

Post-Labor Economics Master Outline

1. The Rise of Automation

- a. **Epochal Shifts:** Automation and GPT transformed agrarian >> industrial >> service, causing massive economic, social, and political changes
- b. **Better, Faster, Cheaper, Safer:** When machines surpass humans, labor substitution is inevitable
- c. **The Fourth Industrial Revolution:** AI and robotics are the next GPT and automation wave. They are already here.
- d. **The Glass Ceiling:** First principles view of how high AI and robotics can go (i.e. there is no meaningful limit)
- e. **Cognitive Hyper-Abundance:** The world we're heading towards. The natural result of the current automation experiments.

2. The Decline of Labor

- a. **History of Labor Substitution:** How, when, and why technologies have permanently dislocated human jobs.
- b. **Structural Decline of Labor:** Demand for human labor has been dropping for decades, along with wage power.
- c. **Importance of Labor Power:** Why is labor special? How has it declined? What happens when labor power is undermined?
- d. **Zero Labor Optimum:** How and why all businesses are incentivized to eliminate as many jobs as possible.
- e. **The Future of Labor:** The rise of the meaning and experience economy, baumol's cost disease, human preference and premium.

3. Power and Social Contracts

- a. **Social Contract Operating System:** Treat the contract as the invisible OS that allocates rights, duties, and surplus. For two centuries the core loop has been labor → income → taxes → legitimacy. Cognitive automation severs that loop, forcing either a patch, a reboot, or a crash. Prosperity goes up over time. History of Social Contracts.
- b. **Credible Threats:** Boycotts, strikes, tax resistance, data walkouts, and—if nothing else works—raw street force are the bargaining chips that keep rulers honest. As payrolls shrink, the traditional strike loses bite; new forms of withdrawal must target the code, the data, or the network throughput on which automated capital now depends. Robber Barons to Neoliberalism.

Seizing the means of production and holding the economy hostage are the primary way to rebalance power.

- c. **Capital Intensification:** Software eats labor, scale eats competition, and intangible assets compound. Ownership of models, fabs, and data moats channels bargaining power uphill, much like water in a hydroelectric dam—inevitable once the turbines spin, unless political spillways redirect the flow. This is the primary threat to the current social contract. Wealth and power tend to concentrate over time unless or until something structurally changes that.
- d. **Legitimacy Erosion:** When lived experience contradicts the civic promise—work hard, get ahead—trust bleeds out. Polling, turnout volatility, and protest frequency are empirical pressure gauges; ignore rising readings and the boiler explodes, historically within a decade of the initial leak. French Revolution, Taiping Rebellion, Tsarist Revolution. American Revolution and Civil War.
- e. **High Tech, Low Life:** The default attractor under unmitigated capital concentration: ultra-productive platforms, threadbare publics, and a precarious service caste hustling in augmented neon. This isn't speculative fiction; it is visible on the streets of San Francisco, Shenzhen, and São Paulo right now. GINI coefficient decay locks in indefinitely. This is what we want to avoid, and why we need a new social contract. “You will own nothing and be happy”
- f. **Solarpunk Future:** A possible future defined by economic and environmental sustainability, decentralized and distributed power, ecological and social harmony and justice. It must rest upon a new lever of power, and entirely new social contract. This is what we want to achieve, rather than the cyberpunk dystopia.

4. Measurements and KPI

- a. **That Which Gets Measured Gets Managed:** Overview of econometrics throughout history. How metrics are power. Why measurements are important – to create testable, falsifiable reporting and optimize the policy interventions.
- b. **Who is Measuring What:** How existing polities are tracking decoupling of labor and productivity. Dashboards, KPI, econometrics, etc.
- c. **Gaps in the Line:** What measurements exist and what are they missing? What can we accurately diagnose and prescribe today? GDP, GINI, etc.

- d. **Economic Agency Index:** A proposed new metric that tracks *wage:property:transfer* ratios.
- e. **Inclusive Capital Income Ratio:** Another proposed metric that tracks how much the median household is getting from “inclusive capital” rather than wages or transfers.
- f. **Diagnosis, Prognosis, Prescription:** This is the simple power of good, comprehensive KPI, and what we hope to achieve and foster with PLE.

5. Concrete Interventions for Power and Prosperity

- a. **What Everyone Agrees On:** We must broaden ownership and overhaul governance. Survey on economists and consensus today. We must steer the implementation.
- b. **Local, Municipal, City, and County Interventions:** What local officials and communities can do for prosperity.
- c. **State-Level Interventions:** What states and governors can do for prosperity. UBI and predistributive policies.
- d. **Federal and International Interventions:** What nations and alliances can do for prosperity. Sovereign wealth funds (predistribution) and UBI (redistribution)
- e. **Democratic Interventions:** What governance, policy, lawmakers, public institutions can do for rebalancing power. Transparency, accountability, redistribution, taxes, etc.
- f. **Coercive Extraction of Concessions:** History of extracting concessions from power, state, business, banks – last resort for citizens to seize back power. What do you target, how, why, etc.
- g. **Conventional Power Interventions:** Tax resistance, economic withdrawal, labor strikes, boycotts, embargos, seizing infrastructure. Enumerate conventional ways to demand concessions.
- h. **Novel Power Interventions:** Blockchain, data, cryptocurrency (permissionless leverage, collective power)
- i. **Corporate Interventions:** Adopt AI as fast as possible, automate everything, build the abundance that we need for the future. Banks can help create collective purchasing power. Credit Unions can help local ownership.

6. Life After Labor

- a. **Human Needs:** A first principles view of what humans actually need to be healthy and happy. Connection, challenge, mastery, etc. TLCs, Glasser’s Choice, SDT.

- b. **Meaning and Purpose:** Where do we get sources of meaning, purpose, and dignity after labor deteriorates forever? Philosophical and practical look at human meaning.
- c. **Lifestyles of Leisure:** What will we do on a daily basis? What is a “day in the life” like? Will anyone “work” or are all jobs toast?
- d. **Civic Engagement:** How does social participation look like in the state and economy after labor declines? People will have a lot more time for politics!
- e. **Economic Participation:** Will there still be ways to make money? Accrue capital? Buy influence? Some jobs, investments, property, etc – many things do not change.