

Machine Learning and Economics

Discussion questions – Meeting #3

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The Limits of Price Discrimination

- The paper discusses redistribution between monopolist and consumers. What about redistribution between different consumers?
- What might this paper tell us about wages and labor market monopsony?
- The paper provides a theoretical “anything goes” result. What are the open empirical questions implied by this?
- Are the extreme points of their analysis empirically realistic?
- What are legal constraints on third degree price discrimination?
- What does this analysis tell us about endogenous segmentation (data acquisition)?

AI's Future Doesn't Have to Be Dystopian

- The impact of AI:
 1. What parts of Acemoglu's discussion on the economic impact of AI doesn't apply equally to the steam engine?
 2. What is distinct about AI/ML relative to other technologies?
(AI = "automated decision making to maximize some objective."
ML = "AI using statistics.")
 3. One relevant use case: Targeted treatment of individuals.
How does this impact inequalities? Price discrimination?
- Redirecting technical change:
 1. How does ownership of the "means of prediction" impact the direction of technical change?
Who picks the objective functions to be maximized?
 2. How can different actors influence the direction of technical change:
Workers and unions, NGOs, journalists and media, policymakers, judiciary, regulatory agencies?
By what leverage / threat points directing corporate profit maximization?