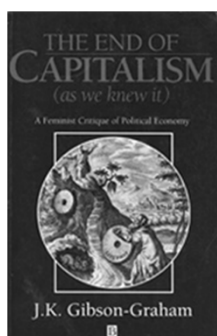
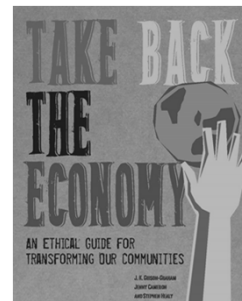


**URSP 3050**  
Special Topics in  
Urban Studies 1

**Lecture 2**

Key concepts and strategies  
underpinning TBTE



Capitalocentrism

The Diverse Economy

Community Economy

The Politics of Research

- A Politics of Language
- A Politics of the Subject
- A Politics of Collective Action

**Capitalocentrism**

Capitalism = "The Economy"

Anything that is not capitalist is positioned in relation to capitalism (with capitalism always in the dominant position)

Examples:

Housework reproduces labour power for capitalism

Non-capitalist modes of production in the majority world are shrinking as capitalism "takes over"

Non-capitalist (and anti-capitalist) activity takes place within a capitalist world

Alternatives to capitalism are inevitably co-opted by capitalism as it adjusts to crises

"It is perhaps no coincidence that in times of capitalist crisis, alternative ideas and practices emerge [e.g. organic food, fair trade] ... capitalism is dependent on these crises and alternatives for its own reproduction ... we must not disavow the importance of many local, non-market practices for the social, cultural, environmental and economic reproduction of capitalism. While many of us think and hope that alternatives can displace capitalism from within, it may just be that our resistance is the very incubator capital is dependent on to renew itself."

Steffen Böhm, 2014, Review of TBTE, *Sociology*, 48(5), 1057

The options for political action?

Alternatives end up serving capitalism

What's needed is an organised and "comprehensive revolutionary movement" that directly confronts capitalism.

David Harvey, 2012, *Rebel Cities*, 137  
Interview with *The Guardian*

Is this the only form of politics for creating a different future ?

Yes, there are viable political alternatives, but for these to be seen as legitimate we need to retheorise the economy/capitalism

**The Diverse Economy**

A discourse of economic difference

LABOR	ENTERPRISE	TRANSACTIONS	PROPERTY	FINANCE
WAGE	CAPITALIST	MARKET	PRIVATE	MAINSTREAM MARKET
ALTERNATIVE PAID Self-employed Reciprocal labor In-kind Work for welfare	ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST State owned Environmentally responsible Socially responsible Non-profit	ALTERNATIVE MARKET Fair trade Alternative currencies Underground market Barter	ALTERNATIVE PRIVATE State-managed assets Customary (clan) land Community land trusts Indigenous knowledge (Intellectual Property)	ALTERNATIVE MARKET Cooperative Banks Credit unions Community-based financial institutions Micro-finance
UNPAID Housework Volunteer Self-provisioning Slave labor	NON-CAPITALIST Worker cooperatives Sole proprietorships Community enterprise Feudal Slave	NON-MARKET Household sharing Gift giving Hunting, fishing, gathering Theft, piracy, poaching	OPEN ACCESS Atmosphere International Waters Open source IP Outer Space	NON-MARKET Sweat equity Family lending Donations Interest-free loans

## What's happened to "capitalism"?

It's gone

Instead there are capitalist enterprises

Following Marx, in a capitalist enterprise a capitalist (e.g. an owner, a shareholder) owns the surplus labour that the workers produce

Note:

Surplus labour = what's left over after workers have been paid

Profit is included as a part of surplus labour

We'll do more on the weeks 5 & 6 (enterprise chapter)

## Diverse Economy Workshop

## Community Economy

The diverse economy reveals economic diversity

The community economy refers to the economy that results when we use this economic diversity to negotiate our interdependence with other humans and the environment

In a community economy, we take action on a series of ethical concerns:

- surviving together well and equitably
- distributing surplus to enrich social and environmental health
- encountering others in ways that supports their wellbeing as well as ours
- consuming sustainably
- maintaining, replenishing and growing our natural and cultural commons
- investing our wealth so that future generations can live well

## The Politics of Research

What is the purpose of research:

- Reporting
- Describing
- Understanding
- Monitoring
- Evaluating

TBTE is characterised by a commitment to research (and writing) as a performative practice that can help:

- strengthen the community economies that already exist
- create new possibilities
- bring new worlds into being

Strategies to help us do this:

- A politics of language
- A politics of the subject
- A politics of collective action

### **A Politics of Language**

A language/discourse of economic diversity (rather than a capitalocentric discourse)



To help make economic possibilities more recognisable

A language/discourse of community economies



To help assemble together the range of initiatives that are already present

To help make these initiatives more evident as "a movement"

### **A Politics of the Subject**

Reading:

J.K. Gibson-Graham, 2006, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, Page xxxv-xxxvi

Use of story-telling to tap into the affective/feeling register (e.g. 4-7, TBTE)



To help readers identify with and desire different economic worlds and possibilities

### **A Politics of Collective Action**

Providing “tools” and exercises that readers can work through in collaboration with others  
Providing “lists” of examples of what other people are doing



To prompt readers to reflect on their current economic practices and to explore economic possibilities

### “Your Homework”

Write your second reflection:

- What have you learned from the workshop (e.g. something new, something confirmed, something curious)
- Refer to the lecture readings

### “Jenny’s Homework”

Blog writing for TBTE Website