Understanding r/antiwork: just another subreddit or a modern labour movement?

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Introduction

What is r/antiwork? Headlined by “Unemployment for all, not just the rich!” r/antiwork exists for those challenging the contemporary function of work in society. It started as a site to discuss anti-work anarchism with an emphasis on post-left ideology. r/antiwork grew rapidly during the Covid-19 pandemic as stimulus checks, work-from-home, and the virus caused many citizens to reevaluate the negative impact of work on their lives.

Raw Topic Analysis

These are the results of LDA on all ~150,000 clean posts on the r/antiwork subreddit. We ran OCR on images to extract text information.

- **Post Archetypes**
  - We hand-classified ~1,000 posts randomly sampled on r/antiwork into post archetypes.
  - We ran multiple classifiers on the data. Best scores achieved with extreme overfitting.

- **Personal Story Topic Analysis**
  - We used BERT binary to isolate personal stories. However, personal stories are single-topics.

- **Are there persistent sub-communities?**
  - We analyzed existence of user clusters defined by:
    - Direct interactions via child/parent comments
    - Indirect interactions by participation in a common thread

- **Post popularity is associated with “user track record”**
  - We found that user track record has limited predictive power for subsequent post popularity.
  - User longevity and avg. post karma do not have statistically significant impact, however, total # of posts and total post karma do.

Conclusions

- Raw topics describe a social movement and a space to vent.
- The most common post archetypal are personal stories. These topics center around common poor work conditions.
- Related Subreddits communities lean towards younger, progressive and anti-capitalist ideas.