



Markets, Morals, and Religion

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The examination of the relationship of economic activity to other important aspects of human life and social behavior has inspired some of the most interesting and provocative social-scientific research in the past one hundred years. This book of original essays by leading thinkers across many disciplines offers new insights into enduring questions about how modern and modernizing market economies are both shaped by and shapers of morality, values, and religion.

Part 1, "Markets and Morals," offers eight contributors who provide analyses of the various ways in which the market operates in relation to morality. An empirical presentation of moral values and market attitudes is given. Other essays take aim at how markets serve and disserve moral interests: Economic growth has moral consequences; the manipulation of markets exposes a moral underside; the nature of market failure has implications for understanding moral vulnerability; preference change has moral implications. In other chapters, a broad consideration of the positive moral effects of market economies is offered along with historical essays on the role that intellectuals have played in debates about the positive and negative effects of commercial life and on the ways in which the American idea of the pursuit of happiness reveals much about the morality of economic life.

In Part 2, "Markets and Religion," nine contributors address both the historical and contemporary emergence of religious factors in the growth and transformation of global capitalism. Major religious traditions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are examined for their contributions to answering questions about the nature and function of economic life in light of religious ideas and ideals. Several essays present original approaches to the importance of religious values to modern forms of consumption and to the political economy of reconciliation and forgiveness in nations coming to terms with past conflict. Finally, the influence of non-Western ideas, in particular Chinese religions and Buddhism on economic thought and practice, is assessed as part of the globalizing impact of religion on economic life generally.

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