



*Extended Abstract*

## **The Future of Work in Information Society**

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### **Introduction**

The paper addresses the question whether the development of technology will really lead to the end of work and, if yes, what will be the consequences, if not, how to prevent the end of work. The paper argues that it is not the technology alone that causes the end of work, even if we experienced until now only three waves of informational revolution (personal computers, mobile telephony and Internet) and three further will yet come (more universal social use of robots, of knowledge engineering called popularly artificial intelligence, and of biomedical engineering). It is not technology alone, but its utilization by the capitalist system under the slogan of elastic labour market (actually meaning arbitrary determination of working conditions by employers) that accelerates the end of work. Technology gives to capitalists the possibility of minimizing the costs of work, they snap up this possibility and use it to increase own profits, but also unemployment and socio-economic inequality and stratification. This has occurred since the beginning of industrial revolution, but today occurs much faster and on larger scale.

### **Analysis**

If we do not reform essentially the capitalist system, this will result in enormous stratification and in expansion of precariat, much better educated than classical proletariat, in unemployment and social exclusion of well educated people. This would lead to the end of capitalism in a global revolution, but today's accumulation of nuclear weapons and knowledge of their construction make a global revolution dangerous, leading to a scenario of doom, of an annihilation of intelligent civilization on Earth.

Therefore, the paper proposes another way of evolutionary reform of capitalism through a seemingly small but in fact essential correction of CIT, corporate income tax. Firstly, this tax should be really, not only apparently paid, hence it should be counted from the entire income of an enterprise, not only from its profit that can be easily manipulated by transfer prices. Secondly, it should be a *degressive tax* that will strongly decrease

with increasing employment index, counted as the part of enterprise income used for employees' salaries. This way, entrepreneurs will be positively financially motivated to actually, not only slogan-like realize their fundamental ethical duty after informational revolution: to create new professions and occupation as well as new working places. This solution is not the only one, it should be supported by other means, such as shortening the working hours or an universal personal rent. However, only this way we can use reforms to prevent the end of work with its catastrophic consequences.

## Results and Discussion

Concerning the question, *whether we await indeed an end of work*, the answer is twofold. Undoubtedly yes, if we upkeep the impact of so called *elastic labour market*, meaning in reality the licence of employers in determining the conditions of work, what combined with the upcoming waves of informational revolution results in a *megatrend of minimizing the costs of work*. In other words, the positive feedback between the technology and the market means that the more an employer can exploit information technologies to decrease the costs of work and to increase his own profits, the more he will invest in applications of such technologies. And positive feedbacks result in avalanche-like processes, who end in hitting constraints. In this case, a constraint is a full elimination of human work, such as in nuclear bomb explosion the constraint is the full disintegration of atoms of enriched uranium.

To control the processes resulting from a positive feedback it is necessary - such as in a nuclear reactor - to limit them by applying an additional negative feedback. Concerning the end of work, it is necessary to additionally motivate employers to increase, not to decrease the cost of work. This means an introduction of *degressive taxation*, a strong negative dependence of taxation rate of corporate income tax, CIT, from an employment index, counted as the ratio of total employees' salaries (not counting the management salaries) to the total income of the enterprise. This must be connected, however, with an increase of the amount of CIT that was until now avoided by entrepreneurs.

Such a solution has twofold advantage. Firstly, it preserves the work and employment for majority of people, giving them satisfaction, self-realization and money that will sustain a mass demand that is the foundation of contemporary capitalism. Secondly, paying corporate income tax, CIT, in a scale comparable to personal income tax, PIT, will increase the income of public budget that will secure then a sustainable system of income redistribution, since such public sector income - despite the alarmist neoliberal warnings - will suffice for fair old age pensions, pensions for disabled and unemployed, good financing of health service, science and education.

Such a solution constitutes thus a seemingly small, but actually rather radical reform of capitalism, it creates a specific hybrid of capitalism and socialism by introducing in a market system a version of universal right of work. It also induces capitalists to fulfil - while caring of their own profits - their ethical duty of creating new places of work and new professions.

Such a solution has, however, one fundamental disadvantage: it cannot be introduced in a single country since it would cause a flight of capital to other countries. Thus an international agreement about introducing such a solution in majority of countries is necessary. Therefore, we cannot expect a speedy introduction of such modification of CIT; in the hope of promoting such international agreement, however, I am writing a book on this subject (Wierzbicki 2016) both in Polish and in English.

## Conclusions

Nevertheless, such international agreement and such reform of capitalism are necessary. This results from the fact that the contemporary minimization of the costs of work and the socio-economic stratification resulting from it led to the emergence of precariat, a social layer (or class) of people unsustainably employed or unemployed. However, precariat becomes better educated, in connection with the world-wide megatrend of bettering education, and is more and more aware of its destiny. The unrest and demonstrations resulting from the social exclusion of precariat become increasingly frequent in the world. Continuing impact of the minimization of costs of work will result in the growth of numbers of precariat, its unrests and demonstrations, together with the growth of revolutionary atmosphere. A part of capitalists and oligarchs notes this, using the slogan “they will come for us with pitchforks”.

However, the actual danger is related to the amassment of nuclear weapons and the knowledge of their construction; a simple accident can result in an escalation of the use of such weapons and the annihilation of intelligent civilization on Earth (it is telling that intelligent civilizations are rare in cosmos). Therefore, it is suicidal to allow an excessive growth of revolutionary atmosphere, particularly related to unemployment of well educated people. A corresponding reform of capitalism and an international agreement about it become thus necessary.

Such a reform will also mean an introduction of a new social redistributions system, providing for the needs of all people; *there is no doubt that the society of Earth - precisely because of achievements of technology, if they will be exploited for general welfare, not only for the profits of capitalists - at last could afford such a system.*

## Keywords

End of work, elastic labour market, precariat, scenario of annihilation, reform of capitalism

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