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The AI movement and the ideas ex-machina

Carlos Javier Regazzoni*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) theory serves as the intellectual foundation for the technical advancements driving modern AI systems. At its core, it posits that, with sufficiently rigorous engineering, machines may one day exhibit genuine intelligence. Yet AI extends far beyond its theoretical roots, converging with a constellation of economic, geopolitical, and sociopolitical doctrines and interests to shape a revolutionary global movement. This movement, endowed with its own distinct set of ideas and goals, not only fuels innovation but also accelerates technological expansion, business growth, and the consolidation of power at an unprecedented pace.

The ideology driving the global AI movement intensifies the growing tensions between transformative technological advancements, promising economic opportunities, and deeply entrenched institutional structures and values at both national and international levels. This profound and multifaceted upheaval demands a comprehensive conceptual framework to steer its swift evolution and relentless global expansion.

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The imperative for understanding extends well beyond the boundaries of the AI community, compelling policymakers and intellectual leaders to navigate these uncharted waters of the AI revolution with acuity and foresight.

A new ideology of global reach is becoming discernible on the horizon of AI movement, and our aim is to disentangle it. Subsequently, potential consequences derived from this ideological confrontation in Latin America will be considered.

A powerful and concentrated global AI movement

Our premise is that a new global economic and sociopolitical movement is emerging, one that increasingly coalesces around artificial intelligence as an epoch-defining force. This movement is propelled by an intellectual revolution, commercial imperatives, and expansionary ambitions on one hand, and by the conviction that challenging established beliefs, values, and allegedly outdated institutions is increasingly becoming a prerequisite for advancing AI technology and making the promised profits a reality.

The “AI movement” unites a diverse coalition of researchers, entrepreneurs, development centers, technology corporations, and pioneers whose ideas collectively shape this transformative innovation and propel its rapid adoption. AI’s technology growth has been staggering since 2010. Training data have doubled every nine months, while the parameters enabling models to extract insights have doubled annually reaching an estimated 1.6 trillion. Simultaneously, the required computational power has surged, doubling every six months (Samborska, 2025). All this progress has been absolutely

asymmetrical, favoring power concentration. China accounts for 22% of global AI research publications, the EU for 14%, and the U.S. for 11%.

The AI movement also includes powerful brokers and economic investors who make possible the large-scale AI systems. The velocity of AI advancement is intricately bound to extraordinary levels of capital flooding the field, now in the order of U$S180 billions annually, and growing. Investment is also highly concentrated. In 2020, U.S. venture capital (VC) investors accounted for 43% of global AI VC funding, followed by Chinese at 20% and EU27 investors at 9% (OECD, 2025). Despite the vast array of companies entering the AI space, only a handful of megacap firms are seen as the current winners (Ward, Galler, Toschi, et al., 2024). This limited pool of stakeholders has created a self-reinforcing earnings cycle over the past two years. Just five AI hyperscalers are projected to invest over $1 trillion in capital expenditure collectively between 2024 and 2027. Meanwhile, the top 10 stocks in the S&P 500 now account for over 40% of research and development spending.

This financial deluge has ignited a self-perpetuating cycle where investment fuels technical breakthroughs that unlock commercial viability, thereby attracting further capital to the main financiers. The result is an acceleration of AI's ascendancy, reshaping markets and power structures. Moreover, "one hundred giant firms, all from the high-income countries, account for over three-fifths of the total R&D expenditure among the world's top 1,400 companies. They are the foundation of the world's technical progress in the era of capitalist globalisation" (Wolf, 2013). These companies have invested

hugely across borders, not least in China. In the process, they are losing national characteristics and loyalties.

The man and the market

Over time, this movement is establishing a distinct identity, along with clear objectives and expansion strategies. In doing so, it has sparked frictions and conflicts with various spheres of society, including the labor sector, religious institutions, and the policy-making community. At the core of these tensions lie two fundamental concepts, one concerning the role of human beings in society, and the other regarding the proper functioning of markets.

Relative to the role of the individual in society, the long-held notion of human exceptionalism faces profound and unprecedented scrutiny. Early AI pioneers argued that the nervous system could be understood through a statistical framework (McCulloch and Pitts, 1948, pp. 91–99) and that every facet of human intelligence—including free will—stems from mechanical processes within the brain. The "perceptron" (Rosenblatt, 1958) emerged as a model capable of replicating these processes, operating on the premise that statistical models can reliably capture the intrinsic mechanisms of the nervous system, and nothing else exists beyond that. From that point forward, the AI movement adopted the view that human intelligence is physically explicable and, therefore, technologically reproducible. This assumption underlies all challenges that AI poses to most existing ethical theories, including the very foundations of political decision-making. How can one justify rejecting AI driven decisions for society if the machine is

deemed equivalent to a brain, and the human brain is seen as nothing more than a machine? (Kissinger, Mundie, and Schmidt, 2024, p.56-58).

AI systems generate effective outputs not by adhering to the truth of their premises, but by optimizing for the best fit to a convenient preestablished target. In doing so, the AI revolution erodes the very epistemological foundations of truth. The potential impact of this corrosion on the debate of political ideas is both profound and unsettling. The advancement of machine learning has triggered a paradigm shift, replacing the pursuit of truth with a focus on predictive performance (Otsuka, 2023, p. 129). We may well be witnessing the twilight of the Enlightenment Era—an epoch rooted in repeatable experimentation and deductive rigor—yielding to a new order where algorithms prioritize empirical outcomes over explanatory reasoning. Efficacy now prevails over truth-driven decision-making. This inversion of epistemic authority, where predictive efficacy eclipses causal understanding, not only undermines the scientific method but also destabilizes the foundations of societal trust, redefining how knowledge is constructed, validated, and wielded in an age of algorithmic determinism (Kissinger, 2023, p. 509).

In addition to challenging traditional prerogatives of human intelligence, the AI movement raises fundamental questions about markets. As noted, it is driven by a coalition of powerful economic stakeholders guided by an ideological framework that legitimizes their aspirations. This underlying agenda emphasizes market sovereignty. Within this paradigm, inequalities take on a different guise, attracting less scrutiny and being perceived with diminished urgency.

The contemporary AI alliance—comprising Silicon Valley executives, tech investors, and industry leaders—increasingly embraces a techno-optimist and more confident free-market ideology. This worldview contends that unfettered markets are not only efficient but the sole viable foundation for organizing and sustaining a technologically advanced society (Morozov, 2024). Venture capitalist Marc Andreessen's "Techno-Optimist Manifesto" encapsulates this stance, asserting that free markets—described as discovery machines and forms of evolutionary intelligence—are the most effective means of structuring a technological economy (Andreessen, 2023). This outlook is grounded in neoliberal philosophy, with its faith in deregulation, competition, and private enterprise, but is further propelled by a belief that rapid technological innovation will inevitably drive social progress. Historically, Silicon Valley culture has fused a countercultural libertarian streak—empowering individuals through technology—with neoliberal economics, prioritizing deregulation, free markets, and financialization as paths to prosperity (Dehlendorf, 2024). In this context, AI actively reinforces market primacy in multiple ways.

From Uber to Amazon, algorithms now coordinate and optimize workflows. Algorithmic management assigns tasks, sets dynamic prices, and evaluates workers at scale, treating the workforce as flexible input, and ultimately crafting a semblance of a perfect market (Kadolkar, Kepes, & Subramony, 2024). By accelerating markets, AI functions as both a product and a propagator of a deeper neoliberal ethos. In essence, AI is embedded within an economic model that not only profits from the market but perpetually reaffirms its supremacy.

Despite the familiar mantra that "markets prevent monopolies," in reality, a handful of corporations now concentrate unprecedented wealth, data, and computing power, creating quasi-monopolies in AI competences. These capabilities are rapidly extending into other domains—such as robotics, drones, autonomous vehicles, healthcare, and defense—bestowing extraordinary power upon non-governmental profit-driven actors. In addition to the erosion of the traditional notion of human intelligence, all indications suggest a diminished influence of conventional political positions in both global and domestic affairs. The global discourse on inequalities, long regarded as the most pressing issue surrounding capitalism, is likely to lose momentum, potentially igniting social conflict.

Ex machina

This new ideology, upheld by the leading partners of the AI movement, is profoundly consequential. Yet, it is not entirely human. Interwoven with this powerful society of the AI, a new actor has emerged: the machine. Sam Altman's stated goal is to achieve artificial general intelligence (AGI) that surpasses human capabilities. Indeed, OpenAI was founded nearly nine years ago on the conviction that AGI was not only possible but could become the most transformative technology in human history (Altman, 2025). And the fact that this has become a White House-backed initiative underscores a geopolitical reality. Whichever nation attains AGI first will hold a decisive advantage, both commercially and militarily, over the rest. The real question, however, is who will have the power

to control such a machine. In other words, technology is imposing its own demands in a strikingly autonomous manner.

As Martin Heidegger states in an unforgettable interview with Der Spiegel, "over the past thirty years, it has become increasingly evident that the planetary movement of modern technology is a power whose capacity to determine history is scarcely appreciated". He goes on to remark that, for him, "a decisive question [was] how a political system could be coordinated with the current technological era" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 68-69). The current landscape of international AI governance remains deeply unrepresentative (UN, AI Advisory Body, 2024), with vast regions and historically marginalized communities excluded from critical decision-making processes. On the premise that concentrated power in the AI sector is neither admissible nor sustainable, the United States and China are maneuvering to extend state control over the AI movement in a final bid to restrain it within the traditional confines of political institutions. At the same time, both nations are contending to lead the race for AI supremacy. At the same time, however, as AI systems grow more powerful and complex, the state's ability to control them diminishes. This is not only because machines themselves are becoming more formidable but also due to the expanding economic networks surrounding them, driven by the promise of unprecedented gains. As an inevitable consequence, the influence of the AI movement and its ideas on critical decisions regarding world order and the shaping of a just community—domains once reserved for political movements and ideologies—is steadily expanding.

In the modern era, data centers have emerged as a new symbol of superpower status (Foley, 2025), as well as gigantic investments in search of profit. Vast warehouses housing clusters of microchips on an unprecedented scale could weaken parliaments and public debates in defining the destiny of human community, augmenting the already critical weight of banks and entrepreneurs. In face of this landscape, it would be good to remember that AI models are exactly that, models, and in the end all models are reductionistic idealizations of reality (Cox, 1990, p.169-174). These shifts are likely to give rise to what might be called a new social question—a form of grievance with no clear entity to which one can appeal.

Latin America is a region profoundly afflicted by inequality and insecurity—scourges that demand intense political debate and consensus. Nonetheless, the ideology underpinning the AI movement's advances, as described, risks leaving the region behind, plunging it into even deeper conflict. An economy and technology shaped by the AI movement's ideology risk losing the traditional tools required to bring people to the table to resolve differences and identify shared values and goals.

The further the economy detaches from the rest of social life, the more it gravitates toward its inherent tendency for inequality—growing increasingly alienated from human experience. The assimilation of the brain to a machine, rather than as the seat of human freedom, accelerates this divide by undermining the legitimacy of objections that free human intelligence might raise against economic structures. This, without a doubt, is the underlying reality behind debates on

the end of work and the emergence of a new social question, to take two examples.

In this context, social conflict will demand recognition and, paradoxically, seek empathy from machines—a virtue rarely found in mathematical models and electronic circuits designed primarily to generate profits for investors, while struggling to grasp the complexities of human life.

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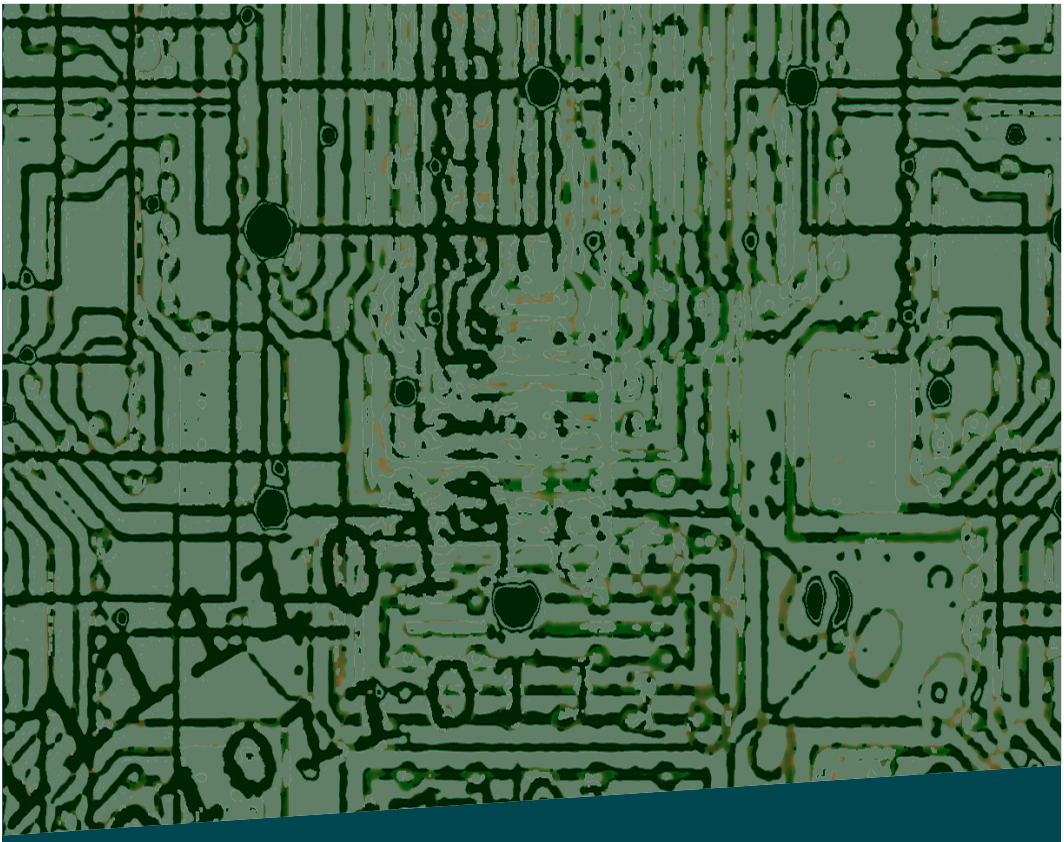

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