



Lecture 21

Work and Wealth

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Participation Quiz

6. You're in a car with a helium balloon tied to the floor. The windows are closed. When you step on the gas pedal, what happens to the balloon – does it move forward, move backward, or stay put?

Does the balloon move forward, backward or stay still?



By Kirit Saelensminde

A

Moves forward

B

Moves backward

C

Stays put

Automation

Let's try another class debate:

“Increasing automation will lead to an era of high unemployment.”

If the last digit of your primary (e.g., mobile) phone number is **even**, you're arguing **for** the proposition.



For



Against

Increase in Productivity

- Working long hours
 - North Americans (particularly Americans) work longer hours than other cultures and other times in history
- Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
 - A famous explanation of this restless work ethic
 - Linked it to Calvinist theology of predestination
- We have exchanged leisure time for possessions
 - Do you think this exchange is worth it? Would you exchange a much lower standard of living for much more free time?

Are Robots on the Rise?

- It seems every year there's a high-profile robotic success
 - self-driving cars
 - playing Jeopardy
- Ethical questions:
 - Is it wrong to create machines capable of making human labor obsolete? Will humans become demoralized by the presence of vastly more intelligent robots?
 - How can we ensure that intelligent robots will not be put to an evil purpose by a malevolent human? How can we ensure they do not adopt malevolent purposes themselves?
 - Is it morally acceptable to create “personal” (self-conscious) AI?

