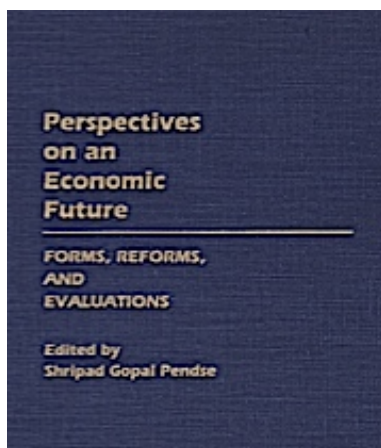


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# An alternative design for the XXIst Century

- Économiste, auteur - Politique -



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[1987a] "An alternative design for the XXIst Century", in Pendse ed. *Perspectives on an Economic Future : Forms, Reforms and Evaluations*, Greenwood Press, Westport (USA), 1991. *Couverture Orange CEPREMAP*

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## ABSTRACT

This text proposes a new design for capitalist social relations and for international order, according to an analysis of the shortcomings of the post-world-war II hegemonic model of development, Fordism. The problems of these shortcomings (too heavy technologies, insufficient productivity, crisis of industrial relations, upspring of individual revolts against hierarchies and allmightness of the state, contradiction between the national character of economic regulation and the international character of production and trade...) are analysed according to the methodology of the "French Regulation Approach". They are on the agenda of all the new competing designs. That is the reason why similar proposals could appear both in the "liberal-productivist" project I criticize and in the alternative project I propose. In the same way, in the thirties, the idea of "corporatism" (explicit cooperation of state, firms and unions in regulation of economic life) was on the agenda of fascism, social-democracy and sovietism, because the main problem appeared to be overproduction stemming from anarchy on the market.

Liberal-productivism accepts the war of every one against every one, both at national and international level. The goal of this competition is accumulation for the sake of accumulation. Only the upper part of world society would take some hedonistic advantage of this model. It could find allies in middle strata with secured employment, against the huge mass of rank-and-file, the "job searchers" of northern suburbs and excluded Third World.

The alternative design I propose for Advanced Capitalist Countries includes:

- New social industrial relations based on conscious involvement of direct workers in exchange of their right to control the implementation of technical progress, the right to live and work in one's homeland, and more free time.

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- Preservation of the degree of socialization of revenues so as to maintain social security, but a deep reform of welfare state so as to develop a new self-managed sector contracting for socially useful services with communities.

- New international relations based on multilateralism and international credit money, but refusing systematic free-trade in favour of a new set of rules giving room to fastest social progress in separate democratic nations.

In the terminology of the "Regulation Approach", the new technical paradigm would be more skilled-labor-using, capital-saving. The new regime of accumulation would secure high employment with slower growth in commodity production, more free-time, less capital investment per capita. The new mode of regulation would be based on more self-management of productive groups and more contractual relations between them. The new world configuration would be based on more auto-centered economies and trade with a multilaterally managed competition. As for the content of production and consumption within this model, it would tend to more ecologist and cultural contents (at least in advanced economic countries). Such a model would imply major changes in gender relations.

Now, some devices (such as quality circles, community jobs, negotiated cancellation of debts) may seem common to this model and to the liberal-productivist model. That is because the crisis of labour, the crisis of the welfare, the debt crisis, are necessarily on the agenda of any next design. But the contexts of these devices would be so different that the content of their implementation would be opposite.

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