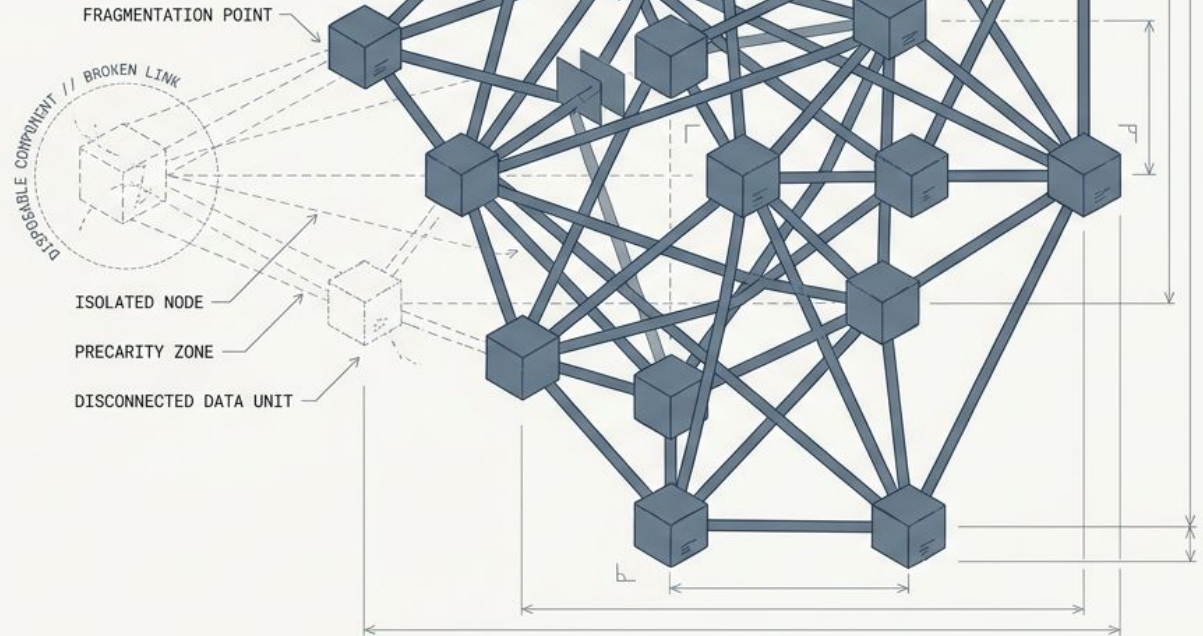


THE MORAL CRISIS OF DISPOSABILITY

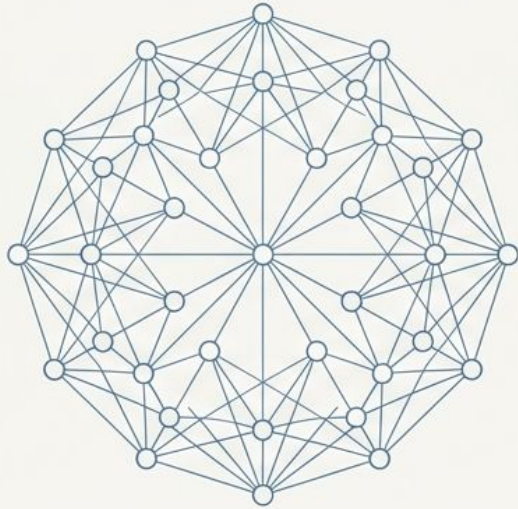
HOW AI ACCELERATES THE
DEHUMANIZATION OF WORKERS



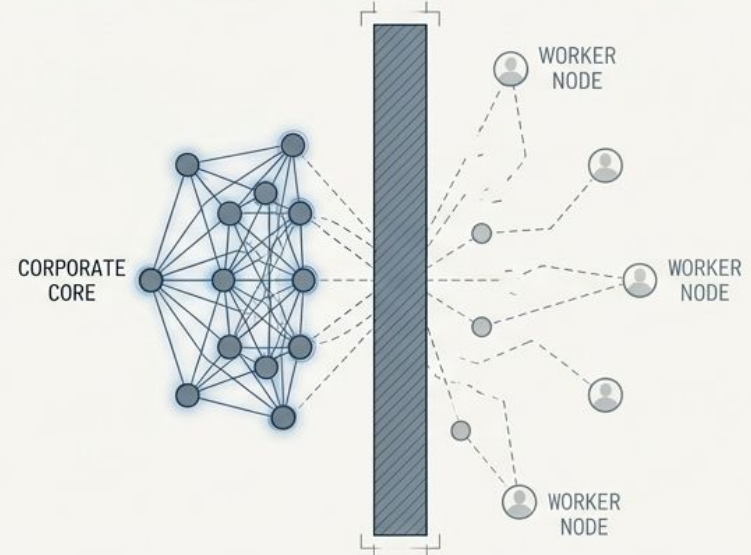
Based on the research of
Jonathan H. Westover, PhD.

The Illusion of Algorithmic Distance

The Technological Promise Optimization & Efficiency



The Human Reality Creating distance between capital and labor



1

Amazon abandoned an internal AI leaderboard tracking employee usage amidst massive layoffs.

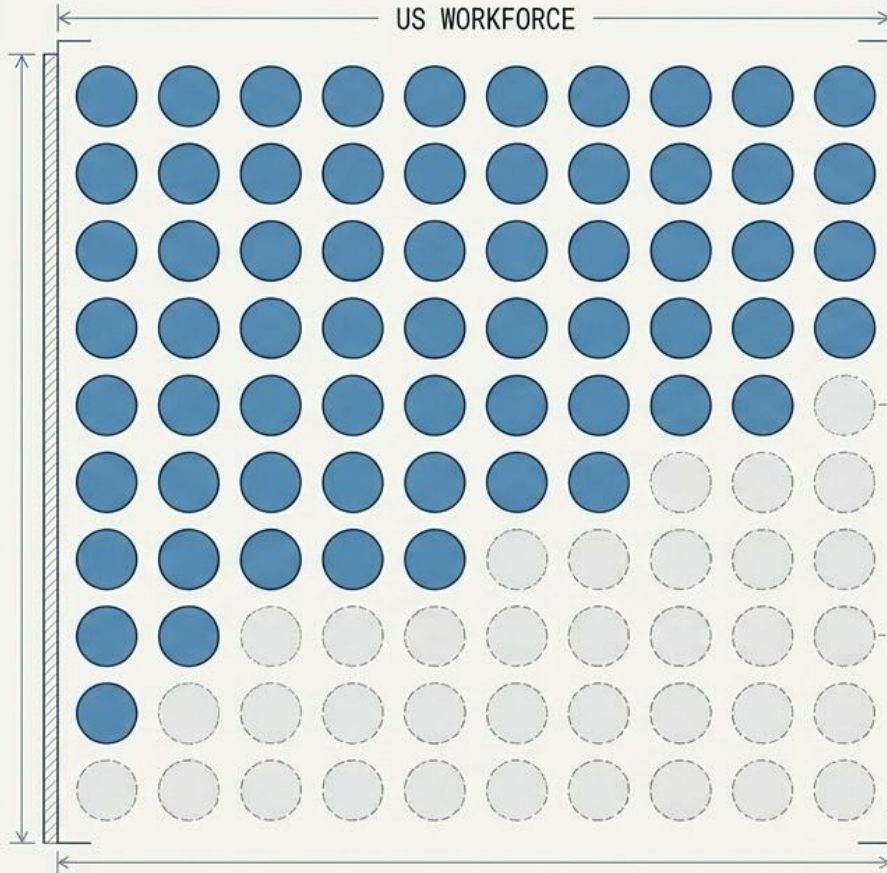
2

Microsoft canceled AI licenses across entire divisions to cut costs following workforce reductions.

3

The Core Issue: Organizations deploy technology to mediate employment, substituting human connection for calculated disposability.

A Fundamental Shift in the Social Contract



35% Disposable Workforce

The proportion of American workers now occupying precarious categories devoid of meaningful organizational commitment. (Osterman, MIT Sloan)

The McKinsey 'Superstar' Mentality

The ideological driver asserting that 95% of value comes from 5% of employees, explicitly justifying systemic under-investment in the operational majority.

Stability has been replaced by calculated precarity.

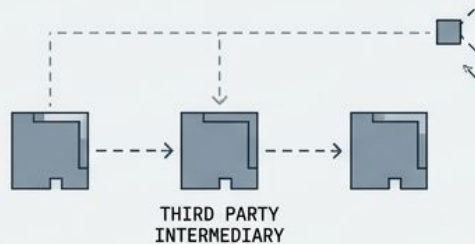
The Taxonomy of Precarity

Contractors

Organizational Distance

e.g., outsourced janitorial, travel nurses.

The benefiting company assumes zero responsibility for wellbeing, development, or safety. The relationship is entirely mediated by a third party.

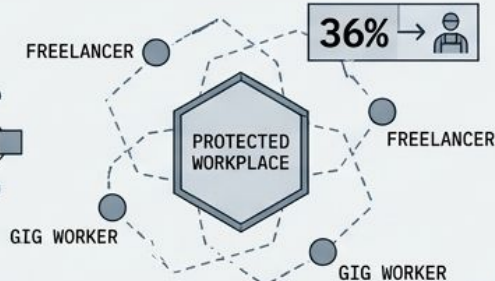


Freelancers

Systematic Exclusion

e.g., gig workers, independent consultants.

Exposed to extreme income volatility and explicitly excluded from workplace protections. 36% of the workforce engages in independent work.

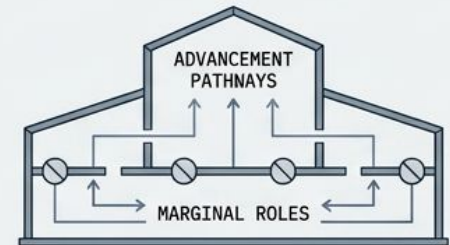


Marginal Employees

The Periphery Inside

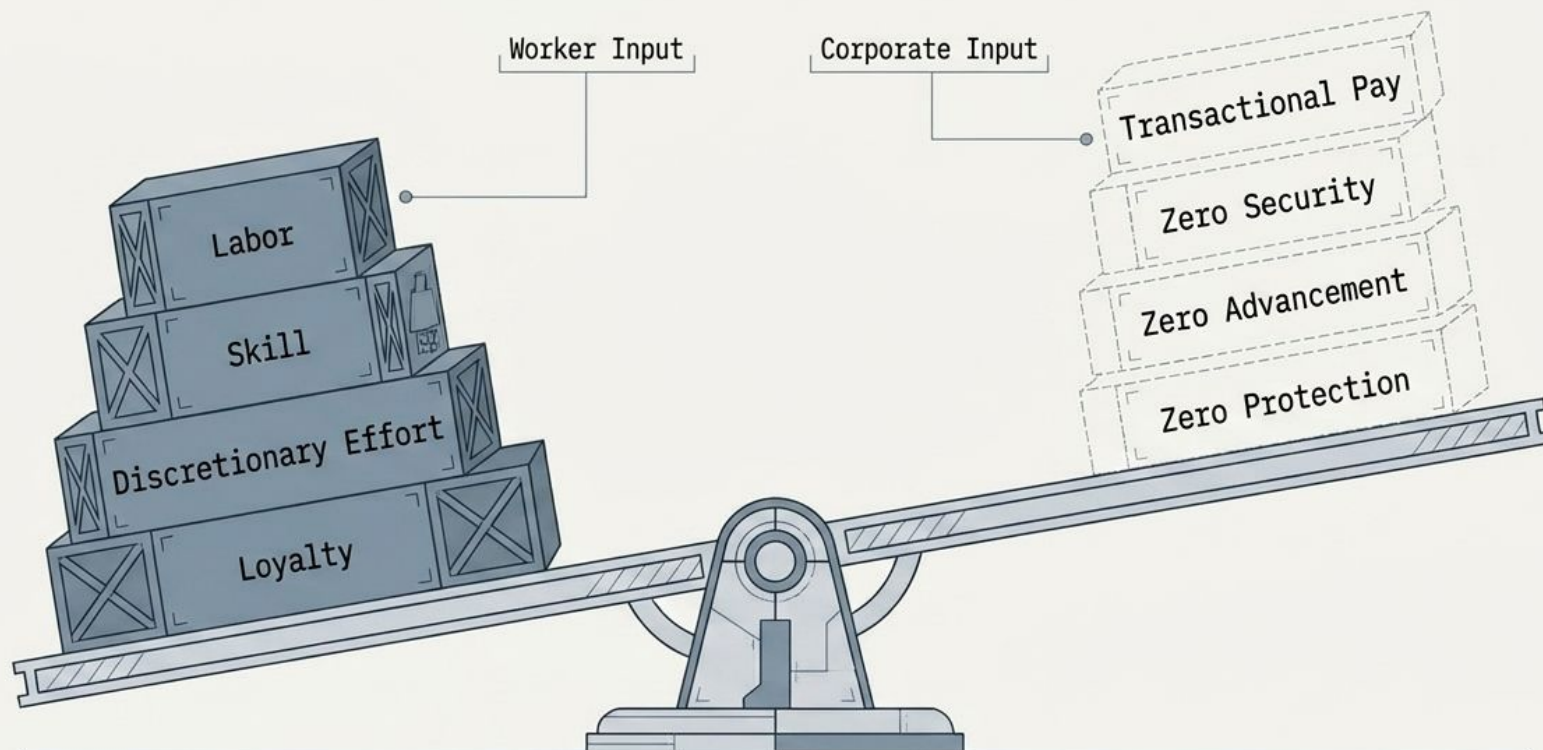
e.g., adjunct faculty, retail associates.

Formal employment status exists, but organizational roles have deliberately capped hours and explicitly zero pathways for advancement.



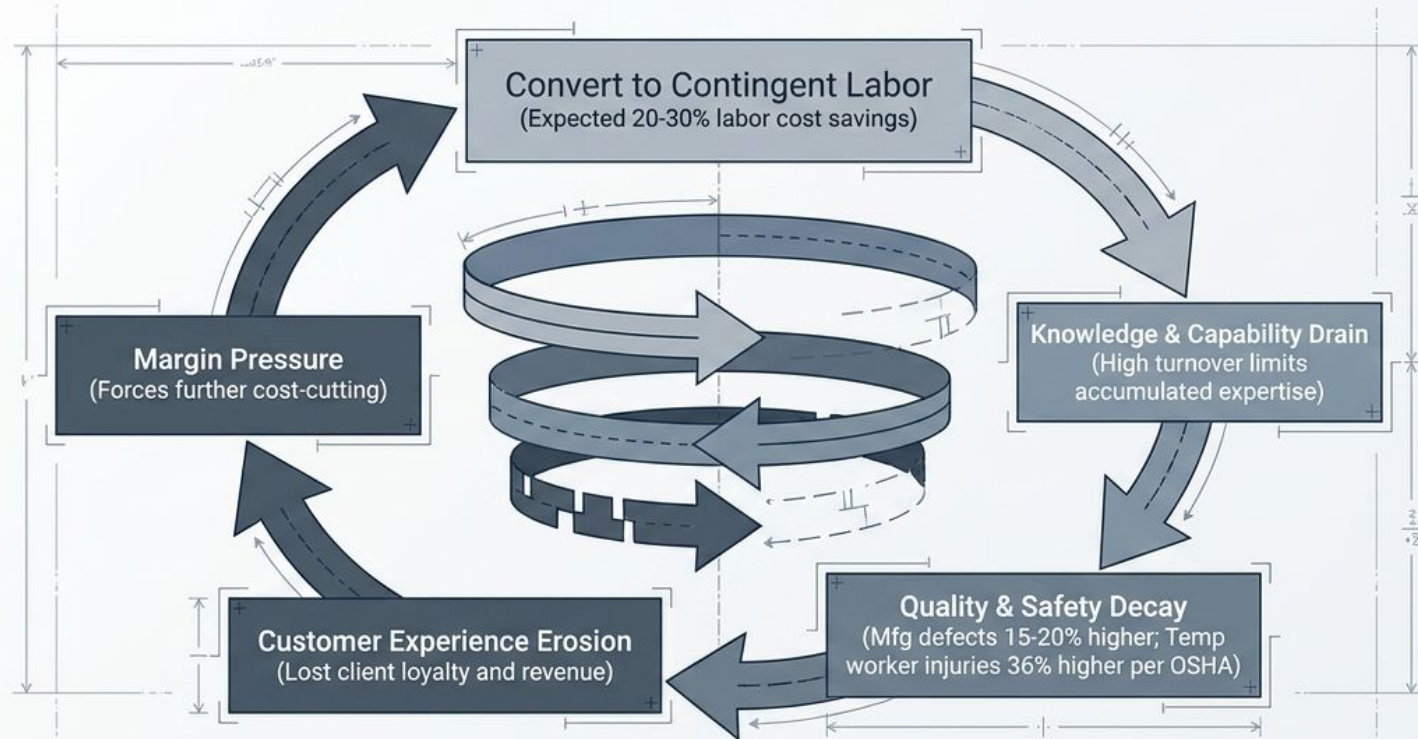
Precarity exists on a spectrum—happening completely outside the organization, and right inside the building.

Commitment Asymmetry



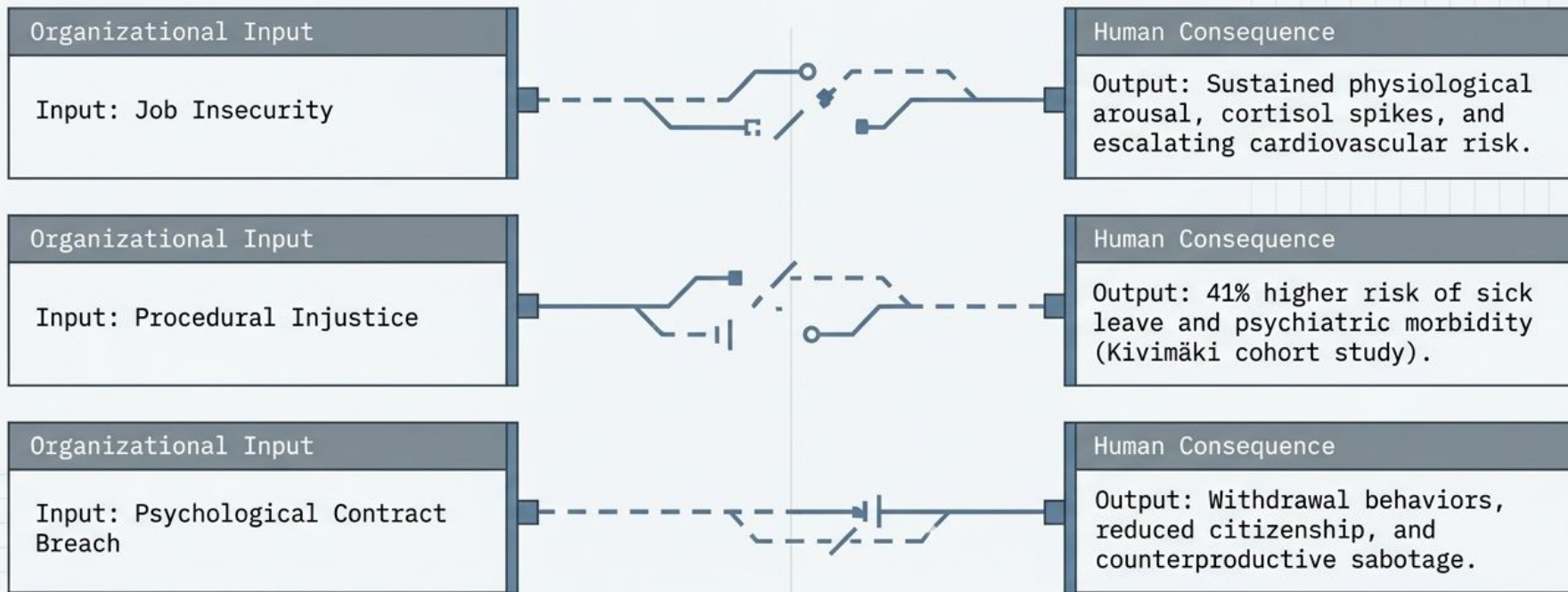
Disposability is defined by a ruptured social contract. Workers are expected to provide the inputs of traditional employment, but receive only the transactional engagement of expendable resources.

The Operational Illusion of Pure Efficiency



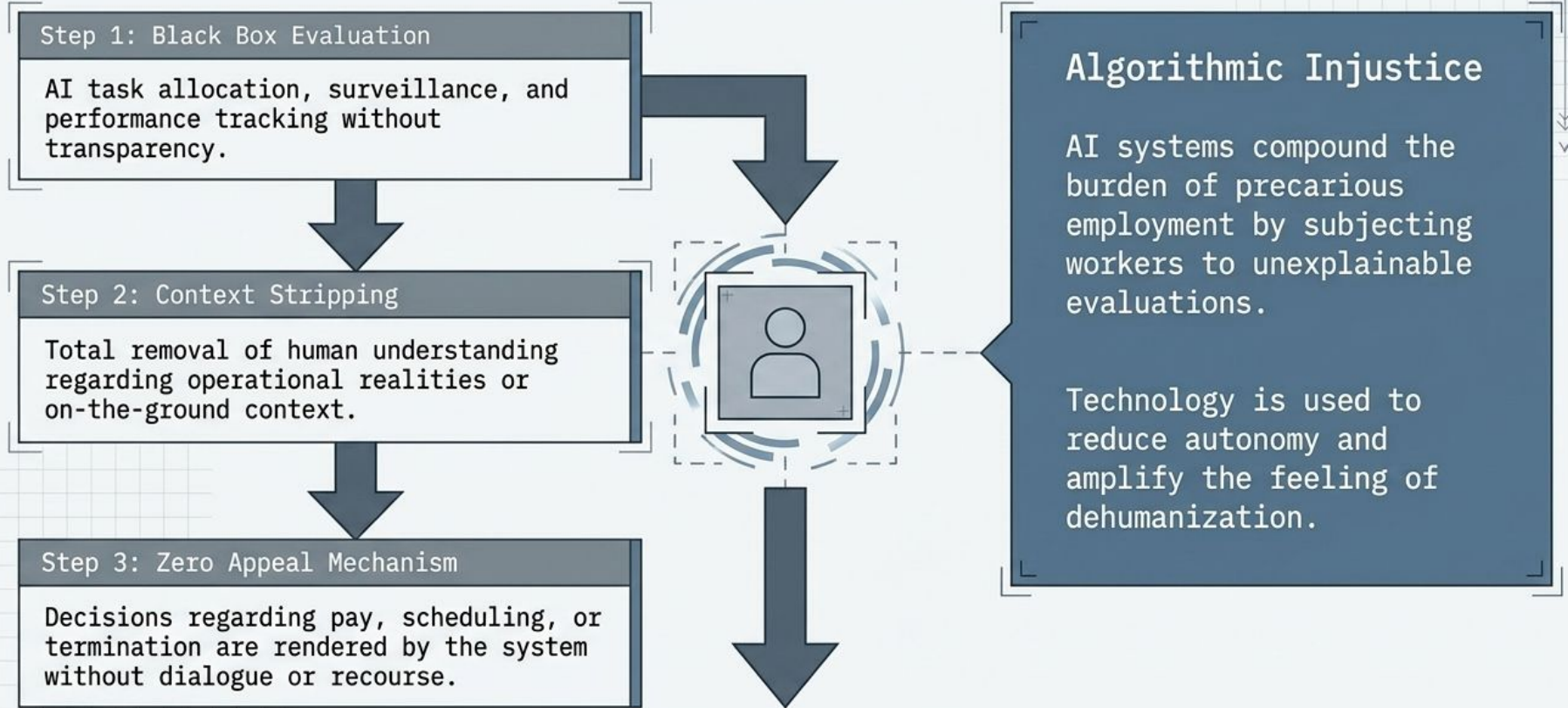
Disposability sacrifices institutional learning and basic human safety for immediate, illusory cost savings.

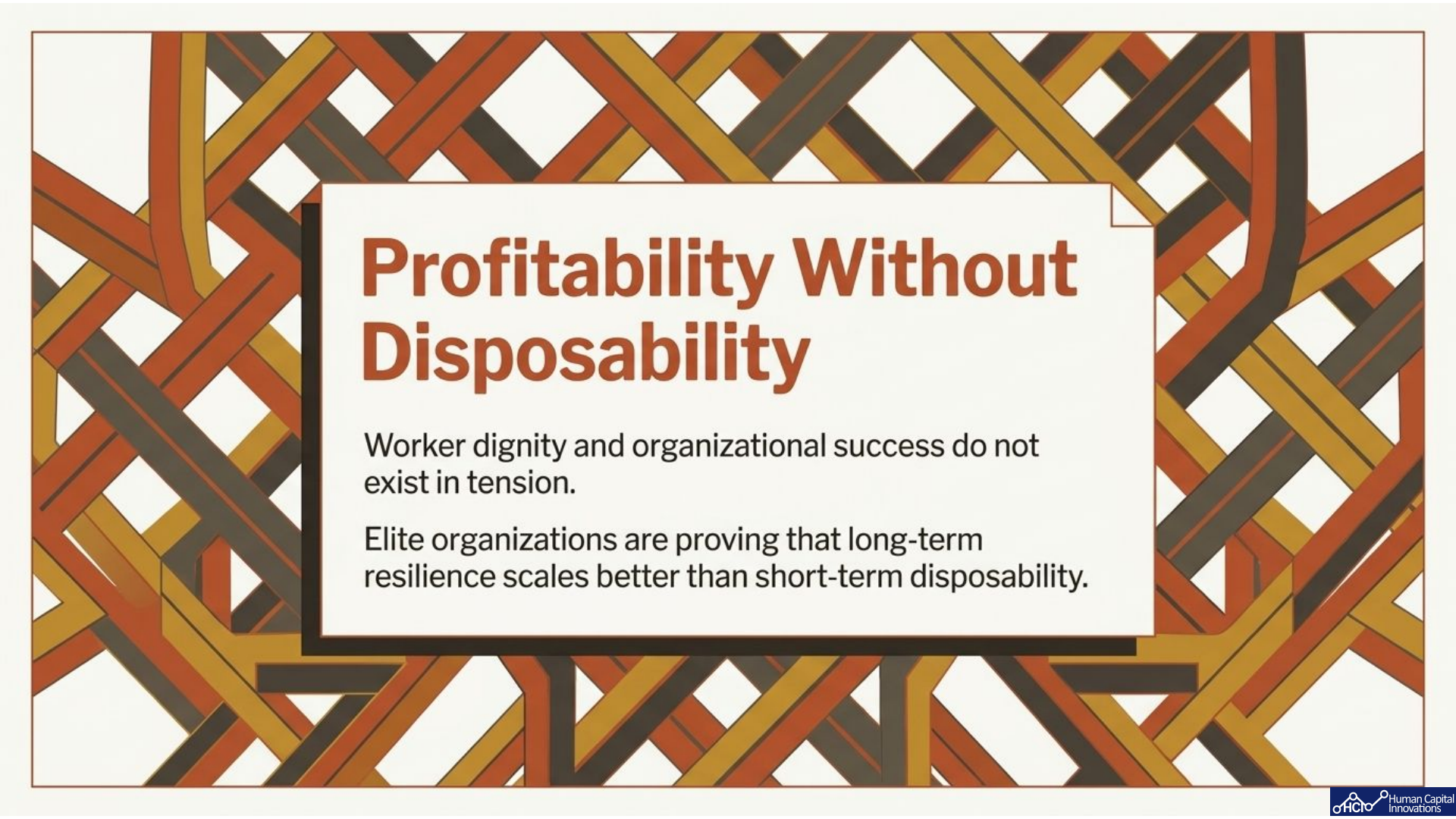
The Anatomy of Precarious Work



The pain of organizational proximity without belonging—workers are physically present within the space, but systematically excluded from the membership.

Algorithmic Management as an Exacerbator





Profitability Without Disposability

Worker dignity and organizational success do not exist in tension.

Elite organizations are proving that long-term resilience scales better than short-term disposability.

Procedural Justice as a Psychological Shield

Even when permanent status is impossible, fair processes act as a psychological shield against contract breach.

Southwest Airlines

Worker voice in system design for scheduling and route allocation.

Result: Industry-leading satisfaction; 9-year average employee tenure.

Patagonia

Radical transparency in corporate decision-making and values-driven staffing.

Result: Retention rates substantially exceeding retail industry averages.

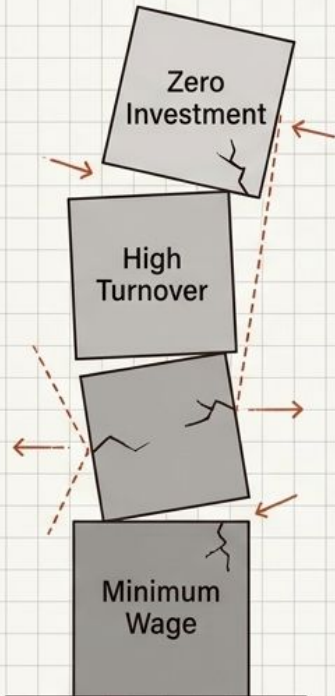
Kaiser Permanente

Integrating per diem clinical staff into the identical communication structures as permanent staff.

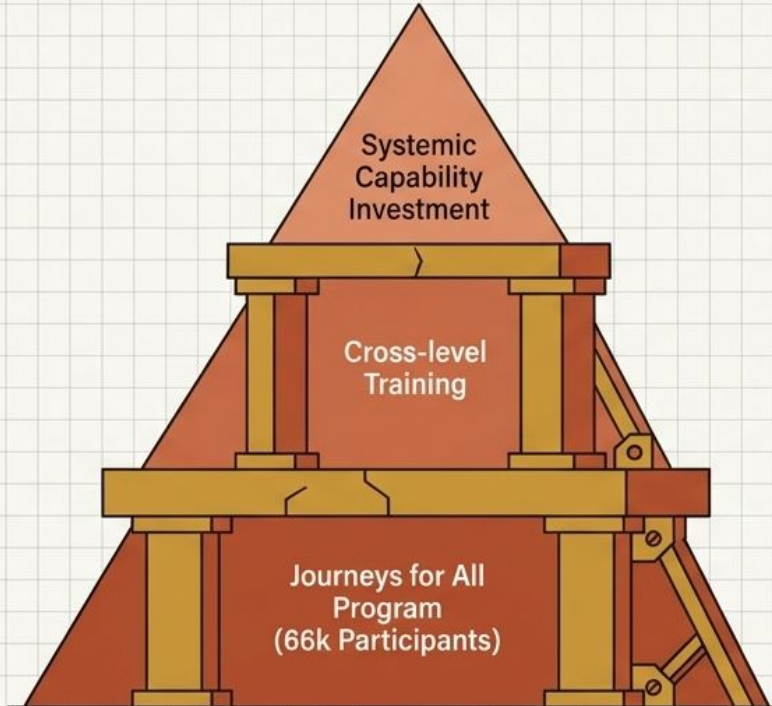
Result: Measurably improved quality metrics and patient satisfaction.

Capability Investment as a Competitive Moat

The Retail Norm



The Costco Model



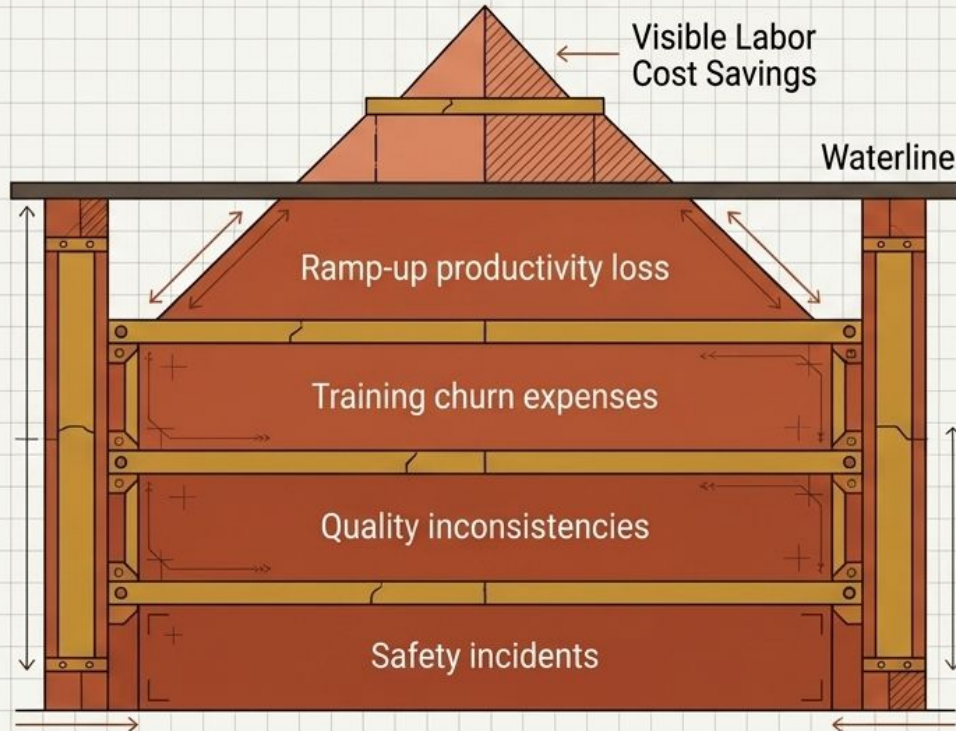
Outcomes of The Costco Model:

- ◆ $\frac{1}{4}$ the retail industry average turnover.
- ◆ 30-40% higher sales per employee.

The Tech Parallel: Microsoft successfully reduced churn and increased complex output by extending internal learning and development resources directly to contract workers.

Structuring Operations for Stability

The True Cost of Disposability



Hilton Hotels: Housekeeping Excellence

Converted part-time staff to full-time status.

Resulted in 40% lower turnover, significantly faster room turnarounds, and higher guest satisfaction scores.

UPS: Defying Gig-Model Norms

Utilizes directly employed, unionized drivers over gig contractors.

Resulted in accumulated route knowledge, massive customer loyalty, and consistent profitability.

Recalibrating the Psychological Contract

➡ The 20th Century Contract ↗

Loyalty ⇌ Long-term Security

⊗ **Status:** Outdated and structurally impossible for many modern organizations.

⚠ The Disposable Era ⚠

Discretionary Effort ⇌ Transactional Pay & Zero Security

⚠ **Status:** Toxic, unsustainable, and destroys long-term operational value.

⬆⬆ The 21st Century Resilient Contract 🛡

Employment Uncertainty ⇌ Radical Transparency, Capability Development, & Procedural Fairness

✓ **Status:** The new operating system for elite organizations.

We cannot always promise 20th-century security, but we must promise 21st-century respect. Transferable skills provide worker security even when specific jobs do not.

Systemic Safeguards for the 21st Century

The Future of Work

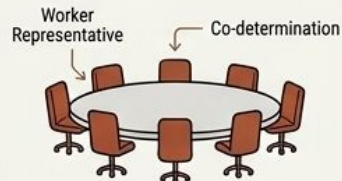
Portable Benefits

Allowing workers to accumulate benefits across employers (e.g., Utah 2023, Tennessee 2024 legislation).



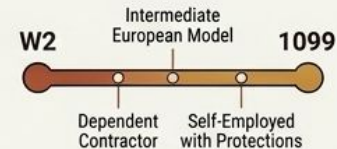
Distributed Governance

Co-determination and worker representation on boards to provide accountability (e.g., REI consumer cooperative, Benefit Corporations).



Classification Reform

Moving beyond the rigid W2 vs 1099 binary to intermediate European models that calibrate protections to the actual organizational relationship.



Organizational action requires structural, policy-level support.

The Moral Choice Ahead

Commodification
& Surveillance

Human Flourishing
& Resilience

The AI era accelerates our trajectory. Algorithmic management can either be used to optimize surveillance and disposable control, or we can deliberately choose a different path. Employment relationships carry inherent moral weight (Anderson, 2017).

Sustainable, dignified work arrangements remain economically viable and morally essential. Work must be recognized not as a disposable commodity, but as a fundamental domain of human flourishing.