# Moral Agency under Globalization

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## Introduction

All our life experience shows that we are not indifferent to moral issues although some may deny being worried about morality and some can break moral principles. But in any case we do know that there is something wrong with our moral behaviour when we act immorally, and we try to present it to others as something much better conceived or morally good. It does not matter which argument we use to justify such behaviour: national identity, ethnic tradition, religious ritual, the economic system, political reasons or personal circumstances. Such an attempt at embellishing our actions can be expected from us because rationalization is typical for human beings as is selfishness. But the problem is that the moral basis in human beings is also unavoidable, and it is the question of time and the development of events which can delay the solution of morally wrong behaviour or decisions made at the individual level or social level (social - old sacred rituals of killing people as a sacrifice, or slavery, or Stalin's Gulag[1]; individual – Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov[2], Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, etc.).

Cognitive neuroscience, which has been experiencing an upsurge recently and which has accumulated much information about human cognitive functioning, allows researchers to put forward the theory of the 'moral brain' and genetically inherited moral thinking due to the evolutionary process of a human being as a social being. Although in Russia this move to moral studies in neuroscience is a rather recent phenomenon (Zernova, 2007) in other western countries it has resulted in the publications of many books and articles on the brain and moral thinking (Szasz, 1996; Gazzaniga, 2005; Tancredi, 2005; Freeman, 2005, etc.). Such studies in cognitive neuroscience promote the theories of ethical realism, such as ethical intuitionism and ethical naturalism.

Specialized bodies of thought and knowledge are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they are produced and develop to satisfy the needs of the

[1] Gulag is the Russian acronym for The Chief Administration of Corrective Labour Camps and Colonies (see Editor's Notes).

[2] Raskolnikov is the main character of Dostoevsky's (1821-1881) novel *Crime and Punishment* which focuses on the mental anguish and moral dilemmas of Raskolnikov, an impoverished St.Petersburg ex-student who decided to kill a hated, unscrupulous old-woman money-lender, thus solving two problems – improving his financial state and ridding the world of an evil worthless parasite. However, he had to kill her half-sister as well which he didn't plan. After that Raskolnikov begins to behave as though he wishes to betray himself, so that the detective Porfiry begins to suspect him purely on psychological grounds. In the end Raskolnikov goes to the police himself to confess.

society. I believe that the increased interest in cognitive neuroscience is due to globalization processes.

Globalization processes which have been more and more pronounced in informational, economic, cultural, and political spheres demand a 'common denominator' for common actions on the global scale. What can become such a 'common denominator'? No doubt, the best is something which is inherent in all human beings. And cognitive neuroscience finds it: moral thinking. It is true that all dilemmas in which people are engaged, demand a moral decision. Moral argument is one of the most powerful arguments for all people. If cognitive neuroscience proves that we have similar moral thinking and basic human values irrespective of national, religious or ethnic identities, then this 'common denominator' will be found, and a very powerful lever for different aspects of global activities will be found, and a functioning global society can be created based on similar moral values.

## 1. The 'moral brain': findings in cognitive neuroscience

Although individual morality is generally considered to be socially constructed, nevertheless, it is based on a natural ability of the brain to think morally. One would have failed to build any social morality if there were not a natural foundation for it. It is like the innate ability of a human being to learn the syntax of a language as Noam Chomsky claims: a small child would never be able to grasp such a complicated system as the syntax of a language if he did not have an innate ability for it (Chomsky, 1972: preface; Foucault, 2002: 81-148[3]). The same can be said about the innate ability of moral thinking.

The '*moral' brain* (Tancredi, 2005[4]) consists of two broad regions of the brain (Snell, 1980[5]): (1) the '*emotional*' brain (limbic system or our 'old brain') and (2) the '*rational*' brain.

The emotional brain consists of four main parts: the amygdala, the hippocampus, the hypothalamus and the anterior cingulated cortex.

The rational brain is the frontal lobes (see Figure 1). The prefrontal cortex is the brain's 'command post' (near the forehead above the eyes). It is supposed to be the centre of personality and identity, and of the integration of emotions and thoughts. Virtually every functional part of the brain is directly interconnected to this cortex and is controlled by it.

We should also mention the *mirror-neuron system and neuroplacticity* (Tancredi, 2005; Gazzola, Aziz-Zadeh, Keysers, 2006: 1824-1829). The mirror-neuron system has a certain type of neurons united into the network and engaged in understanding, imitating and learning, which is at the basis of human culture and social life. Experiments have shown that a man observing another develops the activation of the same zones of the brain subconsciously.

[3] The conversation with Foucault and Chomsky
[4] The description of the 'moral brain' is based on Tancredi.
[5] The division into two parts and structural description is based on Snell.

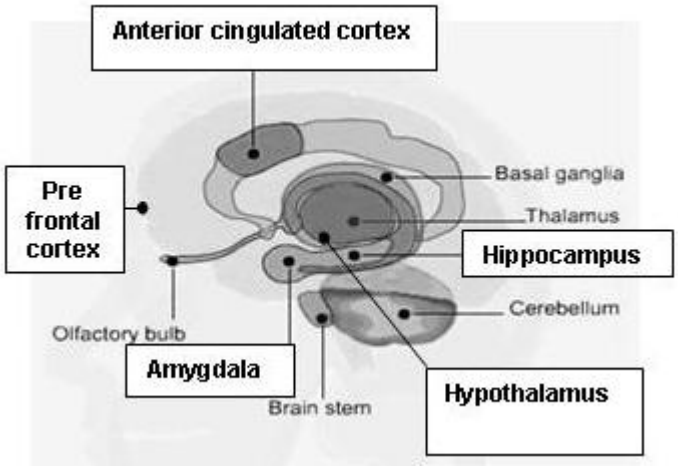


Figure 1. Moral brain

When a challenge occurs involving moral decision making, the amygdala produces a range of emotions from fear and anger to disgust. Conditioned fear is its main responsibility. The inhibitory mechanism – the hippocampus and hypothalamus are activated. The anterior cingulated cortex judges if everything goes right between what we expected as a reward, for example, and what we have got. It activates the prefrontal cortex warning that something is wrong and presses the prefrontal cortex to intervene. The amygdala's apprehension, anxiety, and fear cause the hypothalamus to accelerate, resulting in a full range of bodily symptoms – increased breathing, racing pulse, and sweating. If we get into a similar fearful situation to the one which we have had earlier, such as a loss, for example, the hippocampus, which frequently works in tandem with the amygdala, becomes activated. Although the hippocampus does not generate emotions directly, it has the power to affect reactions by linking specific memories with emotions, thereby influencing the amygdala and the hypothalamus (Tancredi, 2005).

The amygdala responds to winning and losing by different sides: the left side in the left part of the brain is activated during winning, the right side in the right part of the brain during losing. Economic losses are especially threatening for the amygdala. A pattern of loss in a previous experience will reappear in similar situations. During the financial crisis of 1998 in Russia, the pattern of loss continued over a long period of time. People were afraid of keeping their savings in banks and they were not capable of making rational decisions. The same can be said about other people who suffered from the stock market problems of the late 1990s in the world, inasmuch as they might also have declined rational investment opportunities.

Prolonged frustration or distress, or depressing moral issues cause an over activation in certain zones of the brain with an over activation of certain

neurotransmitters in the synapses[6] during synaptic connections between neurons. If it is repeated for some time, the *neuroplacticity* helps to remember the 'distress pathways' through the cortex and a person cannot get out of depression (or moral stress – for example Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikov). When a person starts using some diverting mechanism in order to 'forget' and 'overtrick' himself (drugs, gambling, smoking, alcohol or other addictions), what was at first temporary becomes a fixed habit due again to *neuroplacticity*. Thus, the remodeling of neural networks can take place leading to the change of a person's identity.

The *mirror-neuron* system is responsible for imitating the behaviour of others in the vicinity (criminal surrounding, social violence, family abuses, etc.), and if it lasts for a long time neuroplacticity can make such imitation permanent. The neuroplacticity also can help to get rid of bad habits under the pressure of will, good surroundings, mental control or other techniques.

The expression of empathy, positive and negative reciprocity and a psychological need for trust, social respect, justice and fairness are considered to be an involuntary reaction on the part of a normal brain system which we have inherited as social creatures, if, of course, the brain was not damaged as a result of injury, or due to poor genetic inheritance, or through an acquired misfunctioning of the brain in the unfavourable surroundings and fixed by the mechanism of mirror-neuron system and neuroplacticity.

## 2. Moral philosophy

### *2.1. Ethical theories of the first and second order*

There are ethical theories of the *first order* (how we should behave) and ethical theories of the *second order* (meta-ethics, i.e. theorizing about ethical theories).

Among the *first-order theories* we can discern three main groups:

(1) duty-based (e.g. Kant's ethics and Christian ethics) (Kant, 1995; Lews, 2002);

(2) consequentialist (e.g. utilitarian ethics of Bentham and ethics of Mill) (Bentham, 1988; Mill, 2001);

(3) virtue theories (e.g. Aristotle's ethics) (Aristotle, 2004).

(1) Duty-based ethical theories assert that acting morally means acting according to our duties (either we ought to perform some actions or we ought not) disregarding consequences which might follow them. The motives for actions must be 'pure' and cannot include any calculated benefits. The word 'duty' actually means a morally necessary thing to do which you also want other people to do to

[6] Neurons are nerve cells in the nervous system. Each has an axon, which carries nerve signal away from the soma (central part of a neuron) to the dendrites of another neuron, and also several dendrites which receive the impulse. The shapes and functions of neurons can be different. Neurons communicate with one another via synapses which can be excitatory or inhibitory. The axon terminal of a neuron containing synaptic vesicles with neurotransmitter chemicals release neurotransmitter chemicals into the synaptic cleft between the axon and the dendrite of another neuron (which has special receptors for it) in order to communicate with target neurons.

you and which can be regarded as a universal law for all. Happiness cannot be a universal principle because a person may want to become happier at the expense of another's unhappiness. If, for example, Georgians, who want to join NATO but cannot because they have an ethnic conflict with South Ossetians on their territory, attack and kill South Ossetians, who want autonomy it would be an immoral act, according to Kant, to solve a problem in such a way[7]. His 'categorical imperative' (command to act in a certain way) is to act only on the maxim (a general principle underlying the action) which you rationally want to become a universal law applied by others to you.

(2) Consequentialist ethical theories are based on the principle of the greatest beneficial consequences of the action: 'good' is whatever brings about the greatest total happiness (negative utilitarian theories – 'good' is whatever brings about the least total unhappiness). Thus, it is morally right for Georgians to attack South Ossetians because it could bring the greatest total happiness for Georgians who are the majority in Georgia and who want territorial integrity and membership in NATO.

(3) Virtue ethical theories focus on the character of an individual and his personal life on the whole, unlike the previous ones focusing on the rightness or wrongness of particular actions. Happiness comes from coping with life's problems morally which is due to the acquired virtues. So, if all Georgians and South Ossetians had been brought up correctly and had really developed moral virtues individually, no killings would have taken place on the territory of Georgia at all. Georgians and South Ossetians would mutually have respected each other and lived peacefully.

*Ethical theories of the second order (meta-ethical theories)* can be divided into two broad groups: *realism and anti-realism* which include five broad views about the nature of morality: subjectivism, naturalism, non-cognitivism, nihilism and intuitionism. Ethical realism presupposes the existence of objective moral truths. Ethical anti-realism, on the contrary, claims that there are no objective moral values at all. There are two main groups of ethical theories belonging to realism: ethical naturalism and ethical intuitionism. And there are three main groups of ethical theories belonging to anti-realism: subjectivism (moral statements are not objectively true), non-cognitivism (moral statements are neither false nor true) and nihilism (moral statements are false).

- Ethical subjectivism (including cultural relativism) holds that moral values are subjective: it is the individual's or group's attitude of considering something as 'good'. The value facts are reduced to psychological preferences. If I say, "The Russian president is good" it shows only my attitude to him. If someone else says, "The Russian president is not good" it shows his attitude: no objective truth is possible.

- Ethical non-cognitivism claims that evaluative statements cannot explain what the world is. They express only a speaker's emotions or can be treated as imperatives. If I say, "The Russian president is not good", for a non-cognitivist it

[7] The conflict in August 2008 (see Editor's Notes).

sounds like “Boo to the Russian president” or “Do not deal with the Russian president”.

- Ethical nihilism (called also ‘the error theory’) claims that evaluative statements are generally false because they assert things which do not exist in reality. If I say, “The Russian president is good” it is neither a false nor a true statement because there is no such a property as ‘goodness’ in reality, there is only the Russian president out there.

- Ethical naturalism holds that objective moral properties exist but they are reducible to non-evaluative terms. If I say, “The Russian president is good”, he can be considered good objectively, for example, if he imroves the well-being of his citizens. Moral statements must be expressed either in non-evaluative terms or justified empirically on the basis of observation.

- Ethical intuitionism claims that moral properties are objective: there are such objective properties as ‘goodness’ or ‘evilness’ and they do not depend on someone’s attitude. They are irreducible (we cannot but use an evaluative language speaking about value facts saying ‘good’, ‘evil’, ‘desirable’ and so on).

If I say, “The Russian president is good”, it means he is, indeed, ‘good’ independent from someone’s or my own attitude towards him, and other people understand what I mean, i.e. they understand this property ‘good’. I do not need to use any other non-evaluative terms to be understood by people.

Below is the diagram (Figure 2) based on the classification suggested by Michael Huemer (Huemer, 2005: 7).

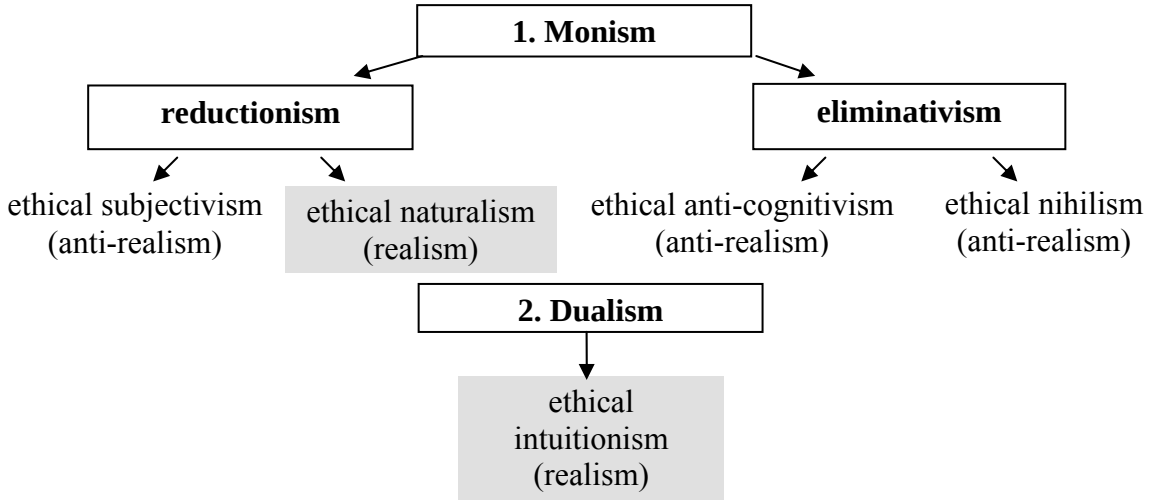


Figure 2. Meta-ethical views

Monism (1) and dualism (2) belong to the classification in the tradition of the philosophy of mind where monism is presented by two methodological philosophical approaches: reductionism (reduces moral statements to non-evaluative facts or psychology) and eliminativism (eliminates possibility of moral truths). Ethical theories are grouped according to both the philosophical approach (monism and dualism) and the traditional classification of ethical theories (realism and anti-realism). Two shaded boxes (ethical naturalism and ethical intuitionism) belong to realism.

Dualism is understood here as the existence of two fundamentally different kinds of facts (or properties) in the world: evaluative facts (properties) and non-evaluative facts (properties). Only intuitionism includes both of them. Such classification first of all allows Huemer to put the most important question of what exists in the world and to show that "subjectivists, naturalists, non-cognitivists, and nihilists all agree in their basic view of *the world"* (they are monists) implying that either there are no value facts at all (eliminativism), or value facts are entirely explicable in terms of non-evaluative facts (reductionism) (Huemer, 2005: 8).

Intuitions are defined by Huemer as "mental states in which something appears to be the case upon intellectual reflection (as opposed to perception, memory, or introspection), prior to argument" (Huemer, 2005: 232). We have intuitions ('intellectual appearances') about certain abstract truths including self-evident principles similar to perceptual experiences ('sensory appearances') about the physical world. Our intuitions are merely the form of our awareness: we are directly aware of moral facts. It can be compared to our awareness of a physical world via sense perception: we are directly aware of physical objects. Moral intuitions can conflict with our moral theories or fixed moral beliefs resulting from culture, religion and ideology. They also can be affected by bias as much as our sensory experience.

The main objection against ethical intuitionism is that we cannot be certain of moral truths based on intuition unless we find a way to show that intuitions are reliable for verification in general. But no such verification is required to show that sensory perception or memory exists. Huemer states that "it appears, then, that the present objection relies on an epistemological double-standard: the objector imposes demands on intuition that would not be placed on any other fundamental source of knowledge" (Huemer, 2005: 236). He asks why this process of cognition should demand a second cognitive process and remarks that even a utilitarian will use his intuition and will say that to kill a healthy human being to distribute his organs to five other people is not good in spite of the basic principle of the utilitarian theory: the greatest total happiness. There is also a lot of disagreement about objective, factual questions in science. Human beings are subject to making mistakes in all fields of human activities. Intuition may fail sometimes because it can be affected by cultural, ideological and religious indoctrination. So intuition should be considered as a good and reliable source in moral knowledge as are other sources of cognition such as, for example, sensory perception or memory.

## 3. The findings in cognitive neuroscience strengthen the position of ethical realism

New findings in cognitive neuroscience supply ethical realism (naturalism and intuitionism, which admit objective value facts) with good material for the argument with their opponents representing the anti-realist trend. What is interesting is that the initiative in discussing the main questions of the philosophy of mind (explanation of a human being either on the basis of one substance in the framework of monism or two distinct substances in the framework of dualism and

their ratio in moral behaviour) has moved to neuroscientists who build bridges between their discoveries in neuroscience and moral philosophy using the philosophy of mind or provide the possibilities for others to make such links. What is common to ethical naturalism and ethical intuitionism is the belief that there are objective moral facts and moral thinking is objective. But ethical intuitionism considers such a phenomenon to exist due to distinct mental states irreducible to physical states while naturalists use the work of the brain as the explanation of objective moral thinking.

### *3.1. The brain directs the mind: a person is not responsible for her moral behaviour*

For his naturalistic monistic conclusion that the brain directs the mind, Tancredi (Tancredi, 2005) gives the following reasons:

1. Clinical research on patients who have been afflicted with brain injuries (lesions) show the change in their abilities of cognition, memory, behaviour and feelings. The same can be said about patients suffering from strokes or degenerative disorders affecting the brain.

2. Patients with psychiatric and neurological disorders show difficulty in emotional control and cognition. Examination of these patients showed that the normal pathways of neural networks were changed because some parts of the brain have defective performance.

3. Discrepancies in genes, especially gene combination, which serve as the basis for differences in brain biology reveal the impact on personality.

4. Highly refined technologies such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), single-photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) and positron emission tomography (PET) help to compare normal and abnormal brains. These technologies produce computer-generated pictures of the brain with special colour indicators of the zones of the brain showing the degree of their activity. For example, in a drug abuser (cocaine, heroine) the technologies reveal abnormal blood flow or deviating metabolic rates of specific areas of the brain affected by the drug. Complex emotions like grief, empathy, uncontrollable anger, fear, guilt and shame arise in specific areas of the brain and engage other brain areas distorting their motor and intellectual functioning.

Tancredi through the whole book uses a medical case of a criminal in order to illustrate the distorted moral judgment due to the distorted functioning of the brain. The story is about Ricky Green, 29 years old, who was charged with the serial killing of two women and two men. He had sexually mutilated his victims after drinking with them and having sex. The pre-history is as follows: he started drinking at 9, and at the age of 14 he was a heavy drinker and smoked marijuana. His elder brother and father went to prison, and his mother died at 45. His father was very demanding of the boys, he abused his wife when she was alive and slept with his daughter. Ricky Green had an intense fear of his father, had no friends, had protracted bed-wetting until 16, and as a child he liked killing animals and starting fires. He ran away from home twice at the age of 11 and 16. His attempt to escape at 16 ended up in a casino where he was picked up by a homosexual old

man. At the age of 18 he had got a woman who liked to hurt him during sex. He found a new girl-friend who was a drug-abuser and married her. After killing a victim Ricky felt so guilty and had such a strong impulse to confess to someone that he used his wife for that against his own best interests. Tancredi classifies Green as a psychopath who lacks an ability to shape a moral issue, conscience and sensitivity for empathy, and who displays extremely abnormal behaviour - violence, deception and harm (though he is not considered to be fully anti-social).

Recent research shows that psychopaths have a malfunctioning brain, perhaps due to defective wiring (neuropaths), which leads to undesirable moral behaviour and cannot exhibit what we consider 'free will'. Tancredi comes to the conclusion that Green is a biologically driven murderer resulting from exposure to a prolonged stressful environment which most likely altered the neurobiology of his brain because each person has a threshold, the limit of his ability to withstand stress and provocation. This is dynamically set by the force of amygdala responses (leading to fear, anger, and rage) and the power of one's limbic structures and anterior cingulated cortex to inhibit impulses. Under extreme frustration and helplessness the biology of the brain may cross a stress threshold, decreasing the ability to control undesirable instincts and desires (similar to prolonged alcoholism which also changes the biochemistry of the brain). He arrives at the conclusion that genetic predisposition must be somehow activated by the environment in order to become the permanent trait of character.

Tancredi states that some recent findings indicate that a moral sense is innate ('hardwired in the brain'), and we begin to display it at a very young age. The phrase 'it's not fair' can be heard from 4-5 year old children. Studies among preschool children have shown that the sensitivity to fairness becomes refined with age.

Tancredi gives interesting examples with monkeys which show that they have a feeling of fairness based on inequity aversion. Researchers at the Yerkes National Primate Centre in Atlanta studied how brown capuchin monkeys (5 males and 5 females) responded to unequal rewards in their group. Their conclusion is that monkeys have an innate sense of equality and fairness and that this capacity, essential for cooperation, might have evolved in social primates before it did in humans. Chimpanzees, for example, possess reciprocal altruism (generosity with food and sharing) which is important for getting a higher social status.

Tancredi illustrates the biologically malfunctioning brain with many cases of immoral behaviour starting from 'corporate criminals' ignoring social norms because of the basic obsessive-compulsive dimension to their personality that causes them to behave anti-socially and steal corporate money and finishing with gamblers for whom gambling becomes a psychostimulant drug.

### *3.2. The mind directs the brain: a person is responsible for her moral behaviour*

*James W. Jones* relies on *dualism* in his research. He, on the contrary, argues that the mind can control the physical substance and cure both the brain and the body (Jones, 2005: 36-60). Jones has practised clinical hypnosis as part of his

behavioural medicine work. He has found it very effective in the treatment of anxiety, chronic pain, stress-related disorders, and smoking cessation. Central to his own practice is the use of imagery. When he asked his patients to imagine warming their hands over a fire, the blood flow to their hands increased and blood vessels dilated. This may help in relieving vascular headaches. When he asked his patients with chronic pain to imagine their hands in a bucket of cold water it induced a numbness in the hands which can be transferred to the parts of the body with chronic pain. Imagery under hypnosis can produce the impact on the functioning of the immune system. Thus, the power of mental imagery affects the body. He writes, "A person forms a purely inner, mental power act (an image) and the *following* result is that the blood pressure changes, or pain sensations decrease, or other physiological processes alter. In light of such practices, it is hard for me to deny that inner, mental activities can control physiological processes" (Jones, 2005: 37). He adds that it is also possible that "an active thought can reduce heart rate, change skin conductance, relax musculoskeletal tension, and even shift brain wave patterns". The latter is the most philosophically interesting question for him: to what extent can nonreductive physicalism account for such phenomena?

Meditation-derived techniques are widely employed in behavioral medicine and are proven to be effective in treating anxiety disorders, stress, eating disorders, depression and personality disorders. Meditation produces an impact on such "basic functioning as brain hemispherical laterization, immune system functioning, an emotional processing" (the increased activity in the left cerebral hemisphere under meditation increases positive emotions). Advanced meditators showed "under laboratory conditions, the ability to control fundamental physiological processes, such as basic reflexes, formerly thought to be beyond conscious control" (Jones, 2005: 39).

Reductive physicalists, nonreductive physicalists, and dualists, all agree about scientific discoveries: functioning of neurotransmitters, the growth and decay of neuronal cells and that some parts of the brain are more activated during some mental activities and so on but the explanation they use is different.

Reductive physicalism explains the primary causation via physical factors, i.e. brain activity. But in the above mentioned examples the cause is the thought itself which changes the brain activity. Jones examines the possibility of nonreductive physicalism to explain such a phenomenon and his conclusion is negative.

Nonreductive physicalists admit that the mental cannot be reduced to the lower physical level of neurons for the explanation of mental states and they try to explain it using the concepts of 'emergent property' and 'supervenience'. Jones claims that the explanation with the help of these concepts is unsatisfactory because the main question is not answered: "from where does the mind acquire the property of downward causation" forcing the physical body to move or to change the brain activities, if these powers of causality are not determined by the causal processes in the brain? (Jones, 2005: 51). He analyses the 'emergent property' explanation and comes to the conclusion that a new property can emerge only from something similar to it (e.g. a word from its constituting letters, water from its constituting atoms) but ponders how our thoughts emerge from neurons, which

have quite different physical characteristics such as space and time, unlike thoughts. Jones remarks that those who use an 'emergent property' thesis understand the lack of convincing power themselves. For example, Clayton suggests 'pluralistic ontology' not being able to reject a monistic materialist approach characterizing the contemporary scientific approach but at the same time admitting that mental states can be explained as physical only if we understand 'physical' not in the ordinary sense.

Jones also criticizes the 'supervenience' thesis which does not admit causation (when one event causes another event), instead putting forward the idea of correlation of events at different levels and the relation of dependence under certain circumstances.[8] Our mental states supervene on a lower level of neuron firings but appear at certain circumstances. Thus the subvenient property of neurons can cause the supervenient property (mental states) without determining it. But such underdetermination is not a top-down causation and cannot explain mental causation when a thought changes brain wave patterns or physiological processes. Jones analyzes Murphy's thesis of 'triggering and structural' causes. 'Triggering causes' are impulses travelling between the neurons according to the laws governing the movement of ions through neurons. These impulses are structured by the density of the neurons, the amount of neurotransmitters, the strength of the impulses (Jones, 2005: 46). Mental causation is an example of 'structural causation'. According to Murphy people come across physical objects or events in the world, learn and remember. After some time they get used to the physical causation that they have come across previously and matched thoughts appear and become associated with the physical reaction of the organism to the environment. Thus, as Jones argues, supervenience is understood as a process of learning which admits only conjunction and not causality for the mental states. His final conclusion is that nonreductive physicalism cannot explain mental causality.

Jones comes to the conclusion that "natural science as currently conceived cannot provide a robust enough account of mental causation to account for the findings of research in behavioral medicine, meditation, hypnosis, and other fields of psychophysiology" (Jones, 2005: 56). He suggests that, perhaps, we should rethink what is physical after all, or take the position of those who claim that consciousness is simply another irreducible dimension of the universe or believe religious people's claim that "within the depths of human consciousness is a window on the universal and the divine" (Jones, 2005: 57).

### *3.3. The influence of theoretical debates on social practice*

We can see that the different philosophical positions of Tancredi and Jones make them treat the findings of neuroscience in different ways. Though very promising, the position of Jones seems to be weaker due to the 'scientific prejudice' existing in the present scientific community. Scientific objectivity is

[8] Jones illustrates the supervenience thesis with the following example: a 'penny' cannot be considered a penny though it has the image on it and is made of metal if someone mints it at home or if there is no law about the use of a penny for payment in the country.

supposed to be based on the physicalist monistic approach but Jones rejects the existing physicalist explanation of mental causality. However, other researchers try to investigate the mental states Jones is interested in using Tancredi's approach, though they have not answered Jones's question yet either. "Mainstream neuroscience suspects that mystic experiences are correlated with certain brain activities, noting that several electroencephalographic (EEG) studies of meditation, a frequent precursor of mystical experiences, show shifts of neural activity while participants are meditating" (Krippner, 2005: 65). Single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) applied to meditators (Buddhist meditators and Franciscan nuns in the experiment described) showed increased blood flow, while other regions showed marked decreases during the experiment. Krippner states that "It is not unreasonable to suggest that these meditators and nuns permanently altered their brains in such a way to predispose themselves to a god experience through a neurological process referred to as 'kindling'" (Krippner, 2005: 66). Then, it is possible to suggest that religion helps people to acquire consciously new neural circuitry to cure 'distressed' neuropaths. Religion reflects people's intuition for self-help when their mind is disturbed.

There are some studies by distinguished scientists in parapsychology as well (Price, 1995; Kieruff, Krippner, 2004) but the scientific community does not take them very seriously. The parapsychologists can put forward only the minimal claim nowadays that there are genuine paranormal phenomena to be scientifically investigated. "Many scientists working primarily in other areas seem to have regarded the claims of parapsychologists as a threat to established knowledge and to the credibility of science" (Mulkay, 1983: 83). However, it seems to me that the study of parapsychological phenomena is the best opportunity to understand consciousness and the properties of the mind because such cases allow a glimpse into the reserves of powerful abilities of the mind. The study of normal human beings will keep us away from a full understanding of the mind for some centuries time.

Dualists struggle for the right to admit the existence of a mental state as something quite distinct from the physical in a modern understanding of 'physical'. Ethical intuitionists are mostly dualists and insist on the innate moral intuitions. And though none of us can deny that we know what intuition is and have experienced it in our lives, nevertheless 'intuition' is regarded as something unscientific. However, for intuitionists, objective moral thinking is innate, due to the spirituality of a human being supplied with certain intuitions from birth, meanwhile for naturalists, objective moral thinking is inherent in all human beings due to the biochemical functioning of the brain, the result of genetic inheritance in the process of evolution and human social form of life. Both naturalists and intuitionists admit that moral human thinking is socially conditioned, i.e. innate objective moral thinking can be influenced (distorted or improved) by social surroundings.

The theoretical argument between naturalists and intuitionists is, no doubt, interesting for philosophers but the question as to what application it can lead to is much more important for society. If our moral objective thinking is based on

uncontrollable inherited biochemical work of the brain, the conclusion is that no person is responsible for his behaviour and our duty is to help him to improve his moral judgment by pharmaceutical means; brain implants[9] and genetic interference[10] should be used. If society chooses this path, then no doubt a new powerful lever will be used politically. Special devices will be implemented for testing the morality of people in court ('Brain Fingerprinting' has already been implemented in the USA[11]), by police, and in other social institutions. But as we know, where there is power there is abuse.

The morality of society does not necessarily coincide with innate moral individual intuitions. In the course of history there has never been any perfect society that has not needed improvement.

The prospects of social practice based on ethical intuitionism and Jones' dualism look like being less gloomy. A human being endowed with spirituality and consciousness which is distinct from material substance can control his behaviour, irrespective of the inherited properties of the brain. Cognitive neuroscience demonstrates that our mind can control brain activity, i.e. the material substance. Thus everyone is responsible for his actions though bad or good surroundings also matter due to human mirror-neuron system and neuroplacticity.

The way of improvement is engagement in art, philosophy, religion, meditation, self-hypnosis, treatment through images and so on. All of that is based on the willingness of a person to improve his behaviour and to attain 'moral virtues'. Moral virtues are a means of improving a person's psychological state that is directly connected with a good physical state. It is also necessary for successful social communication. However, a person of high moral virtues in the background of an immoral societal system would hardly be successful, so the question is of creating good surroundings in the basis of which lies an adequate political and economic system.

## 4. Generative Ethics

The famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a representative of the Enlightenment, believed in the power of human reasoning and that moral laws can be established by reason *a priori* but ought to be tested in practice. He defined the understanding of what is moral in such a way that it can be applied to

[9] Brain implants are technological devices directly connected to the brain and usually placed on the surface of the brain or attached to the brain's cortex (see Editor's Notes).

[10] Human genetic engineering is the modification of the genotype of the unborn individual to control what traits it will possess when born.

[11] Brain Fingerprinting is a controversial forensic science technique that determines whether specific information is stored in a subject's brain by measuring electrical brainwave responses to words, phrases, or pictures that are presented on a computer screen invented by Lawrence Farwell and based on the theory that the brain processes known, relevant information differently than it processes unknown or irrelevant information which is revealed by a specific pattern in the electroencephalograph (EEG). 'Brain fingerprinting' has been applied in a number of high-profile criminal cases in the USA, including bringing to court a serial killer Grinder and helping an innocent convict Terry Harrington.

any society in any century. What he suggested coincides roughly with what we understand as morality in our everyday life. Kant is the supreme representative of a duty-based moral theory. He was interested in the question 'what is a moral action?' and 'how to define it?'

The moral action is based on a moral duty which a human being imposes on himself. He feels free to act according to his understanding of what is morally necessary for him to do. His rational choice ought to disregard his desires, feelings, and any external influence or consequences. It is a courageous morality demanding one to be honest with others and especially with oneself, knowing best one's own motives for the action. The motives must be pure: the moral act is directed at another person without waiting for any benefits from the action. It is 'good will'[12](Kant, 1995b) which means one will act morally because one rationally wants to do so. Kant connects the act with the will which does not presuppose any condition resulting from any inclination, it is *a priori*. It is hard to liberate oneself from one's own inclinations, feelings and possessions but Kant insists on the freedom from even any good inclination because it is not a sure guarantor for a moral act: circumstances can change and one may lose one's natural inclination to behave morally and only one's reason can be a guide for a moral action. Kant uses the word 'maxim', i.e. a general subjective principle underlying an individual action. One must choose such 'maxims' which one wants to become an objective moral law universally applied to all (including oneself) and by all. It is a principle of universalizability and is called a 'categorical imperative' by Kant, i.e. an unconditional moral command to act in this way (a conditional duty is called a 'hypothetical' imperative by him starting with 'if', e.g. 'if you want to be respected you ought to…'). Another categorical imperative is to treat people as ends in themselves, never as a means to an end. We should recognize humanity and respect people.

Such a universal presentation of morality as made by Kant is the most suitable principle for the formation of a global society with common value system, but, at present, a theory of moral relativism seems to be still popular, and Kant is rebuked just for what is the most valuable in his moral theory – a universal application based on humanity.

Alasdair MacIntyre, while paying tribute to Kant's heritage, criticizes Kant for having "an essentially conservative view" in spite of "the period of rapid social change" caused by his leading "an isolated academic existence" near Prussia's eastern limits, not noticing that "in different societies there might be different moral schemes" and conceiving "his task as the isolation of the *a priori*, and therefore unchanging, elements of morality" (MacIntyre, 2005: 185). He also claims that "the Kantian doctrine is parasitic upon some already existing morality,

[12] "Good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is it is good in itself, and considered by itself is to be esteemed much higher that all that can be brought about by it in favour of any inclination, nay even of the sum total of all inclinations." (*Foundations of the Metaphysic of Morals* translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott).

within which it allows us to sift – or rather, within which it would allow us to sift if the test it provided were a reliable test" (MacIntyre, 2005: 190). "The logical emptiness of the test of the categorical imperative is itself of social importance. Because the Kantian notion of duty is so formal that it can be given almost any content, it becomes available to provide a sanction and a motive for the specific duties which any particular social and moral tradition may propose. Because it detaches the notion of duty from the notions of ends, purposes, wants, and needs it suggests that, given a proposed course of action, I may only ask whether, in doing it, I can consistently will that it shall be universally done, and not ask what ends or purposes it serves. Anyone educated into the Kantian notion of duty will, so far, have been educated into easy conformism with authority" (MacIntyre, 2005: 191).

I disagree with MacIntyre's opinion and I want to use Kant's reply made in the 18th century in his preface to *The Critique of Practical Reason*, "A reviewer who wanted to find some fault with this work has hit the truth better, perhaps, than he thought, when he says that no new principle of morality is set forth in it, but only a new formula. But who would think of introducing a new principle of all morality and making himself as it were the first discoverer of it, just as if all the world before him were ignorant of what duty was or had been in thorough-going error? But whoever knows of what importance to a mathematician a formula is, which defines accurately what is to be done to work a problem, will not think that a formula is insignificant and useless which does the same for all duty in general" (Kant 1995a: 127).[13] Kant clarifies in the *Foundation of the Metaphysic of Morals* that all maxims must have "a *form* consisting in *universality*; and in this view the *formula* of the moral imperative is expressed thus that the maxims must be so chosen as if they were to serve as *universal laws of nature*" (Kant, 1995b: 96). All maxims have a "*matter*, namely, an end, and here the formula says that the *rational being*, as it is an end by its own nature and therefore *an end in itself,* must in every maxim serve as the *condition limiting all merely relative and arbitrary ends*" (Kant, 1995b: 96) (the italics mine).

What can be more explicit as a goal or richer as a content in a moral theory? The content of Kant's moral theory is a respect and fairness to human beings who should be treated as an end in themselves in society. So the guideline for a universal law is to treat others in the same way as if you wish to be treated by them. Irrespective of time and territory, a society based on fairness and respect where all people are governed by such categorical imperatives, will be perfect and does not need any further specifications of the 'ends', 'purposes' or 'wants', because Kant's moral principles automatically exclude the possibilities of traditional, or religious, or political, or economic distortions in societies. A person cannot follow 'easy conformism with authority' at all because such a perfect society where all people including the authority follow Kant's categorical imperatives, however simple they might seem, does not exist yet and, in any case, if the authority acted according to Kant's moral principles, such 'conformism' could be worth pursuing. Kant's principles of 'fairness' and 'treatment as yourself'

[13] Translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott

demand actually dismantling all existing nation-states at present. So without formulating any political goals for a society, just applying Kant's moral formula is enough to create a morally perfect political and economic system for any society and international world. However, we have a theory of moral relativism, the idea of which is to allow every society to distort the basic human morality expressed by Kant, to the degree it can afford.

Kant gives an example of how a categorical imperative works in the case of 'promise keeping' which is also described by MacIntyre. One can find himself forced to borrow money but is not sure if he can give the money back. So he thinks about promising without keeping his word because he wants to get out of a difficulty and he is ready to invent a maxim for himself, "when I need money and have such difficult circumstances I can break my promise and not return the money". But Kant recommends we ask, "How would it be if all other people did the same?' Could promise keeping exist at all if other people used this maxim?" Thus, such a maxim cannot become a universal law applied to all. Hence Kant's categorical imperative is "Keep your promise!"

MacIntyre claims that one can formulate the question in such a way that anything can become a universal law, for example, "I may break my promise only when….", so his conclusion is that Kant's principle of universalization of maxims cannot work properly (MacIntyre, 2005: 190).

However, the question of difficulty in implementing Kant's morality lies in quite a different area, to my mind: his intentional emphasis on a rational part of our 'moral brain'. It is true that experiments show that the principles of 'fairness' and 'justice' are very important innate moral criteria in human beings (even in monkeys) and that a rational part (prefrontal lobes) of the brain can promote a rational decision very well, but our emotional part of the moral brain should also be engaged in order to make a 'will' stronger, i.e. to support a rational part. Even Kant's word 'duty' disturbs people because it seems to be depressing and completely ignoring 'happy' emotions and stripping people of the enjoyment of performing a moral action.

He did not engage an emotional part of a moral brain in his theory to make people comfortable and happy. Kant denies 'happiness' as the greatest moral principle because, sometimes, the only way to achieve one's happiness is to achieve it at the expense of another's unhappiness. Besides, happiness cannot be a universal law because people need different things to be happy. However, he considers that a person's moral duty is to take care of herself and to enjoy life if it does not contradict a categorical imperative. But rejecting 'happiness' as a moral basis and a 'moral feeling' as a criterion of morality due to his mistrust of emotions, Kant goes against human nature which is both rational and emotional and, unfortunately, does not engage an emotional moral brain to reinforce his moral theory. However, international politics, the nature of which is supposed to be less emotional, can be based on Kant's moral principles.

Kant's three principles – good will, the universalizability of an action and treatment of a human being as an ends in itself - *generate moral actions* and can be

called *Generative Ethics*[14]. Good will implies no selfish interest or benefits in performing an action expressing our good will to act morally. Universalizability means that one rationally wills that the chosen action will become a universal law applied to all including oneself. 'A human being as an end in itself' means that one respects humanity and treats a human being as an end in itself and not as only a means to achieve something through another human being. The application of all these three principles is required for an action to be moral. A totality of all leads to fairness, social respect and positive reciprocity based on good will.

| *1. Good will* | *2. The universalizability of an action* | *3. A human being as an end in itself* |
|---|---|---|
| No selfish interest in the moral action | A chosen action for being a universal law applied to others and to oneself (e.g. promise keeping) | Respect to a human being |

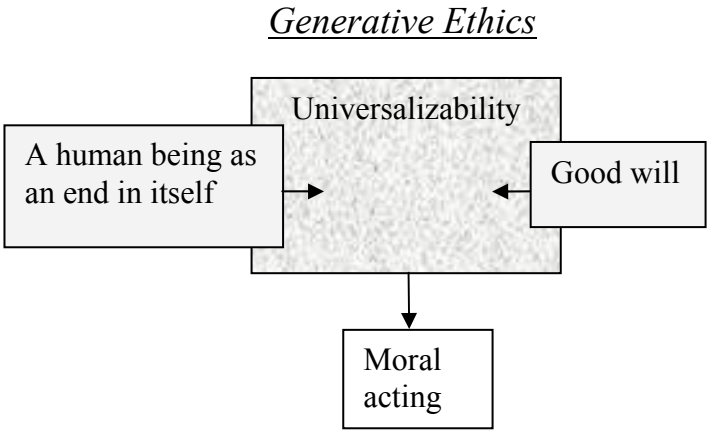


Figure 3. Generative Ethics.
At the top there are three of Kant's principles for calling an action moral: good will, the universalizability of an action and a human being as an end in itself which generate moral actions. In the second row there is the same idea but depicted in a different way.

Kant's moral principles are cosmopolitan while moral relativism refers to a communitarian approach. Considering international relations Molly Cochram examines possibilities of three approaches: cosmopolitan, communitarian and pragmatic (Cochram, 1999). Her choice is pragmatism based on the American pragmatic philosophical tradition because cosmopolitan and communitarian ethical positions are assumed to be irreconcilable, while pragmatism gives the opportunity to adjust different ethical opinions. However, the ethics of the European Union is based on three competing ethical principles: cosmopolitan, communitarian and pragmatic, which causes some friction but, on the whole, it does not prevent it from existing as a union. Such a mixture of ethical positions is typical nowadays

[14] I have borrowed this term from Noam Chomsky's Generative Grammar.

for international relations in the world. Logically the formation of a global society demands the application of cosmopolitan ethics based on Kant's universalizability.

## 5. An ethical component of sustainable development in the context of global processes

One of the most widely discussed topics nowadays is sustainable development under globalization[15]. However, to answer the question "how to make the development more sustainable?" we must first answer another question: "what kind of system has a moral worth developing and sustaining?" The next thing to do is to develop a strategy taking into consideration the complexity of human cognition and its continuous process. "Living as a process is a process of cognition" (Maturana, Valera, 1980: 13) and our cognition as living systems is complex. So economic, political, social, moral and other aspects of our life constitute a whole and demand a certain strategy for sustainable development which will take into consideration all aspects of our life.

Economic theories of development under globalization consider a welfare state[16] as something obsolete and redundant. However, a *welfare state* which is arranged on the unconditional universalistic principle pursuing de-commodification at best provides the necessary conditions for a human being. Fairness, equality, empathy, desire for social protection, freedom for the development of human abilities and justice – all these ethical questions are a part of the human natural way of thinking.

Modern mainstream economics neglects ethical questions for the calculation of profits and efficiency due to its thesis about a self-interested rational actor. However, Amartya Sen argues (Sen, 2005) that actual human behaviour is seldom rational and that consistency characterizing rationality can characterize irrationality as well if a person consistently continues doing the wrong things to achieve his aim. Rationality cannot serve as an equivalent to maximization of self-interest either. "To consider universal selfishness as a requirement of rationality is patently absurd" (Sen, 2005: 16). Mainstream economic theory considers the behaviour irrational if the actor rejects the maximization of his self-interest in decision making due to moral thinking. But as we know from cognitive neuroscience, no one can escape moral thinking in decision making: moral zones of a human brain are constantly engaged in decision making rationally and emotionally.

### *5.1. The formulation of a new social morality by Anthony Giddens*

Anthony Giddens puts forward the idea of a new welfarism: he calls for the preservation of the neoliberal economic basis and the restructuring of the welfare state by deepening individual political involvement and by introducing the

[15] Globalization is understood here as the process of transformation of some activities or phenomena into global ones. This process is a combination of economic, technological, sociocultural and political forces where people function together unified in a single global society.

[16] I consider 'a welfare state' as a state which assumes responsibility for the welfare of its citizens not only beyond a minimum level but for a middle class as well.

criterion of individual responsibility and selected eligibility to welfare funds instead of the traditionally universalistic and unconditional. So, instead of a welfare state's risk minimization system he suggests, in fact, creating a risk management system based on individual responsibility (Giddens, 1998). However a neoliberal economic logic based on an individual owner getting profits during his lifetime and reducing costs in any possible way, does not coincide with the logic of a welfare state (for example, ecology, human resources) intended for generations.

There is a discrepancy between private-economic rationalization to increase individual profits and societal rationalization to provide all the citizens and future generations with social benefits. Giddens's proposal to use a neoliberal economic basis for deepening democratic involvement in a new type of a welfare state based on individual risk management and responsibility (shifting the burden of responsibilities from the societal level to the individual level) is contradictory.

The logic of democratic political involvement demands mass participation and societal solidarity, while neoliberal logic requires individualization and the prevalence of private interests. Besides, one simply needs more free time for political participation which will not be available due to the increased 'individual responsibility' in all spheres of life and risk management at the individual level. Besides this logical contradiction between the deepening democracy and the neoliberal economic basis, Giddens' proposal denies human psychological needs in unconditional social protection and universalistic attitude.

### *5.2. A welfare state under globalization. The decision of the neo-liberalized social democratic elites to fail a new economic model of a welfare state in Sweden*

It is not the question that it is not possible to create an economic mechanism under globalization to preserve universalistic and unconditional welfare states. The problem is in the lack of political will (not speaking about Kant's good will), and the lack of desire to introduce a new socio-economic redistributive policy because it might demand a new distributive principle concerning the property of those who have the main political influence in the state.

For example, the old successful *Swedish model*, the so-called the Rehn-Meidner model, was revised and adjusted to new economic trends in the 1970s and was called *Wage earner funds plan* made by the same economist Meidner who was a co-author of the previously successful model, but it was never implemented as it was first suggested by Meidner. It was a political act to prevent the implementation of the model because it could lead to the gradual socialization of the means of production.

Magnus Ryner argues that "the crisis was fundamentally political in nature" and that "the neo-liberalisation of Swedish social democracy itself played a decisive role". Thus, it was a socially constructed phenomenon due to "political practices of social democratic elites, pursuing a particular kind of neo-liberal strategy ('compensatory neo-liberalism')". Thus, such practices can be changed through alternative practices, which will be consistent with "traditional commitment to social citizenship and de-commodification" (Ryner, 2002: 1).

The old Rehn-Meidner model is based on a national system of collective bargaining under a macroeconomic commitment to full employment, where pay norms are set centrally by the representatives of employers and employees, according to the principle of 'solidaristic wage policy'. This means that inefficient enterprises are forced out of business as they cannot pay the going rate, whilst at the same time labour and other resources flow (through the aid of active labour market policy) to more efficient, productive and competitive enterprises. Hence, the latter enterprises actually get a more stable and secure supply of labour and a lower wage bill than they would in the free market system, which would be likely to generate bottlenecks and shortages of skilled labour. Hence, the Rehn-Meidner model secures both a competitive and efficient industry as well as laying the foundation for a universal welfare state through full employment and the elimination of waged poverty.

In addition, according to the new model, the wage restraint was to have been compensated (the high-profit enterprises could not pay to their employees more than it was defined by the 'solidaristic wage policy') via the corresponding issue of shares that would have gone to these high-profit enterprises for their development as equity held by the Trade Union. The shares were to have become compulsory to all enterprises with more than 50 employees and envisaged 20% of pre-tax profit backed by law. An individual worker at such a high profit enterprise would not have been given dividends from these shares but he would have acquired the corporate decision-making power according to the shares and would have elected his representatives democratically. Dividends and equity capital would have belonged to the Trade Union regulating the equal distribution of social goods among all citizens irrespective of their working place.

The implementation of this model was blocked, in fact, and it provoked a crisis that helped to create the discursive popular platform for pushing further the neoliberal economic policy as 'inevitable'. Thus, the modification of the old model was not introduced in a proper way and at the proper time so as to strengthen the welfare state. Instead of it, a new neoliberal economic system was created in Sweden which caused a crisis in the welfare state.

### *5.3. Moral thinking and socio-economic development*

We cannot deny that human beings consider the principle of equality to be very important. Equality seems to produce a special effect within our minds. Amartya Sen argues that virtually all social theories which stood the test of time demand *equality* of something – something which is important for the particular theory. They are all 'egalitarian' in some essential way, arguing resolutely for equality of something. For example, John Rawls demands equal liberty and equality in the distribution of 'primary goods', but Robert Nozic demands equality of libertarian rights and so on (Sen, 2003). It seems as though all the authors of well-established theories know that there is some ethical code in the minds of people to which they can appeal so as to have success.

*Empathy* is another thing which is connected with the innate ability of the mirror-neuron system to imitate and feel the same (Wicker, Keysers, Plailly,

Royet, Gallese, Rizzolatti, 2003; Singer, Seymour, O'Doherty, Kaube, Dolan, Frith, 2004). Experiments show that the same areas become activated in the brain of an observer if the experimenter causes pain to another person, especially a loved one. The politician who would dare to announce that he does not care for the poor will hardly win an election. Empathy is installed into the human brain from birth if it is not deficient due to genetic inheritance or injuries.

*Fairness and reciprocity* have powerful implications for many economic domains. Ernst Fehr and Simon Gachter (Fehr and Gachter, 2000: 159-181) came to the following conclusion in their study of the effect of reciprocity in economics, "Reciprocity is an important determinant in the enforcement of contracts and social norms and enhances the possibility of collective action greatly. Reciprocity may render the provision of explicit incentives inefficient because the incentives may crowd out voluntary co-operation. It strongly limits the effects of competition in markets with incomplete contracts and gives rise to noncompetitive wage differences". The traditional view in economics of a human being exclusively self-interested and rational does not allow awareness of the phenomenon of reciprocity. Companies that give the employers additional benefits and show generosity and trust to their employees get better profits, while punishment and distrust lead to resistance and the avoidance of working properly. Sales mangers know from experience that a smiling shop-assistant, discounts, and free samples given to customers lead to good profits. It is an example of positive reciprocity.

Sustainable development requires political and economic systems to be based on the innate moral human thinking such as equality, empathy, reciprocity, fairness and justice. Human beings are neurologically unfit for strict utilitarian thinking in any field of their activities. The separation of ethics from economics is unscientific in its approach, contradicting natural laws and leading to social conflicts.

## Conclusion

Human beings, while acting as individuals or as groups, produce certain repeated patterns of behaviour that can be described as systems. Such systems are central to the analysis of both group and international relations. Interactive patterns of agents' behaviour can be examined at various levels of analysis focusing on the question to what extent agents have the ability to shape their destiny being constrained by external forces which we call structures. The analysis of interplay of structure and agency within the system (or subsystems in relation to the whole system) is one of the most instructive ways to study social, political and economic problems.

Moral agency is doomed to *become global* in the globalizing world. The process can already be observed now: humanitarian interventions, activities of international non-governmental human right organizations, European court of Human Rights, International court of Justice and so on.

The question of moral choice is usually central to any social argument and it is a powerful instrument in domestic and international politics. The insistence on moral

relativism by the governments of the states, in many cases, suppresses individual innate moral understanding of the world.

The increased intensity of international relations nowadays demands common understanding of this world, or in other words, working out common moral criteria for the formation of a global society. Such cosmopolitan moral values need philosophical foundations and scientific proof based on empirical findings which is necessary for the validation of scientific discoveries in the scientific community.
In this paper I suggest a *philosophical foundation based on Kant's moral principles* because his moral philosophy seems to have been the best available version of a cosmopolitan approach since the 18th century. As far as scientific validation is concerned, I suggest *the findings of cognitive neuroscience related to innate moral thinking.*

The theoretical interpretations of empirical findings usually find their way in social practice, i.e. applying findings in the way we understand them. Cognitive neuroscience cannot escape this tendency because knowledge, on the whole, is a cultural phenomenon. Thus, contending theoretical approaches presented in the paper demand social and political assessment.

The insufficient study of paranormal psychological phenomena by the scientific community hinders the discovery of a new perspective for explaining of what mental states are, why thoughts can change brain waves, how thoughts can be transmitted by telepathy and what moral intuitions are and so on.

However, the increased influence of the school of ethical realism claiming that moral values are objective has been recently observed. It has been caused, on the one hand, by the findings of cognitive neuroscience in the field of moral thinking, and, on the other hand, due to the needs of the globalizing world in an objective basis for working out common moral values.

And finally, I want to say that dismantling welfare nation-states without creating a global welfare society is not a good political move because the human mind has innate moral criteria based on fairness, justice, equality, respect and empathy which are not possible to eradicate from the social consciousness.

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