

*The Politics of New Approaches to  
Institutionalising Markets:  
The World Bank and Water Privatisation  
in the Philippines*

A Research Seminar presented by Toby Carroll

This seminar will present a paper that looks at the interests and assumptions that currently guide the process of market extension driven by major development organisations. It examines what these interests and assumptions, and the policies they generate, imply for state and society in recipient countries. Further to this, the paper will analyse what occurs on the ground when these policies are implemented. Critical in this process of market extension is the new way in which certain institutional forms are promoted by organisations like the World Bank in an attempt to construct particular markets. The case study presented in the paper involves the privatisation of water provision in metropolitan Manila, in which the World Bank, through its International Finance Corporation (IFC), has been heavily involved since the mid-to-late 1990s. The paper demonstrates that while new approaches to delivering neoliberal reform have materialised, and the content of the reforms has changed too, there is still nothing technical about their implementation. Here, the role of capital – domestic and international – and its intersection with both the state and the Bank is critical in understanding how certain reforms are put on the table and, secondly, how markets end up being constituted.

Friday 11th May 2007

1:30 pm

Senate Room

Murdoch University

All Welcome

Toby is a postgraduate researcher with the Asia Research Centre. His research interests fall within the field of political economy, specifically issues relating to the World Bank, The International Monetary Fund, poverty reduction, social capital, governance and the trajectories of neoliberalism. His PhD dissertation develops an analytical framework to analyse the so-called post Washington consensus and incorporates case studies from Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia to demonstrate the framework's utility. He is particularly interested in the way in which orthodox theoretical positions underpin certain reforms on the ground. However, beyond the content of neoliberal reforms themselves, his research analyses the way in which development organisations, like the World Bank, have developed new approaches to delivering reform, where their previous attempts failed, particularly concerning the political implications that these approaches both involve and encounter.