Why Economic Issues are Ethical Issues

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Introduction

A major point of this conference, as I understand from the Concept Note we all received, is to challenge the idea that development is all about "technical and economic processes" that are separate from ethical issues. This is certainly something worth doing! When I first studied Development Economics back in the 1970s, the focus was entirely on raising measured capital-labor ratios to foment GDP growth. When, taking a break from Economics graduate school, I briefly worked for the World Bank in the early 1980s, I was shocked to find that it was overrun with economists to the near total exclusion of sociologists, anthropologists, demographers and the like. More recently, Washington Consensus economists, in a fit of extreme hubris, attempted to make national economies more closely conform to our abstract models of free markets, no matter what the local conditions and institutions (and in spite of the fact that most rich countries relied on considerable government action to reach their states of industrialization). The human element, considerations of personal and national self-determination, and even the core ethical issue of defining the goals of development have been sorely neglected in such approaches. Raising them is an important step forward.

Yet I would like to challenge this group to go one step deeper in our analysis of development, ethics, and economics. It is possible to approach this issue thinking that there exists a merely technical, a-moral, often quantifiable, and mechanically
"economic" side to development that exists independently of ethical concerns. Such a conceptualization is reflected in the frequent acceptance—even by critics of economistic approaches—of the idea that there are certain "economic laws" driving economic processes. From a neoclassical point of view, for example, these may be "competitive market forces" or "profit-maximization by firms," while a more Marxist commentator might point to "capital accumulation." Action on the basis of individual self-interest is often said to be the driving force of capitalism. The fact that much economic activity can be measured in units of currency appears to lend support to the idea that there exists a quantifiable dimension that is far removed from issues of human self-identity and social behavior. If we take this viewpoint, then ethics and sociality become things which must be introduced into economic life, either by abandoning current systems and programs in favor of radically egalitarian and democratic ones, or by modifying current economic systems and programs around the edges by "adding on" human, social, and moral concerns.

I would like to suggest that, if we have not already rejected such an image, we reject it now. Economic life is not, and has never been, separate from human social and ethical life.

The Hoax

The idea that economic life is separate from social life is nothing more than a hoax that has been perpetuated by the economics discipline, which—as I will shortly discuss—adopted it as a way to satisfy pretentions to being considered a "hard science." This hoax has had many negative consequences, including

- A growing acceptance that of the idea that selfish behavior is not only acceptable, but even required, in capitalist commercial dealings—with a concomitant decline in actions arising from normal pro-social motivations such as responsibility and care.

- Deference to a priesthood of economists, who, sheltered by the mathematical complexity of our models, are said to understand the economy in ways not possible for normal folk (including other social scientists, lawmakers, and regulators).
• Definitions and models of "economic development" that (with a few notable exceptions, such as in the work of Amartya Sen) are morally, socially, and ecologically short-sighted—and extremely influential.

But the problems do not all stem from economists. The wide cultural success of this hoax has lead to further problems, including

• Critiques of economistic models of development that work within the conventional economy/society dualism, and so—based on the assumption that current systems actually are as economists describe them—fail to recognize many creative, helpful, and potentially attainable modifications and alternatives.

• Critiques of economistic approaches to development that, while not buying into the model of "economic man," still rely on his brother, "liberal man"—a creature for whom ethics is predominantly a matter of disembodied, universal rational principles.

I come at these questions from the perspective of a feminist economist. As an economist, I was trained in conventional, largely neoclassical but also policy-oriented economics. As a feminist, I entered the field detecting major biases and lacunae that seemed invisible to the vast majority of my colleagues. In the next two sections, I will describe how the hoax—that is, the belief that economies somehow exist apart from normal human and social life—came about, and at least one reason why it maintains cultural hegemony. Then I will return to the issue of the specific damages caused by the hoax, particularly (to avoid preaching to the choir) amongst critics of economistic approaches.

The Origin of the Hoax

Mainstream economics is centered around neoclassical orthodoxy, in which a number of assumptions are considered too self-evident to be ever questioned. One of these is that economic life is fundamentally mechanical, so that it is amenable to analysis using mathematical tools similar to those used in mechanical physics. Another is the people are invariably self-interested and rational in their economic dealings. A third is that the use of mathematical models, along with an avoidance of
any discussion of values, endows economists' work with an unassailable objectivity. An outsider might assume that the assumptions about mechanism, rationality, and self-interest came from economists' careful empirical study of actual economic phenomena. This demonstrates a misguided trust in economists, however, since the history of the development of these assumptions is quite otherwise.

**Historical Antecedents**

Often cited as the original source of the notion of self-interested, rational "economic man," John Stuart Mill's 1836 essay "On the Definition of Political Economy" attempted to carefully distinguish economics from the physical sciences and technology, from ethics, and from a more general study of social behavior.¹ Political Economy is distinguished from physical science, he wrote, because it is about "phenomena of mind" (Mill 1836, 12, 29, emphasis in original) rather than about physical laws. Among the mental sciences, it is further distinguished by the particular "part of man's [sic] nature" (36) with which it deals. Conscience, duty, and other feelings relevant to a person's dealings with other individuals were consigned by Mill to the realm of ethics (34). Principles of human nature that have to do with life in society were consigned by Mill to the realm of "speculative politics" (35). With issues concerning physical bodies, ethics, and social interactions split off and assigned to other disciplines, Political Economy would deal with what was left. It should, Mill wrote, deal with "man [sic]...solely as a being who desires to possess wealth, and who is capable of judging of the comparative efficacy of means for obtaining that end" (38).

Why did Mill believe that he had to separate out a very thin slice of human nature for analysis by each of the various fields? He believed that this was required by the nature of science. Significantly, his model for science was geometry. Political Economy, Mill thought, could only proceed as a "pure" and "abstract" science, resulting in general truths and timeless laws, if it posited a minimal set of starting principles. Political Economy and geometry, he claimed, both “must necessarily

¹ One could, of course begin this history of important themes in economics earlier, perhaps with Adam Smith. Mill's essay is highlighted here for the sake of brevity.
reason...from assumptions, not from facts” (1844, 46). Political Economy presupposes “an arbitrary definition of man” for the same reason that “[g]eometry presupposes an arbitrary definition of a line, ‘that which has length but not breadth’” (46). That is, Mill’s fundamental assumption of material self-interest was not derived from observation, but from the presumed requirements of scientific methodology. That is, the illusion of objectivity and the assumption of self-interest—and came not from a broad evaluation of evidence, but from Mill’s conscious intention to align economics with geometry and clearly distinguish it from everything social and ethical.

Mill, to his credit, in principle left his premises open (64). He argued that no political economist would ever be “so absurd as to suppose that mankind” is really described by only the parts of human nature selected for study in Political Economy (38). He explicitly presented his assumptions of self-interest and rationality as arbitrary and partial, chosen not for comprehensiveness but for the goal of creating conclusions by logical deduction. In any application, he said, Political Economy would need to be complemented by the insights of other sciences that had focused on other parts of human nature and other circumstances (58), and also by practical knowledge of specific experiences (68).

Unfortunately, however, what remained and flourished in later economic thought was not Mill’s modesty concerning the ad hoc premises and limited applicability of the geometry-like discipline he proposed, but rather his idea that Political Economy must become a axiomatic-deductive and mathematical enterprise in order to be “scientific.” This approach received a big boost in the late 19th century when neoclassical economists (including Edgeworth, Jevons, Walras and Pareto) found that they could formalize Mill’s idea of the “desire for the greatest amount” of wealth in terms of maximization of mathematical profit and utility functions. Alfred Marshall’s systematization of the neoclassical approach was instrumental in its wider acceptance. In the 1930’s, economist Lionel Robbins (1935) offered his precedent-setting definition of economics as the science of choice-making in the face of unlimited wants and scarce resources. Through such an historical process, the original broader meaning of economics in terms of processes of household
management, wealth creation, and distribution increasingly faded, to be replaced by the currently dominant, narrower emphasis that approaches policy design from the direction of the formal modeling of choice and abstract market exchange.

An Explanation of Persistence

There still remains the question of how such a way of thinking—which vastly narrows the scope of economics, its toolbox, and its potential for productive engagement with problems of real human interest—gained such a near stranglehold on economics. Feminist theorists and others who have studied the role played by gender in the rise of modern science offer one explanation for which there is considerable historical and psychological evidence (Harding 1986, Keller 1985).

The term “gender” does not refer to biological sex, but to the social constructions that cultures make on the base of sexual dimorphism. Of particular interest for our purposes is what we might call cognitive gender, or the way that our Western minds tend to organize a variety of disparate concepts on the basis of the dualism “male/female.” Most people in Euro-American cultures will, for example, think of dogs as somehow masculine and cats as somehow feminine (even though of course both species come in both sexes). Recent psychological research (Wilkie and Bodenhausen 2011) has confirmed that many modern people, like the ancient Pythagoreans (Lloyd 1993, 3), tend to associate odd numbers with masculinity and even numbers with femininity. Psychological research shows that cognitive gender schemas are important ways in which we “organize incoming information and integrate it—through no conscious act of will—into clusters” (Most, Sorber et al. 2007, 288) and that these gender associations pervade perceptions about academic fields (Whitehead 1996).

Very often this dualistic metaphorical structure is also hierarchical. The term “virile,” for example, refers to a masculine trait with a positive connotation, while the term “effeminate” carries negative valence. Masculinity is traditionally associated with strength, and femininity with weakness. When John Stuart Mill set up geometry as the model for economics, he drew on the Cartesian tradition in the philosophy of knowledge. According to Descartes, the cosmos is split into a res
cogitans (a thinking something which has no spatial extension) and a res extensa (a spatial something which has no psychic qualities). The mind is considered to be the active, valuable part with which “rational man” identifies, reigning over the passivity of matter and the body. In characterizing “rational man” by traits of mind, activity, rationality, detachment, and a search for generalities, all the human characteristics not included in this picture were split off—and projected onto women. James Hillman has written, “The specific consciousness we call scientific, Western and modern is the long sharpened tool of the masculine mind that has discarded parts of its own substance, calling it ‘Eve,’ ‘female’ and ‘inferior’” (quoted in Bordo 1986, 441). The counterpoint to “rational man,” Elizabeth Fee has pointed out, is “woman [who] provides his connection with nature; she is the mediating force between man and nature, a reminder of his childhood, a reminder of the body, and a reminder of sexuality, passion, and human connectedness.” (Fee 1983, 12).

Of course, if we examine the key assumptions and methodology of orthodox neoclassical economics, we find that it has been systematically defined by an elevation of stereotypically "masculine" ideals of detachment, "hard" and provable knowledge, and mathematical abstraction, and a neglect or denigration of "feminine" associations of connection, ethics, uncertainty, and concrete, grounded understandings (McCloskey 1985; Nelson 1992; Jennings 1993; Nelson 1996). To include more of the latter would, given dominant cultural understandings of gender and value, be felt as equivalent to accepting "emasculating." The hoax is supported by the fear of being called a sissy.

My point is not to reify these gender dualisms or attributions of value, but rather to bring them out from an unconscious level into the light of awareness where they can be examined. I do not wish in any way to endorse the idea that women are “by nature” more emotional, intuitive, or connected—or, a la Larry Summers’ comments (Bombardieri 2005), less able in mathematics and science. Rather, the point is that these dualisms reflect a cognitive habit that deeply permeates our Western and modern way of thinking. In pointing out how cognitive habits reinforce the aspirations of economists to false "scientificity," I also do not mean to overlook the fact that such an abstract, ostensibly objective and neutral
discipline of economics clearly supports some special interests. By sidetracking a
discipline that might otherwise concern itself with phenomena such as
concentrations of power, injustice, and exploitation into less status-quo-challenging
pursuits, the hoax is of use to those who want to hold onto wealth and power.

The result is a splitting of reality in half: aspects of human existence
associated with embodiment, with sociality, with moral judgment and with any kind
of connection or interdependence are—a priori, and with not even a pretense to
confirmation by empirical observation—shunted aside by my discipline. This is, of
course, a radically reality-denying move, by a field that at the same time aspires to
be objectively reality-describing; and a heavily normative move—valuing, for
example precision of analysis over richness of analysis, and rationality over
emotion—by a field that denies any normative leanings. The notion that objectivity
is somehow guaranteed by a position of abstraction and detachment has been
challenged by numerous philosophers of science (e.g., Keller 1985; Longino 1990;
Sen 1992; Kitcher 2011). A much more sensible notion of objectivity defines reliable
knowledge as that which passes the test of evaluation by larger communities.

**The Damages Done**

Many in this audience are already deeply familiar with the damages that the
conventional economistic, disembedded, highly biased approach to development
have at times caused in many parts of the world. But the widespread cultural
acceptance of the fundamental assumptions of this approach—namely, that
economic processes are mechanical and a-social, and that persons and businesses
operating in the commercial realm must always act out of rational self-interest—
means that the approach has also, in often unnoticed and unquestioned ways,
permeated the thinking of many of its critics. Let me give two examples.

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2 Exposing the distortions caused by such dualistic thinking has been one of the major projects of
feminist economics since the early 1990s (Ferber and Nelson 1993; Ferber and Nelson 2003). This
analysis will not be repeated here.
Financial Structures

The influence of the hoax is highly evident, for example, in Jürgen Habermas's influential distinction between what he calls the "lifeworld" arena of communicative action and the "system" arena driven by unconscious, objectifying forces (Habermas 1981). The lifeworld, Habermas claims, is the area of truly social public and private life, and the arena of norms, aesthetics, and conscious and deliberative action. Systems, on the other hand—in which Habermas includes both economies and state bureaucracies—are "steered by" the nonhuman media of money or power (Habermas 1981, 164). Within the latter, people are dehumanized—"stripped of personality structures and neutralized into bearers of certain performances" (308). A key element in Habermas's theory is a belief that money is a neutral, a-social medium.

But let us examine this belief. Habermas claims that because money is backed up by "gold or means of enforcement" (1981, 270), it therefore does not require social, communicative agreements or legitimation (272). In fact, however, there hasn't been an international gold standard since the early 1930s, and money has long been a quintessential social construction: It has value precisely and only because (or when) people believe it has value. Those close to the actual management of national or regional monetary systems are, in fact, deeply concerned with issues of beliefs, expectations, credibility, reputation, legitimacy, and the problems of collective decision-making (King 2004). As with money, so too with other financial assets: During the financial crisis of 2008, trillions of dollars worth of assets suddenly evaporated, simply because of a change in the socially-influenced beliefs of people as to whether or not the various collateralized debt obligations or credit default swaps had value. As to the economistic assumption that people are stripped of from their human values and emotions when enacting their economic "performances"...consider again the incidents leading up to the financial crisis, or
the emotions that accompanied going over the brink. Money and markets are thoroughly human and social creations.

Beware, then of development strategies that suggest that a separation of "purely economic" or "technical" issues such as national financial structures or international economic agreements from "social" concerns of human development. They are intimately linked. Naomi Klein (2007, Chap. 10), for example, documents how just such a separation of "technical issues" concerned with central banking and trade agreements from other political struggles occurred during the transition of power to the ANC in South Africa. As a result, the ANC was left with its hands tied in regard to jobs, land redistribution, and the rest of its more obviously "social" program. And the sort of knowledge required to begin participating such discussions is not—as some in the self-appointed economic priesthood may argue—an understanding of graduate-level mathematics and the latest in ultra-sophisticated modeling techniques. There is often much less content to economic models than outsiders are led to believe. Rather, the most important requirements are a good knowledge of history, a familiarity with institutions and current events, and a willingness to persistently engage with empirical evidence and with issues generally portrayed as unsexy, boring, and "too complicated."

Business and Government

Another example of criticism that puts far too much faith in conventional economic thinking are claims, such as these by Gar Alperovitz, that "the logic and dynamics" of the capitalist system, with its "profit-maximizing imperatives" makes it impossible for business executives to consider the social good in their decision-making (Alperovitz 1995, 3). While such claims are so common that they may seem entirely unobjectionable, they in fact are rooted precisely in the economistic hoax.

The belief that firms must always sacrifice social responsibilities in favor of profits does not originate in the study of actual, historical business practices; nor is it based in law; nor can it be said to be generally forced on businesses by

3 There is also a growing literature in "behavioral economics" exploring the emotional and social dimensions of motivations (e.g., Fehr and Falk 2002).
competitive markets (given that competition is not the only, or even necessarily the strongest, force acting on businesses) (Nelson 2006; Bratton forthcoming, 2011; Nelson forthcoming, 2011). It instead originates from the mechanical metaphor used in neoclassical economics, and, even more precisely, from ideologues of the far-right University of Chicago school of economics (Nelson forthcoming, 2011). Businesses are, in fact, social organizations within which people have to cooperate, have to get along, and to which people bring their whole complex bundle of values and aspirations—for good or ill. Serious scholars are increasingly noticing that a regard for ethics is absolutely required for economic functioning (even though the teaching of economics may simultaneous serve to undercut it) (e.g., Stout 2011).

Yet the belief in single-minded profit maximization has become so culturally pervasive that it is turning into a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more we teach that the role of business is to profit-maximize at all costs, the more we allow "the system made me do it" as an excuse for all sorts of unethical corporate social (yes, "social" includes "economic") behavior. And the more we may neglect thinking creatively about possible positive roles that businesses could play in development.

Such an unwarranted cynicism about business is often also paired with an equally unwarranted faith in the beneficence of governments, NGOs, and nonprofits. Partha Dasgupta, for example, in his writings about economic development, sets out a hard-and-fast dichotomy between the market sphere, in which he claims that self-interest is appropriate and "we should not worry about others," and the public sphere, in which concern for others is appropriate (2005, 247; 2007, 151). One need not be a public choice theorist to wonder if the public and non-profit spheres are capable of bearing the full ethical burden on their own. They are human and social organizations, too—with all the fallibility that implies.

**The Problem of "Liberal Man"**

So, let us assume that we agree we need to include consideration of ethics in discussions of development, at least, whether or not I have convinced you that they are also part of economics "proper." What, then, do we mean by ethics? While most philosophers do not adopt the model of rational, autonomous, self-interested,
hedonically-drive "economic man," those influenced by Enlightenment thought still tend to base their theories on what we might call "liberal man." "Liberal man" is an autonomous, rational thinker, who uses principles of reason to determine the proper rules for living among his peers. This image is, however, also part of a larger hoax, and limits the creativity of our thinking about development ethics.

Neuroscience

Contemporary cognitive neuroscience suggests that focusing on principles, rules, and reasons may be a fundamentally misleading way of approaching questions of moral judgment and moral action. Emotion and socialization play a much larger role than we have commonly believed. In studies using brain imaging, observation of people with specific brain damage, and other techniques, psychologists have found that moral judgment is—initially at least, and often entirely—more a matter of affective moral response than of moral reasoning (Greene, Sommerville et al. 2001; Haidt 2001; Greene and Haidt 2002). Moral reasoning, rather than being part of the process of coming to a judgment, is more often—as a practical and empirical matter—involved in possible post hoc justifications of a judgment already arrived at intuitively. That is, we often sense the "rightness" or "wrongness" of something, and then may work to come up with reasons for what we feel. This is not to say that introspective moral reasoning plays no role—people may in some circumstances consciously reflect on their intuitive judgments, and then change their mind. In practice, however, this seems to occur relatively rarely.

For questions of positive moral action—as opposed to moral judgment—emotional responses such as empathy, sadness, and shame seem to be particularly important, while the role of moral reasoning is particularly weak. Emotion is a motivator: One can be an expert on the many ways of formulating principles of justice, but if one does not care about acting justly, all the principles in the world will have no effect on behavior (Warren 2000; Haidt 2001, 112).

The fear, of course, on the part of those who are loyal to a purely rationalist view of ethics is that once one lets emotions in, "anything goes," and universal
agreement on principles is lost. But this is a misconception, for two main reasons. First, the idea that reason-based arguments can be relied on to create unassailable moral decisions is itself misleading: Even when principles can be clearly stated, it is often the case that more than one principle can apply to a particular matter. Reasonable people often, then, in good faith, disagree about the relative importance of different ethical principles. Second, the emotional aspects of moral judgments are not merely whims experienced, subjectively and randomly, by individuals. Rather, they tend to be formed out of the experience and knowledge of larger cultures.

Cultural variation

Jonathan Haidt (2001, 817), for example, defines moral judgments as "evaluations (good vs. bad) of the actions or character of a person that are made with respect to a set of virtues held to be obligatory by a culture or subculture." Gerd Gigerenzer suggests that moral intuitions are a sort of unconscious "moral grammar," built up within particular social environments and having emotional goals, and taking the form of gut feelings or rules of thumb (2007, 185). In various cultures, some moral intuitions will be nurtured more than others, and some principles will be considered more acceptable and binding than others. Individualistic principles, such as those embodied in "liberal man" and concerned with individual goals, reciprocity, and non-harming form only one of three clusters of moral intuitions that researchers have identified cross-culturally. The second cluster revolves around community, loyalty, in-groups, hierarchy, and wise leadership. The third emphasizes divinity and purity (Haidt 2006, 188; Gigerenzer 2007, 187). Unlike individual goals that can be traded off, issues related to community and purity are usually perceived of as in some way non-negotiable and absolute—or, as put by Gigerenzer, "not up for sale" (2007, 206).

The shaping of norms

Furthermore, investigation into the culture-specific aspects of moral judgments gives some insight about how they are shaped. "[C]ultural knowledge is a complex web of explicit and implicit, sensory and propositional, affective, cognitive,
and motoric knowledge,” writes Haidt (2001). Consider, for example, why soldiers practice marching in formation for hours, often chanting at the same time. I had always assumed this was merely a matter of practicing moving efficiently from Point A to Point B until my attention was drawn to "motoric" knowledge and the bodily enculturation of moral values by this literature. Drawing on work by neuroscientist Andrew Newbury, Haidt points out that repetitive motor activities and chanting have been used throughout history to create "resonance patterns" among people and that lead to feelings of group harmony and cohesion (2006, 237). Similarly, behavioral scientists, including economists, have found that the creation of apparently substantively meaningless group identifications among experiment subjects (e.g., assignment to a "team" that never works together) can create in-group feelings.

Besides highlighting the cross-cultural variability and social and embodied roots of ethical norms, recent research has also highlighted the importance of framing effects in eliciting ethical (or unethical) behavior. Framing a decision as being merely "business" or "legal" or otherwise "technical" tends to draw our attention away from its moral aspects (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel 2011). There is even preliminary evidence that putting people in an analytical rather than feeling frame of mind—for example, having people do calculations in advance of being asked to make a choice—can lead to a fading of ethical concerns and ethical emotions such as guilt (Zhong 2011). Of course, if this research is correct, this makes the economistic hoax even more powerful: To the extent people associate economics with calculation, the somatic indicators we generally rely on to alert ourselves to ethical concerns may become even more suppressed.

Relations of asymmetric mutuality

Another problem with the liberal man image that is particularly relevant to development issues (as well as to climate change) is the way it highlights relationships among autonomous peers who can engage in reciprocal behaviors, while neglecting to give any guidance about relationships characterized by significant and continuing differences in wealth, power, knowledge, leadership
ability, or specialized responsibilities, in which autonomy is compromised and reciprocity is not possible. Within the "liberal man" view, hierarchy is generally considered to be oppressive, with egalitarianism (in at least some dimensions), democracy, and participation the goal. That is, among peers, reciprocity should reign. But if this is our only view of morality and justice, then we are left unable to deal with the real, distinct and sometimes unavoidable, differences that characterize actual human societies. Liberal man is clearly not a five-year-old child. Nor, traditionally, was the child's female caregiver considered part of the society of liberal men. Teacher/student, doctor/patient, current generation/future generation, and development professional/aid recipient are all relationships in which there is a fundamental imbalance of power, but in which we yet hope that dimensions of care, helpfulness, and mutual respect may prevail. An analysis of moral judgment arising from norms of connection, as highlighted by feminist work on the existence of an "ethics of care" alongside an "ethics of justice" (Nelson 2010) may be more helpful in examining the relevant ethics for development professionals and institutions, than an analysis based on a false imagined equality of position.

**Conclusion**

Is there a purely mechanical and technical "economic" side to development questions? This talk has argued that the answer is "no"—that economic life has always been thoroughly human, social, and ethically significant, even if the economics profession has over the last century-plus tried to convince us otherwise. I have attempted to outline the dangers implicit in confusing the images of neoclassical "economic man"—or even philosophical "liberal man"—with actual socially embedded and embodied human beings.

The implications of this for development academics and development professionals is, however, quite challenging. Dropping the hoax brings down the disciplinary walls among economics, development, ethics, psychology, sociology and the like. I challenge you all to, if you haven't already done so, stand up and "claim your inner economist"—in the good sense, of someone who seriously engages with specific, complicated economic issues. This would mean going beyond the much
easier (and therefore popular) paths of consigning difficult economic analysis to someone else's bailiwick, or understanding economies in terms of stale theories about economic "laws," or perhaps cultivating a position as a morally superior critic of a presumably ethically bereft capitalism. It means thinking seriously about the moral possibilities as well as the moral failings of all different types of social organizations, including businesses, governments, and NGOs, and about the ethical dimensions of relationships that inherently vary along dimensions of culture and power. It means rethinking not only development, but also ourselves.

References


