



Morality and Markets

Discussion Questions

Who chooses? Who benefits? Who pays? What's fair? These four questions can be a useful tool for evaluating any policy or system. Posing the questions is a great way to stimulate a lively discussion.

In small groups, discuss the following: (For each question, think broadly about all the possible people or groups of people who may be affected, and remember there may be non-monetary costs and benefits.)

1. Who chooses morality in the marketplace?

2. Who chooses how staff will behave at a place of employment?

- a. Is it strictly up to the owners/managers/bosses?
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3. Who chooses which businesses to purchase from/deal with?

- a. Is that choice different in a free market compared to a centralized economy?
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4. Who benefits from moral, ethical businesses?

- a. How do they benefit?
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5. Who pays for morality in the marketplace?

- a. Is there a cost associated with it?
 - b. What kinds of costs?
 - c. Are there costs associated with immorality in the marketplace?
 - d. Who pays those costs?
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6. What's fair?

- a. Businesses every year lose money because people steal from them – shoplifting is one example. They must account for this by charging everyone higher prices to make up for the theft.
 - i. Is this fair? Why/why not?
 - ii. What other solution(s) could you offer?



- b. Suppose a business has a reputation for cheating its customers or selling poor products.
 - i. Is that fair?
 - ii. How can customers protect themselves?
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7. Who Chooses?

- a. Who chooses the values that people in society have?
 - b. Who chooses what products businesses sells?
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8. Who Benefits?

- a. Who benefits from these internal conversations, the impartial spectator that Adam Smith wrote about?
 - b. Who benefits from the Whole Foods stakeholder philosophy that John Mackey discussed?
 - c. Who benefits from creative and innovative employees?
 - d. Who benefits from Whole Foods being on Fortune's "100 Best Companies to Work For" list?
 - e. What choices do people have when they go food shopping?
 - f. What is a fair way to:
 - i. run a business?
 - ii. deal with employees?
 - iii. deal with consumers?
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9. Who has benefitted from the progress of the last 250 years?