



The Center for Innovation, Growth, and Society

a project of Institute for
New Economic Thinking



CENTER FOR
ADVANCED
STUDY IN THE
BEHAVIORAL
SCIENCES

Labor, Technology and Growth: Towards A Gini Negative Solution

Agenda

February 27, 2020

MacArthur Park Restaurant
27 University Ave, Palo Alto, CA 94301

6:30 – 8:30 **Welcome Dinner and Discussion**
Inducing Labor Law Change for Greater Equality In a Market Economy
Sharon Block and Damon Silvers

February 28, 2020

Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University
75 Alta Road, Palo Alto, CA 94305

8:00-8:30 Breakfast

8:30-9:00 **Introduction**

9:00-10:30 **Session I: A Shifting Social Compact**

The story of GDP and the changing distribution of its spoils between labor and capital is the story of relative leverage between the two groups within market economies. A loss of bargaining power by full time workers would be expected to look like stagnant wages, loss of benefits, and the gradual demise of collective representation, ‘overtime’ and other perks of organized labor. These presumed losses of bargaining leverage are all consistent with the so-called ‘casualization of labor’, and the “fissured” and “gig” economies. This session will explore some of the sources and consequences of the changing balance of power.

Joel Rogers (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
David Weil (Brandeis University)
Tanya Goldman (Center for Law and Social Policy)
Commenter: Margaret Levi (CASBS)

10:30-10:45 **Break**

10:45-12:15 **Session II: Building Leverage Through Economics**

A tight labor market arising in a highly productive nation is one in which workers have considerable leverage over employers. The twin forces of globalization and automation have had considerable impact in many sectors to the point where an assembly line worker in a midwestern factory may now find herself competing on cost against a robot in (or immigrant from) Malaysia. Further, as frequent monopsonies, big tech firms wield considerable additional leverage as “the only game in town” in certain sectors. While addressing these new forces, this session asks whether there are any new and plausible Gini-negative forces wholly within markets that might reverse the rise of Capital’s share of productivity.

Marshall Steinbaum (University of Utah)
Lance Taylor (The New School)
John Irons (The Ford Foundation)
Commenter: Tom Ferguson (INET)

- 12:15-1:30 Lunch
- 1:30-3:00 **Session III: Building Leverage Through Law and Representation**
What role does regulation play in wage stagnation? How are legal structures governing worker leverage affecting the ability of workers to negotiate wages? Data indicates that declines in wage growth closely track declines in private union membership. What are the regulatory and legal changes that can bring to bear non-economic forms of leverage on widening income inequality?
- Sharon Block (Harvard Law School)
Damon Silver (AFL-CIO)
Sanjukta Paul (Wayne State University)
Commenter: David Abraham (University of Miami Law School)
- 3:00-4:30 **Session IV: Steering Innovation and Gini Negative Solutions**
As the debate continues amongst economists about whether automation is labor substituting or labor complimentary, we attempt to look beyond the stalemate to ask whether there is a possibility of steering innovation through incentives and regulation to achieve better outcomes for labor, whether by increasing the role of workers as stakeholders or redesigning workplace technologies to forestall avoidable degradation of meaningful human work.
- William Lazonick (UMass – Lowell)
Nathan Schneider (University of Colorado)
Anton Korinek (University of Virginia)
Commenter: Pia Malaney (Center for Innovation, Growth and Society)
- 4:30-4:45 Break
- 4:45-5:45 **Session V: Discussion**
- 5:45-6:30 Drinks and Farewell

We thank the OneProject for providing generous support towards this conference.