

AI and Surplus Value: A Critical Political Economy Perspective

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the value of labor power and the broader labor market through the lens of the Labor Theory of Value. As AI systems increasingly perform tasks traditionally carried out by human workers, the nature of labor as the primary source of value in capitalist production is being fundamentally challenged. Drawing on classical Marxist theory, this study argues that while AI does not produce surplus value in the traditional sense—since it is not living labor—it nonetheless exerts downward pressure on wages and alters the organic composition of capital. The substitution of human labor with AI leads to a relative devaluation of labor power, undermining workers' bargaining positions and contributing to the commodification of cognitive and affective labor. Furthermore, the paper explores the contradictions that emerge when value-generating labor is increasingly marginalized in favor of non-labor inputs. Ultimately, the analysis highlights how AI intensifies existing capitalist dynamics, while also raising critical questions about the future of value creation, labor exploitation, and class relations in an increasingly automated economy.

Index Terms

Artificial Intelligence, Labor Value, Surplus Value, Industrial Relations, Unemployment