



# The Market

*Alan Aldridge*

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## **The Market** Alan Aldridge

The Market addresses one of the most controversial answers to the question, 'how is social order possible?' Ever since Adam Smith conceived the idea of an 'invisible hand', advocates of the market have argued that social cohesion, material prosperity and political vitality are best achieved not by central control and planning but by laissez-faire - the policy of non-intervention. In this book, Alan Aldridge guides readers through the complex interplay between analysis, description and ideology that characterizes social theorizing on the market. A distinctive feature of The Market is its emphasis on the role of culture in shaping the social reality of markets as perceived and experienced by people participating in them. Ideologies examined include: \* Market fundamentalism - the conviction that free markets are universally beneficial \* Market populism - the assertion that the free market reflects the democratic will of the people \* Economic 'man' - the notion that the main motive of our actions is to maximize our personal advantage \* Globalism - the claim by neo-liberals that the global expansion of markets is irresistible, making political action irrelevant The Market will be essential reading for students and researchers interested in the sociology of economic life, economic sociology and political economy.

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