

# **The Viability of Associative Economics**

A diploma study in associative economics

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# 1. Outline of Study

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## 1.1 Abstract

Economic science, as commonly conceived and practised, has its roots in a worldview that marries 18th century Enlightenment rationalism with 19th century naturalistic materialism. Represented by market economics, the human being is described as an agent who, in his economic life, is able to do no more than pursue his self-interest.

Convincing though this consensus has proved, in terms of its explanatory power if not its results, the 20th century phenomenon of global economy has served to put the market-oriented approach to economics under evermore exacting scrutiny, such that now, at the dawn of the 21st century, the discipline of economics can be shown to require a new methodology that will enable it to develop tools to meet today's world situation adequately. Associative economics<sup>1</sup> offers such tools and seeks to describe the next phase in the development of economic science. It aims to further a dynamic of global co-existence based on enterprise, association and comparative advantage.

This study examines associative economics by looking first at its historical emergence, then its conceptual coherence, and finally its contemporary development in the context of Talking Economics, a project within the Centre for Associative Economics (CfAE).<sup>2</sup>

The study has a portfolio format devised by the author.



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<sup>1</sup> Associative economics is used here in the sense employed by the Associative Economics Institute (see [www.ae-institute.com](http://www.ae-institute.com)).

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 5.

## 1.2 Aims of Study

The overall aim of this study is to demonstrate the viability of associative economics, which will be done through the following steps:

- Describing and making visible the appearance of associative economics by locating it within an historical context.
- Outlining associative economics as a theorem implicit in the  Quality Guarantee Mark<sup>3</sup> of the Associative Economics Institute (AEI).
- Surveying the work of the Centre for Associative Economics (CfAE) and analysing its structure as a representative organisation.
- Through Talking Economics, by developing the author's competence in accounting and financial planning and thus enabling him to realise his own contribution to the development of associative economics, with a view to making Talking Economics an eligible user of the  Quality Guarantee Mark.

### **The Centre for Associative Economics**

This study will be taking place in the context of the CfAE. It is the task of the CfAE to represent associative economics, conduct research, publish journals, papers and books, offer consultation, teach, and host events.

### **Evaluation**

An overall feature of the portfolio will be the documentation of the planning, financing, publicising and evaluation of work undertaken. An important element of self-education will be present in developing the author's competence both in terms of the strategic relevance and the technical know-how of what is done.

### **Peer Presentation**

The sharing of ongoing work will play a role in developing the author's research and presentation skills.

### **Documentation**

A variety of formats and media will result in a final portfolio that reflects work undertaken over this period, including financial plans, website publishing, photo and video material, black paper drawing, event descriptions, research papers, and audio interviews.

### **Research Results**

The study will culminate in the author's participation in an entrepreneur course in associative economics<sup>4</sup> at which the author will share the results of his work over the period.

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 3.4.

<sup>4</sup> To take place at L'Aubier, Switzerland - July 2004.

### 1.3 Overview

Associative economics is a practical discipline that aims to make economic life increasingly conscious. This ranges from a one-person business, through medium size organisations of all kinds, to governments and international corporations, such that the conduct of the economy as a whole arises as a mutually recognised endeavour. Associative economics bears on the terminology by which phenomena are described, the appropriateness of the forms created and also the spirit in which it is undertaken. Taken as a whole, it constitutes a new paradigm, whose development has been pioneered by Anita Grandjean, Marc Desaulles and Christopher Houghton Budd through the Associative Economics Institute.

The particular intention of this study is to make visible the evolution of associative economics within the English speaking cultural context through the work of the CfAE, to describe the changing nature of our current economic paradigm and to discover how this will enable an associative approach to economic life to develop. This will entail an historical introduction, a brief history of the concept of associative economics and a descriptive process of its ongoing development and implementation in the English-speaking world.

In so far as clear and transparent accounting is an essential aspect of the associative approach, the financial tracking of the CfAE events will provide a measure both of the degree of take-up of associative economics within the English context and of the author's experience.

This portfolio, which is part of the process leading to a 'Diploma in Associative Economics', is self-devised and self-driven. It is undertaken in collaboration with Dr. Christopher Houghton Budd<sup>4</sup> as mentor and other diploma students who seek to journey on the same path. Supervision will take place on an ongoing session basis, as required by the study. Opportunities to share work in progress with other students will be found through seminars taking place over the course of the study.

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<sup>4</sup> Director of Centre for Associative Economics. Founder-member of the Associative Economics Association, the legal vehicle for the Associative Economics Institute.