

Masterarbeit

Dreaming of Automation: A review of Hype-Driven Claims about Technological Disruption that Should Have Impacted Organizations and Society but Did Not

For decades, scholars have attempted to predict how technology would impact societies in future years. In 1956, Leavitt and Whisler published an article in the Harvard Business Review titled "Management in the 1980s," discussing the "revolutionary" effects that emerging technology would have on organizations 30 years into the future.

They posited that the middle-management world would become "highly depersonalized, highly programmed, and more machine-like." In contrast, today's middle management frequently assumes a strategic role, serving as a conduit between upper management and frontline employees, spearheading innovation, and fostering agility.

In 2013, Frey and Osborn, researchers at Oxford, released a working paper that examined 702 occupations, noting that 47% of total US employment was at high risk of being automated in the coming years. Among the jobs believed to be on the brink of automation were truck drivers. However, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics currently projects that the employment of truck drivers will increase by 10% over the next decade.

The common thread linking these two articles seems to be an overestimation of the extent to which technology would automate jobs. Given this background, the thesis aims to conduct a literature review of forward-looking statements on technological transformation to categorize such exaggerations. The ultimate objective is to gain a deeper insight into how hype emerges and permeates academic discourse.

Recommended Literature:

Leavitt, H. J. and Whisler, T. L. (1958) Management in the 1980's, *Harvard Business Review*.
Frey, C. and Osborne, M. (2013) The future of employment, working paper.

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