The Moral Crisis of a Jobless Future: an analysis of presidential campaign rhetoric

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# Table of Contents

List of Figures ........................................................................................................ iv
List of Tables ........................................................................................................... v
Chapter One: Introduction ......................................................................................... 1
Chapter Two: Literature Review ............................................................................... 7
Chapter Three: Materials and Methods ................................................................. 27
Chapter Four: Findings ............................................................................................. 31
Chapter Five: Discussion ......................................................................................... 56
References ................................................................................................................. 71
List of Figures

Figure 1.1 U.S. Labor Force Participation Rate (1976-2014) ................................................................. 14

Figure 1.2 U.S. Employment/Population Ratio (1976-2014) ................................................................. 14

Figure 1.3 Prime-age (ages 25-54) labor force participation rate, 1948-2015 ..................................... 16

Figure 1.4 Workers Begin Falling Behind (Labor Productivity, Real GDP per capita, Private Employment, Median Family Income) ................................................................. 18

Figure 1.5 As Profits Climb, Wages Plummet (Corporate Profits vs. Wages as a Percentage of GDP) .............................................................................................................................. 19

Figure 1.6 Cumulative Change in Real Annual Wages, by Wage Group, 1979-2013 ......................... 21

Figure 1.7 Cumulative Change in Real Hourly Wages of All Workers, by Wage Percentile (1979-2013) .......................................................................................................................... 21

Figure 1.8 Income to Debt Ratio 1965-2007 .......................................................................................... 22

Figure 1.9 Personal expenditure consumption as a percentage of gross domestic product (1960-2012, projected to 2022) ........................................................................................................ 23

Figure 2.1 Public Opinions on Worker/CEO Compensation by Country ................................................ 64

Figure 2.2 Public Opinions on Inequality in America ............................................................................. 65
List of Tables

Table 1.1 Hillary Clinton Main and Sub-Codes.................................................................55
Table 1.2 Donald Trump Main and Sub-Codes.................................................................55
Chapter One: Introduction

Karl Marx famously argued that the contradictions of capitalism would eventually lead to its own demise. Committed to the labor theory of value, Marx argued that new, surplus value comes only from labor-power, or variable capital (v), as opposed to technological apparatus and machinery, or constant capital (c) — and, he symbolically represented this relationship as c + v → c + v + s (Marx, 1867). Marx noted that this relationship introduces a system-threatening contradiction: “Every capitalist works might and main to reduce the wages bill, and turn over as much material as he can, investing in expensive machinery and increasing c to cut labour costs, v; this produces a general increase in the “organic composition of capital”, c/v. However, since it is only the variable capital that produces profit, the result is a falling rate of profit” (Lenin & Bluden, 2008). According to Marx, the falling rate of profit entailed that the process of surplus-value extraction (i.e. exploitation) would become increasingly implausible and intolerably inhumane. Under such circumstances the proletariat would have to rebel and seize control of the means of production. In the words of Engels, “Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution. [Eventually] The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property” (Engels, 1935).

Marx’s critique and analysis of capitalism has been chastised among intellectuals for the failure of this prediction — the revolution, as envisaged by Marx and Engels, never came. A post-mortem of this prediction indicates that their failure to foresee a number of phenomena that may help mitigate the problem of falling rates of profit — such as offshoring, globalization, the rise of cheap credit, and growing income-to-debt ratio (Roberts, 2009) — and other redistributive measures — labor protections laws, government expenditures, the success of unions and collective bargaining, and a generous welfare state — that have facilitated ‘class compromise’ keeping the proletariat politically content and mitigating the problem of devalued labor and unemployment (Schelkle, 2012). In fact, FDR even proclaimed that his greatest achievement was “saving capitalism” with the introduction of the New Deal legislation package (Hedges, 2011). A central claim of this paper is that Marx’s inability to factor these possibilities
into his diagnosis of capitalism does not grant us the right to entirely refute his prophecy. Indeed, these oversights may have only rendered his predictions about the timing of capitalism’s collapse incorrect. It is possible that these outcomes have only stalled the collapse Marx spoke of not ameliorated its logical necessity. In what follows, I argue that we now have substantial reasons for reconsidering the legitimacy of Marx's concern regarding this systematic flaws of capitalism because of recent technological advancements.

Thus, this paper takes as its central concern whether we ought to reconsider Marx’s warnings given the recent developments in automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence (ARA). In brief, I argue that budding ARA developments are now building ultimate labor-saving-devices, and that on the economic horizon is a jobless future where human labor of all kinds — not just unskilled occupations — is almost entirely eliminated. To be fair, this is a controversial claim and one that is certainly not accepted by all economists, political scientists, and sociologists. On this subject, researchers break broadly into two camps: the utopians (those who believe ARA will only be a source of untold prosperity, usually orthodox economists) and the pessimists (those who consider technology a source of serious concern). I will consider the arguments of both groups, and from a Marxian perspective, demonstrate the implausibility of the utopian position. In short, Marx himself argued that human labor would eventually become worthless at some point. The capitalist mode of production, he pointed out, encourages the destruction of human labor (variable capital) and its replacement with technological apparatus and machinery (constant capital), because if the capitalist has an incentive to reduce input costs, then eliminating labor costs is a simply the fulfillment of that incentive and ‘good business’.

To be sure, ARA would, logically speaking, hasten the process of making human labor redundant and eliminating its need in the economy. This is now becoming increasingly empirically verified by key indicators signaling the coming future of a jobless world. Two trends stand out in particular: (1) what has been labeled the great decoupling and, (2) the declining rates of labor force participation, especially among men. These trends certainly speak to an unfolding reality in which labor’s value is rapidly diminishing at the hands of technological advancement, making a jobless future more than a distant fantasy. In light of this burgeoning
and problematic arrangement, I then go on to ask an important question: what is America’s the state of political preparedness for a world without jobs? Will we be capable to absorb the impact of ARA, economically and politically? To accomplish this I completed a relational content analysis of the political campaign speeches of the presidential candidates — Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump — in the 2016 presidential election. I review their speeches for mentions of ARA, how they conceptualize the problem of lost work and income (the declining labor force participation rate and stagnant wages), and do these conceptualizations include the role of ARA?

***

Post-industrial democracies, and by extension the entire world, face a serious problem: the decline, and likely annihilation of employment opportunities. What is interesting about this ‘problem’ however is its embodied nature as crisis and miracle. That is, the rise of ARA could be the greatest possible achievement in human history, by ending the need for human drudgery and the misery associated with constant labor, or, it could result in a world potentially resembling a work of apocalyptic fiction, with a handful of trillionaires living in guarded compounds surrounded by unimaginable poverty and unemployment. The threat of a jobless future, then, is not so much a crisis of uncontrollable circumstances, but a crisis of choice itself. To many, the rise of ARA looks like the former because, if it was realized to a measurable degree in our current political-economic system, then it certainly would be a disaster. In a capitalist mode of production, the problem of resource distribution — for those who survive on salaries and wages, i.e. most people — is mediated through the institution of employment. Thus, capitalism’s mode of distribution is entirely centered around the role of labor. In simple terms, you are entitled to have whatever you can afford, and what you can afford is determined by your income. Therefore, it stands to reason, that if you have no income, you cannot afford anything, and ultimately you are not entitled to any resources. This problem, which I will call the work-prosperity-link is the very core of the ‘lost work’ issue. If society continues to enforce a link between work (or income) and prosperity (or even survival), then the decline of work opportunities is a sinisterly grave threat.
It is important to remember, however, that this does not have to be the outcome of lost work and ARA. Remember, ARA has the potential to usher in an era of inconceivable wealth and prosperity for society and its constituent individuals. What stands in the way of this optimistic outcome is the work-prosperity-link. This mode of distribution simply cannot handle the world that ARA is bringing forth for a very obvious reason: ARA destroys work opportunity, and therefore condemns those bound by the work-prosperity-link to unemployment and poverty. Thus, either society designs a political and economic system that honors a new mode of distribution that — eliminates the work-prosperity-link and — can absorb the rise of ARA by inculcating shared prosperity, or, society will likely collapse into something resembling a banana republic.¹

In what follows, I argue that this choice, whether to maintain the work-prosperity-link or implement a new mode of distribution such as a universal basic income, is a moral dilemma. Indeed, the very notion of distribution is inherently a question of justice: how is society to manage competing claims to property, or put another way, who gets what? Questions of distributive justice are not normatively neutral: they imply, and demand, a morally attuned answer. While many may attempt to present the nature of distribution as something that is naturally and unavoidably derived, this simply is not the case. Distribution is, in a very significant way, the outcome of the social policy regime that presides over a specific economy. This explains why we see different levels of inequality across space and time within and among capitalist economies (Weissmann, 2013).

***

This general purpose of this paper is to undertake an investigation into the political response to the problem of lost work and income, and, to pay close attention to the how ARA developments fit into the discourse on this subject. My interest is this particular dimension of the lost-work problem stems from a number of reasons. First, as we saw above, the reality of a jobless future brought about by ARA could be a crisis or a miracle, but whichever it ends up as, is dependent upon the mode of distribution put in place. Extant modes of distribution are not

¹ While I would like to explore the range of suggestions that have been put forth, I am unable to do so for the sake of conciseness. It appears that the most popular alternative to the work-prosperity-link is a universal basic income (UBI). For reasons that will become clearer later on, I argue that we should be skeptical about this alternative mode of distribution.
natural and unavoidable, but are actually social and political constructs sponsored by the State. In other words, the work-prosperity-link mode, as a mode of distribution, is not prior to social convention; instead, it is a result of a conscious social commitment by the political system to instantiate rules like private property rights. It is reasonable to conclude, then, that whether ARA and lost-work turns out to be a miracle or crisis, is exclusively contingent upon the mode of distribution adopted by the State as a political actor. Moreover, the State is run by the political class, thus, transitive logic implies that we should examine how the political class is greeting the economic reality of lost-work.

A second, but similar reason to focus our attention on the political world is the State’s traditional responsibility in solving market failures. Overtime, the economic community has accepted the reality of market failures, such as externalities, monopolies, asymmetric information, and so on (Stiglitz, 1989, see p. 197). These phenomenon are labeled market failures because they arise out of free market conditions, and furthermore, free markets cannot ameliorate them. If the process of making a good has resulted in substantial environmental pollution, free-markets are incapable of pricing that good so as to include the full cost of production (i.e. the costs of environmental damage). There is certainly a cost of that pollution, but a free-market is unable to effectively impose that cost on the producer. The destruction of employment, it could be argued, is a market failure, because it results from a pernicious contradiction highlighted by Marx. In a capitalist system, producers are encouraged to lower input costs which includes the cost of labor. The problem is that the more successful producers become in eliminating labor costs, they are at the same time destroying the consumer base responsible for their profits. I will henceforth refer to this as the employer contradiction. The employer contradiction operates like other market failures can only be adequately addressed through government intervention.

A third reason to inspect the political realm is that, even with all that has been said thus far about lost-work and ARA, it has been widely reported in the press that ARA has been neglected by politicians (Davenport, 2017). The truth of this claim has yet to be validated by academic research, but a cursory review of mainstream media sources appears to bear out this accusation. Given the fact pattern above, it should be evident why this is deeply concerning. A
jobless future demands a new mode of distribution and the resolution to the employer contradiction, both of which require state interference; yet, the people running the government are ignoring the root impetus of this inevitable future. Fourth, we should recall that Marx did more than prophesize the dislocation of labor by technology. He commented on the consequences it would have: namely, it would introduce a widespread ontological insecurity among workers regarding their ever-present disposability. The ontological insecurity of workers is becoming increasingly salient within the United States and post-industrial democracies in general (Kalleberg, 2009). This is by all accounts a political problem. For these reasons, it is not only important, but paramount, that we consider where the political class stands in relation to the jobless future and ARA. Indeed, the contradiction between the need for discussion on this topic and the failure of the political class to address it, begs the following questions: (1) why aren’t politicians talking about this problem of lost jobs and income and the role of ARA, (2) how exactly are the addressing the employer contradiction and rising ontological insecurity, and (3) what can be done about it.

***

To measure the response of the political class to the problem of lost work and income, I completed a content analysis of the campaign speeches given by the two major party candidates in the 2016 election: Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. In the methods and materials section I will elaborate on why the campaign speeches of these candidates is the appropriate object of empirical analysis. In brief, campaign speeches have two important functions: to broadcast a politicians policy preferences, but also their moral attitudes about governing. As we discussed above, the choice society faces in maintaining the current mode of distribution (work-prosperity-link),or opting to implement a new mode of distribution (like the UBI), is a moral commitment. Thus, if we were to ever observe the political class discussing a moral dilemma, like the threat of a jobless future and the rise of ARA, then it would most likely be evident in campaign rhetoric.

Furthermore, the content analysis will be narrowed to campaign speeches given in the rust-belt states. This decision is motivated by the fact that these states are home to many of the communities most affected by ARA developments (Safford, 2009). Therefore, it stands to
reason that if politicians were going to take up the problem of ARA, the possibility of a jobless future, and the need for a new mode of distribution, it would be most likely to occur in these states. In sum, the purpose of this project is to explore how the political class — as represented by the presidential candidates in 2016 — are reacting to the threat of a jobless future on the not-too-distant horizon. How are they conceptualizing the problem of lost work and income? Is ARA part of their analysis? Are they acknowledging that in the face of this oncoming mode of production, wherein human labor has no value, we might need to consider a new mode of distribution? Do their political ideologies represent lost work to be a moral problem?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

| The Contradictions of Capitalism |

Georg Hegel’s logic of dialectics argues that situations defined by contradiction will eventually become unstable, and replaced by a new situation (Baur, 2015). Karl Marx applied Hegel’s logic to capitalist modes of production and discovered a systemic, overarching contradiction embedded within the capitalist system: the effort by employers to reduce production costs, including human labor, simultaneously destroys the consumer base that employers need to buy their product (Woodfin, 2015). The employer contradiction — along with other noted contradictions like the falling rate of profit, as mentioned in the introduction — led Marx, in consistency with dialectical logic, to prophesize that capitalism would eventually become unstable and replaced by a new economic system. It is only a matter of time until production becomes so efficient through the implementation of new technologies (constant capital, c), that human labor (variable capital, v) would become entirely redundant. The problem with this inevitability is that without the existence of human labor class there is no one for the capitalist to sell his or her product to — ultimately resulting in a system-wide collapse. This concept was captured in a back and forth between Henry Ford and and union boss Walter Reuther. The Economist reports, “An apocryphal tale is told about Henry Ford II showing Walter Reuther, the veteran leader of the United Automobile Workers, around a newly

What I am referring to as the employer contradiction will be the primary Marxian contradiction used in the analysis of this paper, as it is most illustrative of the crisis presented by ARA.
automated car plant. “Walter, how are you going to get those robots to pay your union dues,”
gibed the boss of Ford Motor Company. Without skipping a beat, Reuther replied, “Henry, how
are you going to get them to buy your cars?” (The Economist, 2011).

As stated before, many have criticized Marx’s general theory of capitalism on the
grounds that the ‘implosion’ never came (Pirie, 2013). However, as we will see, this criticism is
most likely premature, and ultimately fallacious. In the words of Dr. Paul Craig Roberts, “If Karl
Marx and V. I. Lenin were alive today, they would be leading contenders for the Nobel Prize in
economics” for their prescient claims about the rise of precarious economic institutions and
widespread ontological insecurity (Roberts, 2009). Marx may have been correct in regards to
the content of his predictions but incorrect about the timing of their realization. Hitherto
capitalism has been able to cosmetically manage the tensions that arise from its embedded
contradictions, but, absent a systemic alteration the dialectic necessity of instability (and
collapse) from such contradictions has never been resolved. Therefore, Marxist theorists have
provided a number of persuasive analyses for why the collapse has yet to materialize, and why
it will manifest in the not-too-distant future. I consider this paper as a contribution to that
effort, by arguing that the existing global capitalist order is rapidly approaching its insolvency
at the hands of ARA and that new system of production and distribution is desperately needed.

The collapse of global capitalism is being ushered in by its inability to sufficiently
correct the employment contradiction. The possibility of mass-unemployment, brought about
by ARA, is a threat that is becoming ever-more real and insurmountable. The pace and nature
of technological advancement is rapidly making labor redundant, and furthermore, there are
good reasons for believing that in the near future human labor may be entirely irrelevant to
the production process. Such a development could not be sustained within a capitalist
structure for several reasons, but most importantly, no one will be able to buy the products
being sold. Thus, I now want to explore the theoretical reasons for why ARA will make the
employment contradiction unnavigable, and then turn to some empirical signs in the current
labor and consumer markets signaling this impending reality.

|The role of technology in lost work|
The loss of work opportunity is largely symptomatic of and is greatly accelerated by improvements in our technology. Of course, the threat of worker redundancy and structural unemployment perpetrated by developments in technology is certainly not a new phenomenon. Technological revolutions have occurred several times in history, and each time there has been a panic over the resulting loss of jobs. The most famous case was that of the Luddite factories in England, where workers destroyed textile machinery to prevent their own labor obsolescence (Conniff, 2011). The continual revolutions in technology have produced a certain — as we will see, well reasoned, but problematic — ideology in economic theory: the maxim that technological revolution is always a good thing, or more technically, that technological revolution results in greater utility for everyone (Allen, 2015); but some have remained skeptical, and we will see why their skepticism is warranted (Dolphin, 2015; Ford, 2016; Rotman, 2013). Traditional economists point to the fact that the replacement of human labor by machines has net beneficial effects on overall standard of living. (Interestingly, this is beginning to change as the prospects of future generations appear to be worse than their parents, even with increasing productivity (Tankersley, 2016)). First, they argue, that automation increases efficiency, which results in greater productivity and output, and this increases consumers’ purchasing power and ultimately facilitates greater consumption (which economists have also problematically tied to standard of living). Secondly, the workers who are displaced by the implementation of new technologies are able to pursue work in new fields and offer new contributions to society with their labor. This has beneficial effects on entrepreneurship and innovation. For instance, the replacement of farmers by machines may have paved the way for new industries to thrive.

This time is different

Some economists and social theorists are beginning, however, to raise flags about the nature and economic function of automation today, and suggest that economic orthodoxy may be outdated. That is, they claim that this time technological revolution is different, and not in a beneficial way. Specifically, developments in the third and fourth industrial revolutions have introduced new economic problems that didn’t accompany prior revolutions. Klaus Schwab,
founder of the World Economic Forum demarcates the revolutions as such, “The First Industrial Revolution used water and steam power to mechanize production. The Second used electric power to create mass production. The Third used electronics and information technology to automate production. Now a Fourth Industrial Revolution is building on the Third, the digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century. It is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres” (Schwab, 2016). I will now explore the most salient attributes of the third and fourth revolutions that make them unique and immune to the ideas of traditional economic theory.

According to (Brynjolfsson et al., 2014), economists branch mainly into two distinct groups that conceptualize the fourth revolution in different ways. They claim that,

On the one hand, there are the techno-optimists, who often have a utopian view of the world. This group thinks that technology will solve all our problems. In fairness, innovation has never been faster, and technology has solved an amazing set of problems. The conclusion this group sometimes draws from that is “just let technology do its thing and the rest will take care of itself.” People in the second group, which is largely composed of economists, tend to have a pessimistic view of both the present and, perhaps more disturbingly, the future. They point out that median income is lower now than it was in the 1990s, that unemployment has been struggling, that the economy, by many metrics, has been performing quite poorly. They believe that we’ll have less economic growth in the future than we did in the past.

There are, I will argue, three critical reasons that support the pessimistic view of ARA and the fourth revolution. First, is that technological revolution today incorporates artificial intelligence. Historically, the development of new technologies replaced the need for human physical labor, but, the machines that replaced such labor still required a human operator — i.e. a mind — to control them. For example, the replacement of carriages by cars threatened the livelihood of carriage drivers, but, new jobs were created in the form of car drivers. In both cases, human mental activity is needed. Automation in the most recent revolutions, on the other hand, is different in that labor saving machines are developed with built in minds. To continue with our example from above, the transition from car to driverless car will not be like the transition from carriage to car. As far as we can tell, driverless cars will replace hired drivers without producing a new type of related job. In other words, the shift from carriage to car didn’t obliterate the need for human driving, but the transition to driverless cars will -- and this distinction is the product of intelligence being built into driverless cars. In sum, driverless
cars—and automation with a built in mind—destroy the economic and functional need for the human body and mind.

The second problem is slightly derivative of the first. Some economists point out that technological developments in the third and fourth revolution are general purpose (Ford, 2016). That is, the new types of technology being developed aren’t particularly useful, but are generally useful, which means that automation can replace workers in several, if not all fields at once. According to (Ford, 2016), “The situation today is quite different. Information technology is a truly general-purpose technology, and its impact will occur across the board. Virtually every industry in existence is likely to become less labor-intensive as new technology is assimilated into business models—and that transition could happen quite rapidly” (p. xvi). Simply, in earlier economic periods a new technological development in, say, farming equipment, may have affected the labor market of the agriculture industry, but it didn’t really alter the coal mining industry. The way technology is revolutionized today with digitalization and algorithmic programming, as two examples, is changing every economic dimension and industry in rapid fashion. This feature of general purpose technology accounts for research findings that suggest “47 percent of total us employment is at risk” of being automated (Frey & Osborne, 2013).

Third, the problem is much more sinister than some economists let on and others believe possible. To put it bluntly, the institution of work itself will eventually become entirely solvent. This position is predicated on deeper understanding of the possibilities behind artificial intelligence—which I now briefly want to survey. The purpose of exploring this possibility, which may seem ‘far-fetched’ or far off in the future, is to stress the reality with which we must grapple: a world without work. At this point, we have built some machines that have ‘artificial intelligence’. A chess playing computer is the obvious example. This AI, however, does not possess general intelligence. That is, such a machine cannot think across domains or apply its knowledge to novel situations. It will play chess better than anyone in the world, but it cannot play tic-tac-toe or read a poem. This type of AI has been labeled artificial narrow intelligence (ANI). Of course, ANI has already been used to replace human workers, much like other technological innovations in history.
Real problems arise with the introduction of an artificial general intelligence (AGI), a machine that actually can think across domains. Once a computer has the ability to think generally (like humans), and has access to the internet, it will soon begin to improve itself and re-write its own code. Because an artificial intelligence learns at the speed of the digital-time scale and possesses infinite memory space, a take-off effect will occur. An AGI would learn so quickly it could make 1,000s of years of human intellectual progress in the span of weeks. Eventually the AGI would learn to build physical iterations of itself that it could inhabit and control. These physical bodies would be the ultimate laborer; they have no human-like needs and could work endlessly. Running these physical bodies would require only raw materials, driving down the cost of production to the price of resources, and effectively negating the need for human workers. Unlike with current ANI machines, the AGI will operate its physical iterations directly, and humans won’t even be needed for operation and maintenance purposes.

Philosophers and economists are extremely concerned about this outcome, since we lack a political and economic system that could absorb the effect of such powerful cost-saving machines. It may end up that one person or one company controls an ever-growing army of labor with zero labor costs. As no business entity could compete, this would lead to massive unemployment and extreme wealth centralization. We need, and don’t have, a political infrastructure capable of ensuring that everyone would have access to the newfound wealth. If we continue with our current moral understanding of the economy, that the worker’s worth is determined by market forces, society will completely deteriorate in a world with AGI where the worker’s worth is zero.

Again, some may argue that the development of AGI is decades, or even a century, away. This observation serves no purpose, and is nothing more than a non-sequitur. The fact that the problem is some distance away does not change the fact that it moving closer and is ultimately an eventuality that society will be forced to confront. AGI, I would argue, is a problem that we must categorize with climate change. Both climate change and AGI: (a) are complex affairs that are difficult to understand (b) are inevitable outcomes given our current behavior, (c) pose an existential threat to society, and (d) demand substantial political consideration and preparation. The day a corporation, government, or even an individual, harnesses the power of an AGI, the end of work will ensue shortly there after. Economic rationality will demand that this ultimate labor-saving device be put to use, and the employer
contradiction will reach the point of absurdity. Either all forms of competition will be wiped out by the efficiency of the AGI, or competitors will develop their own AGI, but either way almost all forms of labor will become immediately redundant and unnecessary.

| The Empirical Reality |

The remainder of this chapter is a foray into the indicators suggesting that the rise of ARA will result in the materialization of Marx’s predictions — the destabilization of capitalism — through the employer contradiction. Recall that the employer contradiction is comprised of two claims: (a) production will become so efficient that human labor (variable capital) is no longer needed, and (b) that capitalists will no longer have a consumer base to whom they can sell their products. I now want to highlight some empirical facts about the current labor and consumer markets that underscore the growing reality of (a) and (b) in contemporary times — and, also consider the link of (a) and (b)’s growing reality with ARA advancement. The truth of (a), that workers are becoming increasingly redundant is affirmed by three economic trends: (1) the declining labor force participation rate/employment-to-population ratio, (2) the fact that most new jobs being created over the last decade are temporary, part-time, no benefit, service jobs, and (3) what economists have labeled ‘the great decoupling’. The truth of (b) is also validated by three noted trends in the economy: (1) growing income-to-debt ratios (and the rise of cheap credit), (2) the stagnation of personal consumption expenditures as a share of domestic and global GDP, and (3) corporations are sitting on trillions of dollars in cash as opposed to reinvesting profit back into their firms.

| The employer contradiction: part (a) |

The grim future that looms ahead, namely a world without employment opportunity, is already coming into focus. Key economic indicators suggest that the employer contradiction is beginning to seriously threaten the economic and political stability of post-industrial democracies (the ‘developed’ world). The redundancy of labor, and more broadly, the loss of work and income in America and post-industrial democracies is starkly evident when considering the anemic state of labor markets. In 2010, Neil Irwin reported in the Washington Post that, “There has been zero net job creation since December 1999. No previous decade going back to the 1940s had job growth of less than 20 percent” (Irwin, 2010). Things have not
improved since the publication of Irwin’s article. A recent September 2016 paper by economists Lawrence Katz and Alan Kreuger, found that, as of right now, one million fewer people are working steady, full-time jobs than at the beginning of the recession (Katz & Krueger, 2016). Also, we can see from Bureau of Labor and Statistics data reproduced in Figure 1.3, that the U.S. labor force participation rate has been steadily declining since the late 1990s — and, in Figure 1.4, we see that the employment to population ratio has been declining over the same time period, and has not significantly improved following the Great Recession.

Figure 1.1 U.S. Labor Force Participation

The declining labor force participation rate runs counter to main-stream media narrative of a full and healthy recovery from the Great Recession. As The Brookings Institution notes, “Today’s unemployment rate of 4.8 percent, showing the United States still nearing “full employment,” will dominate the mainstream news. But behind the headlines is a troubling, stubborn trend: men and women dropping out of the labor force. Today’s report confirms this decline, with the labor force participation rate sitting at 62.9 percent compared to its 1990s peak of 67.3 percent” (Krause & Sawhill, 2017). Indeed, government figures continue to obscure the reality of labor trends and inflate the cause for celebration. Paul Craig Roberts reports that, “According to the government, March [2017] produced only 98,000 new payroll jobs, an insufficient amount to reduce unemployment, but the unemployment rate fell from 4.7 to 4.5 percent. How did that happen? Not because the unemployed found jobs. The unemployment rate fell because the government did not count as unemployed large numbers of
unemployed people who did not look for a job during the four week period prior to the
survey” (Roberts, 2017).

The standard reported unemployment statistic, U3 unemployment, has serious
methodological limitations. This is problematic because it is usually cited as a leading indicator
for the health of an economy. The structure of the statistic ignores certain eligible populations
that are not participating in the labor force, such as those who have given up looking for work.
Those eligible persons missing from the labor force, as noted by (Roberts, 2017), are what
economists have labeled hidden unemployment, which currently stands at 5.9% in contrast to
the U3 unemployment of 4.8% (Economic Policy Institute, 2017). Additionally, the low U-3
unemployment rate isn’t compatible with other data: “The government knows the reported
unemployment rate is wrong, because other data are inconsistent with the low rate. For
example, the labor force participation rate consistent with a 4.5% unemployment rate is 67%,
whereas the current participation rate is a low 63%, which implies a much higher rate of
unemployment than 4.5%” (Roberts, 2017). It is also worth noting that while the U-3
unemployment statistic has reduced substantially from the 2008 post-recession high of 10.0%,
most of the new jobs created are temporary, minimum wage, with no benefits. In fact, 95% of
the ‘10 million’ jobs added during the Obama Presidency “are temporary, contractual jobs or
part-time employment” (Staff, 2016).

A deeper analysis of the labor market by race and gender reveals even more
disparaging results, namely, how imbalanced the loss of jobs is for blacks and men in general.
According to economist Lawrence Summers, “The share of the male population who are neither
working, looking for work, in school or old enough to retire has more than doubled over the
past 50 years, even though the population has become much healthier and more educated.
Today, even with a low overall unemployment rate, roughly one in six men between the ages of
25 and 54 is out of work.” He continues, “if current trends continue, a quarter of men between
25 and 54 will be out of work by mid-century” (Summers, 2016). Figure 1.3 shows the falling
rate of male participation in the workforce and the, “decline[d] from its peak of 98 percent in
1954 to 88 percent today” (Krause & Sawhill, 2017). This trend is likely to continue as
traditionally male industries, such as truck driving, continue to become automated. Demos, a
Washington, D.C. policy think tank, reports that, “that there are about 4 million Americans who drive for a living. A lot of the autonomous-vehicle discussions have focused only on cars, but most people who drive for a living drive heavy trucks (e.g., 18-wheelers), delivery trucks, and buses… Autonomous vehicles could begin eliminating driving jobs in as soon as 2 or 3 years” (Austin, 2017). The authors continue by noting the devastation automated driving spells out for black men:

Driving occupations are for the most part dominated by men... [and] by race, no group relies more on driving occupations for work than African Americans. Blacks are overrepresented in the bus driver, truck driver, and taxi driver occupational categories. [Therefore,] Black men should be especially worried about the rise of autonomous vehicles because not only are they overrepresented in these occupations, they tend to earn more in driving occupations than they do in non-driving occupations. Driving occupations are one of the few in which a black man without a college degree can obtain a job that pays fairly well.

The data cited in this section may, in part, explain the false perceptions many Americans have about the actual state of the economy. A 2015 poll by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) found that, “a full 72 percent of Americans believe that the economy is in a state of recession. And that is an improvement. In 2012 — three years after the recession officially ended — 76 percent of Americans told PRRI researchers the country remained in recession” (Ross, 2015). Furthermore a Bloomberg News poll showed, “that a full 34 percent of Americans mistakenly believe the unemployment rate is now worse than it was when Obama took office, right after the economic collapse had already sucked up millions of jobs. For
Republicans, that figure is 53 percent — a majority” (Ross, 2015). How wrong exactly are these respondents? They are certainly tapping into something real that pundits, in their scoffing at the stupidity of the masses, carelessly ignore. Specifically, these respondents are reacting to a handful of problems in the current labor market that are overlooked by traditional indicators of a healthy economy, such as hidden unemployment and the rise of part-time, contractual, service jobs with no benefits.

The question remains, however, as to whether these trends are related to the advancement of ARA. To be clear, there is no consensus within the literature on what is causing these highlighted labor trends. The Brookings Institution captures the conflicted nature of the research community: “Explanations for the decline tend to focus on supply-side factors (workers are ill-fit for the jobs available) or demand-side factors (employers aren’t hiring). The CEA [Council of Economic Advisors] leans more on the demand side, suggesting that trade and technology have reduced demand for less-skilled labor, principally in the manufacturing sector. But not all experts agree with this assessment” (Krause & Sawhill, 2017, my own italicization). Another non-ARA (nor offshoring) related explanation for these trends come from Economists Paulina Restrepo-Echavarria and Senior Maria A. Arias. They have, “outlined two general views for this decline… The “bad omen” view, which says that the declines in the LFP rate are due to people leaving the labor force because of the poor state of the economy [and] the “demographics” view, which states that the changes in the rate are a reflection of changes in the demographics of the labor force” (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2017). In short, their research indicates that demographic changes, such as the sharp rise in female labor force participation, the aging workforce, and that more work-age persons are enrolled in higher education institutions. Thus, they conclude that, “Piecing together these characteristics of the working-age population, we can help explain the declining labor force participation rate” (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2017).

Again, nobody can be sure with certainty what macro-economic factors are driving these trends, but there are strong reasons for believing ARA is at the heart of it. Chief among these reasons is what has labeled the great decoupling by economists (and faculty members at
the MIT Sloan School of Management) Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee. In an interview for the Harvard Business Review, they describe this phenomenon as such:

Let’s look at the four key measures of an economy’s health: per capita GDP, labor productivity, the number of jobs, and median household income. When we studied the U.S. data on all those metrics, we turned up an intriguing story: For more than three decades after World War II, all four went up steadily and in almost perfect lockstep. Job growth and wage growth, in other words, kept pace with gains in output and productivity. American workers not only created more wealth but also captured a proportional share of the gains. In the 1980s, however, the growth in median income began to sputter. In the past 15 years it’s turned negative; once you adjust for inflation, an American household at the 50th percentile of income distribution earns less today than it did in 1998, even after accounting for changes in household size. Job growth in the private sector has also slowed—and not just because of the 2008 recession. Job gains were anemic throughout the 2000s, even when the economy was expanding. This phenomenon is what we call the Great Decoupling. The two halves of the cycle of prosperity are no longer married: Economic abundance, as exemplified by GDP and productivity, has remained on an upward trajectory, but the income and job prospects for typical workers have faltered (Bernstein & Raman, 2015).

Figure 1.4 highlights the multi-decade divergence of income and labor productivity that Brynjolfsson and McAfee speak of. This growing separation between labor productivity and median family income lends immense support to the claim that ARA is playing a significant role in the problem of lost work and income. Many have argued that offshoring and trade are central to the stagnation of wages and income over the last forty-years. But this can
development can only partially explain the stagnant incomes, and fails to account for growing labor productivity within the U.S. (David et al., 2013). Moreover, in the developing world, “labor’s share of GDP had declined in 42 out of 59 countries, including China, Mexico, and India... Researchers [have] concluded that as advances in information technology caused the price of plants, machinery, and equipment to drop, companies shifted investment away from labor and toward capital” (Bernstein & Raman, 2015).

Recall from earlier in this chapter that, according to economic orthodoxy, technological advancement will always result in improved productivity and increased labor value (i.e. higher income and wages). Thus, the question at hand is whether the impact of technology is different this time — that is, are ARA advancements (and the fourth technological revolution) actually hurting working the prospects and propensity of working people. The answer put forth by Brynjolfsson and McAfee is yes, this time is different: “We haven’t experienced anything quite like this before. Even though machines did more and more work and the population grew rapidly for almost 200 years, the value of human labor actually rose. You could see this in the steady increase in the average worker’s wages. That fueled the notion that technology helps everyone. However, that kind of success is not automatic or inevitable.” They also point to the declining share of GDP that goes to workers’ wages, featured in Figure 1.5. In the words of McAfee, “One gauge of workers’ prospects is how much of GDP is paid as wages every year. Labor’s share of GDP held steady for many decades in America, but since 2000 it has fallen sharply. Meanwhile, corporate profits were rising quickly before the Great Recession and

![Figure 1.5](image-url)
recovered with remarkable speed afterward; now they’re at their highest point since World War II.” If the employer contradiction was unfolding with greater severity due to ARA advancement, we would expect this very trend to take place. If technology was increasingly making redundant labor it would start with the decline of workers’ wages and the rise of corporate profits — but, as we will see, this situation can only be managed with fixes like cheaply available credit for so long.

Brynjolfsson and McAfee argue that ARA is not only central to declining income and wages, but the increases in inequality we have seen over the last four decades. According to Brynjolfsson, “the dirty secret of economics is that it’s possible for technology to make the pie bigger—and that’s exactly what it’s been doing. Record wealth. But at the same time there’s no law that everybody’s going to benefit from technology. Ever since the Industrial Revolution, we’ve experienced a rising tide that has helped most people. But in the past 15 or 20 years or so, those trends have diverged” (Brynjolfsson et al. 2014). This is the crucial point that will be explored at the end of this chapter. Technological advancement may increase efficiency and productivity, but the manner in which it does is completely divorced from the distribution of such newly developed wealth. Thus, ARA introduces — rather demands — that we must consider new modes of distribution in order to justly and effectively absorb its impact.

| The employer contradiction: part (b) |

Recall that truth of the second part of the employer contradiction, (b), is also validated by three noted trends in the economy: (1) growing income-to-debt ratios (and the rise of cheap credit), (2) the stagnation of consumption (the declining profits of shipping companies), and (3) corporations are sitting on trillions of dollars in cash as opposed to reinvesting back into their firms. Regarding the first point (1), it stands to reason that if the employer contradiction was taking form, we would observe a significant decline in wages and income for the working and lower classes accompanied with rising increasing household debt to finance consistent levels of consumption over this time period. Indeed, both of these expectations have materialized within the United States over the previous four decades. Figure 1.6 shows that the pace of annual pay increases — that is, cumulative change in real annual wages — for the bottom 90% only grew 15% since 1979, compared to the 138% increase for the
top 1%. The reality of stagnant wages, however, is best captured in Figure 1.7 which further segregates the data on annual pay increases into very high wage earners (the top 5%), middle wage earners (the middle 50%), and low wage earners (the bottom 10%). In real dollars, wages for have risen only 6% over thirty-five years for middle earners, and they have declined 5% for low earners. In other words, most American’s have seen no new income or lost income over the past four decades. This stagnation or decline in income has, of course, occurred over an inflationary period with rising costs of living. Consider the effect of this trend with respect to the minimum wage. According to (Desilver, 2017), “Adjusted for inflation, the federal minimum wage peaked in 1968 at $8.68 (in 2016 dollars). Since it was last raised in 2009, to the current $7.25 per hour, the federal minimum has lost about 9.6% of its purchasing power to inflation.” If the minimum wage was raised to its “inflation-adjusted historic high” in 1968, it would be over ten-dollars today (Barbones, 2012). However, (Barnones, 2012) argues that isn’t an appropriate benchmark because it would merely restore the minimum wage to the purchasing power it had in 1968. Instead, he suggests that, “A better way to update the minimum wage is to benchmark it to personal income growth in the economy as a whole... If our standard for minimum wages had kept pace with overall income growth in the American economy, it would now be $21.16 per hour.”

If the cost of living is going up, but incomes are going down, then how are the bottom 90% getting by? In other words, how has this problematic manifestation of the employment contradiction been navigated thus far? Some point to the rise of cheaply available credit as a
means of maintaining consumer purchasing power as the value of labor decreases. This claim is validated by massive increase in the debt-to-income ratio over the last three decades of the bottom 95%, as evidenced by the findings of (Kumhof & Rancière, 2010) in Figure 1.8. Their research shows that the income-to-debt ratio for the bottom 95% has gone from $0.63 of debt for every dollar earned to $1.40 of debt for every dollar earned from the early 1980’s to the great recession. This trend of increased borrowing by the bottom 95% is congruent with a period of consistent wage and income stagnation of low and middle-wage classes. According to (Mishel et al., 2015), “Middle-class wages are stagnant—Middle-wage workers’ hourly wage is up 6% since 1979, low-wage workers’ wages are down 5%, while those with very high wages saw a 41% increase.”

Thus, in order to finance constant levels of consumption, the middle- and lower-classes have had to borrow. Problematically, their lenders were (and will continue to be) members of the upper-class who increasingly posses higher levels of disposable income for giving out loans (through buying assets like collateralized debt, such as home mortgages) (Hodgson, 2016). Of course, this can only go on for so long until the levels of debt become unsustainable, which is exactly what happened in the financial crisis of 2008. Thus, as mentioned above, it would be naive to believe that because the employer contradiction has yet destabilize the current capitalist model that it will never happen. It is entirely plausible that certain social and economic processes — like cheaply available credit — have simply forestalled Marx’s prophecy.
In fact, the central argument of this paper is that the capitalist order will destabilize when confronted with final, unnavigable manifestation of the employer contradiction in the form of automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence.

**Figure 1.9**

*Figure 1. Personal consumption expenditures as a percent of gross domestic product, 1960–2012 and 2022 projected*

Another indicator that the employment contradiction is taking shape in ever-graver form is the decline of consumption levels by American consumers. Figure 1.9 shows that personal consumption expenditures as a percent of gross domestic product has been relatively stagnant from 2000 onwards, and is even projected to decline over the next decade. The 2022 rate of personal consumption expenditures is expected by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics to return to near 2000 levels. The U.S. consumption expenditures as share of the world economy has been steadily declining since 2000. Additionally, the reality of a the declining consumer is further evidenced by the stagnant profits of international shipping companies. The Financial Times reports that, “The [container shipping line] industry, a vital link in the world’s supply of manufactured goods, is suffering what could well turn out to be the deepest and longest downturn in its 60-year history” (Line, 2016). The declining profits of this industry signals that the fruitfulness of internationally traded goods is falling, a sign of weak consumer demand.

The third trend I will point to as evidence for the sedimentation of the employer contradiction is the recently-adopted practice of corporations hoarding trillions of dollars in
cash in banks, as opposed to reinvesting such profits back into the company. Adam Davidson, in an article for The New York Times, captures the absurdity and non-existent historical precedent for this phenomenon:

There is an economic mystery I’ve been struggling to understand for quite some time, and I’m not the only one who’s confused: Among financial experts, it is often referred to as a conundrum, a paradox, a puzzle. The mystery is as follows: Collectively, American businesses currently have $1.9 trillion in cash, just sitting around. Not only is this state of affairs unparalleled in economic history, but we don’t even have much data to compare it with, because corporations have traditionally been borrowers, not savers. The notion that a corporation would hold on to so much of its profit seems economically absurd, especially now, when it is probably earning only about 2 percent interest by parking that money in United States Treasury bonds. These companies would be better off investing in anything — a product, a service, a corporate acquisition — that would make them more than 2 cents of profit on the dollar, a razor-thin margin by corporate standards. And yet they choose to keep the cash (Davidson, 2016).

Davidson goes on to survey some of the academic explanations for this corporate behavior offered in economic journals, but notes that they all conclude with remaining uncertainty. Traditional explanations such as putting aside money for mergers and acquisition, tax efficiency (i.e. tax evasion), or economic emergencies don’t add up because, “we are still left with an enormous puzzle. Companies like Google and GM are holding on to far more cash — many times more — than could possibly be explained by emergency funds and tax efficiencies and M.&A. intimidation put together.” In his monthly lecture on the state of Global Capitalism, Marxist economist Richard Wolff suggests that this hoarding of cash by corporations is a symptom of weak demand. He argues that investing in new products only make sense if you have someone to sell them to. Therefore, the decision to buy treasury bonds at a measly two percent interest rate signals that corporations have little faith in the profitability of selling new products. This position is echoed by Davidson and the wider economic literature: “One camp [of economists] believes that a large cash hoard is a sign of an unhealthy company. Maybe its whole industry is doing so poorly that there is nothing worth investing in.” If the employer contradiction were starting to rise in salience, this kind of corporate behavior is exactly what we would expect to see. That is, there would be an unprecedented breakdown in production and consumption, where businesses would see no reason to continue making goods for which they have on one to sell them to.
ARA as a moral, not economic, issue

Modes of production and modes of distribution I want to conclude the literature review with the following claim: it cannot be stressed enough that, unlike other traditional labor market issues, ARA is not an issue that will be solved with the utilization of economic mechanics. What I mean by economic mechanics is those measures that attempt to improve labor market conditions via technical or managerial innovation — such as, fiscal and monetary policy, legislation (like federal work programs, trade policy, etc.) and other efforts to restructure economic institutions. Historically, all of these government-sponsored actions have operated under the pretense that the overarching features of our economic system will remain constant. That is, the manipulation of market factors to improve labor conditions does not require that the entire system be re-arranged or re-designed. Take for instance the response by the federal government to the threat posed by the Great Recession. The Federal Reserve lowered interest rates for a long period of time to get out credit, the Treasury carried out several rounds of quantitative easing to bail-out the financial institutions that were on the brink of failure, and Congress passed legislation for multiple stimulus packages to divert federal funds to public employment campaigns. The result of all these policies was much needed relief that lowered unemployment quite rapidly, restored consumer and investor confidence, and kept a handful of financial institutions from bringing down the global economy. All of this was done, however, without any demand that the fundamental principles and structures of our economic system — such as the modes of production and distribution — change.

The possibility of navigating the ARA crisis with economic mechanics, while leaving the fundamental principles and structures of our economy constant, is simply non-existent. The reason is simple: the central distributive institution within our modern economy, the role of labor, will be eliminated! Within capitalist market structure, the activity of production and consumption is mediated through the institution of employment because the most pressing economic question a society faces, the distribution of material goods, is effectively answered by the institution of work. That is, people are only entitled to what they can afford, and what they can afford is defined by their employment status. CB Macpherson articulates very
eloquently why this is: at the heart of the capitalist model is the separation of capital and labour (Macpherson & Cunningham, 2014). This separation entails that laborers enter the market with no access to the means of production (i.e. those materials that satisfy the critical needs of life). The only means of obtaining access is to sell their labor in exchange for a wage in which to purchase such commodities. Marx denoted this process as C-M-C (commodity, money, commodity). Thus, in a capitalistic mode of production, the institution of employment is the primary *mode of distribution*. I will refer to this entire fact pattern as the work-propserity-link. Thus, this term signifies that, in our current capitalist system, one’s prosperity is contingent upon the presence and fulfillment of work. It should be evident now that our subscription to the work-propserity-link as the means of distributing property cannot go any longer, because ARA will remove the work component altogether. In other words, a reconfiguration of the distributive system is demanded, not economic manipulation by managerial experts.

It is this fact, that technocratic ‘dial-turning’ will not solve the problem of lost work brought about by ARA, that must eventually be accepted. I fear, however, that the acceptance of this reality will come too late, or certainly, not soon enough. As mentioned above, capitalism has survived the employer contradiction — and other economic disasters like the Great Depression and Recession — for centuries. This successful survival has resulted in a profound commitment to the notion that we can navigate economic problems without doing away with a capitalist market-structure itself. In other words, because societies have always managed economic breakdowns through mechanical fixes, we will always be able to manage economic troubles through such measures.

Due to modern ARA developments, as stated above, two social phenomena that are becoming increasingly conceptually and morally incongruent: the linking of work with prosperity and the atrophy of full-time, meaningful employment. Indeed, our current politico-economic system draws and enforces a direct link between work and prosperity, wherein the livelihood and social worth of an individual is significantly correlated with her occupation. Therefore, any threat to the ability of individuals to work and find employment is a problem, not only of economic consequence, but of social and political significance as well. The twenty-
first century, so far, has suffered such a threat, with serious despair in the labor market. This moral contradiction, the linking of employment with quality of life in a climate of disappearing employment opportunity, in addition to the economic contradiction noted by Marx, must be addressed or our political system will only become increasingly unstable.

Not only is work considered functionally necessary, it is often conceived as morally necessary. Attached to the concept of work is the moral intuition that it has inherent, not just instrumental value — work is good in and of itself. This appropriation of ARA from the economic sphere to the moral sphere is fundamental to the reasoning behind this project. Thus, the value in exploring the national political dialogue on ARA is that it helps us understand where we stand in building a political system that can handle the oncoming moral crisis of ARA. Are politicians building a narrative based on economic policy alone, or are they accounting for the moral dimension of redistribution? If it is discovered that the problem of ARA is routinely ignored, what does this say about the ideology of lost work? Is this an attempt to skirt the moral dimension of lost jobs, and define the loss of work as merely an economic problem? If so, this has serious political consequences that benefit politicians and hurt the populace. It allows politicians to maintain the facade that they are actually addressing the problem, when in reality, turning ‘economic’ dials will do nothing. The collection of data that attempts to answer these questions can be further broken down to reveal important distinctions, like differences among political parties.

Chapter Three: Materials and Methods

| The Response of the Political Class

Naturally, the citizenry look to politicians to mend a broken economic system and ameliorate structural problems like depressed labor markets and a climate of rapidly diminishing meaningful employment opportunities. So what has been the political response to this economic and moral crisis? It appears that politicians are, in fact, tapped into the problem. There certainly is widespread acknowledgement by the political class of existing economic concerns among voters, such as the need for greater productivity growth and the creation of more jobs (Timiraos & Rubin, 2016). In the last three political cycles, candidates have categorically and consistently promised to implement policies that will ‘bring back’ good jobs
to America, and their suggestions, unsurprisingly, are dominated by managerial policy measures
(more will be said on the managerial component in subsequent sections). Specifically, their
typical response to widespread job insecurity has predominantly involved the chastising of
potential culprits: globalization, immigration, bad trade deals, high corporate taxes, excessive
regulation, the need for jobs training programs, and trade deficits. What is curious, however,
as noted by journalists and pundits, is how little attention is appropriated to the problem of
automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence (Casselman, 2016; Clifford, 2016; Roller, 2016),
which is regarded by economists and policy analysts as the ‘real’ source of lost jobs (Hicks &
Devaraj, 2015). It seems that neither Left nor Right has much to say about this phenomenon or
how to properly address it — and it is this rhetorical vacuum around ARA that is a central
concern of this paper.

While the opinions and political stances of politicians on the disappearance of work are
well documented, a deeper analysis of the ideology that is unfolding in response to the
problem of lost work is needed. I employ the term ‘ideology’ to represent both the traditional
and Marxian meaning of the word. The traditional definition — “a system of ideas and ideals,
especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy” — and the
Marxian definition — “the ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the
dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence
of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of their
dominance”3 — highlight that suggested solutions to the problem of lost work by the political
class will not only inform how government addresses the problem, but that such measures may
be inspired by the interests of the elite. Thus, this project is an effort to explore the role of
ARA, and how it is conceived of, in the developing ideology surrounding the problem of lost
work and income.

| Data and Methodology

3 Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. The German Ideology Part One, with Selections from Parts Two and
Three, together with Marx's "Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy." New York: International
The empirical object to be observed is the campaign rhetoric of political candidates. It is in the process of campaigning that politicians are forced to broadcast to the public their governing intentions in the pursuit of votes. Furthermore, in the course of making legislative promises, politicians traditionally warrant their claims by appealing to specific policy measures and values. It is the presence of both descriptive and prescriptive political rhetoric that is of critical importance to this project. As noted above, the problem the loss of work isn’t just an economic issue, it is a moral one as well. Campaign stump speeches helpfully offer a window into potential technocratic and philosophical reactions to the issue of ARA. Moreover, the presidential campaign process offers even more unique advantages as empirical object for this study. First, presidents are arguably held responsible, more so than congressional figures, for the state of the economy. Thus, presidential candidates are thoroughly vetted on their plan to improve economic conditions. Second, the presidential campaign provides national-level attention to more than just the traditional political figures. The presidential cycle is arguably the best period of exposure for dissenting political opinion, especially from third-party outlets such as the Green and Libertarian Parties. For these reasons, then, presidential campaign speeches are the optimal empirical object for exploring the political rhetoric surrounding ARA.

The appropriate research method for this project, then, is a content analysis of campaign speeches. A content analysis offers a detailed examination of the extent to which ARA is being discussed by the political class, how the problem is being conceptualized, and what policy solutions are being put forward. The examination of these factors will, hopefully, yield the findings needed for a deeper understanding of developing political ideologies on the problem of lost work. The content analysis for this project will utilize presidential campaign stump speeches as the raw data to be reviewed. The University of California at Santa Barbara sponsors the American Presidency Project, which houses an extensive archive of campaign speeches given by presidential candidates in the Democratic and Republican party. The American Presidency Project has produced transcripts for campaign cycles going back to 2000, but the document archives for the 2008, 2012, and 2016 cycles boast the most substantial repository of speech transcripts. My content analysis will only cover the most recent 2016 presidential cycle. Moreover, the document archive for these cycles includes only Republican
and Democratic candidates. This means that my analysis will be limited to only the main political parties, which is a key limitation.

Presidential candidates usually campaign across the entire country, and give speeches in a large number of states. For instance, the 2016 campaign document archive contains sixty-eight speeches given by President Donald Trump in more than thirty states; and, Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton gave eighty-nine speeches in more than thirty-five states. While performing a content analysis on every state would be optimal, for reasons of resource limitation, I will be narrowing my content analysis to speeches given in the rust-belt states: namely, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin. These states have particular significance to the scope of this project: they are home to the people and locations most harshly affected by the phenomenon of ARA. In fact, the political significance of this region — and the lived experience of those living in these areas — took on a new importance in the 2016 presidential election. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton was expected to do well in these states; the rust-belt was even proverbially labeled the ‘blue wall’. The available polling data leading up to the election supported this belief. It was a staggering shock when she lost Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania — all states that had gone for Obama in both 2008 and 2012. The loss of these states doomed her prospects in reaching the 270 electoral college requirement, and ultimately the presidency, even though she won the popular vote by a substantial margin.

This paper will utilize a conceptual and relational content analysis of presidential campaign speeches. The conceptual analysis will employ an existence, not frequency, count to track the prevalence of ARA in the speeches. I figure that the likelihood of any ARA terminology appearing in a given speech is more significant than how many times ARA words are used in that speech. The relational analysis will involve a broader consideration, by exploring the themes associated with the problem of lost work and income. This part of the content analysis will utilize a grounded theory approach. That is, I will not be starting with pre-determined categories, but allow the categories to develop throughout the coding process. The categories to be developed will likely revolve around words, phrases, explanations, or themes surround the discussion of lost jobs, unemployment, and stagnant wages.
The content analysis completed for this paper, reviewed twenty campaign speeches given by Hillary Clinton (N=20). This sample size is a result of the American Presidency Project possessing only twenty transcripts of Clinton speeches in the rust belt states. Furthermore, this low number is also indicative of the arguably ‘fatal’ decision by the Clinton campaign to spend such little amounts of time in the rust belt. The first speech coded was given April 14, 2015 and the last speech coded was from the day before the election, November 7, 2016. A state breakdown of the speeches is as follows: Iowa (5 speeches), New York (3 speeches), Illinois (1 speech), Pennsylvania (4 speeches), Ohio (5 speeches), Michigan (2 speeches). In the case of Donald Trump, thirty-one campaign speeches were reviewed (N=31). The first Trump speech coded was given June 16, 2015 and the last speech coded was from the day before the election, November 1, 2017. A state breakdown of the speeches is as follows: Iowa (2 speeches), New York (3 speeches), Illinois (0 speeches), Pennsylvania (8 speeches), Ohio (9 speeches), Michigan (5 speeches), Wisconsin (4 speeches). It is worth noting the substantial discrepancy in sample sizes between Trump and Clinton and the possible decisive role it played in Trump’s victory. The rust belt states were often labeled the ‘Blue Wall’ to signify their, at the time, undoubted support for Clinton (the Democratic candidate). Clinton never visited Wisconsin, and Trump held speeches in the state at least four times.

Chapter Four: Findings

This section is dedicated to relaying the key findings from a relational content analysis of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump’s campaign speeches in the 2016 presidential election. The trajectory of the reported findings will range from the most concrete discoveries, to the more theoretical ones.

| Hillary Clinton on the problem of lost work and income

Throughout the coding process, I identified thirty-three themes that related to the problem of lost work and income. Each of these themes could be broadly categorized into two categories: (a) problem, (b) solution. However, a more nuanced take on her comments might
suggest a third category (c), of themes that both embody a problem/solution. Category (a) means that the theme was something Clinton identified as a problem, that is, a phenomenon that is contributing to the salience of lost work and income. Category (b) means that the theme was a phenomenon that Clinton believed could help solve the problem of lost work and income. Category (c) represents themes that Clinton believed to be both a problem and a solution at the problem of lost work — for instance, loss of traditional energy jobs (like coal mining) is a problem, but the newly developed ‘green energy’ sector is a solution to this problem. Fifteen of the thirty-three themes coded were categorized as a problem (i.e. something causing lost work and income), fifteen themes were coded as a solution to lost work and income, and three themes were coded as a solution/problem.

For the sake of conciseness, I will not be reviewing each independent theme, but the themes in each category that were most often discussed in Clinton’s speeches. Starting with category (a), the causes of lost work and income (and some themes may fall under (c)), Clinton most heavily stressed the following phenomena: the need for higher wages/good jobs, global trends, insufficient infrastructure spending (including energy), and economic favoritism toward the elite. I will now briefly expand upon each of these themes.

Higher Wages and Good Jobs

The need for higher wages and ‘good jobs’ was the theme that highest rate of appearance in Clinton’s campaign speeches. Of the twenty speeches reviewed, she stressed this political need in fifteen of them. Even though she often recognized the success of the post-recession recovery, she still addressed that the status quo is problematic. Arguably, this theme is one the most relevant and insightful to the central question this paper is investigating (i.e. how is the political class responding to the problem of lost work and income). To be sure, the frequent mention of this problem demonstrates that Clinton was indeed tapped into the problem of lost work and income. She does, for instance, acknowledge the problem of stagnant wages and income. In June of 2015, at a speech in New York Clinton spoke to the reality of this issue: “There are allies for change everywhere who know we can’t stand by while inequality increases, wages stagnate, and the promise of America dims.”
Furthermore, in three of the twenty speeches reviewed, she even voices concern over the Great decoupling between productivity and wages as discussed above. In May of 2015, at an Iowa speech Clinton stated, “We need to get back into the habit of actually rewarding workers with increases in their paychecks for the increases in productivity and profitability that they have helped to bring about.” In June 2015, at a New York rally: “You see corporations making record profits, with CEOs making record pay, but your paychecks have barely budged.” Two days later at another New York event she said, “Corporate profits are at near record highs and Americans are working as hard as ever. But paychecks had nearly budged in real terms…Now beyond strong growth, we also need fair growth and that will be the second key driver of raising incomes.” For our purposes, it is worth noting that she makes a point about the divergence between productivity and income without mentioning the role of ARA in driving this phenomenon.

Her understanding of the need for higher wages and good jobs primarily center on the inadequate minimum wage and jobs with rising incomes. In a speech on September 29, 2016 in Iowa, Clinton said, “Let’s raise the national minimum wage, so people who work full-time are not still in poverty. I’ve met - you know, two thirds of the people on minimum wage are women - and I’ve met a lot of minimum-wage workers right here in Iowa and across America. Sometimes they have to take two minimum-wage jobs, because a full-time minimum wage job will earn you $15,000 at the end of a full-time year of work.” Or on January 26, 2016, also in Iowa, she stated, “Now, there are two ways we can raise incomes real quick. One, we’ve got to raise the minimum wage. People who work full time should not still be in poverty.” Her proclamation of the need for a higher minimum wage frequently, if not always, couched in the moral precept that full time year-round workers should not be in poverty, as they currently are at minimum wage levels.

Clinton’s discussion on the need for good jobs wasn’t all that clear other than uttering the term ‘good jobs’ and connecting it to the concept of rising incomes. Thus, it appears that she designates a job to be a good job if it has an income that is fair and fulfills the needs of families. On May 18, 2015, at a speech in Iowa Clinton stated, “It [the economy] needs to be producing good jobs with rising wages.” Or in July 2016 in Pennsylvania she claimed, “My
primary mission as president will be to create more opportunity and more good jobs with rising wages right here in the United States”; and during a September 2016 Iowa address she said, “But when I think about the economy, yes, I want more new, good jobs with rising incomes.” In one instance, interestingly, Clinton analogized good jobs to the ones that have been replaced by ARA forces. At a speech in Ohio (October 2016): “We want to make the biggest investment in new jobs since World War II. Jobs in infrastructure and manufacturing, clean energy, technology and small business.”

In sum, we can say that Clinton acknowledges the problem of lost work (good jobs) and the stagnation of income and wages. However, she frames this reality as the result of a mode of production that needs managerial oversight, without stressing the need for a new mode of distribution altogether — and this is likely a result of failing to consider the role of ARA. Her insistence on a higher minimum wage, it could be argued, speaks to the need for a new mode of distribution, but as a solution it essentially propagates (and even supports) the work-prosperity-link. That is, this policy proposal is still grounded in the idea that work and prosperity are and should be bound to one another. It maintains the traditional capitalist mode of distribution, with tepid concern for those who fall into poverty.

Global Trends

Another cause central to Clinton’s analysis of lost work and income is the role of global trends, like globalization, international trade, and outsourcing. In eleven of the twenty reviewed speeches, Clinton mentioned the impact of such forces on the livelihood of American workers. In her comments on global trends she articulates the following phenomenon as contributing to lost work and income: deindustrialization, poorly written trade deals, unfair (or illegal) practices by foreign governments, problematic tax incentives, the failure to enforce trade rules, the need for an exit tax, and the flight of manufacturing jobs to Germany.

Clinton’s remarks on deindustrialization, the loss of manufacturing jobs to other countries, and the need to institute an exit tax on American companies that produce oversees underscores the primary concern of which this project is focused on. That is, Clinton does acknowledge that jobs are disappearing, but this particular theme of ‘global trends’ suggests
that a resolution does not require a new mode of distribution, rather a way of bringing back the industrial mode of production that once existed in the United States. For instance, at a rally in New York (July 2015), she states the problem we face, “You know, advances in technology expanding global trade have created new areas of commercial activity and opened new markets for our exports. Too often they are polarizing our economy, benefitting high skilled workers, but displacing and downgrading blue-collar jobs and other mid-level jobs that used to provide solid incomes for millions of Americans... And let me just say a word here about trade... Trade has been a major driver of the economy over recent decades, but it has also contributed to hollowing out our manufacturing base and many hard-working communities.” She goes on to suggest that a solution is available, “So we do need to set a high bar for trade agreements. We should support them if they create jobs, raise wages and advance our national security. And we should be prepared to walk away if they don't. To create fair growth, we need to create opportunity for more Americans.” Months later an Iowa event (January 2016), she makes an even more bold proposition, “And then we're going to take the tax system and get rid of the incentives that actually encourage people to take jobs and move them overseas, take factories and build them overseas. We're going to reverse that so we start investing in America again, advance manufacturing.” At a speech in Pennsylvania (July 2016) Clinton said, “If you believe that we should say no to unfair trade deals, that we should stand up to China, that we should support our steelworkers and autoworkers and home-grown manufacturers, then join us!”...“And if companies take tax breaks and then ship jobs overseas, we'll make them pay us back and we'll put that money to work where it belongs, creating jobs here at home.”

We can see from these quotes that Clinton conceptualizes and frames the problem of global trends does not underscore the need for a new mode of distribution, but some managerial manipulation of the current system. Her solution to the “hollowing out of our manufacturing base” appears to be negotiating better trade agreements and restructuring the tax system to incentivize companies to manufacture here at home. Neither of these resolutions speak to the fact that companies have returned to manufacture in America without producing new jobs, because these companies predominantly utilize ARA technology. In other words, the ARA and post-industrial mode of production dilemma is completely overlooked. In a couple of
speeches, like the New York (July 2015) one quoted above, Clinton does make mention of technological advancement contributing to the decline of manufacturing, but she conjoins this comment with comments about globalization, and then ultimately follows such comments with plans about addressing the globalization aspect only. This clearly demonstrates the hesitation of politicians to think of ARA as independent, dire issue that worth addressing outright.

Moreover, It is worth noting that after the Democratic Primary, Clinton begins to talk about global trends in ways that partially mirror the claims of Donald Trump, namely, she starts attacking the malignant practices of foreign governments. In Pennsylvania (July 2016) speech, Clinton has this to say about China, “If you believe that we should say no to unfair trade deals, that we should stand up to China, that we should support our steelworkers and autoworkers and home-grown manufacturers, then join us!... And if companies take tax breaks and then ship jobs overseas, we'll make them pay us back and we'll put that money to work where it belongs, creating jobs here at home.” It appears she is trying to tap into the zero-sum narrative that was purported by Trump, in a much less pointed way.

**Insufficient Infrastructure Spending**

The third central thematic cause central to Clinton’s analysis of lost work and income is the role of insufficient infrastructure investment. In ten of the twenty reviewed speeches, Clinton mentioned the impact of declining infrastructure investment on the livelihood of American workers. Additionally, if you include two other related themes, outright investment and energy jobs, she relates the problem of infrastructure spending to lost work and income in all twenty speeches. Clinton often claims that America’s declining investment in infrastructure, green energy technology, research and development, and broadband connection, have resulted in a less competitive America, and that reinvesting in these areas will bring back a substantial number of jobs. For instance, in a Pennsylvania speech (July 2016), Clinton made this campaign promise: “In my first 100 days, we will work with both parties to pass the biggest investment in new, good-paying jobs since World War II. Jobs in manufacturing, clean energy, technology and innovation, small business and infrastructure. If we invest in infrastructure now, we'll not only create jobs today, but lay the foundation for the jobs of the future. And we will also transform
the way we prepare our young people for those jobs.” She continually doubled down on this promise in many of the Rust Belt states. At an Ohio rally (October 2016), Clinton stated, “We are going to have a big investment in infrastructure: our roads, our bridges, our tunnels, our ports, our airports, our water systems. They need to be upgraded and maintained and built. That is a question of competitiveness. We have to have a competitive economy. Our airports are so rundown we don't even have one airport in our entire country in the top 25 in the world because we're not using the newest technology. We're not really prepared to do what we need to to invest in you and invest in those new jobs.”

As these quotes suggest, Clinton sees infrastructure as both a problem and solution to the problem of lost work and income. Part of her vision in building an economy that ‘works for everyone’ is investing in infrastructure jobs, of which there are many. At a Michigan rally, the day before the election she said, “And it’s important for us to recognize that when I talk about getting the economy to work for everybody, that means I want the biggest jobs program since World War II - infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, clean, renewable energy technology.”

We can see from the comments relating to this theme, that Clinton doesn’t see an inherent problem with our current mode of distribution, rather, we can use public investment within our current mode of production and distribution to help ease the problem of lost work and also reinvigorate our national infrastructure. In fact, she often refers to post-WWII times which signals a belief that we can return to the strong economy we had in the post war decades.

Economic Favoritism Toward the Elite

The fourth major theme in Clinton’s explanation for the loss income and work is the ‘stacking of the deck’ in favor of the elite. In thirteen of the twenty speeches, she mentioned the unfair tax code favoring the wealthiest Americans, and in seven speeches she berated the Republican commitment to trickle-down economics; and a related theme of inequality was mentioned in eight speeches. Arguably, her discussion on this theme is more pertinent to the problem of lost income and stagnant wages as opposed to jobs. In some instances, Clinton suggests that the financial squeeze and insecurity individuals and families are experiencing is the result of unjust distribution – yet, this injustice is framed as a social policy regime problem
as opposed to resulting from an outdated mode of distribution. In a Pennsylvania speech (July 2016), she stated, “Wall Street, corporations and the super rich are going to start paying their fair share of taxes. This is not because we resent success. But when more than 90 percent of the gains have gone to the top 1 percent, that’s where the money is. And we are going to follow the money.” As we can see, she incorporates into her narrative the fact almost all new gains are going to a small handful of people, and suggests that the slicing of the economic pie is unfair and threatening to the other 90%. I think it also important to note how this promise is couched in tacit admiration for the success of the 1%. This has a specific consequence of presenting a non zero-sum depiction of the economy, and the consequences of this depiction will be further explored in subsequent sections.

In a Ohio speech (October 2016), Clinton interestingly mentioned the problem of lost work in combination with her comments on unfair taxation: “First let’s start with protecting taxpayers and making sure we have more fairness in the system. It is wrong that corporations and the super-wealthy play by a different set of rules. A Wall Street money manager should not be able to pay a lower tax rate than a teacher or a nurse… And it is infuriating when they take tax breaks with one hand and give out pink slips in America with the other hand.”

Clinton also attributed the failed policies of trickle-down economics to the economic struggles Americans are facing. She often argued that this policy commitment is essentially a form of class-warfare, by extracting wealth and income from the middle and working classes and shuttling it all the top. At a Pennsylvania rally (October 2016), she had this to say, “As I said the other night, we are going to invest in the middle class. We are going to grow this economy from the middle out and the bottom up, not the top down.”...and they [Republicans/Conservatives] believe this -- if you give trillions of dollars — and they mean trillion with a t — of tax cuts to millionaires, billionaires, corporations, it will all trickle down to everybody else.”

As with the other themes thus far explored, this cause of lost work and income as identified by Clinton is not as much structural as they is cosmetic. By this I mean, the problems she singles out require managerial fixing, not a radical or substantial shift on our political and economic structures, such as a new mode of distribution to match the newly budding mode of production.
Clinton: the solutions to lost work and income

To briefly recall, I identified thirty-three themes that related to the problem of lost work and income. Each of these themes could be broadly categorized into two categories: (a) problem, (b) solution. Fifteen of the thirty-three themes coded were categorized as a problem (i.e. something causing lost work and income), fifteen themes were coded as a solution to lost work and income, and three themes were coded as a solution/problem. We have already covered the major themes in category (a), therefore, we now turn to the major themes of category (b). The solutions to lost work and income (and, as before, some themes may fall under (c)), Clinton most heavily stressed the following phenomena: empowering small business, inclusive prosperity/profit sharing, and job training.

Empowering Small Businesses

In fourteen of the twenty coded speeches, Hillary Clinton mentioned the role of small businesses in building a better economy with more jobs and higher incomes. She often defended her call to empower small businesses with the observation that most American workers are employed by a small business, and not the major companies that we often think of as the predominant employers. She often made statements like following at a campaign event in Ohio (October 2016): “most new jobs are going to come from small businesses in America, so we should have a big, dynamic small business economy.” Thus, Clinton presented small businesses as an untapped engine for growth and job creation. She often spoke of small businesses in the following language (from an Iowa rally in May 2015): “Now, small businesses like Bike Tech and the ones you’ll here about today have to be at the heart of that effort – creating jobs, driving growth, and giving millions of Americans the chance to live up to their God-given potential... A president who does make it easier to start and run a small business in this country, so it seems less like a gamble and more like an opportunity.” She highlighted several policy changes we can make to get further fuel this engine, most of which centered around making it easier to start and run a small business. These proposals included: leveling the playing field (i.e. making it easier for small businesses to compete with larger corporations,
decreasing regulation, helping small businesses access greater credit and loans, and lifting up local/community banks.

Her overarching concern regarding this theme was the need to make it easier to start a small business. At an Iowa event (September 2016), she stated, “Now, we also need to help small businesses. Iowa is filled with small businesses. It should be easier to start one, it shouldn’t be so cumbersome to deal with all the multitude of regulations… We’re going to try to streamline that process.” Clinton’s primary strategy for ‘streamlining’ the business start-up process was to tackle the significant existing barrier of over-regulation. In five of the twenty reviewed speeches she singled out the problem of over-regulation and called for the scaling back of such rules to further grow the economy and create jobs. At another Iowa speech (May 2015), Clinton said this about the harmful effects of regulation: “First, we need to cut the unnecessary red tape that costs small businesses time and money and keeps new entrepreneurs out. We should scrub federal regulations to find responsible ways to make life easier for small businesses, and we should offer new incentives to state and local governments to do the same, because that’s where many of the obstacles still lie… But today those same local banks are being squeezed by regulations that don’t make sense for their size and mission. Like endless examinations and paperwork designed for banks that measure their assets in the many billions. And when it gets harder for small banks to do their jobs it gets harder for small businesses to get their loans.”

Part of Clinton’s regulatory overhaul included revitalizing small, local, community banks, and making it easier for them to lend credit and provide loans for small businesses. At an Iowa event (May 2015), Clinton had this to say about small banks, “Our goal should be helping community banks serve their neighbors and customers the way they always have. To make it easier to give our responsible loans to responsible small businesses so they can do what they do best, create jobs and help families get ahead.” Moreover, Clinton believed that gutting such extensive regulations on small businesses would help ‘level the playing field’ between large corporations and smaller firms. At an Ohio event (October 2016) Clinton made the following remarks: “And let’s stand up for small businesses, which create most of the jobs in America… More than 60 percent of small businesses face payment delays. That can cause a
serious cash flow crisis. So as president, I will explore new ways to arm small businesses with the tools to fight back and level the playing field. Part of the problem is large corporations are amassing so much power in our economy. Sometimes it's called market concentration or even old-fashioned monopolies, but either way it threatens businesses of all sizes, as well as consumers. With less competition, corporations can use their power to raise prices, limit choice for consumers, cut wages for workers, crowd out startups and small businesses.” As we can see, Clinton advocated on several occasions that we must make it easier -- and frankly possible -- for small businesses to compete with the big player, in order to grow the economy and create new good jobs.

*Inclusive Prosperity/Profit Sharing*

In eleven of the twenty coded speeches, Clinton made remarks that have been catalogued under the theme of ‘inclusive prosperity/profit sharing’. This theme appears to be, or at least functions as, a call for more equitable income distribution without actually calling for redistribution itself. The slogan of ‘profit sharing’ is employed as coded language -- probably focus test approved terminology -- for discussing and addressing the Great decoupling, without advancing any ‘radical’ proposals. This theme embodied statements of immense generality and platitudes, but also instances of more specificity. For instance, the notion of inclusive prosperity was often relayed in imprecise and idealistic terms. At a New York event (April 2015), Clinton said the following: “Our goal must truly be inclusive and lasting prosperity that’s measured by how many families get ahead and stay ahead...How many new immigrants can start small businesses ...How many parents can get good jobs that allow them to balance the demands of work and family. That’s how we should measure prosperity. With all due respect, that is a far better measurement than the size of the bonuses handed out in downtown office buildings.”

In noting her proclamation to bring about prosperity for all, we should pay careful attention to the primary mechanism(s) singled out by Clinton that will usher in such prosperity: work and good jobs. In other words, she tells us what prosperity looks like, that its widespread incorporation is important, and that *the means for its realization is the ability to start a*
business and occupy good jobs. This speaks to her commitment to the capitalist mode of
distribution (the work-prosperity-link) and mode of production. Recall from previous sections
that this arrangement -- the capitalist mode of distribution in the form of the work-prosperity-
link -- cannot endure forever. As the employer contradiction continues to become increasingly
aggravated by the great decoupling and the declining/stagnant labor force participation rate,
the work-prosperity-link will become insufficient in delivering ‘inclusive prosperity’. In other
words, we cannot simply economically grow our way out this problem -- it is, at the core, an
issue of distribution.

This confused understanding of reality is further represented by Clinton’s repeated
admiration for the ‘Basic Bargain’. At a New York rally (June 2015) Clinton said, “It’s America’s
basic bargain. If you do your part you ought to be able to get ahead. And when everybody does
their part, America gets ahead too.” The **Basic Bargain** is a cornerstone talking point of
Clinton’s campaign and the Democratic Party in general. At first blush, it appears to be a
watered-down iteration of the American Dream -- and possibly even less optimistic. As the
quote above highlights, the Basic Bargain a moral conceptualization of distribution (hence
Clinton’s use of the word ‘ought’ which carries normative implications). Clinton (and the
Democrats) are right in acknowledging the rapid decline of the Basic Bargain -- it is a fleeting
feature of the contemporary world. Clinton herself acknowledged this throughout her campaign
when she spoke of the full-time, year-round minimum wage workers failing to cross the poverty
threshold. As this paper has suggested throughout, the work-prosperity-link (or the Basic
Bargain) is becoming a less adequate mode of distribution by the day, yet, its implementation
continues to serve as the guiding principle of the Democratic Party.

Furthermore, Clinton tried to address the issue of the great decoupling when she called
for ‘profit sharing’. At an Iowa speech (September 2016) Clinton claimed, “the other thing I
want to do is make sure more companies adopt profit-sharing, so if you helped to create the
profits, all of you, not just the top executives, will be able to share in those profits.” She cited
a specific example of this profit-sharing technique in action of Mark Cuban: “He [Cuban] used
profit-sharing to help his employees, not bankruptcy to fire people. And when he sold his first
company, he shared the profits with his employees, and 300 of them became millionaires.
That's the kind of business practices I want to see more of in our country...Let's protect and empower workers who actually drive our economy. Everyone who works hard should be able to share in the rewards, not just senior executives. So we're proposing new tax credits to encourage more companies to share profits, on top of, not instead of, higher wages.”

This notion of profit sharing does, in some respects, speak to the problem of the Great decoupling. However, as with all other instances of Clinton acknowledging the central concerns of this paper, she fails to propose a sufficient solution. This profit-sharing technique is deeply flawed for the following reasons: first, it seems to rely on the benevolent whim of corporate executives which, if history is any reliable indicator, is dubious at best; second, providing a ‘tax-incentive’ to corporations that engage in this behavior is simply a publicly-financed subsidy to the corporate-capitalist class and those workers that share in the company’s profits. In other words, it is the movement of money from one group to another which is hardly fair. This theme of inclusive prosperity/profit sharing demonstrates the profound confusion and ineptitude of her policy regime. These ‘solutions’ fail to recognize that the industrial-capitalist mode of distribution -- i.e. the Basic Bargain (the work-prosperity-link) -- is no longer appropriate nor adequate, and that a new mode of distribution is necessary.

Job Training

The call for more expansive job training was one of the most popular themes in Clinton’s campaign speeches, as it appeared in thirteen of the twenty coded speeches. This theme is primarily comprised of two underlying currents. First, that workers have been dislocated by a number of forces, and that we can retrain/repurpose them for the new types of jobs available today. She identified community college programs and subsidized apprenticeships as drivers in this effort. Second, Clinton stressed the revitalization of trade schools for persons not interested in traditional four-year college, and the need for a cultural shift away from the intense preoccupation with a classic degree. The problem of worker dislocation due to deindustrialization is a few-decades old now, which has allowed solutions to crop up in response to the issue. Arguably, the most highly cited and sedimented solution is that of retraining, which acknowledges that new technologies are being deployed on the shop
floor, and that higher skilled workers have more to offer in today’s economy. At a New York rally (July 2015), Clinton stated, “As we pursue all these policies, we can’t forget our fellow Americans hit so hard and left behind by this changing world from the inner cities to coal country to Indian country... Workers are assets. Investing in them pays off; higher wages pay off. Training pays off. To help more companies do that, I proposed a $1,500 tax credit for every worker they train and hire.”

Clinton continually stressed that our movement as a society away from vocational training was a mistake, and that we need to restore training programs for young people in more traditional jobs. At an Pennsylvania event (October 2016) Clinton stated, “I want us to bring technical education back to high school. I think it was a mistake when we took it out. There are a lot of good jobs that you can be prepared for in today’s economy -- coming out of high school, maybe going to community college, going into an apprenticeship program, and I want to lift up that work. A four-year college degree should not be and is not the only way to have a good job with the rising income and a satisfying life.” Embedded within this call for greater vocational training is the recognition that utility service jobs are available for young people entering the workforce. At a Michigan rally (November 2016) Clinton said, “And I want to be sure that we put technical education back into high school because there are good jobs out there waiting for young people with the skills to do them.”

This theme of job training is an important one within the discussion of this paper. Given the economic orthodoxy reviewed above -- that new technology creates new jobs -- it is intuitive to believe that the problem of lost work and income is a result of structural unemployment that will eventually be overcome. We can accelerate this ‘overcoming’ and mitigate the harms of structural unemployment through training programs that allow dislocated workers can operate new technologies. We can see, however, why job retraining cannot be a final or ultimate solution. While it may address some forms of structural unemployment for now, in the long run, ARA will continue to absorb greater responsibilities and no ‘retraining’ will overcome that reality. Recall from the literature review that today’s technology is being built with internal minds, and as these built-in minds become evermore advanced, the repurposing of human operators will dwindle into little or no opportunities. Furthermore, the Great
decoupling shows that the economy isn’t actually suffering from a lack of ‘retrained’ workers. Production levels have been steadily increasing over the recent decades. This fact calls into question how much we can really expect from this policy proposal. If production levels are at an all time high, how much need is there for retrained workers?

| Donald Trump on the problem of lost work and income |

Throughout the coding process, I identified twenty-two themes that relate to the problem of lost work and income. Unlike with Clinton, the most salient themes are not easily categorized into the binary categories of (a) problem, (b) solution, but rather, most themes likely belong to category (c) problem/solution. Trump’s presentation and rhetorical style is less precise than Clinton’s and more conversational. Clinton would often talk about the independent problems causing the loss of work and income, and then turn to the independent solutions that are needed — sometimes the problem and solution were directly related, and in some cases, they were not. For instance, her solution of job training was substantially separable from the problems she highlighted. Trump’s discussion of problems and solutions was not nearly as easily delineated, and furthermore, he often presented the negation of each problem as his solution for addressing the problem of lost work and income. For instance, he proclaimed the loss of traditional energy jobs (like coal mining) as a significant cause for the loss of jobs, but, suggested the building of pipelines could be a resolution. Thus, for Trump, the solution is often found within the problem itself. Nevertheless, I will divide the following section into independent parts, like I did with Clinton, and explore the themes that belong to each category.

For the sake of conciseness, I will not be reviewing each independent theme, but the themes in each category that were most often discussed in Trump’s speeches. Starting with category (a), the causes of lost work and income (and some themes may fall under (c)), Trump most heavily stressed the following phenomena: decline of manufacturing, losing to other countries (currency manipulation, tariff, trade deficit), and immigration.

*Decline of Manufacturing*
In eighteen of the thirty-one speeches reviewed, Trump made statements about the
disappearance of manufacturing jobs in America, and the effect is has had on workers across
the country. At an Ohio rally (October 2016), Trump spelled out the devastation of this trend in
citing the actual number of lost factories: “We've lost 70,000 factories. Think of that one, 70. I
tell everybody, it’s a typo. Can’t be 70,000. It is. We've lost 70,000 factories since China entered
the World Trade Organization… Just this year, Eaton Corporation in Ohio closed its plant, laid
off 152 workers, and moved their jobs to Mexico. And you've had many. I could I could name
them all day long.” A few days later at a Michigan event, Trump stated the state-level reality,
“Michigan has lost more than 1 in 4 manufacturing jobs since Bill Clinton signed NAFTA, a deal
strongly supported by Hillary Clinton.” Trump demonstrated a consistent effort in
acknowledging the impact of lost manufacturing jobs in Michigan. Early on in the campaign, at
a Michigan speech he spoke directly to those who used to be employed in the automotive
industry: “There is no greater example of this in our country than Flint, Michigan. The city of
Flint was once known as Buick City. More than 80,000 workers were employed by GM in 1970 -
today, its less than 8,000. Forty percent of the city’s residents are living in poverty.” Trump was
able and willing to describe the bleak circumstances, with sincere imagery, that have resulted
from the decline of manufacturing. At a New York rally (September 2016), he said, “Our
manufacturing base has crumbled, communities have been hollowed out, wages have declined,
and households are making less today than they were in the year 2000.” As we can see, Trump
is certainly tapping into the central problem this paper is concerned with, namely the problem
of lost work and income.

Possibly the most interesting dimension of Trump’s diagnosis regarding the decline of
manufacturing is its failure to include the impact of ARA in contributing to this phenomenon. In
fact, he never mentions the problem of automation, and almost exclusively cites international
developments and governmental activity as the causes. In his opening campaign speech on June
16, 2015 at Trump Tower, he spoke about the decision of manufactures to move plants out of
the United States: “We need a leader that can bring back our jobs, can bring back our
manufacturing... All of a sudden, at the last moment, this big car manufacturer, foreign,
announces they're not going to Tennessee. They're gonna spend their $1 billion in Mexico
instead... Now, Ford announces a few weeks ago that Ford is going to build a $2.5 billion car
and truck and parts manufacturing plant in Mexico. $2.5 billion, it’s going to be one of the
largest in the world... They’re going to build in Mexico. They’re going to take away thousands of
jobs. It’s very bad for us.” A few days later at a New York rally, Trump again stressed the need to
bring manufacturing back: “Our country will be better off when we start making our own
products again, bringing our once great manufacturing capabilities back to our shores.” He
promised to make this happen at Iowa event (September 2016): “Jobs will return, incomes will rise, and new factories will come rushing back to our shores.”

In numerous speeches he cites international trade deals and agreements as a significant
contributor to the flight of manufacturing from the United States to other countries (and often
ties ‘the Clintons’ to these developments). For instance, at a New York rally (June 2016), he
claimed, “I have visited the cities and towns across America and seen the devastation caused
by the trade policies of Bill and Hillary Clinton. Hillary Clinton supported Bill Clinton’s
disastrous NAFTA, just like she supported China’s entrance into the World Trade Organization.
We’ve lost nearly one-third of our manufacturing jobs since these two Hillary-backed
agreements were signed.” In addition to NAFTA and WTO agreements, Trump cautioned against
the TPP and promised not to kill that agreement upon being elected. At a Michigan rally
(August 2016), Trump had this to say to Michigan voters: “According to the Economic Policy
Institute, the U.S. trade deficit with the proposed TPP member countries cost over 1 million
manufacturing jobs in 2015. By far the biggest losses occurred in motor vehicles and parts,
which lost nearly 740,000 manufacturing jobs. Michigan ranks first for jobs lost as a share of
state workforce due to the trade deficit with TPP members.”

It is evident from Trump’s comments on this theme, that he recognizes the failure of
our current modes of production and distribution. He, surprisingly, articulates the bleakness of
the manufacturing decline with greater sincerity and vividness than Clinton. However, like
Clinton, he conceptualizes and frames the problem as something that can be resolved through
managerial expertise. At an Ohio speech (July 2016), Trump promised that, “Using the richest
people in the world, which our country has, I am going to turn our bad trade agreements into
great trade agreements,” and bring back America’s manufacturing jobs. This understanding of
the problem fails to recognize that the budding new ARA-based mode of production is central, or at least will be, to the decline of manufacturing, and that no amount of managerial capacity can resolve this problem. Instead, a new mode of distribution is required to justly and functionally absorb this new mode of production. Furthermore, it is important to note how Trump frames this cause of lost work and jobs as a failure in competing with other nations. This will be further explored in subsequent sections.

_Losing to other countries_

One of the most popular themes present in Trump’s campaign speeches was the notion that America is ‘losing’ to other countries -- especially Mexico, China, and Japan -- and that this is a significant contributor to the problem of lost work and income. As we will see, this theme is quite related to other themes (such as the decline of manufacturing), but, it represents an important ideological orientation for Trump’s message and his supporters. In some instances, his comments on this theme would be of a more general nature. For example, at his first speech announcing his candidacy, Trump said, “We used to have victories, but we don’t have them. When was the last time anybody saw us beating, let’s say, China in a trade deal? They kill us. I beat China all the time. All the time... When did we beat Japan at anything? They send their cars over by the millions, and what do we do? When was the last time you saw a Chevrolet in Tokyo? It doesn’t exist, folks. They beat us all the time. When do we beat Mexico at the border? They’re laughing at us, at our stupidity.”

This notion that America ‘used to be a winner’ and is no longer victorious is, arguably, one of the grand overarching messages of Trump’s entire candidacy. Indeed, his campaign slogan of “Make America Great Again” speaks to this framing of a nation that was once winning and is now losing. This general idea of America as a losing nation was further sedimented in the minds of his supporters with the concept of ‘America First’ as a governing doctrine. At a Michigan event (August 2016), Trump said, “When we abandoned the policy of America First, we started rebuilding other countries instead of our own. The skyscrapers went up in Beijing, and in many other cities around the world, while the factories and neighborhoods crumbled in Detroit. Our roads and bridges fell into disrepair, yet we found the money to resettle millions
of refugees at taxpayer expense.” Trump diagnosed the decline of America First as a result of ‘stupid’ politicians being outsmarted by foreign leaders, and identified this as a substantial cause for the economic problems of lost work and income. At an Ohio rally (August 2016) he promised, “We’re not going to be stupid people any more, we’re going to be the really, really smart people. It’s going to be America first. America first. America first. First… And I said, here we have a country that’s being taken advantage of by every country in the world. Our businesses are being taken. Our jobs being taken. Everything’s being taken.”

Moreover, Trump specifically markets himself as a nationalist and berates Clinton for being a globalist. At a Pennsylvania rally (September 2016), Trump proclaimed his distaste for globalism by saying, “They [establishment politicians] all support the same ideology of globalism that makes them rich while shipping your jobs, your factories, and your wealth to other countries. I am not running to be President of the World. I am running to be President of the United States. I Am For America - and America First.” A few days earlier in New York, Trump clearly stated his nationalist governing intentions, “But to accomplish them [the goals above], we must replace the present policy of globalism - which has moved so many jobs and so much wealth out of our country - and replace it with a new policy of Americanism.” It is evident that Trump is framing the decline of jobs and income as a situation where they are being taken by someone, and that the path forward is one of taking them back. This is a critically important point that will be further explored later on.

In many instances, Trump would present the problem of losing to other nations in very specific terms. A hallmark example is his charge that American leaders’ either cannot or will not prevent other countries, mostly China, from ‘cheating’. When commenting on Hillary Clinton’s tenure as Secretary of State, Trump claimed, “she let China steal hundreds of billions of dollars in our intellectual property - a crime which is continuing to this day. Hillary Clinton gave China millions of our best jobs, and effectively let China completely rebuild itself... [I will] Stand up to countries that cheat on trade, of which there are many.” Trump also decried other Chinese state actions like devaluing their currency, dumping illegal export subsidies, and no enforcement of environmental and labor protections. At an Ohio rally (August 2016) Trump cited these concerns and his commitment to address them: “At the center of my plan is trade
enforcement with China. This alone could return millions of jobs into our economy. China is responsible for nearly half of our entire trade deficit. They break the rules in every way imaginable. China engages in illegal export subsidies, prohibited currency manipulation, and rampant theft of intellectual property. They also have no real environmental or labor protections, further undercutting American workers.”

Trump attributed the problem of America’s losing streak to both the malicious intentions and incompetence of our leaders. He famously labeled the political class as intellectually inept. At an Ohio event (October 2016), Trump signaled his promise to ensure that America is no longer guided by such leaders: “We’re gonna get a better deal for our workers and for our companies. Because we cannot continue to be the people led by stupid people. We can’t. We can’t.” He connected this fact to the problem of corporations leaving the United States in a Pennsylvania (August 2016) speech: “They [the business leaders] want to go out, they want to move to another country and because our politicians are so dumb, they want to sell their product to us and not have any retribution, not have any consequences.” As with the prior theme, we can see that this diagnosis of lost work and income is yet another iteration that ignores the problem of ARA and suggests the need for managerial oversight, which Trump can offer as an ‘excellent negotiator and businessman’.

Immigration

Another major theme in Trump’s campaign speeches that related to the problem of lost work and income was immigration. Surprisingly, this theme was only coded in five of the thirty-one speeches. It is important to remember that this doesn’t mean the topic of immigration was only discussed in five speeches. Recall that the content analysis I carried out was a relational, not a count analysis. In many cases, Trump discusses immigration in relation to national security. I only coded the instances Trump discusses in relation to lost work and income. Even though theme appeared at a much lower rate than the decline of manufacturing and losing to other countries, I felt it was important to include this one for a couple of reasons. First, it further illustrates Trump’s nativist/nationalist conceptualization and framing of the problem of lost work and income. That is, it continues to present the issue of lost work and income in a
zero-sum light. Second, immigration reform was one of Trump’s keystone campaign promises. It is arguably the most (in)famous dimension of his presidential campaign that started with his widely criticized claim about the character of unauthorized immigrants.

Trump’s represents immigration, primarily from Mexico, as a source of concern for low-wage workers, African Americans, and legal immigrant communities. At a New York event (June 2016), Trump stated, “Hillary's Wall Street immigration agenda will keep immigrant communities poor, and unemployed Americans out of work. She can't claim to care about African-American and Hispanic workers when she wants to bring in millions of new low-wage workers to compete against them... Change immigration rules to give unemployed Americans an opportunity to fill good-paying jobs.” It is interesting that the nominee of the Republican Party, a group that often stresses the importance of competition, is worried about too much competition that may result from immigration -- even though this is an unlikely outcome.

The theme of immigration in Trump’s campaign is expressed in terms that most explicitly link to the problem of lost work and income than any other theme in both his and Hillary’s campaign. In all five instances when he mentions the threat immigration poses to the prosperity of American workers, he cites its effect on jobs and wages. At an Ohio rally (June 2016), Trump said, “Decades of record immigration have produced lower wages and higher unemployment for our citizens, especially for African-American and Latino workers. We are going to have an immigration system that works, but one that works for the American people.” At a Wisconsin event (August 2016), he attacked Clinton for allowing immigrants to take jobs from American workers, especially from the most marginalized communities: “No community in this country has been hurt worse by Hillary Clinton’s immigration policies than the African-American community. Now she is proposing to print instant work permits for millions of illegal immigrants, taking jobs directly from low-income Americans. I will secure our border, protect our workers, and improve jobs and wages in your community.”

We conclude this section by again noting the lack of ARA from Trump’s diagnosis of lost work and income and suggesting yet another cause that demands a managerial solution. Moreover, the presentation of immigration a reason for serious concern continues the Trump
narrative that lost work and income is a zero sum problem and is resolved through putting the interests of Americans before the needs and hopes of others.

**Trump: the solutions to lost work and income**

To briefly recall, I identified twenty-two themes that related to the problem of lost work and income in Donald Trump’s campaign speeches. We have thus far considered category (a), namely, the primary themes that relate to Trump’s conceptualization of the causes of lost work and income. Therefore, we now turn to the major themes of category (b), the solutions proposed by Trump to overcome this issue (and, as before, some themes may fall under (c)). In this category, Trump most heavily stressed the following phenomena: negotiation and regulations and taxation.

**Negotiation**

In fifteen of the thirty-three coded speeches, Trump discussed the need for better negotiation in the construction of international trade deals and with business leaders, making this one his most commonly cited solutions for ‘making America great again’. He presented this policy mechanism as a key solution to reversing the problem of lost work and income, because it would bring back ‘so many jobs’. Trump marketed himself as a ‘fantastic’ negotiator and promised to recruit the help of the best negotiators in the business world. He stressed that he exclusively could realize this arrangement because (a) “he knows these people” and (b) he himself is a very successful businessman and negotiator. At an Ohio rally (August 2016), Trump stated, “But the problem with free trade is you need really talented people to negotiate for you. If you don’t have talented people, if you don’t have great leadership, if you don’t have people that know business, not just a political hack that got the job because he made a contribution to a campaign, which is the way all jobs, just about, are gotten, free trade terrible.”

In numerous speeches Trump talked at length about how important international trade deals are for working people. He claimed that many of the deals that have been negotiated in the past couple decades, such as NAFTA and TPP, have resulted in crippling devastation. In Ohio
(July 2016), he said, “I have visited the laid-off factory workers, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals.” In New York (June 2016), Trump described the terrors TPP would bring about (and he later promised to reject the deal): “Hillary Clinton has also been the biggest promoter of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which will ship millions more of our jobs overseas - and give up Congressional power to an international foreign commission.” Trump campaigned on the guarantee to negotiate the ‘best’ deals that will bring back millions of jobs, and to renegotiate old deals that have destroyed the middle and working classes. In Wisconsin (August 2016, ) he promised that, “On trade, I am going to renegotiate NAFTA, stand up to China, withdraw from the TPP, and protect every last American job... [and] we are going to win on trade deals. We are going to make the finest, we are going to bring our jobs back. We're not going to make it easy for these companies to leave and fire everybody. It going to be very, very expensive when they do it.”

An additional component of Trump’s plan for negotiating better trade deals is to also improve exports of American goods. At an Iowa event (September 2016), Trump claimed, “We are going to negotiate trade deals to protect our farmers, help them export their goods, and grow family farming in America... I'm going to, so importantly, renegotiate your horrible trade deals, especially NAFTA - which is the single worst trade deal ever made by any country anywhere in the world a one-way street for jobs out of the United States - and we will make great trade deals that put the American worker first.” This commitment is something that was mentioned with relative frequency by Trump. He often bemoaned the United States import/export ratio, or trade deficit, and implied that he would be able to rectify this imbalance that continues to hurt American producers.

According to Trump, his negotiating skills will not solely be utilized in international trade deals, but also to ensure that businesses buy and hire American. Continually throughout the campaign, Trump explained how he will be able to encourage (if not force) major U.S. companies to stay and continue production in America. This was evident in his story about Ford moving its plant to Mexico. Trump described the negotiation process with major businesses – namely to impose excessive import tariffs on companies that leave – that he would use to ensure they stay in America and hire American workers. This is solution, like the ones
presented by Clinton, is yet another instance of suggesting managerial expertise is what is needed, not a reconfiguration of our distribution system. Trump is arguing that he is uniquely suited for fixing our problems, and that Americans should trust him to single-handedly solve a global-economic crisis.

*Regulations and Taxation*

In twenty-four of the thirty-three speeches reviewed for the content analysis, Trump mentioned the need for slashing regulations and taxes to lift up businesses, increase employment opportunities, and grow the wages of working Americans. Trump argues that regulations are a job killer outright and an immensely significant source of lost jobs and income. At an event in New York (September 2016) Trump said, “One of the keys to unlocking growth is scaling-back years of disastrous regulations unilaterally imposed by our out-of-control bureaucracy. Regulations have grown into a massive, job-killing industry - and the regulation industry is one business I will put an end to.” At an Ohio (July 2016) event Trump attempted to provide a quantified representation of how bad regulations are for American business. He claimed that, “Excessive regulation is costing our country as much as $2 trillion a year, and we will end it very very quickly. We are going to lift the restrictions on the production of American energy. This will produce more than $20 trillion in job creating economic activity over the next four decades.” In fact, Trump frames regulations as something so toxic, he can make blanket promises like this one from Pennsylvania (October 2016) speech, “I will work with Congress to require that for every 1 new regulation, 2 old regulations must be eliminated.”

According to Trump, not only are regulations inherently inimical to economic prosperity, they are contributing to the migration of jobs overseas. At a Wisconsin rally (August 2016), Trump promised, “to reform our regulations so jobs stay in America, and new businesses come to America to hire workers right here in Milwaukee. Every policy my opponent has sends jobs overseas. I am going to bring trillions in new wealth back to the United States.” In his words, the slashing of regulation will, “bring thousands of new companies into our poorest communities.” Trump made the same claims about taxes as he did about regulation: that high taxes are in and of themselves a threat to economic prosperity, that the high statutory corporate tax rate is driving businesses and jobs out of this country, and that by slashing them
for individuals and businesses, jobs will return to America. During an Ohio (July 2016) speech, he said, “America is one of the highest-taxed nations in the world. Reducing taxes will cause new companies and new jobs to come roaring back into our country. Believe me, it will happen, and it will happen fast.” He claims that the low tax rates he plans to install will sufficiently incentivize companies to produce in America: “On taxes, I am going to give a massive tax cut to every worker and small business in this country, bring thousands of new companies and millions of new jobs onto our shores - and make it very difficult for our businesses to leave” (Wisconsin August 2016).

We can see from the quotes above that Trump frames jobs as almost a physical species that surround the American borders, and he will open the ‘flood gates’ allowing them all to flow back in. He produces this image of a gate made of regulations, taxes, and trade deals, that is blocking the jobs from entering America. Certainly, he created a very vivid and powerful myth (image) of how to restore work and income. However, his portrait leaves out the key concern of ARA.

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<td>Empowering Small Businesses</td>
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<td>Subcode #2</td>
<td>Global Trends</td>
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<td>Subcode #3</td>
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<td>Subcode #4</td>
<td>Economic Favoritism</td>
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Table 1.2 Donald Trump Codes

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<th>Main Code</th>
<th>Problems</th>
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<td>Subcode #2</td>
<td>Losing to Other Countries</td>
<td>Slashing Regulation/Taxes</td>
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<td>Subcode #3</td>
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Chapter Five: Discussion

In the course of my grounded approach, four key findings emerged: (1) both candidates point to a number of causes for lost work and income, and both candidates put forth various solutions to this issue – but, the role of ARA is, not only statistically insignificant, but almost never mentioned by either candidate, (2) each candidate presents a political and governing ideology that: (a) conceptualizes and frames our economic problems (i.e. the Great decoupling and declining labor force participation rate) within an industrial-capitalist mode of production and (b) tacitly or explicitly endorses the capitalist mode of distribution (i.e. the work-prosperity-link / basic bargain), and (c) neither candidate speaks to the forthcoming post-industrial, ‘ARA’ mode of production and the need for a new mode of distribution to match, (3) both candidates navigate the need to call for a new mode of distribution by proclaiming their managerial expertise to be a sufficient problem-solver in regards to the status quo — Hillary as a policy expert and Trump as a business expert, and (4) Hillary Clinton’s political ideology reflects an almost entirely non-zero-sum state of affairs (basic bargain), while Donald Trump’s language does gesture to the current zero-sum state of the global economy (America needs to win again). I will now elaborate on each of these central findings.

The identified causes of lost work and the proposed solutions

It is evident from the reported findings above that ARA played no significant role in the discussion regarding lost work and income. My content analysis of Donald Trump’s speeches uncovered zero mentions of job loss being related to technological advancement. His total avoidance of ARA is interesting, and paradoxical, considering how much he discussed: (1) the decline of manufacturing, and (2) the declining labor force participation rate. Starting with (1), Trump, much more so than Clinton, spoke directly to those who have suffered the deinstitutionalization of America. As we saw from the quotations above, he was able to portray a sincere and vivid understanding of the hollowed out factory towns of America, particularly in the rust-belt states. Indeed, a the loss of traditional factory manufacturing jobs was a central feature of his speeches, and he often stressed his commitment to “bringing manufacturing jobs back.” He presented a litany of means for achieving this goal: negotiating better trade deals,
not letting other countries ‘cheat’ and devalue their currency, slashing taxes and regulation, halting the flow of immigrants into the country, correcting our trade imbalance with China and Mexico, placing import tariffs on companies that leave the U.S., and incentivizing companies to hire and buy American. Thus, he painted a detailed picture of the devastation brought about by deindustrialization, and laid several policy responses to rectify the issue without mentioning how technological advancement figures into the situation. Furthermore, Trump never acknowledged the reality of the great decoupling. At times, he rightly pointed out that real median wages have stagnated and declined, but he never contextualized this fact within America’s rising productivity.

In regards to (2), Trump not only discussed the decline of manufacturing, he made mention of the declining labor force participation rate — something Clinton never really spoke about. Figure 1.1 and 1.2 from chapter two show the massive decline in the labor force participation rate and employment to population ratio that has occurred over the last two decades. We can see in Figure 1.2 specifically how little the employment/population ratio has changed since the recession. This figure that highlights just how anemic the post-recession economy is from a labor market point of view. Many of the traditional indicators of an economy’s health, such as stock market points, U-3 unemployment, and productivity growth, fail to capture the standard of living for laborers of the middle and working classes. At a Michigan rally (August 2016), Trump stressed the bleakness of the labor market, “There are now 94.3 million Americans outside the labor force. It was 80.5 million when President Obama took office, an increase of nearly 14 million people... We have the lowest labor force participation rates in four decades. 58 percent of African-American youth are either outside the labor force or not employed. 1 in 5 American households do not have a single member in the labor force. These are the real unemployment numbers—the five percent figure is one of the biggest hoaxes in modern politics.”

While Trump was right in pointing out the depravity of the labor force participation rate, he failed to adequately explain its existence. His primary diagnosis was the overarching narrative that all of the jobs have ‘left’ and that what we need to do is ‘bring them back’. In other words, Trump framed the problem as though jobs aren’t disappearing outright, rather,
they are leaving for other places and that America is losing them to other countries. While this notion of globalization and the outsourcing of jobs certainly plays a causal part in the rise of deindustrialization, it is not the full story. The economic literature surveyed in the literature review shows that jobs are in fact disappearing outright due to the automatization of labor.

The content analysis of Hillary Clinton’s speeches, on the other hand, did mention the problem of technology in a handful of speeches. In fact, in one instance, she possibly addressed the existential threat to the work-prosperity-link posed by the rise of ARA. At a New York rally (June 2015), Clinton asked, “How do we respond to technological change in a way that creates more good jobs than it displaces or destroys? Can we sustain a boom in advanced manufacturing?” She momentarily acknowledged in this speech that technological change can lead to massive job dislocation, and that it can be a threat to worker security. This was the only instance in all of the coded speeches that Clinton hinted at the precarious relationship between the work-prosperity-link and the forthcoming technological developments. What is surprising is that, even though she raised this concern, she then went on to claim throughout the rest of her campaign that we can build a prosperous manufacturing industry that serves the interests of all workers. For instance, a year later she presented technological advancements as an exciting new development full of promise for the manufacturing industry. At an Ohio event (October 2016), she said, “I do want to bring advanced manufacturing. I heard Ted Strickland talking about that. I think we can have a manufacturing renaissance. There is no reason that we cannot own new manufacturing. I’m not interested in a race to the bottom, in competing for low-wage jobs. I am interested in competing for the high-wage jobs. So let’s lead in precision machining, 3D printing.” It was never clear to me what this ‘new’ manufacturing industry is. To be sure, the economists who argue that technology will present a jobless future don’t speak of a blossoming manufacturing renaissance that will produce new jobs like Clinton is claiming.

Clinton, also seems to have better understood the threat of ARA than Trump given her comments on and acknowledgement of the great decoupling. She correctly pointed out on several occasions that corporate profits and productivity have continued to climb but real wages have stagnated or declined for the working and middle classes. At an Iowa rally (May
2015), she claimed, “We need to get back into the habit of actually rewarding workers with increases in their paychecks for the increases in productivity and profitability that they have helped to bring about.” This is certainly an indictment of the great decoupling. Yet, her solution shows that she either doesn’t completely understand the problem, or doesn’t want to address the core issue driving the great decoupling (i.e. ARA). The theme of profit sharing/inclusive prosperity arguably best reflects her conceptualized solution to the growing gap between productivity and wages. That is, Clinton doesn’t appear interested building a political system that redesigns the mode of distribution from the work-prosperity-link to some other system like a UBI, rather, she wants to rely on tax incentives and cultural norms to solve the issue. Her discussion on profit sharing is, with respect, a politically impotent resolution to the great decoupling. Other than giving tax incentives to companies that ‘share their profits’ she put forth no means of actually bring about her vision. Furthermore, as mentioned above, a tax incentive really isn’t even a solution at all given that money is fungible. A tax incentive merely operates as a payment to corporations to then pay their workers a higher wage — which is by all accounts merely a transfer of money from one taxpayer to another and not a meaningful redistributive technique.

**Modes of Production and Distribution**

Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump presented very different visions for America’s future, and politically distant policies for realizing those respective futures. They did not, however, substantially diverge on their understanding of the American economy as consistent with an industrial-capitalist mode of production and their commitment to an industrial-capitalist mode of distribution. The goal of this paper is to suggest that developed nations especially, are on the brink of a radical new mode of production wherein the value of human labor becomes practically worthless. As laid out in chapter two, the forces of ARA will make it such that human labor cannot compete with the efficiency of automated/digitalized processes, and further, that in a capitalist system, firms will always be incentivized to adopt the most efficient processes of production. This fact leads to the employer contradiction: firms will become so efficient in production that they will have no consumer to sell their product to. That is, if
work/employment continues to be the mechanism for distributing money, and nobody can find employment, then the means for purchasing goods will no longer flow to the consumers of goods and services, and the whole system collapses.

The employer contradiction is continually becoming more and more evident. The fact that corporations are sitting on trillions of dollars in cash, and choosing to buy government bonds rather than reinvest it in their own company, is one such example. Corporations are likely choosing not to invest in their own companies because they do not have a strong enough consumer base to reward such investments. Additionally, we see that international shipping companies are seeing massive declines in their profit. The global trade system is starting to slow down, with consumers being able to buy less and less. Figure 1.9 shows that personal consumption has stagnated since 2000, and the BLS projects that it will not increase by 2022. Some economists, such as Richard Wolff, suggest that the employer contradiction has been blunted by the availability credit and massive debt accumulation, wherein the decline and stagnation of wages has been offset by these other sources of capital. This is a scheme that cannot continue forever.

The coded themes suggest that neither Trump nor Clinton see an incongruence between the our evolving mode of production and traditional capitalist mode of distribution. This fact is particularly evident with Clinton’s frequent mention of the ‘basic bargain’. According to her, America is committed to this principle that if you work hard you should be able to ‘get ahead’. (Interestingly, the phrase get ahead implies that you are ahead of someone, thus we support a deal that blatantly endorses stratification.) At a New York rally (June 2015), she proclaimed, “[We need] a wider and constantly rising standard of living... It’s America’s basic bargain. If you do your part you ought to be able to get ahead. And when everybody does their part, America gets ahead too.” Later on in the campaign at an Ohio (October 2016) event she put it in even more clear terms: “That means everybody willing to work - and I say that very clearly; you’ve got to be willing to work - and if you’re willing to work, you should be able to get ahead and stay ahead. That is the basic bargain.” In short, Clinton is promoting a governing ideology that endorses the capitalistic mode of distribution which has been termed the work-prosperity-link in this paper. In the quoted Ohio remarks, Clinton is explicitly connecting work – “and I say
that very clearly; you've got be willing to work” — to prosperity. This is, for the reasons henceforth discusses, completely tone-deaf to the forces driving problem of lost work and income, namely ARA. In other words, she is continuing to morally enforce a system of distribution that is becoming increasingly immoral.

Trump, unlike Clinton, did not directly endorse the work-prosperity-link. In one of the coded speeches (his presidential campaign announcement) he presented the idea that work is a preferred method of distribution: “We have people that aren't working. We have people that have no incentive to work. But they're going to have incentive to work, because the greatest social program is a job. And they'll be proud, and they'll love it, and they'll make much more than they would've ever made, and they'll be — they'll be doing so well, and we're going to be thriving as a country, thriving. It can happen.” In contrast to Clinton’s basic bargain, Trump is stressing the value of a job, more so than its function as a morally appropriate distribution mechanism. Although Trump did not directly support the work-prosperity-link, he indirectly supported it in two general ways. First, his campaign speeches demonstrate a near-obsession with the creation and restoration of jobs. As we saw in the findings section, the major themes related to the problem of lost work and income for Trump involved outlining the policy tactics he would employ to bring back jobs from other countries, and build new jobs here in America. Second, Trump never suggested another possible mode of distribution than the work-prosperity-link. In other words, he tacitly endorsed this program and talked as though the this mode of distribution was a social fact of reality. He never entertained the idea that another system could replace it.

**Managerial governance over moral reconfiguration**

As we can see, Trump and Clinton do not call for the end of the work-prosperity-link. They do not call for a new mode of distribution, nor even hint at the need for such a restructuring of the work-prosperity-link to match the budding ARA-dominated mode of production. Recall, that the work-prosperity-link is a moral arrangement — it exists to ‘justly’ mediate competing claims to property. That is, what one is entitled to is determined by what they can afford to purchase and own, at least for most working persons who rely on income and wages. The prohibition against framing and discussing the problem of lost work and income in
terms of distribution, then, is a prohibition against a much needed moral deliberation. This obvious avoidance of speaking in moral terms and concepts is socially and politically significant for three reasons: (1) it inherently leads to a flawed conceptualization of the lost income and work problem, (2) it highlights the commitment to managerial culture, (3) it continues the American lack of class consciousness.

Starting with (1), it cannot be stressed enough that the economic world looming on the horizon is one that embodies two starkly different possibilities: a world of inconceivable riches and prosperity for all, or, a world of untold poverty and unemployment surrounding a small god-like-wealthy elite. Of course, this language sounds hyperbolic, but that itself is part of the problem! Society is further doomed by the fact that it cannot marshal the appropriate response to this impending threat. The reality of a world in which robots and artificial intelligence completely replace human labor is undeniable. At some point, machines will be achieve general artificial intelligence and vastly surpass our mental and physical capacities while never getting tired or difficult to manage. Insofar as this world is likely, and it certainly appears to be inevitable, we have to seriously discuss how best to prepare for it.

As stated briefly in the introduction, we currently endorse a mode of distribution which I have titled the work-prosperity-link that mediates the question of ownership through employment. It should be evident that this organizational construct will not be sufficient, appropriate, nor moral in the future. Simply, if employment is responsible for resolving the problem of distribution, and the institution of employment disappears, then the problem of distribution goes unresolved. In other words, if people can only access the goods needed for survival by having a job, and there are no jobs, then our distributional system is structurally, and lethally flawed. We can see, then, that our political-economic system cannot absorb the forthcoming, inevitable economy.

Thus, building a society that can functionally and morally absorb the rise of ARA, depends on a moral reconfiguration of our mode of distribution. That is, we cannot rely on the work-prosperity-link in the future to mediate the problem of distribution and the competing claims to property. The possibility of transcending this mode of distribution, and incorporating a more appropriate system, however, is contingent upon the political class discussing the need
to reconfigure our distribution method. We see that neither Clinton nor Trump are interested in having this discussion. The both directly or indirectly support the work-prosperity-link. This has the devastating consequence of continuing a false conceptualization of why the problem of lost work and income persists, and obscures the reality that it will only get worse in time. Unless politicians begin to frame the problem of lost work and income in moral terms, and address the increasing failure of the work-prosperity-link as a mode of distribution, we will continue our slow march into a future of massive inequality, unemployment, and poverty.

In regards to (2), Clinton and Trump avoid a conversation on the moral incompetence of the work-prosperity-link by presenting mechanical, managerial solutions instead. That is, they do in fact recognize the problem of lost work and income, but instead of calling for a moral reconfiguration as the solution, they tout their managerial abilities and policies as sufficiently capable of solving the issue. This fits into a broader political fact about the United States and its continual shift toward managerial aristocracy. According to Professor Jason Stanley, “the US regularly subscribes to a form of managerial aristocracy. In Michigan, Governor Rick Snyder successfully replaced the mayors and city councils of several cities with ‘emergency managers’ supposedly able to negotiate financial emergencies better than elected officials. In the current presidential race, Hillary Clinton advertises her managerial expertise via the language of policy, while Donald Trump parades his via the language of business. Neither language is democratic. Neither invites self-governance” (Stanley, 2017).

Rather than discuss the ethics of redistribution, it seems that Clinton and Trump prefer to frame the problem of lost work and income and the solution in economic mechanical terms. That is, they want to present the economy as a broken engine that simply requires a mechanical fix, and after some ‘dial turning’, ‘tweaking’, and ‘repairing’, the economy will come ‘roaring’ back to life and operate like it did during the golden age after WWII. To broadcast our economic problems in these terms is to undertake a generally normative-free approach and conceptualization. This further advances a transition from a substantial democratic politics to a capitalistically-oriented managerial aristocracy that organizes political and economic space much like a business configures the workplace.
Finally, with respect to (3), the absence of meaningful conversation on our failing mode of distribution perpetuates American class *unconsciousness*. America has a unique and paradoxical relationship to class. Its citizens, all at the same time, dislike vast inequality, live in the most unequal advance nation, and are unaware of how great inequality has become. Consider the following research findings — reproduced in Figure 2.1 — from a study on public opinions about worker CEO compensation ratios:

**Figure 2.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Actual ratio of CEO to worker pay</th>
<th>What subjects thought was the ratio</th>
<th>What subjects said would be the ideal ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research findings highlighted in Figure 2.1 that the United States has by far the biggest discrepancy in worker CEO pay, and that American subjects were not even close in predicting what the actual ratio is. Furthermore, we can see that Americans ideal worker CEO ratio is not much different from that of all the other nations surveyed. Now consider Figure 2.2 which exhibits what Americans think about wealth inequality in general.

Figure 2.2 demonstrates that American’s ideal distribution is far more egalitarian than the actual existing distribution, and, that Americans are very ignorant of the current level of inequality. Figure 2.2 shows that respondents in this study believe the bottom 40% to own about 10% of the wealth, when in actuality, the bottom 40% owns *zero* wealth. Additionally, it is important to note that to achieve the ideal distribution would entail cutting the top 20% wealth share by more than half. Clinton and Trump are responding to such facts with a political ideology that claims we simply have to restore the meritocratic system through managerial
oversight, and, after we do that everyone will once again be able to get to the top by working hard. This ideology perpetuates a lack of class consciousness, in that it continues persuade Americans that distributional injustice isn’t a result of competing groups with adversarial interests, but rather a system that needs mechanical fine-tuning. Sociologist Leslie McCall has carried out extensive research on American attitudes about inequality. In her book *The Undeserving Rich*, she sets out to understand why American’s views about inequality, and specifically why they have not become increasingly progressive as inequality has risen. In her research, she makes the following discovers: (1) Americans do not like high inequality, and they are aware that it has been growing, (2) American’s object to widening inequality because it undermines opportunity, and they want something to be done about it, (3) Americans do not want the government to carry out more redistribution, but instead to increase opportunities (increasing education and minimum wage as examples) (McCall, 2013). Her review of GSS data sets found that American support for greater redistribution has not changed since the 1980s. McCall’s findings highlight the managerial-orientation embedded within the attitudes of Americans. That is, they don’t want to morally reconfigure the system, such as adopting a new mode of distribution, but prefer a more mechanical, normatively-neutral government response like ‘increasing opportunity’; and that is exactly what Trump and Clinton were promising.

| (Non)-Zero-Sum Ideologies: Trump’s reason for success? |

The fourth key finding that emerged from the grounded content analysis of Trump and Clinton’s campaign speeches was the tone of the rhetoric in which they respectively framed the problem of lost work and income. The previous sections highlighted many broad similarities
between each campaign. First, neither candidate seriously considered the role of ARA developments in their analysis of lost work and income. They both pointed to a number of solutions, some of which were the same (decreasing regulation and taxation), and many of which were different. Second, Trump nor Clinton spoke about the growing incongruence between our evolving mode of production and our unchanged mode of distribution. That is, both candidates spoke about the economy as though it still operated according like an industrial capitalist model, and they both explicitly or tacitly endorsed the work-prosperity-link. Third, Trump and Clinton both directly or indirectly suggested that their managerial expertise would be the solution to the problem of lost work and income. Hillary Clinton presented herself as a policy expert and Donald Trump boasted his business credentials, and that they themselves possessed the skills and abilities to navigate this growing social ill.

Even with all of these overarching similarities, however, they diverged substantially on how they structurally conceptualized the problem itself, and I want to suggest that this had an impact on the election results. Trump went to great lengths to present the decline of work and income as a result of America ‘losing’. He famously made statements like, “We are going to win so much you will be sick of winning” and “When has America ever beaten Japan at anything?” among others. The central slogan of his campaign was ‘Make America Great Again’. Indeed, the tone of his rhetoric implied that America’s decline is the result of others doing better — and for this reason, we can conclude that he conceptualized and framed the problem of lost work and income in zero sum terms. Recall that for Trump, the primary causes of the decline of work and income for American’s were losing to other countries, immigration, and the decline of manufacturing. Each of these cited causes suggested that American’s were getting snubbed because jobs and wealth were flowing to others, and not them.

First, his constant bemoaning of America’s incompetency on the world stage and his derision of our constant losing to China and Japan reflect the notion that our economic and political relations with these countries are embedded in a state of competition for work and wealth. This narrative stands in stark contrast to the traditional Republican platform that conceptualized international trade as a meaningful boom for American consumers and businesses. Second, Trump spoke at length about the impact of immigrants coming into the
country and ‘taking’ good jobs away from hard working Americans. He claimed that immigrants were competing away jobs and lowering wages by accepting lower pay than Americans are used to. This yet another instance of Trump contextualizing the problem of lost work and declining wages in a zero-sum framework, and contrasting traditional political narratives. While lax immigration laws have traditionally been less supported by Republicans, they have historically recognized the economic boom immigration offers to the United States, especially in the presidential legacy of Ronald Reagan.

Third, he spoke about the decline of manufacturing in terms that also suggested a zero-sum state of affairs. As noted above, Trump framed the disappearance of manufacturing jobs as though such employment opportunities simply migrated to other parts of the world. In other words, he suggested that such jobs were lost by America to other countries, and that he could bring them back. While globalization and outsourcing jobs to lower wage workers is certainly a part of the deindustrialization story, Trump left out that many of these jobs have simply disappeared outright, and that they didn’t go anywhere. Nevertheless, his entire depiction of America’s manufacturing decline as though we lost to the rest of the world, and we could fix this problem by winning again. He further developed this narrative with his prominent solution of negotiating better trade deals. Trump stressed that his Administration would restore the ‘America First’ doctrine, and that he would only accept deals where America comes out on top. This nativist theme of America First was a large component of Trump’s campaign and it created a zero-sum political ideology.

Clinton, on the other hand, did not frame the problem of lost work and income within a zero sum ideology. Recall that the problems she cited as causes for this issue include insufficient infrastructure spending, global trends, and economic favoritism toward the elite. The need for greater infrastructure investment is itself not suggestive of nor conducive to a zero sum rhetorical frame and it was not presented within one by Clinton. However, her other proposed causes — global trends and economic favoritism — could have been presented in a zero sum conceptualization, as was demonstrated by Donald Trump, but they weren’t. Consider the following language used by Clinton to discuss globalization, “Trade has been a major driver of the economy over recent decades, but it has also contributed to hollowing out our
manufacturing base and many hard-working communities... So we do need to set a high bar for trade agreements. We should support them if they create jobs, raise wages and advance our national security. And we should be prepared to walk away if they don't. To create fair growth, we need to create opportunity for more Americans.” Unlike Trump, she is not framing trade deals as dangerous and a source of heated competition between nations. In fact, she even pays tribute to the classical notion that international trade does great things for America. Her language on the subject is starkly different from Trump: she focuses on describing how certain policies may or may not create opportunity as opposed to Trump's description of how policies facilitate winning and losing.

Moreover, in her discussion on economic favoritism to the elite, again we see Clinton employ non-zero-sum language in framing the cause of lost work and income. For instance, while describing the unfair tax code she said, “First let's start with protecting taxpayers and making sure we have more fairness in the system. It is wrong that corporations and the super-wealthy play by a different set of rules. A Wall Street money manager should not be able to pay a lower tax rate than a teacher or a nurse... And it is infuriating when they take tax breaks with one hand and give out pink slips in America with the other hand.” Her description of the favoritism enjoyed by the elite presents no oppressor and oppressed. Indeed, Clinton frames the issue as though there are mechanical flaws in the existing tax codes, and that Wall Streeters are just luckily benefiting from a system that is out-of-tune. This doesn’t suggest the existence of competition between classes with winners or losers, but rather a system that is in need of correcting. Her rhetoric could easily be compared to that of Senator Sanders who presented this very issue in zero-sum terms — namely, that Wall Street and the billionaire class is actively rigging the system and unjustly taking wealth from the middle and working classes.

Clinton's solutions to the problem of lost work further substantiate the claim that she presented a non-zero-sum ideology. Her primary solutions included: empowering small business, profit sharing, and job training. All of these remedies, unlike Trump’s, make no suggestion of a competition between groups in society. Each of these policy endeavors were presented by Clinton as something that will lift up everyone in society, as opposed to reconfiguring who wins and loses in the global economy as was the case with Trump's solutions.
Now, I want to finally suggest that the different political ideologies presented by Trump (zero-sum) and Clinton (non-zero-sum), played a significant role in Trump’s victory. We reviewed, at length, the state of the labor market in the literature review. However, we mostly considered the economic facts and figures — the quantitative dimension — without exploring the qualitative lived experience of the laborers themselves. The nearly five-decade reign of neoliberal policy (i.e. the privatization and retrenchment of government services, austerity measures, deregulation, weakened labor protections, and liberalized international trade) have resulted in the salience of precarious work. Sociologist Arne Kalleberg defines this phenomenon as, “employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker. Resulting distress, obvious in a variety of forms, reminds us daily of such precarity” (Kalleberg, 2009).

The facts and figures cited in the literature review, especially on the declining labor force participation rate and the rise of part-time, temporary jobs with no benefits, highlight how rampant precarious unemployment has become in the U.S. According to (Kalleberg, 2009), “Precarious work has far-reaching consequences that cut across many areas of concern to sociologists. Creating insecurity for many people, it has pervasive consequences not only for the nature of work, workplaces, and people’s work experiences, but also for many nonwork individual (e.g., stress, education), social (e.g., family, community), and political (e.g., stability, democratization) outcomes. It is thus important that we understand the new workplace arrangements that generate precarious work and insecurity” (Kalleberg, 2009, p. 2). It is also important to note that rising precarious unemployment in the United States exists within a context of low intergenerational mobility, further exacerbates the sense of ontological insecurity among workers.

The political consequences of this growing phenomenal sensation of ontological insecurity among working people cannot be ignored. In regards to the consequences, Kalleberg points out that, “Economic inequality and insecurity threaten the very foundations of our middle-class society, as workers are unable to buy what they produce. This results in a growth in pessimism and a decrease in satisfaction with one’s standard of living, as people have to spend more of their income on necessities, such as insurance and housing, and there has been a
rise in debt and bankruptcies... [and] the precarious situation may also spur natives’ negative attitudes toward immigrants.” (Kalleberg, 2009, p. 8, 10). It should be evident that Trump’s political ideology, which frames the problem of lost work and income and precarious employment in zero-sum terms, may have resonated more than Clinton’s non-zero-sum rhetoric. Persons captivated by the sense of pessimism that accompanies widespread precarious employment might more inspired by political rhetoric of ‘winning’ and making America ‘great again’ than an ideology that simply wants to make technocratic improvements to the status quos. As Kalleberg stated, nativism is a possible, if not inevitable, outcome of growing precariousness in the labor market, and Trump certainly tapped into this dimension if it exists with his America First doctrine — and Clinton did not.
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