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Issue Brief

Accelerationism and the 'Post-Labour' Dystopia

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Summary

Both left-wing and right-wing proponents of accelerationism wish to bring down the existing liberal and democratic order of society in favour of a totalitarian order. Silicon Valley accelerationists, through their pursuit of advancing technological innovation, particularly in the field of Artificial Intelligence, are being described as 'Tech-Fascists' due to their support for authoritarian politics, mass surveillance, artificial intelligence, and transhumanist technologies.

In 1967, American science fiction writer Roger Zelazny published a novel, *Lord of Light*, in which fictional Earth colonists use high-tech machinery and physical upgrades to become demigods. In the novel, the group of revolutionaries who wanted to take their society 'to a higher level' through technology were called the Accelerationists.[1] Although the novel did not gain popularity in Zelazny's lifetime, critical theorist Benjamin Noys revived the novel's term 'Accelerationism' and used it in his 2010 book *The Persistence of the Negative* to describe the ideology of the 1970s post-structuralist thinkers Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Jean-François Lyotard. [2]

According to Noys, these post-structuralist thinkers believed in pushing capitalist and technological processes to their extreme and opposed any form of regulation or public restriction on their development. Since then, 'accelerationism' has been associated with the socio-political theory of taking capitalist and technological processes to the extreme without supervision or regulation, in line with the left-wing ideology of Deleuze and Guattari.[3]

Left-Wing Accelerationism

Surprisingly, these early accelerationists trace the ideological origins to classical Marxism. Notably, Marx recognised capitalism as a historically revolutionary stage necessary for human development; he even praised it as a progressive force that develops massive productive capacities, but he also argued that capitalism is riddled with internal contradictions. To end the social inequalities and frequent economic downturns caused by capitalism, Marx suggested several strategies to destroy capitalism and usher in a communist order. One of these strategies was to accelerate capitalism's own processes to generate systemic crises within its incoherent internal dynamics (such as overproduction, alienation and abstraction).

In the context of bringing down capitalism, Marx explicitly argued for unchecked free-market capitalism in an address delivered to the Democratic Association of Brussels in 1848. Thus he said, "The free trade system hastens the social revolution. It is in this revolutionary sense alone, Gentlemen, that I vote in favour of free trade".[4] Marx discusses the same idea again in the section 'Fragment of Machines' in his famous *Grundrisse*, a series of notebooks published posthumously.[5]

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[1] A.M. Gautam, **"Myth, Machines, And Revolution In Ancient India: Roger Zelazny's 1967 Novel *Lord of Light*"**, *Scroll,* 25 May 2025.

[2] Benjamin Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative: A Critique of Contemporary Continental Theory*, Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

[3] Jordana Rosenfeld, **"Accelerationism: Social and Political Ideology"**, Britannica.

[4] David McLellan (ed.), ***Karl Marx: Selected Writings***, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 296.

[5] Martin Spence, **"Marx Against Marx: A Critical Reading of the Fragment on Machines"**, *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism and Critique, Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2019.

Thus, while Marx viewed automation as a brutal tool of worker exploitation under capitalism, he also maintained that technological advancement through automation is necessary for a post-capitalist society. This probably explains China's apparent embrace of capitalism, which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) itself states is the 'first stage of communism' in its official pronouncements.[6]

Even moderate left accelerationists of our times, like Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams (who co-authored the 2015 book *Inventing the Future: Post-Capitalism and a World Without Work*),[7] advocate repurposing modern technology, automation, and mass media away from corporate profit motives and towards a post-work, post-scarcity future (and call for universal basic income).[8] They argue that contemporary left-wing politics is ineffective and transient because it is politics of small-scale resistance, as exemplified by protest movements like Occupy Wall Street. Instead, they propose that the Left harness the productive and technological forces of modern capitalism (such as automation) to move beyond its ineffectual politics and align with Marxist strategies for achieving a post-capitalist utopia.[9]

Far-Right Militant Accelerationism

In reaction to left-wing accelerationism, an even more radical and disconcerting trend has developed in the accelerationist movement. Known as right-wing accelerationism, this branch embraces fascist and neo-Nazi ideologies and has now become the most publicly visible form of the accelerationist movement.

In fact, militant accelerationism first grew out of the white supremacist writings of James Mason in the 1980s, which call for the use of violence to engineer societal collapse to demolish the present democratic political order, which is necessary for the creation of White supremacist ethno-states. It argues that modern society cannot be redeemed because of the alleged decadence caused by the principles of liberalism, democracy and multiculturalism. In the collected essays of his book *Siege*, Mason explicitly calls on his followers to carry out lone-wolf terrorism, infrastructure sabotage, and the total collapse of Western democratic governments to then form White ethnostates.[10]

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[6] Wei Xinghua and Sang Baichuan, **"Properly Understand Theories Concerning Preliminary Stage of Socialism"**, *Journal of Renmin University of China*, No. 1, 1998, pp. 7–13,126.

[7] Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, ***Inventing the Future: Post- Capitalism and a World Without Work***, Verso Books, 2015.

[8] Hanna Schwander and Tim Vlandas, **"The Left and Universal Basic Income: The Role of Ideology in Individual Support"**, *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, Vol 36, Special Issue 3 (The Social Legitimacy of Basic Income: A Multidimensional and Cross- national Perspective), November 2020, pp. 237–268.

[9] Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, **"#Accelerate: Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics"**, in J. Johnson (ed.), *Dark Trajectories: Politics of the Outside*, 2013, pp. 135–155.

[10] James Mason and Michael M Jenkins, *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*, 1992.

Over the years, militant accelerationism has spread its tentacles globally and has been found responsible for carrying out deadly terrorist attacks like the Christchurch Mosque Shootings in New Zealand (15 March 2019), the El Paso Walmart Shooting in Texas, USA (3 August 2019), Buffalo Tops Supermarket Shooting in New York (14 May 2022) and Bratislava Tepláreň Bar Shooting in Slovakia (12 October 2022).

Silicon Valley Accelerationists: Anti-Democratic Futurist Vision

However, several researchers, journalists and tech experts allege that right-wing accelerationism is not limited to its militant version. Still, its more insidious tech-oriented version now infests many Silicon Valley corporations, which also seek to replace democratic systems with a form of corporate dictatorship or 'network states'.

According to research organisations like the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Silicon Valley's economic/technological accelerationism and far-right militant accelerationism share a troubling ideological overlap: a desire to dismantle existing democratic regulations, laws and public institutions.[11] Journalist Gil Durant's book *The Nerd Reich: Silicon Valley Fascism and the War on Democracy* has been making waves with its claim that powerful venture capitalists are deliberately using artificial intelligence (AI) and cryptocurrency to undermine democracy. The author even links tech ideologies with techno-libertarianism and claims right-wing accelerationists have infiltrated President Donald Trump's Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement as well.

Publications like the *Financial Times* have also heavily critiqued the 'Techno-Optimist Manifesto' published by Silicon Valley venture capitalist Marc Andreessen for its alleged accelerationist leanings. Critics claim Anderson's essay brazenly cites the work of controversial right-wing philosopher Nick Land, who openly rejects democracy in favour of authoritarian tech governance.[12]

Almost a century ago, many fascist writers and artists in the Italian futurist movement became obsessed with the machines of the industrial era and sought to harness their technological potential to invigorate society. In the 1920s, futurist leaders like Filippo Tommaso Marinetti joined forces with Benito Mussolini's Italian Fascist Party, sharing values of authoritarian control, violent force, and total obedience as they imagined humans with the unrelenting dynamism of highly

[11] **"Atomwaffen and the SIEGE Parallax: How One Neo-Nazi's Life's Work is Fuelling a Younger Generation"**, *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 22 February 2018.

[12] Jemima Kelly, **"I Read Andreessen's 'Techno-Optimist Manifesto' So You Don't Have To"**, *Financial Times*, 22 October 2023.

efficient industrial machines.[13] It must be clarified here that not all futurist artists were fascists at that time, although futurist artists heavily influenced Mussolini's fascist movement.

Later, even Nazism promoted futurist technologies as major German automotive companies like Mercedes-Benz (Daimler-Benz), Porsche and Volkswagen played a major role in empowering Nazi Germany's economy, rearmament, and war machine through state collaboration and mass exploitation.[14] The pseudo-science of eugenics, seeking to improve the genetic quality of the human population through selective breeding, forced sterilisation, and mass murder, was pursued by racist Nazism so that only physically and intellectually developed White European humans would prevail.[15]

Just as Hitler's Nazi regime heavily favoured and aggressively pursued technological innovation while completely disregarding humanitarian and ethical concerns, it is alleged that some tech-accelerationist corporations of Silicon Valley in our times have also developed a compulsive fondness for AI without any apparent concern for their impact on human society or economies. Many journalists, political theorists and authors describe these Silicon Valley accelerationists as 'Tech-Fascists', due to their support for authoritarian politics, mass surveillance, artificial intelligence and transhumanist technologies like Neuralink.[16]

Many such critics target tech billionaire Peter Thiel, co-founder of Palantir Technologies and a friend of hardcore accelerationist thinker Curtis Yarvin, who famously declared in a 2009 essay for the Cato Institute that "I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible." He is also known to have penned the foreword to the 2020 edition of *The Sovereign Individual*, a foundational text for the 'cognitive elite' to exit traditional democracy.[17] In addition, Palantir Technologies is reported to be providing AI-developed software to President Trump's controversial Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) forces and to Israel's Ministry of Defense in its ongoing military operations in Gaza.[18]

Thiel also invokes Christian apocalyptic themes in private lecture series around the world, arguing that attempts to regulate artificial intelligence align with what he

[13] Ernest Ialongo, **"Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: The Futurist as Fascist, 1929–37"**, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 18, 2013, pp. 393–418.

[14] David de Jong, **"They are the Heirs of Nazi Fortunes, and They aren't Apologizing"**, *The New York Times*, 19 April 2022.

[15] Charles J. Epstein, **"Is Modern Genetics the New Eugenics?"**, *Journal of Genetics in Medicine*, Vol. 5, No. 6, November–December 2003, pp. 469–475.

[16] Luke Munn, **"Naomi Klein's New Book Calls Out End Times Fascism. What is this – and What's the Role of Big Tech?"**, *The Conversation*, 16 September 2026.

[17] Alexander Howard, **"This Libertarian Manifesto, Loved by Peter Thiel, Urges a Cognitive Elite to See Selfishness as a Virtue"**, *The Conversation*, 16 September 2025.

[18] Robert Reich, **"Peter Thiel's Palantir Poses a Grave Threat to Americans"**, *The Guardian*, 30 June 2025.

characterises as the Antichrist.[19] Meanwhile, Elon Musk, while agreeing with claims that AI super-intelligence could pose a 10 per cent to 20 per cent threat to human existence itself in the coming years, is criticised for trivialising the grim prospect in a July 2026 interview, when he said: "It just seems like all roads lead to acceleration of AI… you can just sort of be sad about it or join the club, I suppose."[20]

Several political analysts have noted that Peter Thiel and Elon Musk continue to influence the right-wing US administration under President Trump and have been pushing to dismantle regulatory frameworks that could curb their tech-accelerationism.[21] Thiel is even said to have financially helped and politically backed several high-profile Republican leaders, most notably Vice President JD Vance and Blake Masters.

Thiel and Anderson are also alleged to be part of the accelerationist Neo-Reactionary movement (NRx), also known as the 'Dark Enlightenment', an anti-democratic, anti-egalitarian political movement inspired by the radical views of Curtis Yarvin and Nick Land. The movement rejects the core values of the 18th-century European Enlightenment, which emphasise universal human values of freedom, equality, and individual rights over religious or political absolutism.

Nick Land: Accelerate without Humanity

British philosopher Nick Land is widely recognised as the intellectual originator of modern accelerationism. During the 1990s at the University of Warwick, he co-founded the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), blending post-structuralist philosophy, cybernetics, science fiction, and the occult to frame his right-wing technology-driven 'post-human' worldview.[22] Land's accelerationist philosophy treats capitalism not as an economic system developed and driven by humans, but as an autonomous, self-intensifying and "alien" technological force that drives modernity towards a post-human horizon.

In his book *Fanged Noumena*, Land describes the history of capitalism in occultist terms as:

> Machinic desire can seem a little inhuman, as it rips up political cultures, deletes traditions, dissolves subjectivities, and hacks through security apparatuses, tracking a soulless tropism to zero control. This is because what appears to humanity as the history of capitalism is an invasion from the future

[19] Angel Au-Jeung, **"Peter Thiel Wants Everyone to Think More About the Antichrist"**, *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 September 2025.

[20] Liv McMahon, **"Let's Enjoy the Ride Says Elon Musk, as AI Fears Mount"**, *BBC*, 23 July 2026.

[21] Kyle Chayka, **"Techno-Fascism Comes to America"**, *The New Yorker*, 26 February 2025.

[22] Vincent Le, **"The No Human Future"**, *Aeon Newsletter*, 11 June 2026.

by an artificial intelligence space that must assemble itself entirely from its enemy's resources.[23]

As a post-humanist, Nick Land views humans merely as the raw material or relay points in a hyper-intelligent cosmic drama.[24] Rejecting human-centred (anthropocentric) morality, politics, and the limitations of traditional philosophy, Land advocates accelerating technology and market forces towards human apocalypse for the greater good of the universe's progress, or for what he calls an "inhuman real".[25]

Until that stage in history is achieved, Land calls for replacing democratic nation-states with corporate or proprietary governance models (often called 'neo-cameralism'). He believes that a state or territory should be run like a private business (a 'gov-corp') with an absolute ruler or CEO at the top. In his view, this leader should have a clear financial and structural incentive to keep the domain safe, clean, and economically productive, unlike elected politicians chasing short-term public approval.[26]

Nick Land is also a votary of what he calls 'hyper-racism', which envisions modern technological acceleration and market mechanisms will inevitably function as a genetic filtering system, stratifying humanity into distinct biological hierarchies. To Land, democratic politics and egalitarianism act as brakes on technological progress. Thus, he prefers authoritarian governance models that uncouple speed of development from public scrutiny or accountability. Of British origin, Nick Land currently lives in Shanghai, perhaps finding the totalitarian and semi-technocratic modern-day China more to his liking than liberal democratic societies of the West.[27]

Superintelligence: Approaching Technological Singularity

At the philosophical level, both left-wing and right-wing proponents of accelerationism wish to bring down the existing liberal and democratic order of society in favour of a totalitarian order, be it communist or fascist and are thus driven by the near-term goal of radically altering the socio-political order. In the technological sphere, they want to turn technological innovations, artificial

[23]Nick Land, Robin Mackay and Ray Brassier (eds), ***Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987–2007***, Urbanomic, 2011, pp. 319–44.

[24] Denyse O'Leary, **"Accelerating Toward a Post-Human Future, and Loving It"**, *Science and Culture Today*, 16 June 2026.

[25] Nick Land, Robin Mackay and Ray Brassier (eds), ***Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987–2007***, no. 23.

[26] Nick Land, ***The Dark Enlightenment***, Imperium Press, 2021, p. 45.

[27] Monica Sobchak, **"In Conversation with Nick Land, the 'Father of Accelerationism'"**, *The Spectator*, 21 October 2025.

intelligence, and genetic engineering into a wrecking ball to demolish the status quo, posing both immediate societal risks and major existential threats in the medium to long term.

The unregulated development of AI and advanced robotics is fast becoming an imminent threat to global employment markets, for blue-collar and white-collar workers alike. A recent Brookings report states,

> Contrary to predictions that AI will devastate blue-collar workers, the professional class is more likely to see AI change their work. Indeed, AI has a distinct white-collar bent: engineering, science, and computer technology occupations are among the most at risk, and business ranks fifth.[28]

However, some experts say white-collar jobs such as clerical, customer service, and entry-level data processing roles face the most immediate risk of disruption and hiring slowdowns due to artificial intelligence.[29] Translators, technical writers, and entry-level content creators may struggle to find work as generative tools effectively handle initial drafts. Modern software can easily automate routine typing, record-keeping, and basic administrative tasks. Artificial intelligence threatens to drive jobs through vehicle automation and challenges the legal sector with data errors, fake case citations, and risks to professional training.

Elon Musk predicts that money won't matter by 2036. He claims AI and robots will handle nearly all physical labour and knowledge work, implying a shift away from traditional, mandatory employment.[30] According to him, robots and AI will manufacture goods faster than humans can consume them. This could trigger a deflationary economic cycle, so he recommends that governments issue stipends or universal high income (UHI) since production costs are near zero.[31]

However, this scenario raises fundamental questions about the role of human beings in the economic process, both as producers and consumers. If humans stop producing goods and services, they cannot remain free-loading consumers of goods and services produced by super-intelligent AI robot labourers for long. A post-labour economy risks becoming a post-human, AI-driven economy, where AI robots produce and consume to sustain themselves rather than cater to the needs of a weaker, unproductive human species.

This recalls Nick Land's apocalyptic vision of the 'Techno-Singularity': a hypothetical moment when AI and self-improving technologies surpass human intelligence,

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[28] Samantha Subin, **"AI is Already Taking White-Collar Jobs. Economists Warn there's 'Much More in the Tank'"**, *CNBC*, 22 October 2025.

[29] **"Labor Market Impacts of AI: A New Measure and Early Evidence"**, *Anthropic*, 5 March 2026.

[30] **"Elon Musk's Vision of the Future"**, *The Economist*, 23 July 2026.

[31] **"Elon Musk Proposes 'Universal High Income' as Answer to AI-driven Job Losses"**, *The Washington Times*, 17 April 2026.

triggering an uncontrollable, unpredictable chain reaction of rapid progress.[32] The most recent alarm bells in this regard started ringing in September 2026, when former Anthropic and OpenAI researcher Jacob Coxon resigned. His social media post went viral as he disclosed that top AI labs are now recklessly racing towards 'recursive' (which means 'self-improving') AI superintelligence and that the fast-developing technology could potentially eradicate all of humanity by the end of the decade.[33]

This news was surprisingly not dismissed, but was even partially corroborated by prominent technology experts, like Nobel laureate and the 'Godfather of Artificial Intelligence' Geoffrey Hinton, who told the world that he cannot discount Coxon's claim entirely. Heeding these warnings, Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders officially introduced the Ban Artificial Super-Intelligence Act in September 2026, alongside Representative Greg Casar, calling for an immediate pause on advanced AI development and a permanent ban on artificial superintelligence.[34]

For his part, US President Trump has strongly opposed the bill, labelling the move a "sick conspiracy" that would only benefit China.[35] Then on 29 September 2026, Trump and leaders of major artificial intelligence companies signed the voluntary 'White House Accord on Super Intelligence', agreeing to self-police advanced AI development rather than face strict federal regulations.[36]

No wonder Peter Thiel helped put together the exclusive guest list and coordinated the round-table gathering alongside Trump's transition team (including Jared Kushner and Reince Priebus). The very next day (on 30 September 2026), US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that Elon Musk would co-lead Project Meridian, a 120-day Pentagon task force studying the future of warfare.[37] Then, on 5 October 2026, President Trump launched the Super Intelligence Force to coordinate federal AI strategy and maintain US dominance in the field.[38] Meanwhile, the prospects for Senator Bernie Sanders' legislative efforts to pause or regulate AI and other dangerous accelerationist technologies appear slim for now.

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[32] Richard Sheposh, **"Technological Singularity"**, *EBSCO Information Services*, 2017.

[33] Toby Walsh, **"How Would AI Actually Kill All Humans? Here are the Top 5 Scenarios"**, *The Conversation*, 22 September 2026.

[34] Joey Cappelleti, **"Sen. Bernie Sanders Unveils Bill to Ban Artificial Superintelligence and Create Department of AI"**, *PBS News*, 23 September 2026.

[35] Felix Tamsut, **"Donald Trump Dismisses Concerns about Dangers of AI"**, *DW News*, 14 September 2026.

[36] **"Trump Says Top Tech Firms have Signed Accord to 'Self-Police' AI Development"**, *The Associated Press*, 30 September 2026.

[37] Nick Robins-Early, **"Pete Hegseth Appoints Elon Musk to US Taskforce on Future of Warfare"**, *The Guardian*, 30 September 2026.

[38] Alex Leary, **"New AI Czar Unveils Goals, Members of White House Task Force"**, *The Wall Street Journal*, 3 October 2026.

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