

Toward an Inclusive Industry 4.0: Social Policy, and Development in Africa

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Abstract

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, or 4IR, is a framework or overarching concept that covers data and technology such as artificial intelligence (AI), as well as its relationships to tangible things such as infrastructures, automobiles, residences, and cities. It reflects essential and very genuine tendencies, but unfortunately, most of both good and negative criticism of it adopts a technical determinist viewpoint. This is regrettable because it signifies significant and very real developments. Most individuals are under the false impression that new technologies actively influence society, either by creating new wealth or by destroying democratic institutions. Most people assume that new technologies directly alter society, rather than recognizing that society may influence the direction of research and development (R&D) and select how technologies are utilized. If countervailing measures are not implemented, the application of technology linked with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) may not only bring about large economic growth and gains in welfare but also social and economic disruption, including a widening of inequality. The goal of this chapter is to discuss, through the prism of social policy, the key measures that can be implemented to ensure that the Fourth Industrial Revolution is inclusive. The ultimate objective is to comprehend how this might help economic growth and development, especially in Africa.

Key Words: Inclusive Industry, Social Policy, Economic Growth, Development, Africa.