

Labour, Exploitation, and the Tau-Flow of Work

Every Hour of Human Labour is Directed Tau-Flow

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Abstract

Labour economics studies how human work is organised, compensated, and exchanged. The Force of Time (FOT) grounds labour theory in physics: human labour is the directed Tau-flow of a conscious Tau-address — the most concentrated form of intentional Tau-flow available in nature. This paper derives the FOT account of wages, exploitation, automation, meaningful work, and the future of labour from the conservation law $dST = 0$.

P-LAB-1 · Labour as Directed Tau-Flow

What is labour? Standard economics defines it as a factor of production alongside capital and land. FOT identifies it more precisely: labour is the directed Tau-flow of a conscious Tau-address — the only factor of production that is irreducibly a living being.

P-LAB-1

Labour is directed Tau-flow from a conscious Tau-address. It differs from capital (crystallised past Tau-flow) and land (positional Tau-address claim) in being present, living, and self-referential. An hour of human labour is an hour of conscious Tau-flow irreversibly expended — it cannot be returned to the worker.

This grounds the intuition that labour is special among factors of production. Capital and land can be owned, sold, and transferred between addresses. Labour cannot be fully alienated: the Tau-flow of a conscious being is inseparable from the being itself. Employment contracts govern the direction of Tau-flow; they do not transfer the Tau-address.

P-LAB-2 · Wages as Tau-Flow Compensation

A wage is the Tau-flow token given in exchange for directed Tau-flow from the worker's address to the employer's purposes. FOT gives a precise definition of fair wages.

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A fair wage is one that returns sufficient Tau-flow tokens to the worker to maintain and reproduce their Tau-flow capacity — to cover subsistence, recovery, skill development, and sufficient leisure for self-referential modelling (consciousness). A wage below this threshold is Tau-suppressive: it degrades the worker's future Tau-flow capacity.

This is the FOT grounding of the minimum wage concept: not as a political intervention but as a physical necessity. A wage that does not allow workers to maintain their Tau-flow capacity is self-defeating — it degrades the very resource (conscious human Tau-flow) that the economy depends on.

P-LAB-3 · Exploitation as Forced Tau-Flow Transfer

Marx defined exploitation as the extraction of surplus value from labour. FOT translates this into physical terms.

P-LAB-3

Exploitation is the systematic transfer of Tau-flow from worker Tau-addresses to employer Tau-addresses at a rate that leaves workers with insufficient Tau-flow tokens to maintain their Tau-flow capacity. It is not a moral category imposed from outside — it is a physical description of Tau-flow dynamics that leads to the degradation of worker addresses over time.

FOT does not require any particular remedy for exploitation — that is a political question. It does establish the physical diagnosis: exploitation is a Tau-flow imbalance that, sustained over time, degrades the Tau-flow capacity of the exploited addresses and ultimately reduces the productive capacity of the entire Tau-economy.

P-LAB-4 • Automation as Tau-Flow Substitution

Automation replaces human Tau-flow with mechanised Tau-flow. FOT clarifies what is and is not substitutable.

P-LAB-4

Machines crystallise past Tau-flow (design, manufacture, energy) into reliable repetitive output. They can substitute for routine directed Tau-flow but cannot substitute for self-referential Tau-modelling (creativity, judgment, care). Automation displaces routine labour; it cannot displace conscious Tau-flow.

This predicts a structural division in automated economies: routine Tau-flow tasks will be automated while self-referential Tau-flow tasks (creative work, teaching, healing, leadership) will become more valuable. The challenge is distributing the Tau-flow tokens generated by automation to those whose routine Tau-flow has been substituted.

P-LAB-5 • Meaningful Work and Tau-Address Alignment

Not all labour feels equal. Meaningful work — work that engages the worker's self-referential Tau-modelling — is a qualitatively different Tau-flow than alienated routine labour.

P-LAB-5

Meaningful work is Tau-flow that is aligned with the worker's own Tau-address structure — their skills, values, and self-referential model. Such work enhances rather than depletes Tau-flow capacity. Alienated labour is Tau-flow directed entirely by external address commands, disconnected from the worker's self-referential model.

The empirical finding that meaningful work improves health, longevity, and cognitive function is a Tau-conservation result: Tau-aligned work maintains and develops the worker's Tau-flow capacity; alienated work depletes it. Organisations that invest in Tau-alignment (autonomy, mastery, purpose) achieve superior Tau-throughput.

P-LAB-6 • The Future of Labour: Universal Tau-Flow Income

If automation substitutes routine Tau-flow and the resulting Tau-throughput is concentrated in few addresses, Tau-conservation requires redistribution.

P-LAB-6

Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a Tau-conservation mechanism: it ensures that all Tau-addresses receive sufficient Tau-flow tokens to maintain Tau-flow capacity regardless of whether their routine Tau-flow has been automated. It is not charity — it is the Tau-dividend of collective mechanised Tau-flow returned to the conscious addresses that ultimately authorised and built the machines.

FOT does not prescribe UBI as policy — that is a political decision. It establishes that any economy in which automation displaces labour without redistributing the Tau-throughput will accumulate Tau-suppressed addresses whose reduced Tau-flow capacity eventually constrains the entire Tau-economy through reduced consumption, social instability, and political breakdown.

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