

2012

Seminar Series

University of
Western Sydney
Bringing knowledge to life



INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY

DATE

Thursday 26 July

TIME

2:00pm–4:30pm

VENUE

Room EB.2.21
Building EB

UWS Parramatta campus
Cnr James Ruse Drive &
Victoria Road, Rydalmere

RSVP

ics@uws.edu.au

INFO

www.uws.edu.au/ics

SELF-INTEREST IN CHINESE DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

Jack Barbalet
Sociology Department
Hong Kong Baptist University

ABSTRACT

The paper examines the concept of self-interest by considering its operation in a context in which it is widely held that self-interest has no place. China is often described as having a collectivist culture characterized by self-abnegation. But Chinese intellectual traditions include a premise of self-interest and many practices demonstrate its application. Indeed, Chinese sociological discussion affirms the centrality of the self and self-interest in traditional thought and practice. Confucian antipathy to selfishness is shown to relate to admonishment of satisfaction of the interests of present selves against those of past selves. The variable institutional selection of distinct temporal phases of self is core to understanding particular configurations of self-interest, and incidentally, major differences between Confucianism and Daoism in their respective conceptions of self-interest.

BIO

Jack Barbalet is Professor of Sociology and Head of the Sociology Department at Hong Kong Baptist University and Adjunct Professor in the Institute for Culture and Society, UWS. He was previously Professorial Fellow in the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy at UWS. His research interests include sociological theory, economic sociology and the sociology of markets and enterprise in greater China. Recent publications include 'Market Relations as Wuwei: Daoist Concepts in Analysis of China's Post-1978 Market Economy', *Asian Studies Review*, 2011, 35(3): 335-354 and 'Chinese Religion, Market Society and the State' in *Religion and the State: A Comparative Sociology*, edited by Jack Barbalet, Adam Possamai and Bryan Turner. London: Anthem Press, 2011. His currently research is directed to theoretical apprehensions of absence, imminence and latency in social relations.

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TAKE BACK THE ECONOMY, ANY TIME, ANY PLACE: A MANUAL FOR CONSTITUTING COMMUNITY ECONOMIES

Katherine Gibson
School of Humanities & Communication Arts
University of Western Sydney

ABSTRACT

The agenda of the popular book *Take Back the Economy, Any Time, Any Place* is to offer a set of tools and metrics to prompt ethical deliberation around key concerns of a community economy. In a world surrounded by knowledge technologies that habituate us to capitalist economic dominance this manual offers techniques for re-subjection. As a sense of hopelessness spreads in the face of inaction on climate change it documents encouraging cases of collective action. Rather than advocating alternative blueprints for the future, it outlines the choices we are confronted with when we aim to live with each other and earth others with respect and care. Building on Gibson-Graham's reframing of the economy, this book suggests that a sensitivity to economic diversity is a precondition for building more resilient and thus secure livelihoods for all species. In this presentation I outline ways of taking back work, business, markets, property and investment and introduce key concerns for securing economies centred on the wellbeing of people and the planet.

BIO

Katherine Gibson is Professorial Fellow at the University of Western Sydney. She leads the Community Economies Research Initiative--an international network of researchers interested in building ethical economies for the future. An economic geographer by training, she has directed action research projects with communities interested in alternative economic development pathways in Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Philippines. In 2008 she made a 50 minute film on social enterprise development as a local development strategy in the Philippines. Her books with the late Julie Graham, published under the authorship of J.K. Gibson-Graham, include *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* and *A Postcapitalist Politics*. They enjoy an international readership and have been translated into Chinese, Spanish, Turkish and Korean. Her most recent book co-authored with Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy is entitled *Take Back the Economy, Any Time, Any Place* and will be published by University of Minnesota Press in 2013.