

# MARX AND TECHNOLOGY

Amy Peat

# MARX'S VIEW ON TECHNOLOGY

- Distinction between tools and machines. (*Capital, Volume I*)
  - Machines work themselves, tools are used by men.
- Machines turn craft into industry.
- Machines meant less labour was needed for more production.
- Machines made labour easier, increasing labour pool to women and children. Labour force loses power.



INCREASED PROFITS  
FOR CAPITALISTS

# CONTRAST EXAMPLE

- Machines are only used when they produce more value than their cost.
  - Brazil: A maid costs between €7 (full time) and €14 (part time) per day, so washing machines aren't needed.



Vs.



# ADVANTAGES OF TECHNOLOGY

- Increased production.
- More efficient methods.
- Replaces labour.
- No need for food, health, benefits, etc.

# MARX TODAY

- Capitalism reached its peak, labour force demands better care.
- Shift from material production to information capital.
- Going back to Marx's capitalism- but replacing capital with innovation skills to use technology.

*“The biggest factor is that the technology-driven economy greatly favours a small group of successful individuals by amplifying their talent and luck.”*

*MIT Technology Review*

# WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

- Technology has become cheap and accessible.
- Creating apps, websites, requires almost no capital investment.
- Innovation today requires skills in information, not physical production.
- Repetitive tasks are replaced by robots, creativity is now top in the list of requirements.

# DELOITTE research report

- 35% of existing UK jobs at high risk of replacement in next twenty years, 30% in London
- 40% of UK jobs are low or no risk, 51% in London
- Lower-paid jobs over five times more likely to be replaced than higher-paid, almost eight times as likely in London
- 73% of businesses in London plan to increase headcount overall, with advances in technology requiring new skills and a major shift in job types



# CONCLUSION

- Capitalist structure is intensifying.
- Shift from material capital to creative capital.



# REFERENCES

- Karl Marx, Capital
- Thomas Piketty, Capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- <http://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/press-releases/articles/deloitte-one-third-of-jobs-in-the-uk-at-risk-from-automation.html>
- <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2014-11/10/third-of-uk-jobs-at-risk-from-robots>
- <http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/531726/technology-and-inequality/>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marx%27s\\_notebooks\\_on\\_the\\_history\\_of\\_technology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marx%27s_notebooks_on_the_history_of_technology)
- [http://www.gringoes.com/articles.asp?ID\\_Noticia=2005](http://www.gringoes.com/articles.asp?ID_Noticia=2005)