

Communitarianism and the Future of Social Policy

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‘Welfare and Community in Post-Industrial
Socialist Theory: Beyond Employment?’

Abstract

This paper sets out to evaluate some of the developments in socialist theory in Europe which are designed to provide a fresh agenda for the Left. This process is necessary as the Left has a long industrial-productivist heritage which is a problematic foundation as we face the potential development of post-industrialism. Initially I will attempt to define post-industrial socialism by differentiating it from post-industrialism (as it has been traditionally understood) and other work-based forms of socialism. From this I shall establish that the defining characteristic of post-industrial socialism is the belief in and advocacy of ‘the end of work-based society’.¹ This idea refers to the belief that developments in labour markets suggest that if all available work were distributed more equitably then more time would be available for activities in civil society. This would need to be facilitated by the state and suggests potentially radical social and economic policies. The second half of the paper will focus on theoretical initiatives which are designed to regenerate the concept of ‘community’ through radical social policy. This section should demonstrate that not only is the understanding of community employed in much policy discourse rather limited and conservative, but also that the post-industrial Left has much to offer any attempt to reimagine the notions of community and civil society in a theoretically rigorous manner.

Introduction

The notion of post-industrialism has been an often used – and yet peculiarly under theorised – concept since it emerged during the late 1950s and 1960s.² Daniel Bell has been one of the most prominent analysts of social change linked to post-industrialism. He suggested (in 1973) that the advent of post-industrial society was likely to come about due to changes in the class structure associated with the decline of blue collar manufacturing industry and the consequent decline of organised labour. The social organisation which would replace this scenario would be of a post-industrial nature encompassing an affluent and consumerist knowledge-based society mirrored by a high technology, service-based economy. Bell’s vision was grounded in the knowledge that structures of industrialism remained resiliently in place when he wrote his book and this fact was emphasised by the decline of literature predicting the onset of post-industrial society later in the 1970s.

¹A.Gorz, *Critique of Economic Reason*, Verso, 1989.

²See D.Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, Basic Books, 1973; C.Kerr et al, *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, Oxford University Press, 1964; and A.Touraine, *The Post-Industrial Society*, Random House, 1971. See also the work of Krishan Kumar which provides a useful analysis of this area, in particular, *Prophecy and Progress*, Pelican, 1978; and *From Post-Industrial to Post-Modern Society*, Blackwell 1995.

Alternative explanations of capitalist reproduction such as post-Fordism emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as did new strands (or reworkings) of socialist thought such as market socialism. However in the 1990s post-industrialism has re-emerged as a pertinent concept and, importantly the new commentators treat the concept as if it is presently being witnessed in Western capitalist societies.³ This paper sets out to refute the notion that post-industrial features are dominant in contemporary capitalism and to show that the type of post-industrialism being developed amongst the European Left offers a much clearer understanding of the variety of forces at work in the reproduction of modern social organisation. Having established this position we can examine the 'communitarian' perspective developed by the major post-industrial socialist, Andre Gorz, and compare that with some of the more common viewpoints on community and communitarianism. Finally we can then briefly analyse the conception of welfare associated with the post-industrial socialist perspective on community and the implications of this theoretical position for the state and social policy.

Exploring Post-Industrial Socialism

Bell's visualisation of post-industrial society as outlined above is highly questionable. Some of the features he highlights have undoubtedly developed to some extent but others look even more distant than when Bell predicted them in the 1970s. Arguably the status of citizenship has been subsumed by the ubiquitous logic of consumerism,⁴ but there is little evidence that Western capitalist societies as a whole have become particularly affluent. Rather the available resources are not as widely distributed as they might be so that the increased resources in society are shared by decreasingly small sections of the population. This leads not to 'an affluent society' but rather a fragmented, divided society riven by social exclusion in which the affluence created is hived off and distributed within a small, compartmentalised élite. This situation has arisen because Bell's prediction that a high technology, white collar, service-based economy would emerge has fallen wide of the mark. Whilst service-sector employment has increased, there is little evidence that this work has been technologically sophisticated or highly skilled. Thus he was wrong to perceive that the tertiarisation of the economy would result in an affluent society because 'in contrast to Bell's thesis, low-status blue collar and service occupations show no signs of disappearing'.⁵ Thus his perspective seriously underestimated the distinction between the wealth in society which may be very poorly distributed and the lived experience of the mass of individuals who suffer from the social inequalities, insecurity and marginalisation which characterise contemporary capitalist societies. To this extent, Lodziak argues that 'theorists of the post-industrial society embrace a flawed conception of power which enables them to misconstrue the relation between the social totality and the individual'.⁶

³ See G.Esping-Andersen (ed), *Changing Classes: Stratification and Mobility in Post-Industrial Societies*, Sage/ISA, 1993; 'Equality and Work in the Post-Industrial Life-Cycle', in D.Miliband (ed), *Reinventing the Left*, Polity Press, 1994.

⁴ See M.Cahill, *The New Social Policy*, Blackwell, 1994.

⁵ G.Ritzer, *The McDonaldisation of Society*, Pine Forge Press, 1993, p.153.

⁶ C.Lodziak, *The Power of Television*, Pinter, 1986, p.193.

Undoubtedly much has changed in the labour market since Bell's social forecast first appeared and this has had profound effects on social organisation. However it is highly debatable whether these changes can be equated with any kind of mature post-industrialism. For instance Bell was far too quick to equate the downfall of trade unionism with the decline of work as a central issue in the organisation of capitalist societies when he suggested that 'the crucial fact is that the "labor issue" *qua* labor is no longer central, nor does it have the sociological and cultural weight to polarize all other issues along that axis'.⁷ In this suggestion Bell wrongly confuses the importance of the issue of work (and the lack thereof) with the decline of organised labour. On the contrary, the decline of trade unions has (not surprisingly) taken place alongside – and as a result of – the increased centrality of work as a key category in social life. In other words, as work becomes increasingly less available so the role of trade unions becomes less central whilst, at the same time, the possession of work becomes an ever more important mode of social inclusion and citizenship. In this sense organised labour is at its strongest when there is a highly ordered and disciplined labour market in which there is a clear constituency for trade unions to represent. The labour market of today is flexible, transitory and disorganised with a strong growth of part-time and non-unionised labour, often in the service sector. In this scenario work and unemployment are increasingly important as harbingers of economic citizenship whereas the representation of workers through trade unionism becomes increasingly tenuous.

The rhetoric of mainstream advocates of the post-industrial society looks all the more misguided as contemporary capitalist societies witness the new divisions in the labour market between core and peripheral workers and non-workers. These new divisions result in a situation whereby much new work is in the tertiary sector which is frequently lowly paid with little job security and yet simultaneously a large number of individuals remain marginalised from the economy (and society as a whole) through the absence of sufficient jobs. This explains why many on the Left have been sceptical of any attempt to embrace post-industrialism because it does little to challenge the logic of capital accumulation or the fragmentation of the labour market. Thus Wilde contends that 'developments in the forces of production and alterations in the specific forms of production relations do not constitute a departure from the logic of the capital accumulation process'.⁸ From this perspective the increasing fragmentation of the labour market should not be viewed as the inevitable result of the post-industrialisation of the economy but rather as the outcome of neo-liberal policies which prioritise 'efficiency' in the labour market and the leanest possible labour force. Moreover Lee contends that the divisions in the labour market are produced by the primacy of 'efficiency' (which is a key by-product of industrialism rather than post-industrialism) and as a result contemporary times should not be dubbed 'post-industrial' but 'rather the era of mass permanent unemployment'.⁹

Lee correctly identifies that post-industrial visions of highly technological, service economies in which affluent consumers abound cannot be equated with

⁷D.Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, Basic Books, 1973, p.164.

⁸L.Wilde, *Modern European Socialism*, Dartmouth, 1994, p.100.

⁹K.Lee, "To De-Industrialize – Is it so Rational?", in A.Dobson & P.Lucardie (eds), *The Politics of Nature*, Routledge, 1993, p.108.

contemporary Western capitalism, but fails to acknowledge that post-industrialism can also exist in a more radical format than the kind of 'conservative' social forecast propounded by Bell. For example, Dobson, drawing on the work of Michael Marien, outlines the difference between what he calls 'dominant post-industrialism' which is seen as 'an affluent, technological, service society'¹⁰ and more progressive visions of post-industrialism inspired by political ecology. It is this kind of radical post-industrialism which is the main concern here, although the intellectual heritage of the key ideas involved can just as easily be attributed to what Offe calls the 'left-libertarian' ideological orientation as to political ecology.¹¹ Andre Gorz points to the type of policies which the Left, informed by radical anthropocentric environmentalism, should follow in the development of post-industrial socialism:

'To exist politically, an ecological Left, has ... an urgent need for mediations between the existing industrial system, its wage-workers and its jobs, on the one hand, and, on the other, post-industrial forms of society which comply both with ecological demands and individuals' aspirations to liberate themselves from work as it exists and find in work as great a potential for self-determination as possible. We have to start out from what work is and what it really means today in order to transform it, reduce it, and expand the scope for autonomous activities, production for one's own use and self-realization for everyone.'¹²

Clearly then for radical post-industrialists, a post-industrial society requires qualitative societal changes as well as alterations in the mode of production. Whilst the latter does have a wide and powerful influence on social and economic life, it does not necessarily define social relations in a deterministic fashion. Thus whilst the move towards a service based economy – the process of tertiarisation – is taking place, attitudes towards work and employment have not altered at a similar pace. In other words, moves towards a redefinition of the way we work have not been accompanied by a recognition that there is a possibility that this redefinition could facilitate an understanding that the prospect of 'the end of work-based society', that is, genuine post-industrialism, could come onto the agenda. If this scenario is valid – and the pace of technological change suggests that it could be – then, as Gorz points out, dialogue on a social level is necessary to prepare and plan for the future. On a similar note Sherman argues that:

'The new industrial revolution is different from the first in that we are partially aware of what is happening ... [T]echnology is changing, employment is changing, products and services are changing – but the one key change has not occurred. As happened eventually in the course of the nineteenth century, we need a revolution in attitudes to match that in industry.'¹³

¹⁰ A. Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, Routledge, 1990, pp.5-7.

¹¹ C. Offe, 'A Non-Productivist Design for Social Policies', in P. Van Parijs (ed), *Arguing for Basic Income*, Verso, 1992, p.70.

¹² A. Gorz, *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology*, Verso, 1994, p.64.

¹³ B. Sherman, *Working at Leisure*, Methuen, 1986, p.276.

Progress towards a post-industrial society, therefore, requires more than *changes to the kind of work we perform*. It necessitates debate and planning about how to translate changes in working patterns into *the organisation of society and everyday life*. A post-industrial society cannot be deterministically fashioned by an increase in employment in the service sector of the economy, it can only be created by investigating the nature of the new economy and understanding the opportunities that it generates and then changing social organisation appropriately. Post-industrialism has hitherto been characterised by commentators such as Bell as the advent of the knowledge-based society without recognising that knowledge can be restricted to a rather small section of the society. Thus the forces of post-industrialism in the economy are open to manipulation and can be extremely divisive when applied to society in general. Obviously socialist post-industrialism must aim to create a society in which divisions and inequalities are minimised. This has not been the case with the new economy which has encouraged social polarisation and marginalisation for many who do not benefit from flexible labour markets. Thus post-industrial socialism opposes the technological determinism employed as much by Bell as the Marxists he attempted to negate.¹⁴ Rather post-industrial socialism advocates democratic dialogue between employers and employees, the state and local communities and institutions of civil society, individuals and their communities, and women and men.¹⁵ This kind of dialogue is designed to encourage debate about work and human activity in general and to negotiate, amongst other things, how that work is going to be distributed.

Post-industrial socialism then is an ambitious project which asks questions of the very nature of democracy and advanced capitalism. It is concerned with challenging the nature of changes in the economy and their effects on social realities. In this sense it should not be conflated with contemporary literature which confuses moves towards post-industrial economies with the altogether different notion of post-industrial societies.¹⁶ Post-industrial socialism also stands in contrast to those who focus on issues relating to post-industrialism and class mobility. Gershuny, for instance, concentrates on occupational mobility and employs empirical data to demonstrate relatively high mobility into and out of low-level service occupations'.¹⁷ This does not mean that these jobs do not exist in large numbers, it merely (and not surprisingly) indicates that people change jobs with increased frequency in the new economy. Gershuny's evidence says little about unemployment and he openly admits that, whilst the United Kingdom may not have a steady group of individuals who are part of a low-level service-related class, it may well be a dualistic society. It is precisely this kind of dualised and polarised society that post-industrial socialism stands against. Gershuny's line of thought is reflected by Blossfeld, Giannelli and Mayer who argue that there is high mobility between categories of unskilled employment in Germany suggesting that 'unskilled service

¹⁴ W.Clement & J.Myles, *Relations of Ruling*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994, pp.26-7.

¹⁵ A.Gorz, *Farewell to the Working Class*, Pluto Press, 1982, pp.85-7.

¹⁶ See W.Clement & J.Myles, *Relations of Ruling*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994; G.Esping-Andersen (ed), *Changing Classes*, Sage/ISA, 1993; G.Esping-Andersen, 'Equality and Work in the Post-Industrial Life-Cycle', in D.Miliband (ed), *Reinventing the Left*, Polity Press, 1994.

¹⁷ J.Gershuny, 'Post-Industrial Career Structures in Britain', in G.Esping-Andersen (ed), *Changing Classes*, Sage/ISA, 1993, p.139.

jobs can be regarded as a "collecting vessel" for redundant manual workers'.¹⁸ The argument against a new post-industrial service class is continued by Jacobs who states that 'the good news is that the bottom of the post-industrial society is far from closed ... the bad news is that the economic distance from bottom to top is growing'.¹⁹ Similarly Myles et al, in celebrating mobility from low-level service employment in Canada, state that '[O]ccupational skill levels have risen over the postwar period, but despite rising skill levels, low-wage employment has grown faster than average or high-paying jobs'.²⁰

All of the authors above concentrate on the belief that there is not a new class created by post-industrial economies and at the same time all admit that there is increased social polarisation. The notion that there is mobility within different categories of low-level employment does not negate the post-industrial socialist view that polarisation and marginalisation is increasing as a result of the new economy. Moreover if that economy determines society at the moment, then it is determining social fragmentation rather than an affluent, knowledge-based society. This does not mean that this situation is the inevitable result of a post-industrial economy, rather post-industrial socialists believe that society can be improved along with the new economy if the political will to do so exists. Yet many analysts of post-industrialism continue to suggest that the real polarisation that does exist 'applies ... not to skills but to the attributes of jobs' whilst simultaneously noting that 'inequalities of earnings, and the proportion of people in precarious jobs have risen sharply. The unskilled and new labour-force entrants are the two groups that have been most severely affected'.²¹ This would appear to suggest that polarisation with regards to skills is likely to increase. If more jobs are becoming precarious and insecure, it seems pertinent to suggest that the contemporary 'post-industrial' economy will not close the deficit between the securely-employed and the growing marginalised group living in insecurity.

For post-industrial socialists, the economy needs to be controlled and subject to planning to eradicate the insecurity and inequalities that it produces at the moment. This presupposes a radical reappraisal of the way in which governments (attempt to) manage their economies. Planning is anathema to most political and economic thinking in contemporary times, although clearly governments do operate economic plans on a regular basis. For example the annual budget in the United Kingdom is an examination of previous economic performance and a projection of economic planning for the future (for example, plans to cut public spending). Similarly all companies operate on the basis of economic planning to survive.²² This is not to say that planning is always accurate and reliable but it does (by necessity) take place. Clarification and democratisation of economic planning is important for post-industrial socialism because, like all proposals aimed at regen-

¹⁸ H-B. Blossfeld et al, 'Is There a New Service Proletariat? The Tertiary Sector and Social Inequality in Germany', in G. Esping-Andersen (ed), *Changing Classes*, Sage/ISA, 1993, p.134.

¹⁹ J.A. Jacobs, 'Careers in the U.S. Service Economy', in G. Esping-Andersen (ed), *Changing Classes*, Sage/ISA, 1993, p.223.

²⁰ Myles et al, 'Does Post-Industrialism Matter? The Canadian Experience', in G. Esping-Andersen (ed), *Changing Classes*, Sage/ISA, 1993, p.189.

²¹ G. Esping-Andersen, 'Equality and Work in the Post-Industrial Life-Cycle', in D. Miliband (ed), *Reinventing the Left*, Polity Press, 1994, pp.175-76.

²² A. Gorz, 'On the Difference Between Society and Community, and Why Basic Income Cannot by Itself Confer Full Membership of Either', in P. Van Parijs (ed), *Arguing for Basic Income*, Verso, 1992.

erating socialism, it must outline what role market mechanisms will play in the socialist alternative to current arrangements.²³ For theorists like Gorz, though, the development of a more transparent economic system must be coupled with a more thorough understanding of the notion of community and a much clearer outline of the relationship between social and economic policy.

Post-Industrial Socialism, Community and Civil Society

The idea of community has been resurrected and popularised in the 1990s, not least through the work of Amitai Etzioni and it has found a variety of constituencies across the political spectrum.²⁴ Etzioni's brand of communitarianism, which is based upon visions of a unitary, homogeneous community sustained by strong moral convictions in society, has been termed 'moral authoritarian communitarianism' by Hughes.²⁵ From this perspective, and despite Etzioni's claims that his communitarian programme would not be puritan or oppressive, it can be argued that 'moral authoritarian communitarianism' represents a mono-cultural and morally prescriptive agenda for social exclusion and marginalisation. Much of the debate surrounding communitarianism has been centred on a differentiation between it and liberalism in the exposition of contemporary political philosophy.²⁶ At the same time, however, there has also been a growth of literature which is explicitly concerned with radical notions of democracy and simultaneously develops a much broader conception of community.²⁷ It is from this perspective that post-industrial socialism should be approached for, unlike 'moral authoritarian' communitarianism and traditional liberalism, it is a programme for fundamental political change organised around radical participatory democracy and regenerated citizenship and community. All of this is to be facilitated in post-industrial socialist thought by a reduction in working hours and consequently a new politics of time.²⁸

The initial starting point when examining post-industrial socialist approaches to community is to note that theories of 'the community' are broadened to encompass a range of communities which make up society. In other words society and community are not synonymous but rather the former is made up of the institutions (whether national or international) which enshrine our social framework and organisation whereas the latter consists of the smaller groupings which represent a variety of interests within society and usually operate in the domain of

²³This is an argument for what Tomlinson calls a 'socialism with markets approach' which he differentiates from market socialism. See J.Tomlinson, 'Market Socialism', in B.Hindess (ed), *Reactions to the Right*, Routledge, 1990. For thorough commentary on recent developments in market socialism, see C.Pierson, *Socialism after Communism*, Polity Press, 1995.

²⁴See A.Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community*, Fontana, 1994.

²⁵G.Hughes, 'Communitarianism and Law and Order', *Critical Social Policy*, 16/4, 1996.

²⁶See, for example, S.Mulhall & A.Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, Blackwell, 1992; W.Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, Clarendon, 1989; E.Frazer & N.Lacey, *The Politics of Community: A Feminist Critique of the Liberal-Communitarian Debate*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993; S.Avineri & A.de-Shalit (eds), *Communitarianism and Individualism*, Oxford University Press, 1992.

²⁷See C.Mouffe (ed), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, Verso, 1992; C.Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, Verso, 1993.

²⁸See A.Gorz, *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology*, Verso, 1994; A.Little, *The Political Thought of Andre Gorz*, Routledge, 1996; C.Lodziak, *Manipulating Needs*, Pluto Press, 1995.

civil society.²⁹ Thus in Andre Gorz's model of post-industrial socialism there are three different sectors of activity which individuals require to experience full citizenship. Gorz's theory – based as it is upon the advancement of a more pluralistic, radical democracy – tries to envisage a scenario whereby individuals can become:

- (A) members of society at large which is manifested by work in the public sphere;
- (B) members of a range of communities in which collective self-determination is the organising principle; and
- (C) autonomous to the extent that self-determined activities take precedence over A and B in the sense that the combination of time spent in the other sectors is relatively freely chosen.

Gorz, in a large body of work,³⁰ has argued that a tripartite division of society as above indicates the different levels of society which individuals need to enter if full citizenship is to be genuinely encountered. In other words, individuals must be guaranteed social insertion through a right to work. At the same time we must understand that a right to work for all cannot be realised through a traditional model of full employment which assumes that everyone who is fit to work does so full-time throughout a working life-course which ends at a specific age. Post-industrial socialists argue that such a model is no longer either efficient or desirable and that a more effective answer would be a policy initiative which ensured that, whilst individual citizens had a right to work, they also had a right not to work for certain periods in which they wanted to concentrate on activities in either the micro-social or autonomous spheres. Thus, using the work of Gorz and Conrad Lodziak,³¹ we can proceed towards a break down of social activity in Table 1 around which a post-industrial socialist framework can be identified:

Table 1
Post-Industrial Socialism and the Division of Social Activity

<i>Sphere of Activity</i>	<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Organising Principle</i>	<i>Status Conferred</i>
A.Macrosocial	Work for wages, the public sphere	Social insertion	Social citizenship
B. Microsocial	Voluntary, co-operative work	Collective self-determination	Non-work/local citizenship
C.Autonomous	Freely chosen activities	Individual self-determination	Individual freedom

²⁹ See A.Gorz, 'On the Difference Between Society and Community, and Why Basic Income Cannot by Itself Confer Full Membership of Either', in P.Van Parijs (ed), *Arguing for Basic Income*, Verso, 1992.

³⁰ See A.Little, *The Political Thought of Andre Gorz*, Routledge, 1996.

³¹ *Manipulating Needs*, Pluto Press, 1995.

From this formulation we can roughly equate the macrosocial sphere with the domain of the state and markets, the microsial sphere with civil society/communities and the autonomous sphere becomes the domain whereby individuals organise their own time in the spheres of work for wages, voluntary (but sometimes necessary) work in the home or a community and self-ordained activities (for example, leisure). Now clearly everyday life is more complex than any model of this kind could indicate but this does move us beyond the limited Leftist responses to pluralist challenges identified by Walzer.³² The latter claims that the Left has traditionally either a) glorified the state and the political community as the ultimate site of action or b) resorted to a utopian economic belief in the primacy of cooperative work as the unifying feature of the relationship between the state, civil society and individuals. Thus Walzer, in rejecting both these critiques of pluralism (along with individualist and nationalist perspectives), advocates a potential regeneration of civil society as the venue in which individuals can participate pluralistically in social life. He believes this provides a large-scale framework for 'a project of projects' under which citizens can regain lost powers and influence over politics and the economy through small-scale activities and decisions in civil society. This would spawn 'a new recognition ... that the good life is in the details'.³³ Walzer's argument suggests that civil society can become the location through which market organisations and state organisations compete and co-operate freed from the values which previously characterised them such as economic rationality or bureaucracy. In this scenario the state could set a framework for a value-free civil society – an arena where a variety of bodies and institutions (including bodies of the state and market-oriented firms) operate under the focused gaze of the ultimate arbiter, consumer choice.³⁴ However all of this seems to ignore power differentials between consumers and presupposes the absence of vested economic interests.

Nonetheless much of Walzer's argument is useful for post-industrial socialists insofar as it identifies the importance of the state in fostering conditions for civil society to flourish whilst simultaneously understanding that democratic civil society requires associations with political agency. Thus Gorz has formulated a theory of post-industrial socialism whereby the macrosocial sphere would become the domain of the state (and the provision of universal social policy) and the microsial sphere would be the space in which universal rights and obligations could be experienced in particularistic ways in different communities.³⁵ However post-industrial socialists tend not to concur with Walzer's faith in the value freedom of certain institutions. Thus Gorz argues that civil society can only flourish when it is safeguarded from the economic rationality which permeates market mechanisms, for instance. From this perspective, Walzer's notion of market mechanisms operating in civil society is worrying because it suggests that this non-market sector could become imbued with the economic rationality that governs markets.³⁶ This

³² 'The Civil Society Argument', in C.Mouffe (ed), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, Verso, 1992, pp.91-94.

³³ 'The Civil Society Argument', p.107.

³⁴ 'The Civil Society Argument', p.100.

³⁵ This stands against some of Spicker's claims about the exclusivity between universalism and particularism. See P.Spicker, 'Understanding Particularism', *Critical Social Policy*, 39, 1994.

³⁶ For a fuller definition of Gorz's theory of economic rationality see A.Little, *The Political Thought*

is also where the post-industrial dimension of Gorz's thought adds a different dimension to socialist thought on relationship between the state and civil society. The state has a key role in planning and regulating markets in the tightly defined area where economic rationality is to prevail (the domain of work for wages). At the same time it is to perform this role through close mediation with communities (or associations) which exist in the broader realm of civil society. From the post-industrial socialist perspective, it seems suitable to identify the bodies acting in civil society as communities precisely because they are supposed to be governed by principles of mutualism, voluntarism and co-operation rather than economic rationality.³⁷

According to Gorz, the task of empowering civil society necessitates action by the state to empower individuals by reducing the primacy of paid work in gaining the resources which are fundamental to social insertion. Membership of and participation in communities and institutions in civil society could be facilitated by a universal scheme to provide benefits for all to enable each individual to become less reliant on paid labour to gain resources. In this sense the state has a pivotal role to play in ensuring that the requisite conditions exist for civil society to flourish. This is a much more socialistic argument for pluralism than that of Walzer because it highlights the (often overlooked) centrality of paid work (and the lack of it) in contemporary debates on citizenship and realises that the foundations of civil society need to be rebuilt. The notion of a basic income guarantee need not however generate socialistic outcomes and could be used as a subsidy for low paying employers and continued marginalisation if set at too low a level.³⁸ For this reason post-industrial socialists including Gorz and Offe have sought to propose that the state not only has an obligation to provide universal social policy but also that individuals have a right to a job which can only come about through reduced working hours. This requires state action to cap the working week and gradually aim at reducing working hours for all in the interests of allowing everyone the opportunity to work. In other words radical social policy must also be accompanied by radical economic policies to overhaul the labour market. The time out of work saved by a state policy of reduced working hours could then be used by individuals to engage in community or self-ordained activities.³⁹ It seems clear that notions of welfare and community are central to post-industrial socialist thought but that they cannot be assumed to exist in their present form. On the contrary they must be manufactured by state policies (social and economic) to generate suitable conditions for universal welfare to be established and then to allow individuals to

of Andre Gorz, Routledge, 1996, chapter 5, and A.Gorz, *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology*, Verso, 1994, chapter 6.

³⁷ This is not necessarily the case with 'associations' which could be bodies imbued with economic rationality as could be the case with Walzer's reading of the civil society debate. More detail on the debate on associational democracy can be found in E.O.Wright (ed), *Associations and Democracy*, Verso, 1995.

³⁸ See A.Little, 'Flexible Working and Socialist Theories of Welfare', *Imprints: A Journal of Analytical Socialism*, 1/3, forthcoming; the most thoroughgoing debate on basic income can be found in P.Van Parijs (ed), *Arguing for Basic Income*, Verso, 1992.

³⁹ For an analysis of the economics of the end of the work-based society, see A.Gorz, *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology*, Verso, 1994, chapter 9, and further evaluation of moves towards a less work-orientated society see C.Offe & R.Heinze, *Beyond Employment: Time, Work and the Informal Economy*, Polity, 1992.

participate in the domain of community and society at large.

Conclusion

Post-industrial socialism is, as yet, a developing perspective in political thought as the social, economic and political factors and ideas which brought it into existence continue to evolve.⁴⁰ In terms of welfare and community, it can be closely identified with the basic income debate which is concerned with a universal social policy provision irrespective of work requirements. However theorists such as Keane, Offe and Gorz have also suggested that this radical social policy needs to be accompanied by a move 'beyond employment' which, Gorz argues, is facilitated by a policy of reduced working hours and a right to work for everyone. In turn this involves a new politics of time in which the domain of states and markets is minimised and civil society is expanded and regenerated. In this scenario a pluralistic socialism comes to the fore in which a range of communities enjoy collective self-determination liberated from the intrusive presence of economic rationality and state bureaucracy – in this sense it is a communitarian agenda precisely because communities are accorded a primary status in the formation of political identity. However the key remains 'the end of work-based society' and, whilst that is the principle which differentiates post-industrial socialism from other strands of thought on welfare, communities and civil society, it is also the major obstacle to the realisation of the ideas of its advocates because despite the flexible labour market of the new economy, the underlining rationality is rooted in industrialism. In this sense the quantity of work may diminish in the new economy but society may become even more work-based.

⁴⁰ Whilst I have identified the work of Andre Gorz and Claus Offe as being particularly influential in the development of post-industrial socialism, a range of authors (especially those involved in the basic income debate such as Bill Jordan and Philippe Van Parijs) have contributed ideas which will lead to a more concrete identification of the new agenda.