

# The Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Oppression of the Working Class

*Ramon Encila, Simon Fraser University*

## **Abstract**

This paper was originally written for Dr. Alys Avalos-Rivera's ENGL 114W course *Language and Purpose*. The assignment asked students to write a persuasive essay discussing the subject of artificial intelligence's potential risks and advantages. The paper uses APA citation style.

The growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) has sparked many disagreements about its effects on society, with some people hopeful for its future and others recognizing the dangers that come with its usage. This paper argues that AI mainly threatens the populace while simultaneously serving the capitalist class through mass technological unemployment and social division caused by online algorithms. By exploring research on AI and perspectives of experts such as Geoffrey Hinton, this paper supports its argument by demonstrating how AI exacerbates economic inequality and obstructs social cohesion. The paper ultimately critiques the capitalist system that causes AI to prioritize profit maximization over the well-being of humanity.

As the use of artificial intelligence (AI) increases across various social institutions worldwide, many issues arise regarding its effects on society. Geoffrey Hinton, the godfather of AI, has made it his mission to warn the public of the risks and dangers associated with the growing use of his creation (*The Diary of a CEO*, 2025, 4:19). Among these potential risks are mass unemployment, privacy concerns, and a lack of ethical consideration in automated decision-making. These risks reveal a greater threat to society at large of AI significantly amplifying pre-existing social inequalities, and these negative effects are already prevalent worldwide. Employers continuously displace workers as AI's creative and analytical capabilities further develop (Frey & Osborne, 2017, as cited in Kim & Lee, 2025, p. 4734); meanwhile, ideological polarization intensifies as automated

social media algorithms prioritize marketability over objectivity (Thomas & Kuppasani, 2025, p. 105). These are not independent issues; instead, they are symptoms of a larger problem stemming from corporate influence on the usage of AI. From technological unemployment to algorithmically induced social division, the advancement of AI simultaneously revolutionizes profit maximization for the capitalist class while endangering the privacy and socioeconomic security of everyday citizens.

Workers worldwide are already aware that their jobs are at risk as AI continuously learns how to work in traditionally human professions. Forty-seven percent of jobs in the United States are estimated to be at risk of automation (Frey & Osborne, 2017, as cited in Kim & Lee, 2025, p. 4734). About 60% of workers are concerned about being replaced by automated systems (World Economic Forum, 2023, as cited in Kim & Lee, 2025, p. 4734) and 67% of employees worry about how AI will impact their jobs (PwC, 2023, as cited in Kim & Lee, 2025, p. 4734). These worries are not irrational, as socioeconomic disparities have been globally observed to expand with increased AI usage (Nordling, 2019, as cited in Thomas & Kuppasani, 2025, p. 104). The relationship between AI integration into the workforce and the growth of economic inequality reflects employers' alarming attitudes toward their workers. These statistics indicate a global prioritization of profit over the needs of the employee. Many people will have more difficulty in maintaining a job while the companies they previously worked for continue to profit without them. Getting hired will be more challenging for those who are unemployed and living in poor households as more entry-level work becomes automated. Since most jobs that still need human labour require certain credentials, such as post-secondary degrees, these jobs remain largely inaccessible to the poor. As a result, the wealthy will take up well-paying jobs that are yet to be automated, and the poor will keep struggling to make money. Employers replacing human labour with automation only reproduces these socioeconomic disparities and further expands this wealth gap.

Corporate greed not only divides society economically through technological unemployment, but it also promotes social instability through automated social media algorithms. Social media companies profit from user engagement and thus design algorithms that use private user data to curate personal social media feeds. These feeds largely promote content that both affirm one's beliefs and heighten their emotions to retain engagement. Algorithms then consequently produce

online echo chambers, which are digital spaces where one's beliefs are reinforced and unchallenged. These echo chambers contribute to the development of social conflict (The Diary of a CEO, 2025, 19:02) and subsequently result in the adoption of more extremist views globally (Thomas and Kuppasani, 2025, p. 105). Online discourse between different political ideologies and infighting within various communities distracts from the actions of those in power. These social divides are a direct product of policies that prioritize profit over a balanced display of information (The Diary of a CEO, 2025, 19:43). Furthermore, the power of the algorithm to influence one's beliefs not only shapes online discourse but can also be used to manipulate election outcomes. Private user data informs political candidates of consumer behaviour to make their campaigns more marketable, with notable examples being the 2016 US and 2017 French and Kenyan presidential elections (Agudo and Matute, 2021; Bond et al., 2012; Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2023, as cited in Thomas & Kuppasani, 2025, p. 105). Those unaware of the influence of the algorithm on their personal actions grow more easily influenced as they consume content, and those who are aware of AI's effects on social media begin to lose trust in others. This gap in digital literacy only further divides society. When combined with exacerbated political division and economic inequality caused by algorithms and automated work, the danger that AI poses on society becomes more evident.

Due to the apparent issues arising with AI, some regulations on its usage have been proposed to combat these problems. One issue that is directly addressed is the growing threat of AI-induced job loss. While job insecurity grows with the workplace adoption of AI, Kim & Lee (2025, p. 4732) suggest that this concern can be alleviated with proper corporate social responsibility (CSR) that increases the meaningfulness of work (MOW). Work perceived as meaningful positively influences an employee's job satisfaction, engagement, and sense of belonging within an organization (Allan et al., 2019; Both-Nwabuwe et al., 2017, as cited in Kim & Lee, 2025, p. 4735). CSR plays an important role in ethical workplace AI usage and in determining how these technological innovations affect employee well-being (Wang et al., 2025, as cited in Kim & Lee, 2025, p. 4735). This business model is meant to comfort the anxious thoughts that 60% of workers have about their replaceability in the workplace (World Economic Forum, 2023, as cited in Kim & Lee, 2025, p. 4734). The worker is expected to trust their employers to uphold this responsibility. However, the concept of CSR assumes that the corporation cares about employee well-being more than maximizing profit. For

many large organizations, employee wellness is not a concern; Hinton himself states that these big companies are obliged to prioritize profit over anything (The Diary of a CEO, 2025, 22:12). The idea of CSR fails to consider that companies can simply reject responsibility for the well-being of their workers. As long as AI presents opportunities to produce goods at cheaper rates than human labour, corporations will readily disregard the needs of working citizens.

Corporate disregard for individual citizens also becomes an issue when trying to address the issue of ideological polarization caused by social media algorithms. To prevent algorithms from spreading misinformation, Yann LeCun, a chief computer scientist for Meta AI, suggests that everyone will have their own AI assistant while navigating the internet (Lex Clips, 2024, 8:03). He states that this assistant will filter out any propaganda that one may encounter, which will hinder the radicalization of people on the internet. This content filtering system would theoretically result in a more balanced dissemination of information for all internet users, thereby potentially eliminating internet echo chambers and de-escalating social conflict. However, an AI-driven internet can be easily manipulated by corporations for marketing purposes, ranging from product promotion to political agendas. Determining what AI considers as propaganda and misinformation depends entirely on who controls the algorithms. An AI-regulated internet can therefore either be used to promote objectivity on the internet or support full authoritarian control of the media. As previously stated, the corporations in control of AI are legally obliged to prioritize profit over anything (The Diary of a CEO, 2025, 11:55). These companies can simply dismiss any responsibility for fostering social cohesion if less ethical methods produce more financial gain. Trusting an AI assistant to consider the best interests of the populace is simply too risky when the AI's manufacturer is mainly motivated by profit.

When attempting to prevent the AI-related issues of unemployment and misinformation separately, both suggested solutions ignore the influence of financial gain on corporate decision-making. Instead, Hinton proposes that the way to stop AI-induced societal harm is to impose regulations on the system that benefits most from automation. He states that the capitalist system itself needs regulations to avoid the exploitation of regular citizens (The Diary of a CEO, 2025, 23:00). The International Monetary Fund has expressed concerns that AI can disrupt labour on a massive scale and increase inequalities, and they have

called for policies to avoid such consequences (The Diary of a CEO, 2025, 55:21). However, they did not provide any ideas for such policies. Hinton suggests that politicians need to enforce companies' prioritization of societal well-being over profit, which is difficult, as politicians can also be bribed by these companies (The Diary of a CEO, 2025, 23:14). He also suggests a universal basic income so that every citizen will have livable wages (The Diary of a CEO, 2025, 55:52). A baseline income works to decrease socioeconomic disparities that would otherwise be exacerbated by AI; by ensuring that everyone has livable wages, joblessness due to AI becomes less of a concern. These points stress the importance of electing politicians who will enact policies with the best interests of everyday people in mind. Society must come together to combat the factors that make AI a threat in the first place; an organized effort is needed to hold politicians and corporations accountable to prioritize peoples' interests over monetary gain.

While the future of AI remains uncertain, recognizing the warning signs of its dangers and misuse is essential for preventing further societal deterioration. If the issue of AI's role in aiding capitalist greed is not addressed, social stability will continue to be at risk, and social unity and peace will remain as distant dreams. Poverty rates will keep growing with increased AI-induced job loss as corporations seek to hoard more wealth (Nordling, 2019, as cited in Thomas & Kuppasani, 2025, p. 104). Sociopolitical divides will only get wider as profit-driven social media algorithms define our digital realities (Thomas and Kuppasani, 2025, p. 105). Wealth inequality and the radicalization of ideological viewpoints are not problems that can be solved individually. If corporations are left unchecked in their pursuit of monetary gain, AI will only enhance and expedite the achievement of their goals, simultaneously worsening the quality of life for the rest of society. Unless serious systemic changes are made to tackle the ways in which large companies use AI, the well-being of humanity will never take precedence over profit. If we want a future that guarantees prosperity for all, we must act now before the elites use AI to control and commodify every part of our lives.

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