Does Capitalism Have Its Own DNA?

with

Fred Block

Research Professor, University of California, Davis

Thursday, February 11th

3:00PM–5:00PM

Humanities 1500

All across the political spectrum, there is agreement in the U.S. that the proper name for the society in which we live is "capitalism". But the irony is that this historically surprising consensus has become a factor in the polarized and stalemated quality of our politics. Understanding our social order in terms of an underlying economic model makes it impossible to find a way to resolve any of our deep social conflicts. Historically, such resolutions have occurred when most people in society share a concept of the social order that is not primarily economic. And even when we return to Marx, he provides powerful arguments for understanding the society in which we live as something other than another stage in the history of capitalism.

Fred Block is Research Professor at the University of California, Davis. He has wide-ranging substantive interests, including economic sociology, social organization and change, democracy, comparative and historical sociology, and social justice. In his recent work, he examines U.S. government in support of the commercialization of new technologies, showing these efforts are far more widespread and more successful than most analysts have recognized. The programs are “hidden” because they are rarely discussed by journalists or academics, they run counter to the prevailing “free market” ideas, and they operate in a decentralized fashion that makes it difficult to track their impact.

Fred Block will be available to meet with graduate students and faculty from 1:30PM to 2:30PM in Watkins 1206.

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