

STELLINGEN

i. Altruism can be defined as the motivation of doing good to someone else while disregarding, but not necessarily going against, one's self-interest.

ii. Life in a complex social ecosystem constitutes a context for meaningful ethical behaviour. This, in turn, constitutes a context for meaningful ethical investigation.

iii. Economists can be described as human beings with normal cognitive skills and moral inclinations. Economics' unique knowledge structures and the peculiar stereotype of 'the economist,' however, explain why economists behave differently from other human beings with the same normal cognitive skills and moral inclinations.

iv. Self-interest is a poorly understood, widely misused, typically despised – yet very widespread – human inclination.

v. Social life is structured according to four independent, cross-cultural, Relational Models: Authority Ranking, Communal Sharing, Equality Matching, and Market Pricing. Each of them can be implemented differently in different societies and in different epochs.

vi. The metaphor of financial markets as beauty contests, in which the winner is whoever votes for the most voted contestant and not the prettiest, is mistaken: if everyone voted for the same contestant, everybody would win and this cannot happen in the financial markets.

vii. *Before proposing a policy, one may wonder whether, given the opportunity, future generations would veto it. An affirmative answer should weaken one's motivation to propose the policy.*

viii. *The moral legitimacy of self-interest rests on the acknowledgment that the pursuit of one's material interest is different from the maximization of self-interest, and that in turn this is different from the maximization of such interest at anyone else's expense.*

ix. *Finding answers is but one aspect of scientific inquiry. After that, a scientist must persuade his audience that the answers are correct, but before that, he must ask the right questions.*

x. *When done sincerely, corporate social responsibility amounts to spending other people's money to perform unauthorized charitable acts. When done strategically, it amounts to treating the beneficiaries of those charitable acts as instruments for achieving better reputation or reducing business risks. Therefore corporate social responsibility often tends to be immoral.*

xi. *We may rightfully agree with Karl Marx, who suggested that reason has always existed, but that it has not always taken a reasonable form.*