

Archibugi, F. (2000) *The Associative Economy: insights beyond the welfare state and into post-capitalism*, Macmillan, London.

For anybody interested in the future of work and welfare, this book is an essential read. Written by a mature scholar with a fluent understanding of his/her subject, he moves from theory to policy and then practice with an eloquent ease. This is not surprising. Franco Archibugi is no 'ivory tower' scholar. Although Emeritus Professor at the University of Naples and Chair of the Planning Studies Centre in Rome, he is also Professor in the Postgraduate School of Public Administration in the Prime Minister's Office of the Italian Government.

His main thesis is that in 'post-industrial society' deep changes are taking place in the structure of consumption preferences, production modes, labour-market behaviour and the role played by the state. Rather than engage in merely idle reflection on these changes, his aim is to seize the 'bull by the horns' and to suggest no less than a new way of managing socio-economic change. First, he sets out a clearly defined picture of the trends and causes, second, what post-industrial or post-capitalist society can and should look like and third and finally, how to get to where he wants to go.

His starting point is that social integration/inclusion cannot be achieved solely by inserting people into formal employment. Consequently, at a time when many on the Left in the English-speaking world believe that forcing people into work relations founded upon the profit motive (i.e., formal employment) is the route to their emancipation, Archibugi argues that employees "are all deeply isolated and dissatisfied. The work place and the activity no longer seem to be 'places' of social integration" (p.9). In arguing this, Archibugi is not alone. Instead, he is firmly following a widely trod path in European social democratic thought (extolled for example by Xavier Greffe, Andre Gorz and Jean-Louis Laville) that wholeheartedly rejects the 'employment equals social inclusion' thesis. Similar to those who have gone before him, the task Archibugi sees to lie before him is one of constructing a new social model that de-centres employment from its core position at the heart of discourses on socio-economic change and replaces it with a new socio-economic regime. For Archibugi, this is the task of the book. Part I is thus devoted to a critical analysis of the bases of the structural and social changes taking place in contemporary advanced economies and Part II to the design of a new socio-economic regime.

To analyse the socio-economic changes taking place in contemporary society, chapter 2 highlights the different analytical approaches (technological, economic, historic-institutional, sociological) and chapter 3 the substantive convergence in their findings. Chapter 4 then connects together the structural changes in production with those taking place in consumption, followed by a more detailed analysis of the changes in production structures in chapter 5 and its structural implications for formal employment in chapter 6. Chapter 7 then introduces two ideal-typical models of society - 'service society' versus 'industrial society' - and this is followed by an analysis of their implications for labour

processes and income distribution in chapter 8 and their implications for the role of the state in chapter 9.

Part II is then devoted to the design of a new socio-economic regime, or what Archibugi calls a "planning society". In chapter 10, he sets out the case for a shift "from the invisible hand to the visible hand" in managing redistribution. Having set this scene, he then argues that it is not the state alone that should seek to achieve this but, rather, the state in partnership with the third sector. In order to shift from a "welfare state" to a "welfare society", chapter 11 calls for a new type of entrepreneurship based on 'the private collective', or what in the UK has become known as 'social entrepreneurship'. Chapter 12, meanwhile, is dedicated to the presentation of his new social model based on social entrepreneurship and grounded in the development of an associative economy. Chapter 13, to conclude, outlines the new policies and instruments required for this new social model to come to fruition.

For this reviewer, it is this second part of the book that makes it a worthwhile read. At the core of his argument, as the book title suggests, is the idea that the non-profit sector (the 'associative economy') has a key role to play in the future of work and welfare. This book provides a thorough review of the contrasting ways in which the associative economy has been defined in different countries as well as its differential nature and the varying explanations for its emergence. It also gets to the heart of debates about whether the associative economy should be seen as an 'alternative to capitalism' or as a complementary mode of social and economic integration that exists alongside the private and public sectors. Although the preference of Archibugi is to see it as the latter, this is not to say that his proposals are not radical.

Put bluntly, Archibugi's political project in this book is nothing less than de-centring the hegemony of the private and public sectors in socio-economic thinking and bringing the associative economy out of the margins to the heart of economic logic. He achieves this by arguing that the associative economy is a key 'planning tool' that can be used to regulate contemporary economies and achieve social integration in a way that has so far proved elusive to those concentrating solely on the private and public spheres.

For me, the advantage of this book is that it brings a fresh perspective to an English-speaking audience on the future of work and welfare and the potential role of the associative economy/third sector/informal economy. On the downside, there are two problems. First, I found the style of writing rather inaccessible in places and second, I feel that much more could have been done to enable readers to understand the particular intellectual tradition from which many of his ideas derive. Nevertheless, these are minor quibbles. This book is an excellent contribution to the debate on the future of work and welfare which brings the third sector out of the shadows and places it at the core of a new social model.

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