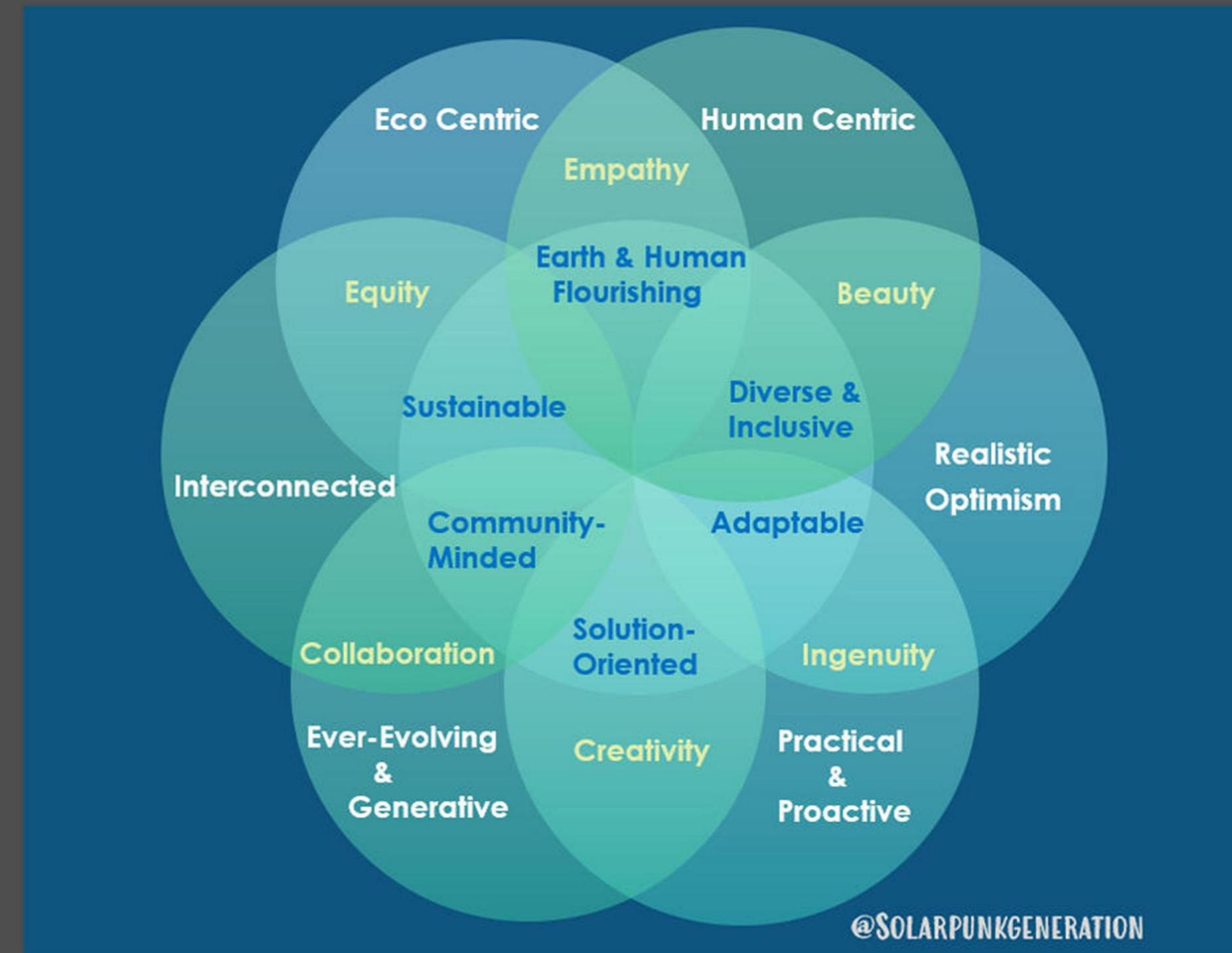
Sustainability: More free time and capital push citizens toward assets and products that meet long-term ecological criteria.

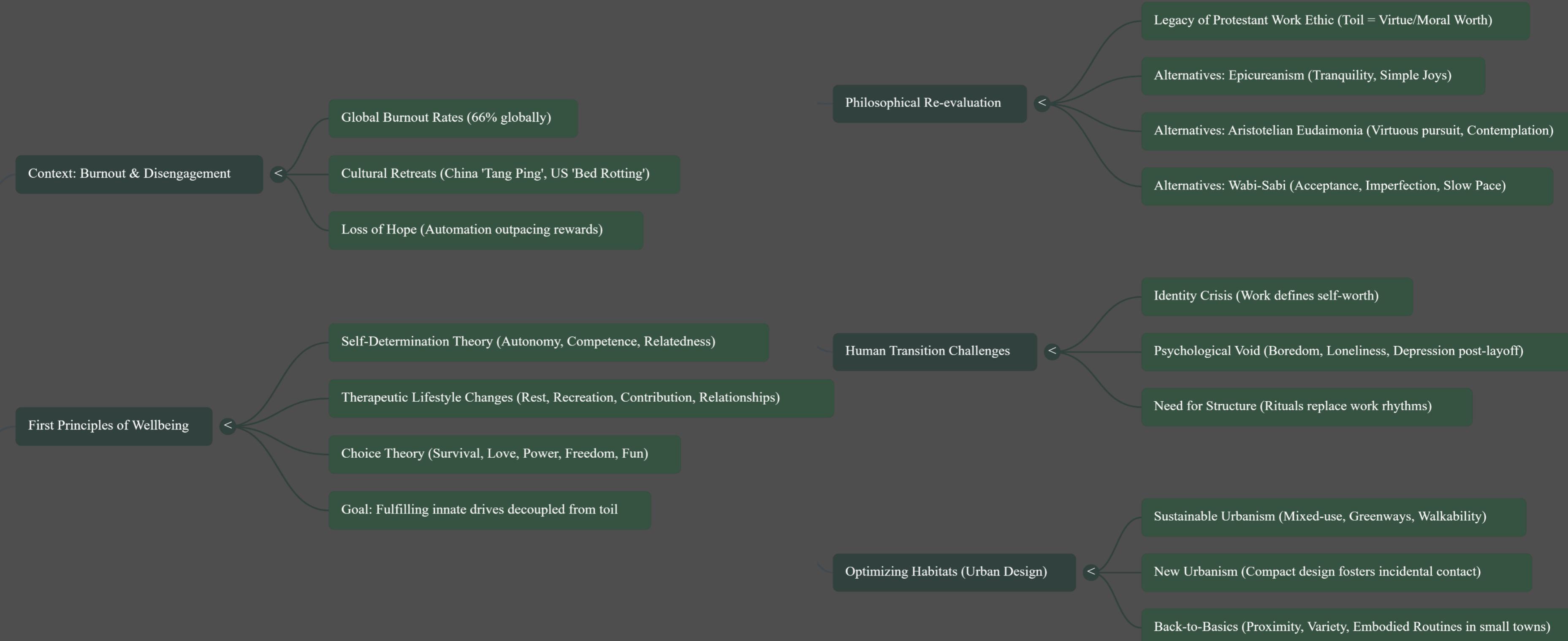
Circularity: Local dividends reward tighter supply chains and hometown spending, locking value inside the community.

Self-Sufficiency: County- and state-level ownership funds build antifragile systems less dependent on distant suppliers.

Stability: Diversified property income buffers households and regions against global downturns or wage shocks.

Economic Agency: When prosperity decouples from payrolls, every resident can invest wisely and control their financial destiny.





Additional Resources

- [Substack](#)
- [Youtube playlist](#)

Thank you!

Questions?