

# Ethics of Social Consequences



# Ethics of Social Consequences:

*Philosophical, Applied  
and Professional Challenges*

Edited by

Vasil Gluchman

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## INTRODUCTION

# ETHICS OF SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES – THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

VASIL GLUCHMAN

To begin with, we should characterize ethics of social consequences. It is an ethical theory developed in Central Europe (mainly in Slovakia, but even in Poland and Czech Republic), but not only in this territory, because its followers and propagators can even be found in Ukraine, Romania and Argentina. Ethics of social consequences is determined mainly as a theory of the good (however, it also consists of the determining what is understood by the right), because it is based upon the formulation of a clear value structure. The fundamental source values of ethics of social consequences are humanity, human dignity and moral right which are developed and executed within the correlation of the positive social consequences which clearly express the clear consequentialist value orientation of this theory. Other values that are developed in the context of positive social consequences are related to fundamental values. There are even secondary values within the ethics of social consequences such as justice, responsibility, moral duty and tolerance. Their task and significance within the mentioned structure is given by their competence to support the achievement and the execution of a moral good. Thus, it is about veering towards value pluralism which refuses maximization as a criterion of the rightness of one's acting, while not accepting impartiality as a fundament of the assessment of and approach to the solution of an individual's and moral community's ethical and moral problems. Basically, we can align the ethics of social consequences to the ethical theories found in non-utilitarian consequentialism.

Ethics of social consequences originated as a need to form the sources, or criteria for the evaluation of the development of ethics in Slovakia (being the topic of my book *Angažovanosť, solidarita a zodpovednosť* [*Commitment, Solidarity and Accountability*] (1994). In the search for adequate criterion of evaluation, I did not find more proper standards for



the comparison upon which I could rely without restrictions and upon which I could strive for an objective judgement of the significance and the role of ethics in the history of Slovak intellectual development, especially from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the 1990s. There was a need to form the starting points for which utilitarian ethics offered certain resources emphasizing the utility and the consequences resulting from our actions. The presented source enabled an evaluation of ethics in Slovakia from the outside, with no research of inner motives, or reasons for particular opinions. On the other hand, it has been proven that utilitarianism in the context of ethical discussions did not satisfy the needs and did not respond to the criticism from its objectors around the world.

However, there was an increasing need for more significant separation of ethics of social consequences from utilitarianism, but on the other hand, the relation to consequentialism was apparent. On the grounds confronting the values of ethics of social consequences with intense discussions about the forms of consequentialism found in world philosophical journals in the 1980s and 1990s, there was a necessity to differentiate between non-utilitarian consequentialism and utilitarianism including the association of ethics of social consequences to the stream of non-utilitarian consequentialism represented by e.g. Philip Pettit,<sup>1</sup> Amartya Sen,<sup>2</sup> Michael Slote (in his older works, mainly from the 1980s)<sup>3</sup> and others. The first phase of the development of ethics of social consequences began in 1994, or rather, in 1992, as the first attempts to present a version of consequentialist ethics appeared then and this phase lasted until 1999.<sup>4</sup>

I determined consequences resulting from the acting of moral agent as fundamental criteria of evaluation in my work *Angažovanost', solidarita a zodpovednosť*, other criteria consisted of the motive and intention of the moral agent, although I did not pay too much attention to them. I even dealt with the analysis of moral responsibility in the context of the consequences resulting from the acting of a moral agent. Therefore I stated that it is necessary to define the primary responsibility of the moral agent for the consequences immediately resulting from his actions or acting at all. In relation to other consequences that result from the combination of particular circumstances or actions of other persons, then we can think only of secondary responsibility resulting from the fact that a moral agent should even consider secondary social consequences that could arise from his decision and acting. First of all, every decision which is made and every action which is taken should be assessed individually from the point of view of the above mentioned criteria. An integral part of the definition of ethics of social consequences is the effort to have a sense of responsibility becomes an attribute of the life of a moral agent, to make

responsible decisions, to act responsibly, regarding primary and secondary social consequences resulting from a given action.<sup>5</sup>

I have researched historical-philosophical and ethical contexts in my book *Etika konzekvencializmu [Ethics of Consequentialism]* (1995) to which the ethics of social consequences is related. I analyze some milestones in Aristotelian ethics that suggest that he assigned a significant role to the evaluation of man upon his acting. Further I dealt with research of Epicurus' opinions where I concluded that Epicurus directly applied the principle of utility to the understanding and execution of justice. One can identify justice and utility in his knowledge. Thus, just is beneficial and then beneficial is just. In spite of the fact that Epicurean ethics is focused mainly on the individual, utility in terms of society related to the needs of mutual coexistence is concerned with identification of utility and justice.<sup>6</sup>

I dealt with research of modern philosophy, especially within the utilitarian aspects of David Hume, Claudius Adrien Helvetius and Paul H. D. Holbach. I found out by analyzing Hume's opinions that Hume considered self-love as a significant principle of human nature that consists of huge extensive energy. Self-love and the utility related to it are a source of moral sense when properly regulated. The application of self-love and utility cannot be understood as a guide to selfish acting. Acting based on self-love and utility can support the happiness of society and, as such, perhaps can be recommended to the performing. Hume's perception of utility is over-individual and has social parameter, because it leads to the public good, supporting peace, harmony and social order.<sup>7</sup>

However, I focused mainly on research into the classical and post-classical utilitarianism of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. I paid attention to the opinions of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill within classical utilitarianism of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. I concluded within the context of their research that not just Bentham's ethics, but even all classical utilitarianism, is based on rationality and psychology. The interconnection of these two elements determines all positive and negative aspects of this phase of the development of utilitarian ethics with its culmination in politics, legislation and economy. Similarly, I stated that it led to the systematization of hedonistic-utilitarian and eudemonistic-utilitarian thinking at that time. Furthermore, I stated that Bentham developed the old, or constituted the new, understanding of fundamental theses of the system of utilitarian ethics with his preciseness. Therefore, I considered it more than necessary to be reminded of the pre-history of utilitarian ethics when individual aspects of potential utilitarian thinking were developed. In relation to Bentham, we can think of the beginning of utilitarianism itself

in its systematic state, because these opinions were expressed in the form of ethical systems since that time.

Considering the concern of John Stuart Mill in the development of utilitarian ethics, I mentioned his role in formulating the qualitative aspect in utilitarian ethics. I emphasized this moment in Mill's viewing the qualitative aspect mainly in better competency of certain things and events to satisfy our interests or our needs. That is the reason, in his opinion, why we can prefer pleasure over other needs.<sup>8</sup> A significant part of this work is a review of the most significant streams of contemporary utilitarianism, thus act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

Great attention is paid to analysis of the opinions of the main representatives of these streams, thus the opinions of John Jamieson Carswell Smart (act utilitarianism) and Richard Booker Brandt (rule utilitarianism). Apart from them, I have researched the opinions of some other representatives of the presented main streams of contemporary utilitarianism in my work *Etika konzekvencializmu*, such as Donald Regan and Daniel Holbrook (act utilitarianism), as well as John Charles Harsanyi and Conrad Derall Johnson (rule utilitarianism).

In relation to historic-philosophical and ethical research into utilitarian and consequentialist ethics, I have elaborated other aspects regarding the broader contexts of ethics of social consequences. I specified particular reasons for the need for differentiating between utilitarian ethics and the forms of consequentialist ethics that are founded on non-utilitarian fundamentals. With this in mind, I specified and identified the features of those theories that can be commonly characterized as non-utilitarian consequentialism. In contrast to utilitarianism, among these common features, I identified differences in understanding the good and the right, differences in understanding the role and the significance of values and principles such as utility, happiness, pain, pleasure, satisfaction of desire etc. Moreover, we can consider the refusal of the principle of impartiality and maximization. Based on the determination of these features among non-utilitarian versions of consequentialism, I assigned the evaluator relative theory of Amartya Sen, the virtual consequentialism of Philip Pettit, the satisficing consequentialism of Michael Slote and the probabilistic consequentialism of Frank Jackson and the ethics of social consequences that I have characterized as one of the forms of modified non-utilitarian consequentialism.

I came to the conclusion during my research into their theories that the conceptions of non-utilitarian consequentialism of Sen, Pettit, Jackson and Slote, as well as other non-utilitarian versions of consequentialism, strived to omit the traditional type of objectivized rationality characteristic of

utilitarian ethical theories. The subjective and psychological moment related to the character of the fundament of particular a moral agent rises in its prominence. Non-utilitarian consequentialism emphasizes the role of a particular individual with all of his social relationships within a particular group, community and eventually society.<sup>9</sup>

I continued in my analysis of historical-philosophical and ethical contexts, which are the sources of ethics of social consequences, in my other work *Etika sociálnych dôsledkov a jej kontexty* [*Ethics of Social Consequences and its Contexts*] where I dealt with research into the opinions of Baruch Benedict Spinoza and partially with the issues of justice in teaching of Aristotle. I came to the conclusion during research into Spinoza's opinions that we can consider Spinoza as a part of the chain of modern ethics heading towards the formulation of utilitarian ethics at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. In many cases regarding Spinoza, we can talk about the indications of a hedonistic, eudemonistic or utilitarian approach to the solution of ethical issues. Often there is only a formal similarity between Spinoza and classical utilitarianism that refers to the similarity of the researched issues or approaches to their solution. However, it did not always result in the similarity of the conclusions to which they came. In spite of this, we can state that particular aspects of Spinoza's ethics contribute to the formation of classical utilitarian ethics.<sup>10</sup>

I also paid attention to some contemporary ethical conceptions in the above mentioned work that concern the issues solved in ethics of social consequences in various contexts. I particularly analyzed Erich Fromm's conception of radical humanism and I found, by detailed research, that humanity and productivity are the fundamental terms of Fromm's ethical conception. Both are an integral expression of the interconnectedness of the extrinsic and intrinsic value of a human being, because they create the symbiosis of goals and means in the execution of man as a moral agent and the object of being. Humanity and productivity create dialectic unity, because humanity is the assumption of the execution of productivity and on the other hand, it is the goal of the execution of productive forces and competencies of man in searching for new solutions to the conflict of the good and the bad in many of its forms. In spite of some utopian features in the forming of something that we *ought to do*, we can state that Fromm's ethical conception is truly realistic in its understanding of man and is productively inspirational for the morality of society and the morality of contemporary man in many ways.

As humanity, creativity and productivity are terms that are an integral part of ethics of social consequences, we can state that the understanding of humanity and creativity derived from it, is similar in certain aspects to

Fromm's conception in ethics of social consequences. It is about the similarity of basic orientation, i.e. the orientation for the life of man. This tendency is expressed as biophilia; generally as an orientation for life in Fromm, in the principle of humanity that is expressed in ethics of social consequences through rights and human dignity, is about a more particular determination of the content of humanity. Another difference between Fromm and ethics of social consequences is that life in Fromm's conception is an absolute value connected with the good; the life of man in ethics of social consequences belongs to the most significant values, but it is not considered as an absolute value. It is given by the fact that we cannot talk about absolutely valid values within the ethics of social consequences.<sup>11</sup>

I have already suggested in my work *Angažovanost', solidarita a zodpovednost'* that the principle of responsibility is very significant within ethics of social consequences. Therefore, I dealt with Hans Jonas' *ethics of responsibility* in researching the contemporary contexts of ethics of social consequences. I acquired the knowledge that only one of the many scopes of Jonas' conception is about the reduction of moral responsibility to very important. Likewise, Jonas reduced the good only to the good of a being, by which he sets other forms of the good apart from it, because they have subjective character. Jonas' understanding of the good as the existence of humanity has of course its own metaphysical scope that is very important, but we cannot depersonalize the existence of humanity from man himself and humanity at all. This existence makes sense through a subjective scope of a given existence; thus its good.

Jonas' principle of responsibility is focused on the future as a priority goal, whereas the present is overshadowed. Perspective responsibility is primary, responsibility to the present, and retrospective responsibility is vague. We can find similar moments in utilitarianism too, where the past is only a little interesting, because the future is determining. But responsibility for the carrying out of human rights and the fulfilling human dignity is responsibility predominantly for the present that necessarily consists of the scope of responsibility in itself regarding the future. Among contemporary significant ethical theories, I partially paid attention to research into Rawls' conception of the justice. During my research I found that Rawls' theory of justice is focused only on the socially ethical scope of justice, i.e. strives to modify the relationship between society and individuals, or between individuals from the social point of view, thus from the point of view of the structure of society. It does not deal with issues of individual ethics at all, i.e. issues regarding, for instance, interpersonal relationships outside of issues of society organization.

Rawls' theory of justice reduces the execution of justice to its execution in the field of material and economic interests, with the aim of stabilizing society and reasoning economic inequality by mutual utility of this inequality. Rawls' theory of justice is related mainly to the macroeconomic level at which its application is very important. This conception of justice is an execution of the principle of justice from above, while the ethics of social consequences is about the execution of the principle of justice from below, i.e. mainly in the individual life of a moral agent.<sup>12</sup>

The focus in my work *Etika sociálnych dôsledkov a jej kontexty* is placed especially on further development of the theory of ethics of social consequences, formulation of its value structure, determination of the basic terms that ethics of social consequences works with, also determination of the correlation between particular values and principles. These values are specifically determined as the core of the value structure of ethics of social consequences: humanity, human dignity, legality, justice, responsibility, moral duty, tolerance and positive social consequences.<sup>13</sup>

The source for the elaboration of these issues in the presented work is philosophical consideration of the social context of the present when an ethical theory is developed. It is very often confronted with statements about the moral crisis of humanity, value crisis, including moral values. Considering the given questions, I came to the conclusion that it is necessary to accept the fact according to which evil is a natural part of our being and life (Fromm), as well as the good. Spinoza claimed that good and evil are products of man and they don't exist apart from it. The reality we are surrounded with does not include good and evil as a part of our daily life and we are able to understand, perceive and evaluate good even through knowledge of evil. Evil is an integral part of our being and life, because it can be the result of an intended, or even unintended, activity or an occasional activity or the product of certain coinciding unexpected circumstances. It means that evil is neither necessary for us to be competent to recognize the good (teleological approach). It is rather necessary to understand evil in context with the fact that the existence of humanity and its moral development is inconceivable without solving the conflict between good and evil. The effort to overcome the evil inside us and all around the world leads us towards the moral development of humanity, i.e. to the execution of humanity in the world, thus leads to the execution of human rights and the protection of human dignity.<sup>14</sup>

The book *Človek a morálka [Man and Morality]* (1997) most significantly forms the ethics of social consequences mainly in relationship to the elaboration of the issues of morality, the moral agent and fundamental human rights. We understand morality in terms of ethics of social

consequences as the current state of moral consciousness and moral relationships existing in a social community and the whole society. On the other hand, the moral visions, goals, or moral ideals of a social community and all of society that express a certain moral perspective are a part of that morality. The moral status of a social community and all of society is manifested mainly in the conduct and the acting of its members from the point of view of executing good in the long-term time.<sup>15</sup>

A moral agent is understood in ethics of social consequences as an agent of morality fulfilling required criteria, i.e. he/she is able to recognize and understand the existing moral status of society and is competent of conscious and voluntary activity, for which he/she needs to take moral responsibility. On the other hand, the object of morality, i.e. the subject of moral acting, is all human beings and also animals to some extents, we could even state that the entire universe can potentially be the subject of our moral interest and acting.<sup>16</sup>

Humanity as one of the fundamental values in ethics of social consequences is simply expressed as respect for the human being *per se*. The self-confirmation of human beings as human beings can be executed only in the form of moral self-confirmation, thus in the form of acting in accordance with the principles of humanity. Every moral agent must prove his human nature independently of his competencies of moral reasoning by his acting and negotiating of what Kant called our animal nature. Respect for the nature of a human being (expressed in the form of respect for human life) is a fundamental moral imperative of the further existence of humanity. We understand the principles of humanity as the principles that are usually accepted at the level of common sense morality, such as respect for elders, but even respect for everybody who deserves it, then it is respectability and justice in interpersonal relationships, tolerance towards others, mutually beneficial cooperation etc. It could be possible to express these principles of humanity either in the form of the golden rule of morality (in its positive or negative form) or even in the form of Kant's categorical imperative.

It is presented in my work *Človek a morálka* that humanity is a certain moral ideal based mainly upon respect for and the execution of human dignity and this moral ideal is specified through moral principles and particular moral norms that determine the ways of executing humanity in the life of an individual, a moral community and the entire human society. Thus, humanity and the principle of humanity are not identical terms, because the principles of humanity are a certain moral guide for the execution of moral ideals in our everyday life. Humanity and dignity create the core of the content of moral good; both are the highest values

that man should strive for in his acting. These values are operationalized through the principles of positive social consequences having the determined content by the requirement to satisfy the effort to execute and achieve humanity and dignity in the life of an individual, moral community and human society.<sup>17</sup>

It has to be emphasized that in the presented work, some significant changes have been made, because the original principle of legality (occurring in primary versions of the conception at the beginning of 1990s) has been replaced by the principle of moral rights of man. Moral right, as another fundamental value of ethics of social consequences, consists of the idea of moral value that has to be executed. Humanity and dignity are generalized expressions of rights that express the effort to protect or satisfy fundamental moral values of the life of an individual and humanity as a whole. Moral rights specify human dignity, are informal expressions of moral values, whereas legal rights are institutionalized expressions of some moral rights. In a certain sense, we can state that moral right is just the scope or the form for the execution of the moral value itself, because in the final consequence, not moral rights but moral values are the goal.<sup>18</sup>

A great deal of creative work has been done in formulating and developing ethics of social consequences so far. However, there is no way we can consider this theory as a closed entity. On the contrary, the characteristic feature of this conception is dynamic stability that is, on the one hand, stability of basic resources, but on the other hand, openness towards other external suggestions that bring the development of the ethical theory and even contemporary moral practice. The book *Etika sociálnych dôsledkov v kontextoch jej kritiky* [*Ethics of Social Consequences within the Contexts of its Criticism*] (1999) deals with new questions that were, so far, generally consequentialist or either ignored or did not pay particular attention to them particularly in the case of non-utilitarian consequentialist ethics. Therein lies the greatest asset and the originality of ethics of social consequences and especially of this work. It even provides an answer for the criticism of consequentialism in general that it often cannot exceed its narrow theoretical scope formed by the founders of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. The book *Etika sociálnych dôsledkov v kontextoch jej kritiky* concluded one phase of intense formulation of the conception of ethics of social consequences.

In the meantime, assessing the development of ethics of social consequences, I stated that it is ethical theory that is an original and productive alternative in comparison to other ethical theories. Furthermore, I stated that



“the originality of ethics of social consequences can be expressed in four main points: Firstly, originality of the definition of ethics of social consequences (and other forms of non-utilitarian consequentialism) in relation to utilitarian ethics (it is a form of “negative” definition of ethics of social consequences in its relation to utilitarianism); secondly, the originality of fundamental resources of ethics of social consequences (it is about positive definition of this ethical conception) as well as its fundamental values and principles; thirdly, the originality of the topics discussed in ethics of social consequences (it is the application of values and principles resulting from positive determination of ethics of social consequences, but even partially from negative determination of some philosophically generalized contemporary moral issues); fourthly, the originality of the conclusions in ethics of social consequences (it is an example of the fact that it is possible to apply and execute traditional moral values within this ethical conception and generally within non-utilitarian consequentialism; ethics of social consequences is one of the possible alternatives that searches for and finds models of solutions to particular moral problems of an individual or social community within the context of consequentialism”).<sup>19</sup>

The first more serious external “stoppage” and consideration of ethics of social consequences was the edited volume *Reflexie o humánnosti a etike* [*Reflections on Humanity and Ethics*] from 1999 where many authors critically faced the opinions contained in the primary versions of ethics of social consequences. The edited volume *Reflexie o humánnosti a etike* is thematically divided into two parts: the first one deals with the search for issues of humanity in philosophical, ethical, spiritual social and literary contexts. The second part is focused on the search for certain aspects of the formation of ethical theory at present, predominantly in relation to ethics of social consequences. Cyril Diatka deals mainly with ethics of social consequences in which he considers the concept of metaphysically oriented philosophy and ethics as more than important.<sup>20</sup> Tatiana Machalová analyzes morality as an agent – an inter-subjective phenomenon. She points mainly to the tendency that is related to Nietzsche and Foucault and their effort to destruct the traditional moral center. On the other hand, she presents Lévinas as a positive example that insists on the moral responsibility of an individual for others. Unlike ethics of social consequences, she strives to determine fundamental principles of the ethical conception that in her opinion, enable an agent to reason – the inter-subjective character of morality and the responsibility to characterize not just as a quality of decision-making and acting of man, but as a basic virtue of man, as the “knot” of his subjectivity.<sup>21</sup> Zlatica Plašienková and Lenka Bohunická deal with the questions of the center of morality and

responsibility in ethics of social consequences in their article. The authors came to the conclusion that these issues are solved insufficiently or not comprehensibly enough in ethics of social consequences.<sup>22</sup>

Petr Jemelka searches for some moments within environmental ethics that result from ethics of social consequences in his article. He stated that the presented ethical conception represents interesting potential for environmental ethics, but cannot avoid ontological issues that are one of the fundamental sources of the solution of environmental problem.<sup>23</sup> Jana Sošková presented the problems that arise for ethics (including ethics of social consequences) in relation to artificial worlds that are produced by art. She does not consider refusing such worlds as an adequate approach. In her opinion, the absence of detailed analysis of these worlds in relation to experience of an agent, including his moral experience, is, in fact, a warning.<sup>24</sup>

However, the most significant evaluation of the first phases of the development of ethics of social consequences and the formulation of new suggestions for development is Theodor Münz's study *Etika sociálnych dôsledkov Vasil Gluchmana* [*Ethics of Social Consequences of Vasil Gluchman*] (2002) published in the Slovak journal *Filozofia*. Münz attempted to carry out complex analysis and evaluation; he even formulated some suggestions for the further development of ethics of social consequences. Many of Münz's reflections are significant for the further development of this theory, but the most significant is the suggestion regarding ignorance of some biological factors in ethics of social consequences.<sup>25</sup> Inter alia, it was a matter of problems related to humanity *per se*, including the understanding of humanity in ethics of social consequences. Münz warns that the effort to perform humanity can be the way to hell in its final consequence, because it can bring more harm than benefit. He points to the danger of the continuity of population explosion that could lead to catastrophe, an increasing number of old people causing economic and social problems, care of physically and mentally disabled people that leads to a weakening of human genetic resources in the final consequence, etc. He warns even of the possibility that future rejections of our vision of humanity and asks the question, what to do next.<sup>26</sup> In spite of some critical remarks, Münz positively evaluates the presented ethical theory, assesses its originality, conceptuality, systematic organization that in his opinion, is not a common phenomenon found in Slovak philosophy. He expresses his hope that ethics of social consequences will be actualized and respond to the questions more significantly in the field of environmental problems.<sup>27</sup>

In relation to Münz's suggestions, we can reflect on the beginning of the second phase of the development of ethics of social consequences that is characterized by a return to its originally formulated values of ethics of social consequences and their reformulation or redefinition. The second phase was from 2003–2008 and was dominated, at first, by published studies in the journal *Filozofia* or in some edited volumes. The book *Etika a reflexie morálky* [*Ethics and Reflections on Morality*] (2008) is related to it. It is thematically focused on two fields of problems: at first, the ethics of social consequences in its two aspects, as a theory of right (acting) and a theory of good. I repeatedly deal with the issues in my book *Člověk a morálka* with the theory of good, I focus on the search for fundamental values of this ethical theory, i.e. humanity, human dignity and moral rights of a man.

I analyze the presented values in much broader and deeper contexts, even from the point of view of actual moral problems of the present, such as abortion, euthanasia, terrorism, war against terrorism etc. I develop the understanding of the presented values that are essentially consequentialist, as I insist on the achievement of positive (social) consequences resulting from our acting. On the other hand, it has to be emphasized that it is not a classical version of consequentialism very often wrongly associated with utilitarianism, because the aim is to form a theory interconnecting fundamental universal human moral values with the effort to achieve positive (social) consequences resulting from our acting. In spite of the fact that motives and intentions have their own place in the conduct and the acting of man (thus, even in morality), the determining factor for the formulation of the morality of society and the morality of individuals, therefore something which characterizes the moral state of society and the moral level of an individual, is our acting and the consequences resulting from it (of course, from the point of view of a longer time period).<sup>28</sup>

The new moment that I included into the understanding of morality and its individual values, is the biological aspect of morality, or its fundamentals that morality and its values are based on and influence it to some extent even today, although we are rarely aware of it. The result is knowledge that the origin of morality is a necessary product of the need for the protection of fundamental values (including moral ones) related to the existence of man as a biological and social being. Another significant shift in developing the theory of ethics of social consequences was the change in understanding the moral rights of man, thus the transition from a pluralist to monistic approach. I veer to the model of the moral right of man that consists of the right for life, its development and cultivation. It

creates satisfactory assumptions in order to modify this moral right into many other forms and real legal rights.

The third phase of the development of ethics of social consequences was started in 2008. The fact that many other authors work on the formation and the development of ethics of social consequences is significant feature of this phase of development. The most significant contribution to the further formation of analytical character of ethics of social consequences is considered to be the development of the theory of right and the conception of the individual, or collective, moral agent through his intellectual and cognitive thinking, conduct, acting and evaluation.<sup>29</sup> The strong way of developing analytical thinking in this particular conception was done by Adela Lešková Blahová when analyzing and elaborating the term 'life' within bioethics.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Katarína Komenská researched and developed the term 'moral community' in ethics of social consequences in the context of our relation to animals.<sup>31</sup> Gabriela Platková Olejárová analyzed the term 'justice', Marta Gluchmanová dealt with the research of the term 'moral right'.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the presented development of ethics of social consequences, authors even focus on the application of its terms, principles and values to the problem of more fields of applied ethics including professional ethics, such as bioethics, business ethics, or financial ethics, ethics of teaching, academic ethics, police ethics, military ethics.<sup>33</sup>

The edited volume *Hodnoty v etike sociálnych dôsledkov* [*Values in Ethics of Social Consequences*] (2011) belongs to this scope. It is the second outcome of the reflection of the almost twenty-year development of ethics of social consequences. A fundamentally new aspect of this reflection is the fact that it is not only about the evaluation of the past development of this ethical theory but it consists also of significant contribution to its development, mainly related to its application as a source methodology for solving the problems of applied ethics that even brings significant suggestions for the development of ethics of social consequences itself. The contributions of other colleagues move ethics of social consequences to its new level. It is no longer only an individual matter, but we can state that a new school has been created, a new tradition of philosophical-ethical thinking has been built in Slovakia and Central Europe, to not only my former students which contribute, but even other "external" academicians, who found or are looking for a new methodological source of their research in ethics of social consequences and joined the project of the development of the theory of ethics of social consequences.

The first part of the edited volume, *Hodnotenie etiky sociálnych dôsledkov* [Evaluation of Ethics of Social Consequences] consists of more complex analysis and evaluation of the development of ethics of social sciences in the works of Igor Kišš, Josef Kuře and Daniela Navrátilová. Igor Kišš strives to evaluate the presented ethical theory in the context of teleological ethics and predominantly of his theory of human deontology. He appreciates mainly the connection of ethics of values and teleological ethics within the ethics of social consequences that in his opinion could be also called *human teleology*. However, Kišš points to the shortcomings of this ethical theory which are dominantly in the absence of the emphasis on absolute ethics and in ethical pessimism in certain forms.<sup>34</sup> Josef Kuře characterizes ethics of social consequences as a temporary ethics responding to the dynamics, variability, indefiniteness and instability of our era. He especially appreciates its “ecumenical” character and sees further space for its development in the emphasis on the acting agent in various relations.<sup>35</sup> Daniela Navrátilová deals primarily with the significance of the value of humanity in her assessment of ethics of social consequences. She disputes the place, the meaning and the role of biological factors in morality and its development including the value of humanity in relation to humanity and its determination within the ethics of social consequences. The author also suggests completing the ethics of social consequences in terms of aims, goals and other values that primarily have its place in virtue ethics in relation to the possibilities of the application of this theory related to economic issues.<sup>36</sup>

The second part of the volume, *Ďalší rozvoj axiologickej problematiky v etike sociálnych dôsledkov* [Further Development of Axiological Problem in Ethics of Social Consequences] consists of articles that critically develop the conception of ethics of social consequences. That is not to say that it deals with repetition of what has been written within the mentioned theory, but that is about polemics, for example, with axiological determination of the value of life, or the moral agent and their development in the context of source values and principles of ethics of social consequences. It is similar to the problem of justice and the moral right of man. Adela Lešková Blahová analyzes the soft anthropocentrism of ethics of social consequences, searches for and develops the understanding of the value of life in ethics of social consequences in the context of moral biocentrism.<sup>37</sup> Gabriela Plátková Olejárová develops and deals with the understanding of the value of justice in ethics of social consequences (especially in context of economic issues), as questions of justice were not analyzed and developed in the presented conception.<sup>38</sup> Marta Gluchmanová applies the understanding of the value of moral right

in the context of professional ethics, especially issues regarding the problem of ethics of teaching and teacher's performance. Ján Kalajtšidis pays primary attention to critical analysis of understanding a moral agent in ethics of social consequences and in terms of economic aspects, he came to the conclusion of a need to extend the original determination of a moral agent in the category of collective moral agent.<sup>39</sup>

*Kontexty hodnôt etiky sociálnych dôsledkov* [*Contexts of the Values of Ethics of Social Consequences*] is the title of the third part of the edited volume in which authors develop or consider the possibilities for the application of the values of ethics of social consequences for example in relation to economic, social-political and medical issues. Martin Lačný reflects on the possibilities for the application of the values of ethics of social consequences in the economic sector in his work and compares them, for example, with the approaches of other authors such as Novak, Putnová and Seknička and others.<sup>40</sup> Janka Kyseľová considers guilt, responsibility and punishment in context of the value of humanity is one of the central values within ethics of social consequences.<sup>41</sup> Rudolf Novotný deals with the values of humanity and human dignity in the context of the holistic approach expressed in Eastern and mainly in Buddhist philosophy.<sup>42</sup>

The fourth part of the book *Konfrontácie s inými etickými teóriami* [*Confrontation with other Ethical Theories*] consists of comparisons or, even, the development of ethics of social consequences when confronted with other ethical theories in the long term. For instance, Lucas E. Misseri deals with the comparison of the understanding of human dignity in Pico della Mirandola and in the theory of ethics of social consequences. He came to the conclusion that in both conceptions, there is the same emphasis on the value of human dignity and, in spite of many differences, he holds the view of the similarity of the opinions on the human being.<sup>43</sup> I argue with Erazim Kohák primarily about the understanding of good in my work, but even in relation to some other questions or determinations in Kohák's existentialist-phenomenologist conception.<sup>44</sup> Corneliu C. Simut analyzes the opinions of Victorio Mancuso upon the value of humanity.<sup>45</sup> Grzegorz Grzybek deals with a comparison of ethics of social consequences and individual development ethics in which he focused his attention on comparing the axiological fundaments of these theories and also of their norms and principles. He states that while ethics of social consequences belong to consequentialist conceptions and his individual development ethics to personalism, they do not differ axiologically. In his opinion, the differences are mainly to be found during the assessment of acting.<sup>46</sup>

The edited volume *Hodnoty v etike sociálnych dôsledkov* can be considered as a successful critical evaluation of the previous development of the presented ethical theory. It can serve as a source of consideration at the same time regarding which direction to follow in the future. I can see the perspectives of the development of ethics of social consequences in three ways. The first aspect of the development consists in the formulation of values and principles that were either not elaborated upon or drafted just very briefly. The second aspect is related to the application of ethics of social consequences as methodological source for other fields of applied ethics. The third one regards critical reevaluation and modification of already formulated theses, because ethics of social consequences develops primarily as an open concept in which the process of verification of particular determinations, statements or conclusions runs permanently.

My book *Profesijná etika ako etika práce a etika vzťahov* [*Professional Ethics as Work Ethics and Relationships Ethics*] (2014) belongs to the scope of the further development of ethics of social consequences. In this book, I formulated theoretical presumptions of a new understanding of professional ethics exceeding the scope of the present approach to professional ethics not only in Slovakia, Central Europe, but even all over the world. I do not understand professional ethics in a reduced form only as a matter of codes of ethics and their application in the presented fields of professional life. I set the form of professional ethics as work ethics and relationship ethics. On the one hand, it is about a broader understanding of work ethics, its values, approach to work, quality of work, work satisfaction, quality of work life. In relation to that, on the other hand, relationship ethics regards the issues of communication, trust, justice, responsibility, commitment, loyalty, etc. among all stakeholders. The source of the presented conception of professional ethics is the ethics of social consequences.<sup>47</sup>

It is necessary to state that my English monograph summarizing previous results of the development of ethics of social consequences was published in 2003 (*Human Being and Morality in Ethics of Social Consequences*).<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the results of the second phase of the development of ethics of social consequences were also published in Polish, entitled *Etyka społecznych konsekwencji* [*Ethics of Social Consequences*] (2012).<sup>49</sup> Fundamental values and sources of ethics of social consequences have also been published in Spanish in the book *Dignidad y consecuencias: ensayos de una ética socio-consecuencialista* [*Dignity and Consequences: Efforts of Ethics of Social Consequences*] (2014).<sup>50</sup>

The edited volume *Ethics of Social Consequences: Philosophical, Applied and Professional Challenges* is a contribution to the third broadly conceived reflection on ethics of social consequences and its further development.

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## **PART I:**

# **PHILOSOPHICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN ETHICS OF SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES**

# CHAPTER ONE

## RESPONSIBILITY AND JUSTICE: SECONDARY VALUES IN ETHICS OF SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

JAN KALAJTZIDIS

### 1. Introduction

Despite initial understanding of justice and responsibility as secondary values in ethics of social consequences, development of the theory showed the inevitability of their better comprehension. In this sense, the main aim of the chapter is to introduce them, as well as to help to shift their initial interpretation closer to contemporary challenges of the theory.

Justice and responsibility are introduced in the presented chapter mainly as values,<sup>1</sup> mostly when they are mentioned in connection to real and practical problems of everyday life. At the same time they are introduced as moral ideals but not in the sense of their inaccessibility, on the contrary, in the sense of their functionality and through their exercise as moral principles. In some parts of the chapter terms such as concept or issue in connection with responsibility and justice are used, which occurs particularly when the general discussion is presented.

There are three important questions associated with the issue of responsibility. Who is responsible? For what is he/she responsible? And to whom is he/she responsible? Before trying to answer those questions, theory must be able to answer first the cardinal question: what is responsibility?

The main aim of ethical thinking has always been the human being – man (moral agent, person). The way he/she is able to make decisions, consequences which are outcomes of those decisions and above all, the ability of a moral agent to bear the responsibility for those consequences. The ability to bear them is important so he/she (moral agent) can be praised or blamed, and then rewarded or punished for them. Responsibility always was and still is a key concept of morality.