Abstract
How does our current era of “technological pessimism” connect with the history of industrialization? To explore this we analyze the effects of different forms of technological change on human capital accumulation and economic growth. We develop a growth model with over-lapping generations that endogenizes skill acquisition and TWO forms of technical change, one that raises the quality of existing capital goods, and one that increases the number of types of new capital goods. The former kind of technological change obsoletes certain middle-range skills but can promote higher-range abstract skills. The approach here allows us gain new insights into theories of unified growth, historical patterns of de-skillling technologies, and current debates about automation and skill acquisition.

- Keywords: employment polarization, job polarization, endogenous growth, human capital, unified growth theory, skill obsolescence
- JEL Codes: J24, J31, O31, O33