

Daron Acemoglu: "Always be open to talking to people who are ideologically opposite to you"

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SUMMARY

Professor Daron Acemoglu, the 2024 Nobel Prize laureate in Economic Sciences, discusses the interplay between political institutions and economic outcomes during a Q&A session. He emphasizes the fragility of inclusive institutions, particularly in the United States, and explores the implications of technological advancements like AI on society and democracy.

- Acemoglu's interest in the relationship between political organization and economic outcomes began in his youth during Turkey's economic crisis.*
- He identifies the U.S. as facing significant risks of institutional decline, particularly due to political polarization and radical agendas.*
- The professor argues that institutional change often arises from crises but can also occur through gradual reforms that build broad coalitions.*
- He discusses the need for "working-class liberalism" to address economic and cultural divides and rejuvenate liberal democracy.*
- Acemoglu believes AI could be a transformative force akin to the Industrial Revolution, with both positive and negative implications for society.*
- He stresses the importance of resilience and persistence in research, drawing from personal experiences of overcoming setbacks.*
- The conversation highlights the necessity of collaboration in research and the importance of maintaining one's vision amidst external opinions.*

My name is Carin Claesson. I'm from the Nobel Prize Museum here in a very sunny Stockholm and we are so happy for this Q&A together with you. This event is enabled by our Nobel International partners. That's ABB, EQT, and Scania. We are going for the next hour to talk broadly about research, about economics, and about society. We are so very welcome to welcome our guest. Uh and uh I will give you the longest description ever because he is the laureate from 2024 of Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in memory of Alfred Nobel.

It is a long one. You are very welcome, Professor Daron Acemoglu. Thank you, Carin. It's my pleasure. Thanks, everybody. Uh it's great to be in conversation with you. Lovely to see you. Um it's morning where you are, right? Yes. Yes. Yeah. And we are from all over the world here. So so it um >> Afternoon mostly in Europe, I presume. >> Yes. Yes, definitely. So Uh so we have a digital room here filled with students eager to ask you questions. And please, everyone, start raising your your hands, your digital hands, so that we can so that we can start.

Um Professor Acemoglu, of the name if the name of the prize is a bit complicated, the prize motivation of your achievements seems quite direct if you compare it. It says, "For studies of how institutions are formed and affect prosperity." So um in the first place, what was it that drawn you to this specific uh research area? Actually, I was drawn to this specific research area in uh high school when I was in my late teens growing up in Turkey and uh in the midst of an economic crisis and under a military regime and I started wondering about the links between political organization and economic outcomes.

Then, you know, things like unemployment, inflation, but also broader prosperity. And I chose to study economics because I thought that's the discipline that would have this site of type of topic as its focus. Soon I discovered that's not what economics focused on. But I still loved it and I continued with economics, but during my PhD studies, I started coming back to these issues and uh over time I was able to sort of merge my training in economics with my passion for understanding political and economic development and their interlinkages and try to write a few things there and that's what sort of prompted all of the research agenda that led to the Nobel Prize for which I'm of course very grateful.

Uh thank you. Um you mentioned passion. I think that is a perhaps a a word that we will talk more about uh during this hour. Uh Stephen, please, you have a question. Uh yeah, thank you. First of all, uh doctor, thank you so much taking the time to chat with us today. >> Great. Yeah, of course. My pleasure. I grew up in Cape Town, South Africa on a little farm in the countryside. Uh I'm American bachelors and then came across to SSE to do my masters here. So I'm now in the finance program, which is great.

I'm really enjoying it. Um I actually read your book. We spoke about it quite a lot in high school cuz obviously South Africa has a history of institutional change over the last couple decades. And so I wanted to to ask you a question about that you argue that, you know, institutions drive prosperity. What countries today do you think are most at risk of institutional decline? Oh, well, uh thanks, Stephen. Actually, the the one of the professors or like he was a lecturer or senior lecturer at York who was also very inspiring for me was somebody in political science who was also a South African emigre, Adrian Leftwich.

Uh he was a very interesting person. So uh and I learned more from him about South Africa as well. I knew a little bit, but not much at the time. Uh now, in terms of your question, there is little doubt in my mind that the country with the biggest risk of institutional decline is the United States.

Some might say we have already undergone a quite significant institutional change. But I think may more may be to come. One of the most important pillars of institutional strength is the ability of a democratic system to find compromises and bring checks on more radical actions so that there is some preservation continuity of the system with some of its problems as well as some of its strengths. I think that's what's being threatened in the United States.

Uh there is a tendency of many political scientists and many on the center-left, for example, in Europe and the US to draw parallels between emergent uh right-wing populist movements in Europe, you know, Swedish Democrats, AfD, the National Rally in France, etc., and what's going on in the United States. I actually think

that none of the European movements really are a big threat to the institutional structure of Europe because their agenda is more on policies and on specific issues, then they will not they do not seem like they're going to have the strength, especially given the proportional representation system, to upend European institutions.

Of course, there are exceptions like Hungary and Poland came close to it, but but for most of Western Europe, I think there are fundamental big problems, but not big institutional risks of big changes. US is different because I think the Trump administration came to power uh as a symptom of deep problems, but more importantly, I think it has a much more holistic agenda of changing institutions and it has spearheaded that relatively fast. So we are at a dangerous moment in the United States.

And that matters, obviously, because the United States is such a linchpin for the global trading system, but also it's an example uh and influence on other countries via different media. So I think institutional worsening in the United States would have tremendous effects in the United States and in around the world and we're seeing that around the uh US influence on global relations, international corporations, now wars, but but mostly right now the risks are domestic.

I would say even with the recent actions. And but once those domestic risks become realized, they would have international implications. Thank you. That's fantastic. Thank you. Um Kristoff, please. Yeah, thank you, Professor Acemoglu, for for this opportunity. Little background maybe about myself as well. I grew up in Germany and um studied economics there and then worked a little bit in in the financial industry and came back to study and I'm studying actually with Stephen in the in the Master of Finance program at SSE as well. Okay, wonderful.

I actually had some other questions, but this was so interesting to hear that I want to kind of hook into Steven's uh question here. How do you think we get out of this? I mean, I I feel like we see these populist movements everywhere in the US. I feel like uh to to to speak in the in the language that is often used by you or around you, we see extractive economic institution and extractive or or or increasingly extractive political institutions um also co- like co- cooperating in some way if we think about the big tech and Elon Musk and the mega movements. And uh it it seems like there's a spiral going on, right? Um a self-reinforcing spiral. How do we get out of there? What what do you think?

How how can the US get out of there? Well, thank you, Chris uh Kristoff. Uh that's great you asked that because that is largely the topic of my new book, which is coming out in August called What Happened to Liberal Democracy. And let me just say a few words on that and also uh have uh a little bit more of an answer to your question that relates to Steven's question. So what I meant to say uh just to clarify wasn't that the problems are distinct in, say, Western Europe and the United States.

There actually there is a lot of similar there are a lot of similarities. It's just that the political system, the institutions have already moderated some of the reaction to it in Europe for a variety of reasons, both because of civil society and also the proportional representation system. So So in fact, in in my book, I take a a broader lens than just focusing on the US. A lot of the examples come from the US and the UK, but uh I'm trying to sort of

speak to what's going on in Western Europe as well.

And my analysis is that you know, it is I'm not going to summarize the whole thing. I hope people are interested to read the book. Uh But it's both economic and cultural. The changes that have happened in the industrialized world with digital technologies and automation have created both economic rifts between say lower education people and higher education people, but they have also elevated the social status, social standing, and political power of those with more education, those who who that work in technical fields like computer science, engineering, business.

And they have therefore become They have there therefore become the handmaidens of a deeper cultural divide between two segments of society, which then underpinned the political polarization that we're seeing. And these two changes together have really uh destroyed a very important part of the liberal democracy's track record of success in the early 20th century in bits and pieces, but also very systematically.

Most Most countries in Europe and the United States and some outside such as Japan went through about four decades of shared prosperity, rapid growth very broadly available public services that people wanted, and a general participation in politics that people felt not perfect, but provided them voice. And all three of these have come apart because of the growing economic inequalities and growing cultural inequalities.

And in some sense, they have created a crisis for liberal democracy. The reactions we're seeing in different countries from AFD to Marine Le Pen to Donald Trump are all those countries' own historically, partly historically determined, partly luck determined reactions to that failure of uh liberal democracy. And I think it's not enough to defeat those challenges if you win a narrow election against Trump.

Somebody else like him will come back if the underlying structural forces are there, or as the case may be, he came back himself. Uh So the solution I suggest in the book is what I call working class liberalism. So an attempt to fuse the ideas of core ideas of liberalism, but with much greater working class priorities. So those include shared prosperity, jobs, good jobs, high wages, but also much less intolerance towards the cultural uh issues that the working class cares, that are different from those that the more educated elites care. And that's a very Those are very different uh sort of movements. No party at the moment embodies both. There are some who talk about the economic issues, but are very progressive on the cultural issues and therefore deepen the rift with with the working class.

And there are very difficult questions such as immigration where there are priorities that are humanitarian, but also there are the preferences of many working class communities that you have to work with. So it's not an easy thing, but I think that's our only chance of sort of re-energizing liberal democracy and liberal ideas. Thank you very much. Very excited to to read your book in August then. Thank you, Kristoff. Thank you. And Adam, you you go ahead.

Thank you so much, Professor Acemoglu, for taking the time. My pleasure, Adam. Yeah, so just a quick background. I'm born and raised in Sweden, from Stockholm, and did my bachelor's at Stockholm School of

Economics, where I'm currently pursuing my master's as well. Okay, so there's I see a pattern. Everybody is from the master's from the SSE. Yeah. All gathered here for you. But so my my question is around institutional change and conflict. So much of your work shows that inclusive institutions are key to long-run prosperity, but institutional change often emerges from crisis or conflict. Do you believe that durable institutional reform can happen without major disruption, or does meaningful change usually require a large shock?

Uh that's an excellent question, Adam. Thank you. I do think that history has many more examples of durable change that happened during what James Robinson and I called critical junctures, which are shocks that destabilize existing equilibria. However, it's also true that most durable and most conducive to inclusive institutional arrangements are gradual changes.

So examples such as say the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which clearly came out of a critical juncture created by both the legitimacy failure of the Tsarist regime and First World War such radical changes hardly ever lead to very successful uh or better institutional equilibria. So I think then the kind of pattern that I see as uh most conducive to the kind of institutional change that you're talking about are those that come from something that destabilizes the system.

But then that generates a broad coalition that makes demands not just like a very specific ethnic group or a very specific ideological group and that induces concessions from the existing regime rather than say repression that then leads to in street fighting and then one side wins. So you can see there are many ways in which this can go wrong and it go does go wrong many times. First of all, in very polarized societies, including today now in the West it is difficult to form broad coalitions.

So say against Trump now there are a lot of people in the United States who are unhappy, but if the sort of the movement against Trump gets the label over the most progressive part of the Democratic Party, it will not form a broad coalition. And you see in places uh around the world where certain regimes, both because of their historical violence or because they don't want to lose oil or other natural resource rents or other reasons, never make concessions.

So those make you know, successful change very difficult. But at least we have a template that has worked generally in upper middle income countries and countries with some amount of history of uh institutional stability. And uh and that history is sometimes quite distant, but if you can leverage it, it works quite well. Super interesting. Thank you so much.

Thank you. Um great questions you have. Natalie >> Indeed, yes. Please. Yeah, thank you so much for for having me. A little background about myself. I grew up in a small town in the Czech Republic near to German borders, and now I'm studying international business on University of Economics in Prague. Oh, wonderful. Thank you. And currently, I'm working on my master thesis about generational differences in motivation.

And scientists often talk about failure. I wanted to ask whether you have ever felt so unmotivated to the point where you didn't want to continue with the research project. And if so, how did you overcome this situation? I

think that's an excellent question, Natalie. Uh My belief is that actually at the personal level early experience with adversity and failure are quite useful for building resilience for later sort of tasks.

So, indeed, a lot of the things that I was trying to do, some of it most of it because of my own failings, some of it because of the profession where it was early on were not welcome or embraced with open arms by the profession or by referees. So, I did have a lot of uh setbacks.

And it can feel very overwhelming [clears throat] at times. But, I think the sort of the personal experience of being used to different kinds of adversity from social environments, from teachers, from the way society was organized in Turkey actually was then turned out to be an advantage because I never actually contemplated giving up. Instead, I thought, "Okay, I believe in what I'm doing. This is difficult. It may not succeed, but I'm going to try."

So, uh there is no consensus on this. Social psychologists and psychologists sort of disagree. But, uh I think my view is sort of too comfortable early upbringing may not completely pre- prepare you for these kinds of adversities later in life. Thank you so much.

But, when it comes to the Nobel Prize history and the laureates, the mistakes and the failures, and it's it's an ongoing topic. That's very fair. It's very common. It's very common. >> indeed. And then, you know, this the the reason why I'm sort of juxtaposing this is because there are a number of social psychologists worrying that the last 30 years the upbringing of children all around the world, but especially in the United States, the UK, to some degree Western Europe doesn't sort of build the same degree of resilience. Again, I think time will show whether that's true or not. But, yeah, the history of Nobel Prizes, I I think uh there are if you look at it, my reading, I have not done a systematic statistical analysis, but, you know, kid kid wonders who do amazing at the age of 19 or 20 are not overrepresented among Nobel Prize winners. It's more people who persevere with their agenda for many years and sometimes many decades before they are recognized.

Like Geoffrey Hinton, who was in the same cohort as me, uh who uh went through, you know, something that I even I may not been able to have resilience where his work was completely rejected by the mainstream for, you know, three three plus four plus decades. So, that kind of thing, again, you need to have the both the belief in what you're working on, but also the psychological resources to deal with. Indeed. There there are more than one scientists in the Nobel Prize history that failed science, uh but turned out to be good at the end.

But, you know, so so it's a yeah, persistence. Um Joel, please. Yes. Hello, everyone. Uh thank you for having me. Uh I can contextualize a little bit about myself. I too am from the Stockholm School of Economics and the Master's program in Business Management, and I'm from Sweden, as well. Uh but, I'd like to add a little bit on this topic. Daron, you know, you've had you've maintained a very impressive level of research productivity across a very long time. Why do you think that is? And what does your actual research workflow look like on a weekly basis?

So, uh thank you, Joel. The main reason for that is because I enjoy what I do. So, it's wouldn't occur to me or if it

occurred to me, I would be scared uh that I could say, for example, enjoy the Nobel Prize and stop doing research. I would not know what to do with my time. Because I there are many many things that I still don't understand, and there are many many things I want to I think I have some basic understanding and I want to communicate with other people, so write on it and improve uh other people's uh or trigger other people to think more about it or improve their understanding.

And I've also been lucky enough that I have collaborated with excellent co-authors, and they help me increase my productivity. So, over time, you have to find uh different ways of allocating your time, and as you when you are, say, a graduate student, you have plenty of time. You can do everything yourself. That's what I did. Uh you can continue that when you're an assistant professor, but once administrative responsibilities, et cetera, increase, then there is more demand on your time. So, you have to focus on some aspects of research and find the right partners to do the research with, and I've been very lucky in that process, as well. And uh yeah, I think the prospect of retirement would really scare me.

Thank you so much. >> Uh Steven, please. >> [clears throat] >> Yeah, thank you. Um so, I had a another question. Um I I think while we're talking a little bit more about like how uh your sort of experience of your work over the last couple of years. Um obviously, *Why Nations Fail* was published like 10 12 years ago now. Um >> More more more 13 14 years ago, 2020 2012. It was really written in 2010. Uh >> Okay. The publication lags are such that uh you know, it's uh it was published in 2012 February, but really it's it's really like my thinking as of 2010.

Okay, fantastic. So, that makes this question even better, then. So, I was going to ask, um over the last couple of years, has there been any research or publications or evidence that has made you rethink parts of the framework that you presented in that book? Many. Some of it were already obvious to me in 2010. Some of it are based on research, and some of it are based on current events.

So, first of all, relative to where we landed in *Why Nations Fail*, I think the recent events would say that inclusive institutions are even more fragile than what *Why Nations Fail* would suggest. We talk about challenges and potential uh collapse of inclusive institutions there, but we are seeing them much more widely and pervasively challenged today.

And as I said in response to uh Kristoff's [clears throat] question, I think it's because of internal problems. So, one thing that I did not anticipate, understand then, which sort of became clear over the last 15 years is that some of the innovations that inclusive institutions themselves generate, such [snorts] as with the very remarkable digital technologies, robots, et cetera, may then destabilize the system. And that's essentially part of the background for why I wrote more recently the book *Power and Progress*, which was about how, you know, the difficulties of different types of technologies create for building shared prosperity and what the institutional and technological requirements of that are.

The second part of what's I knew was missing uh or at least superficial in in *Why Nations Fail* was about the difficult process of building inclusive institutions, which, you know, Steven, your first question was

about, and also that institutional structures and just about conflict, but also is about state capacity, which we discussed briefly in *Why Nations Fail*, but quite superficially, and that's the research that then started after *Why Nations Fail* and led to my uh subsequent book with James Robinson, *The Narrow Corridor*, where there's much greater emphasis on state capacity, but also how state capacity plays out with civil society organization for the process of building different types of institutions.

Uh The other topic that I think research since then by mostly others, but some also my own research, is that we did not sufficiently emphasize the interplay between norms and institutions, culture and institutions, etc. in in *Why Nations Fail*, and I've done some research on that uh myself, but other people have been at the forefront of that research agenda. Uh and and I think other broader things that are important that we don't I haven't really addressed in my work.

One is you know, what are the kind of the broader resources at the society level to build compromise. I think there are social psychologists who work on that, but I don't I have not seen any comprehensive answer to that. Second, the international dimension has always been very light and almost missing in my work. I focused on domestic political economy, domestic issues, even when they are international and comparative international, but you know, we see today that the international dimension sometimes supersedes the domestic dimension.

And then finally, what I'm working on a lot right now, AI, which wasn't around in 2010, but I've been working on it since 2015, and and I think its implications for society, both good and bad, are huge and require much more in-depth inquiry. That's brilliant. Thank you very much. Thanks, Stephen. Thank you. Um we've been doing some writing here in the background. So Jasmine, I will I will try try to ask your question here.

Thank you, Jasmine. >> [laughter] >> So Jasmine, you grew up in Tunisia, and you're currently studying in Paris corporate finance and investment banking. Um your question is would you describe AI as a potential institutional turning point comparable to the Industrial Revolution? Absolutely. I think both the Industrial Revolution and electricity, and to some extent the personal computer, are great examples.

And so is the internet. So I think I do not see AI as transformative as fire, which is what some business leaders keep on claiming. I think it's an amazing set of interrelated possibilities, and it will have transformative effects just like the Industrial Revolution, but the Industrial Revolution was very interesting because it had lots of very good and very bad effects.

It increased inequality, it increased poverty. It uh it led to some very difficult times for poor people, much harsher working conditions, lower wages, uh life expectancy falling to 30 in major industrial centers in the United Kingdom because of the pollution and the unhealthy conditions at work and at home. So it took a while to clean it up. I think same thing with AI, but also the Industrial Revolution was very slow.

Things took 100 years to change. AI promises to be very fast. I don't think it's going to be as fast as some of the insiders claim, like a couple of years. Uh electricity took 30, 40 years to spread after its basic infrastructure was done. I think that would be too slow for AI, but I would expect 10 to 20 years for its full effects to be felt, which

is both good and bad news. Good because it gives us a little bit more time to get adjusted.

Bad because if you were banking on productivity boom based on AI, wait some. Although for your jobs, perhaps not that bad. Thank you, Jasmine. Thank you. Thank you, Jasmine. Um so can we learn from it? I mean, there is a very gloomy saying that uh the only thing we learn from history is that we never learn from it. But can we actually do that when it comes to comparing, for example, then the Industrial Revolution with I think there are things we can learn from history, definitely, and that's why I study history. None of these are exact models, so we can't make them fit.

The lessons that my book *Power and Progress* draws are very much historical because we say that you know, how you will create a lot of inequality via automation if that's what you focus on with AI is something we can learn from the Industrial Revolution. Uh how you know, if AI increases the power of states to monitor and censor people, we again have historical examples, but none of them are perfect examples because AI is much more multi-sectoral.

It will affect all sectors more or less. It's could be much faster. The kinds of things that it will enable us to automate are very different, but also on the flip side, and this is uh the the emphasis point of my recent work, or not that recent work, but the last 5, 6 years, is AI also creates tremendous opportunities for improving worker productivity in a good way without sidelining workers. Things that I think you know, early digital technologies promised, but were never a reality because they were too basic. So much better context-dependent information provision to workers to increase their expertise and ability to perform new tasks. So there are a lot of things that we can do with AI, and again, only imperfect models from history exist for that.

Thank you. Uh Sam, please. Hi, Professor. Thank you very much for joining us today. Um I my name is Sam. I'm uh from Scotland, but I'm studying at the University of Cambridge, studying a master's in real estate finance. Uh my question for you today was it's very easy to see the downward spiral of the world, but what countries have good institutions and are making progress? Ah, boy, that's a difficult question, Sam, because right now I don't think it is that easy to point to many countries as getting things right.

Uh I think different countries illustrate different aspects of resilience. Canada, I think, has been able to deal with the same pressures as the United States much better, but not perfectly. I think the fact that inequality didn't increase as much in Canada, and the media system wasn't as polarizing, and the electoral system didn't get taken over by more extremist elements, were all helpful. Switzerland is dealing with some of the same tensions much better because of its local decentralized structure together with its national politics.

I think many Western countries have shown greater commitment to democracy than the United States. On the other hand, they have bungled many aspects of their economic policy or or other other things. Uh You know, Germany, for example, you know, has suffered both some of the same cultural and economic tensions, but also scored several own goals by not investing in its infrastructure for quite a while and making problems worse and losing its sort of edge in terms of manufacturing leadership, partly as a result of that, but partly because of other things. Uh I think Scandinavian countries have dealt with inequality better, but haven't dealt with, for example,

immigration very well. So So I think all countries are sort of suffering in their own ways. The UK absolutely very badly has had horrible productivity performance, and I think uh there is political paralysis. Again, it's I think it's a reflection of deeper structural issues. So I don't think that there is a very simple one model country, but there are a lot of lessons just like from history that we can get from different uh countries.

Perfect. Thank you very much. Thank you, Sam. Thank you. Uh Kristoff. Yeah, thank you again. Um So my my original question that I delayed earlier was a little bit on more of a personal note. Um I think a lot of people that study economics um come also from some idealist perspective, uh have their very strong ideology, and are driven by that throughout their life. Um and so my question for you is what role did that play in your life? Do you feel like your ideology has changed through the findings that you made? Do you feel like maybe it has influenced even the directions that you have taken?

I mean, your work definitely supports people, like most of us here probably, that believe in democracy as it gives kind of a empirical um support for democracy and and these types of institutions. So, what what role has ideology played in your life throughout your career with regards to this? I think ideology has played a very important role in my initial foray into economics and the topics that I was interested in. Uh I believed as a teenager in some version of democracy and sort of social democratic ideals mixed with liberal ideals in some incoherent way, probably.

Uh and uh but but on many things I have changed my mind. So, uh for example, on the role of uh human capital externalities that I believed a lot and my empirical results as well as other people's empirical results showed they weren't major, I sort of changed my mind. I think on uh sort of what worked with sort of a social democratic model, I have also changed my mind. You know, my initial beliefs were sort of I guess closer to middle of the road social democratic view that you also had to sort of be very progressive on issues such as immigration and uh and and and and not give an inch on the protection of the most vulnerable groups.

I am not fully abandoned those things, but I also see that they backfire in very fundamental ways and and trying to sort of impose those values on society, I've become much less uh optimistic about. So, that also is reflected, for example, in my new book where I try to find ways of compromise between uh anti-immigrant domestic communities and pro-immigrant humanitarian reasons and how we can actually navigate those challenges.

But I think at some level, uh there are pieces of that that remain faithful to my initial ideas, which is that you don't want to silence any opinion too much. If you suppress any opinion, that's going to backfire and as long as well as being unfair and against the spirit of liberal democracy. Thank you. Maybe to add on the on this, what what are what would how would you recommend us to pursue or to leverage our ideology for motivation in our career and to really get to a point where we feel that we do good in our career.

I think I think you want to have your ideology will be with you, but be very flexible about it. Don't turn it into a litmus test. I think especially uh today, there are a lot of litmus tests and they don't work very well. So, uh and and also one thing that is very very important is always be open to talk to people even who are opposed to you ideologically.

That we haven't done enough as a society. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Um Adam, please. Yeah, thanks a lot. Um coming back to AI and your research in that area, I was just curious. You've argued in the past that the direction of technological technological change uh responds to incentives. Um who would you say is shaping the direction of AI today? And maybe what institutional changes would be necessary to steer it toward a broadly shared prosperity?

Well, this is actually a great follow-up to Kristoff's because my argument has been that the direction of AI is shaped by two sets of forces. One is economic, the other one is ideological. The economic one is that AI and the resources that are required and the way that it's presented to society is very much in the hands of a handful of companies and they have business models that are based on automation, you know, congruent with things like artificial general intelligence or other things that are somewhat or more than somewhat disempowering for most people like psychic as manipulative digital ads. And so, that's not a very healthy direction and that's economic. It's about who controls AI, who has the resources, how concentrated the industry is, which matters a lot for the degree of competition, whether new entrants can come in and uh sort of push a different business model, different way of technology being used, etc. But it's also ideological and in particular, uh you know, I became convinced over the last 15 years uh in my talks with people from Silicon Valley, my reading about it that you know, the ecosystem that has generated a lot of that energy very much triggered by uh ideas that go to computers always being in a race with humans becoming as smart as humans, science fiction that was very very important for the Silicon Valley culture that pushes the same thing. It has really created too much emphasis on artificial intelligence as a substitute for humans or a competitor to humans rather than a complement to humans.

And that's the ideological direction. Interesting. Thank you. Thank you. Joel. Uh Adam actually uh was quicker with my question, but I'll ask you another question, maybe. Please, yes. Uh just have to think on my feet. Uh you spoke a little bit about collaboration and finding good uh collaboration partners. Um how do you choose whom to collaborate with and what do you think makes those partnerships productive?

Actually there, I must say Joel, uh I could be much more scientific, but I'm not. It's more like instinctive and uh depends on context, luck, contingency, you know, who you get along with uh in terms of research interest, but also personally, but also sometimes students. Uh but it's more like if it's a productive collaboration, then I invest more in it and I continue it more.

But I don't have a very scientific way of choosing collaborators. Right. Thank you. Thank you. And and we are soon coming to an end. I'm thinking of I I I I heard an interview with you and and you said to your students, which is funny after all these great comments, that they shouldn't pay attention to comments because then they would kind of be in a storm of opinions. Yeah. Could you elaborate a little bit?

>> I didn't quite mean that you shouldn't pay attention to comments, but I think you should have your inner belief. Not ideological, part maybe partly, but your belief in what you are pursuing be the deciding factor. I, for example, don't recommend that PhD students have many many advisers. Some PhD students talk to, you know, five, six faculty. They get pulled in every different direction.

So, it's much better to find somebody, one or two people who are more uh sort of congruent with what you want to do and and collaborate with them or get their advice. Same thing, you know, if you uh I give the following advice to people like you submit a paper to a journal. It gets rejected more and more. Uh it's always been very likely outcome. I've suffered many many rejections in my day and I still do.

So, many keen, hard-working people have the instinct of well, I'm going to send it to another journal, but let me incorporate and respond to all the comments I've received from those first round of the those referees. Well, I I I advise against that. You know, don't let other people write your paper. Of course, if there are good comments, incorporate them, but again, do what you think is good for your paper, not uh try to appease some referees who may never you may never encounter and the next round of referees may be very different. So, that's the sense in which I think comments that you get from other people are very useful, but you don't want to be their slave.

Yeah, there's a fine balance between uh you know, going after advices and and still going your own way. Absolutely. Yeah. >> Absolutely. I I want to thank you so much um for your great, engaging questions uh and uh thank you so much, Professor Daron Acemoglu, for having sharing your thoughts. >> this was wonderful. These were really excellent questions and a great group of people you gathered here, so I'm very happy to have met all of you and I hope I'll uh live long enough to see your successes.

Thank you so much, everyone, and and take care. Thank you so much, Karen. Thanks. Thank you. Very nice meeting you all. Thank you.