

## ФИЛОСОФИЯ

UDC 179.3, 171

**Comparison of bioethical views in the work of Peter Singer  
and in ethics of social consequences\****M. M. Ambrozy*College of International Business ISM Slovakia in Prešov,  
1, Duchnovič Square, Prešov, 080 01, Slovakia**For citation:** Ambrozy M. M. Comparison of bioethical views in the work of Peter Singer and in ethics of social consequences. *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Philosophy and Conflict Studies*, 2022, vol. 38, issue 4, pp. 452–464. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu17.2022.401>

The present paper compares the ethics of Peter Singer and the ethics of social consequences in bioethics. As part of the discussion on the ethics of social consequences, attention is mainly focused on the theory of its founder, Vasil Gluchman, and the works of his selected students. First, the selected bioethical views of Peter Singer are analyzed, and his ethics of preference utilitarianism are presented through the prism of his understanding of the person. In this sense, Singer's view on the issues of abortion and infanticide is presented. Furthermore, the study deals with Singer's views on the killing of animals and people regarding his criticism of speciesism and his prioritization of the preference criterion. Attention is also paid to Singer's view on euthanasia. The study also presents the bioethical views of representatives of the ethics of social consequences, namely non-utilitarian consequentialism. It focuses on the question of to what extent genetics, according to Gluchman, determines morality and whether the protection of life is an absolute value for the ethics of social consequences. The paper also analyzes the abortion issue from the point of view of the ethics of social consequences. Selected bioethical attitudes of the ethics of social consequences proponents are also presented to compare the two concepts and determine the ontological fundamentals on which Singer relies. Furthermore, the paper discusses Singer's concept of the person, claiming that the ethics of social consequences argues for human dignity and positive social consequences for humans. Singer does not work with the concept of human dignity. In the paper, preference utilitarianism is not considered a hybrid ethical theory, unlike the ethics of social consequences. Preference utilitarianism and ethics of social consequences accept abortion and euthanasia in particular cases. The ethics of social consequences accepts them only if life contradicts human dignity, and preferential utilitarianism if it aligns with the person's preferences or if it is not a person.

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\* This paper is a part of the research project IG-KSV-ET-01-2021/12 "Ethics in the context of its implementation into society".

Gluchman admits the solutions above as altruistic help to the suffering person. However, the ethics of social consequences does not consider the animal a person, nor does it condone infanticide, as does preference utilitarianism.

*Keywords:* preference utilitarianism, ethics of social consequences, bioethics, person, humanity, protection of life.

## Selected bioethical views of Peter Singer

Singer is a proponent of preference utilitarianism. As Singer summarises it, preference utilitarianism means that it is not forbidden to kill a human, it is forbidden to kill a person. “To kill a person is therefore, normally, to violate not just one but a wide range of the most central and significant preferences a being can have” [1, p. 80]. Singer asks — who is not a person? He describes persons as merely conscious. “Many non-human animals fall into this category; so must newborn infants and some intellectually disabled humans” [1, p. 85]. If there is a child who is alive but the life of this child is nothing but suffering, we should reduce the suffering by euthanasia. Singer defends his assertion by adding that such a child would suffer for several decades and thus killing the child is not wrong [1, p. 89]. Singer is not anthropocentric in the question of killing. The more advanced the mental life of a being, the wider the range of the being’s potential experience, and thus a human would prefer this advanced life form. As the philosopher concludes, “we should reject the doctrine that killing a member of our species is always more significant than killing a member of another species. Some members of other species are persons; some members of our own species are not” [1, p. 101]. In Singer’s opinion it is only possible to kill unconscious forms of life, however, if possible, it should be done without causing them pain.

Infanticide is a phenomenon which has periodically occurred throughout the history of humankind [2]. In his work Singer [3] defends infanticide in cases where newborns are handicapped. On the other hand, together with Helga Kuhse [4] he denies infanticide in cases where a couple is not able to raise their child. We dissociate ourselves from those who have, either verbally or physically, tried to attack Singer due to his opinions on infanticide. More opponents have spoken out against this position, such as [5], [6] etc.

Singer argues that it is hard to say that the moral status of fetus abortion and killing of a newborn child are the same. He assumes that defenders of this standpoint have to continue working hard to provide relevant and supporting arguments [3, p. 260]. If we kill a one-day old baby and a snail, we do not impede any desires. Classical utilitarianism would a priori oppose killing of a human because it destroys his/her potential happiness. Beings unable to perceive their existence in time cannot be deprived of their future prospects. If the argument against killing is fear of others, Singer does not accept it. In terms of classical utilitarianism, the above argument cannot be accepted if the killing is done secretly. Singer says we should not judge actions according to the standards of usefulness. We should apply different principles. Classical utilitarianism says that if a person desires not to continue living, it could be a problem to respect his/her decision even if the death of the person could put an end to great suffering. Preferential utilitarianism applies a different criterion. It is the extent to which the action influences the preferences. According to preferential utilitarianism it is wrong to kill a person who desires to live. A person is more focused on the future in his/her preferences than a non-person.

Singer says that in some tribal societies it is possible to kill a member of another tribe with impunity. In relation to infanticide and abortion Singer differentiates between two terms — member of the species *Homo sapiens* and a person. “Now that we are reassessing our speciesist view of nature, however, it is also time to reassess our belief in the sanctity of the lives of members of our species” [1, p.80]. Singer supports the moral equality of animals. He does not want to focus exclusively on human species where the criterion is the ability to feel pain or suffer. Ultimately, it is immoral to kill persons, not members of the species *Homo sapiens*. Singer is thus a well-known critic of speciesism. It is appropriate to explain the term. Speciesism is a perspective that some thinkers believe is immoral. Man, as a member of the *Homo sapiens* biological species, commits crimes against, in his opinion, inferior biological species. The opposite of speciesism is egalitarianism, according to which there is a hierarchy among living beings and man does not have a privileged place. Its critics equate speciesism with racism. As Sýkora emphasises, Singer, in his criticism, analyses the argument of modern interpretation of human rights which says that all people are equal. Singer claims that this argument is wrong because it is false. Denying this argument would lead to establishment of a non-egalitarian society and therefore people must base the immorality of such a kind of society on a different principle. This is what the preferential principle states [7, p. 416–418].

Singer’s attitude to infanticide and euthanasia is significant. Pigs, hens, dogs and cats are, in a way, able to have expectations and preferences; even birds and fish have a wide range of abilities. Some animals meet the criteria of the definition of a person. Singer believes that it is wrong to kill a person who could be an animal too; however, it does not have to be a human. De Oliveira and Pereira consider the Singer’s book *Animal Liberation* to be useful because it is based on the concept of not causing harm [8]. As Allegri notes, “a good part of Singer’s moral reflection about animals reveals itself convincing and is finding some achievements in the positive legislation of a lot of countries” [9, p. 117]. According to Marco, Singer criticizes the fact that due to economic, health and national security reasons, we inflict a lacerating cruelty to animals, but it must not lead to justifying equality between animals and humans [10]. Singer’s claim that cognitive abilities can function as a universal criterion for measuring moral value is criticized by Tillman [11].

Singer says that there is no clear dividing line between a fertilized egg and a fully developed adult. “It seems peculiar to hold that we may not kill the premature infant but may kill the more developed fetus” [1, p. 126]. In relation to abortion, Singer claims that a pluralist society should also tolerate controversial ethical opinions and the decision should be left to the woman. The sanctity-of-life doctrine is, in his opinion, not safe enough because it can lead to illegal abortions which can be very dangerous for women. “The irreversible loss of the possibility of consciousness, or of communication with others, or of some minimal level of self-awareness or intelligence — these losses must affect the worth of the life, even though it remains biologically that of a human being” [12, p. 216]. Singer’s argument is that e.g. a fish has a much higher level of awareness than a fetus before it reaches three months of age. The uniqueness of a fetus is irrelevant. With respect to protection of cells themselves he believes that protection of all potential human beings is absurd. A fetus does not have experience, preferences nor, to some extent, awareness either. The right to life should not be based on belonging to an animal species [1, p. 145]. In Singer’s opinion, laws limiting experiments with embryos up to two weeks of age are pointlessly restricting.

Another of Singer's argument is that the potential of a being *x* does not have the value of the being *x* itself, i. e. fetus does not have the same value as a fully developed individual. Many animals have a higher level of awareness than a newborn baby [3]. Killing an infant is not the same as killing an adult. A newborn baby has no preferences. According to Singer, there are no fundamental differences between killing a baby and aborting a fetus. Peter Singer is not, however, a proponent of abortions at all costs. For example, with regard to abortions of fetuses diagnosed with haemophilia he asks if people truly know that a haemophilic patient cannot live a happy life. He reaches a conclusion that the decision whether to perform an abortion or infanticide should be left up to the parents not courts. According to Venkataraman and Kalita, Singer's approach may narrow the moral standing of living beings. "Singer's theory may inevitably result in limiting moral standing only to living members of the human species and may set aside from moral consideration potential human beings such as the human fetus" [13, p. 127].

Another bioethical problem Singer addresses is assistance in dying. He can see no problems in the case of voluntary euthanasia which he says has been legalised in some countries. If a person does not agree with euthanasia despite immense suffering, Singer does not consider it justified [1, p. 176–178]. He also speaks about individuals who are not able to give their consent to euthanasia. These are seriously ill people whose life is nothing but suffering, there is no hope for improvement of their medical condition and they represent a great financial burden for the state. In such cases Singer agrees with termination of their life even though these people are not capable of giving their consent or providing any opinion on this matter. Singer gives an example of a nurse who died after 40 years in coma without realising anything. Singer is aware of some medical discoveries in relation to which he tries to modify the definition of death. However, due to lack of space the present paper does not deal with these questions — compare [14] and [15].

Unlike anthropocentrism, biocentrism denies the centrality of man. He considers people an equal part of the earthly community with other organisms and endows each with an integral autonomous value, independent of man. Thus, the human community is not superior to other living beings. Every being, having a value in itself, acquires the right to protect this value. On the other hand, anthropocentrism is the position of opinion, according to which man is the center of the universe and that the goal of the universe is the good of humanity, or that man is the main engine in the world. Singer can obviously be considered a supporter of biocentrism.

As far as human sexual behaviour is concerned, Singer does not think this question belongs to the field of ethics. However, Cordero [16] does not agree with Singer and looks at this topic from a different angle.

### **Selected problems of bioethics as seen by representatives of ethics of social consequences**

Bioethical questions are also analyzed by representatives of the ethics of social consequences. Mainly they deal with non-utilitarian conventionalism. "The non-utilitarian aspect of the ethics of social consequences demonstrates itself also in the fact that, unlike classical utilitarianism, it also takes into consideration the motives of actions, it rejects the utilitarian principle of maximisation of positive consequences as well as the principle of impartiality" [17, p.47]. It is, therefore, appropriate to introduce this ethical concept.

Ethics of social consequences is a type of moderate non-utilitarian consequentialism, the axiological criterion of which is social consequences. These are primarily consequences concerning people and the surrounding environment. The principle of positive social consequences is the highest principle towards which the actions of a moral subject should be directed. Positive social consequences are subservient to the highest moral principle when they are humane and lawful. The founder of the ethics of social consequences is the philosopher Vasil Gluchman. His scientific research fully focuses on the field of ethics; he is not interested in ontological or metaphysical questions since “metaphysical questions do not play a decisive role in the process of moral reasoning and decision making of a subject” [18, p. 14]. Gluchman’s great inspiration is Spinoza. Nevertheless, there are some differences between the two philosophers. In relation to the abovementioned, Petrufova Jopová claims that it “is not necessary, nor would it be accurate to term Spinoza as a consequentialist, because that would be equal to accusing him of preferring the right over the moral, or vice versa, which he never did” [19, p. 48]. Gluchman offers several examples of social aspects of morality which differ from Darwin’s survival principle, for instance abandoning the Old Testament principle — an eye for an eye or banning of theft and lies, etc. Based on the aforementioned he reaches a conclusion that “our morality cannot be reduced to genetic or biological aspects only” [20, p. 121]. In Gluchman’s words morality includes a social element too; however, it does not reject human biological nature. Sucharek recommends us to look more closely at the social element in the form of accumulated ethical human experience because this experience “is made a taboo or completely ignored in the general cultural experience framework” [21, p. 427]. Even Gluchman draws attention to the danger of speciesism. He recalls the issue while discussing the problem of whether humans in their humanity behave differently than animals and, therefore, whether it is possible to differentiate between humanity and animality.

Let us just briefly remark that Gluchman reached a conclusion that genetic and biological factors are not determining factors for development of morality [20, p. 124]. In his opinion the value of the life of an innocent man is the highest value, not an absolute value. In this case his argumentation is based on the belief that the value and support of human life brings positive social implications [22, p. 614]. In his opinion, this value is the core of human dignity. “We can say that the existence of life creates a basis for conferring dignity on the living. It is a value that is worthy of esteem and respect” [23, p. 137]. On the other hand, he assumes that protection of human life must not turn into inhumanity which for him is the effort to save human life at all costs and by all means. Gluchman believes that care for life in its purely natural and biological form is not a value. He presents an example from the animal world where animals let their disabled offspring die. People let them live and this decreases the quality of the human gene pool. His attitude to euthanasia is positive. In the case of human life and its prolongation “if the result is death following long and painful dying, then help in suffering can mean also help with ending such suffering” [22, p. 617]. Gluchman says that moral laws apply to newborn babies as well because, unlike terminally ill adults, babies can be expected to develop into fully-fledged humans. His attitude to embryos is different, however. “Our attitude to an embryo conceived only shortly before cannot be the same as our relation to an existing human life because observable behavioural manifestations of a human embryo are similar to manifestations of embryos of other mammals with a comparable level of development” [24, p. 517]. Newborn babies deserve social and biological care says Gluchman. With respect to abortions he asks the

question: “Are we to conclude that if by performing an abortion the positive social consequences prevail over the negative ones and that other key values are equally respected, then his/her actions are right and justifiable?” [25, p. 59]. His answer is yes in cases where an abortion has positive social implications and all technical aspects necessary for performing the abortion are provided for.

According to Gluchman’s understanding of ethics, animals or nature are not moral subjects [26, p. 505]. He assumes that we can only speak of some derivation and realisation of moral rights. Animals and nature have some form of dignity, however, this form of dignity varies depending on their position on the evolution scale [23, p. 140].

There are several opinions on personal identity and human features of a man. For example, Vaňková says that “personal identity is permanently shaped during socialization and individualization; yet it is also the outcome of customized verbal behaviour” [27, p. 431]. For Gluchman a purely human feature of behaviour is altruistic help for totally unknown people as well as compassion with unknown people. This aspect of behaviour is typical for humans exclusively; it does not occur in the animal world, a claim which applies to love as well.

The problem of people who have lost the ability to be a moral agent is tackled by Kalajtzidis [28], however, the above question is not a topic of the present paper. Lešková Blahová is another ethicist who addressed the field of ethics of social consequences. She welcomed Gluchman’s transition from anthropocentrism to moderate anthropocentrism in ethics of social consequences [29, p. 80]. Her standpoint is based on biocentrism. She suggests interconnecting moral biocentrism with the ethics of social consequences. Her suggestion is based on her inclination to the ideas of Attfield and Goodpaster. Simultaneously, she remarks that the possible interconnection of authentic starting point of ethics of social consequences with Naess’s biocentrism would violate primary standpoint of consequentialism. It is interesting that Lešková Blahová goes even further into deeper foundations of her understanding of the bioethical aspect of the ethics of social consequences. In her opinion, life is “the ontological basis of the entire value structure from which everything else evolves” [29, p. 89].

With respect to the ethics of disasters Komenská devotes a lot of attention to the bioethical viewpoint, but this is not the subject of the present study. Let us just briefly mention that according to Gianan bio enhancements can help in this matter [30]. Komenská has reached some very interesting conclusions which she presents in her monograph *Ethics of relation to animals* (applying the viewpoint of ethics of social consequences). Komenská speaks of an effort to turn from moderate anthropocentrism to biocentrism, which happened mainly in the work of Lešková Blahová [31, p. 31].

It is interesting to recall selected differences between the ethical conceptions of Gluchman and Schweitzer. In short, Gluchman’s concept of humanity means the development, protection and support of human life, which is associated with positive social consequences both for people to whom we have an emotional attachment, as well as for strangers at all. Gluchman, like Albert Schweitzer, extends the objects of ethics beyond man, but the difference is that for Schweitzer, the protection of life is the highest principle. Schweitzer argues through the will to live, which is absent in Gluchman’s approach. The comparison with Van Rensselaer Potter is also interesting. In Potter, it is possible to observe certain signs of warning against overpopulation: the human species must continue, but Potter also perceives certain limits: the limitation is mainly the ecological need to regulate the

exponential increase of the human population. Potter realizes that no program of conservation or development can hope to succeed without accepting controlled human fertility as a basic ethical imperative for the human species. Potter talks about so-called irresponsible living. Gluchman's theory does not feature such an orientation inspired by Malthus. Potter created the concept of global bioethics. He argues that the short-term preferences of human individuals must be balanced with the long-term needs for the survival of the human species. It is about the adequate protection of human dignity and the good state of the environment. This is what Potter calls acceptable survival.

### **Comparative analysis of selected bioethical standpoints of both concepts**

Let us try to specify some bio ethical aspects of preferential utilitarianism and ethics of social consequences from the viewpoint of their similarities and differences. The basic difference is that Singer's philosophy is actually preferential utilitarianism whereas Gluchman perceives the ethics of consequences as non-utilitarian consequentialism. In ethics of social consequences every agent has obligations towards their nearest and dearest. In addition to this, we also need to take into consideration the interests of the entire society. In ethics of social consequences, the agent can adjust which enables him/her to change his/her standpoint in accordance with common sense morality. In this sense, the ethics of social consequences is a hybrid ethical theory [32, p. 715]. Kalajtzidis comes up with more reasons why we can consider it a hybrid ethical theory (the overcoming of the inaccuracy objection of classical consequentialism). The ethical theory which we are analyzing here develops too and therefore it rejects the maximization principle in consequentialism due to the problem of 'limited moral freedom' [32, p. 718]. The abovementioned reasons allow us to mark ethics of social consequences as hybrid ethical theory. In the course of its development, since mid-1990s, the theory has experienced some modifications "based on many critical remarks" [33, p. 140].

In his views, Singer relies on the opinion of L. Honnefelder, according to whom he uses "Quine's monistic ontology, which is based on Carnap's four-dimensional space-time ontology" [34, p. 196]. Quine, a well-known lover of arid lands, espouses a minimalist ontology, according to which "things and people can be reduced to time-spaced facts that can be interpreted as timelines of world points" [34, p. 196]. He believes that preferential utilitarianism as an ethical direction is conditioned by the mentioned ontology. Volek criticizes Quine's ontology in the sense that in Kripke's analytical metaphysics proper names have the nature of rigid designations and thus denote the same identical object in every logically possible world, while in Quine's ontology there is nothing to refer to, as this minimalist ontology does not distinguish essential and accidental predicates. Volek's criticism shows that Singer with the ontology in question cannot explain that a fetus with DNA develops into a person with the same DNA. Singer rejects the idea of an immortal soul, which again follows from his Quine's ontology.

Utilitarian and non-utilitarian consequentialism differ mainly in the concept of utilitarianism. Ethics of social consequences is a form of non-utilitarian consequentialism. Non-utilitarian consequentialism does not identify with the values of utilitarianism. According to its founder, it can be attributed in particular "the primary role of consequences in the process of reasoning, decision-making, action and evaluation of

proceedings; broad understanding of the consequences” [35, p. 484]. It does not recognize utilitarian values such as utility, pleasantness, happiness. Preferential utilitarianism perceives as a cardinal axiological indicator the current preferences of the individual. This gives a very specific ontological status to the concept of a person, which also has its ethical consequences; a person (not a human being) cannot be killed unless it is in accordance with his preferences. In the ethics of social consequences, the axiological direction is the production of positive social consequences. It is certainly possible to talk about different metaethics between the mentioned concepts, the ethics of social consequences tends towards cognitivism, preferential utilitarianism in turn towards patient-centrism.

Singer’s notion of person is not identical with a human being. A person is an entity that is self-aware, aware of the past, and has preferences for the future. It does not apply to embryos, newborns or mentally ill people. Gluchman uses the term agent, or moral subject. Such an entity has the ability to make free decisions and reason to the extent that it can and does bear responsibility for its actions. It can be stated that the criteria of an agent in the ESC (free will, consciousness, and rationality) are close to the criteria for the concept of a person according to Singer, neither concept is reserved only for a human being. Preferential utilitarianism in certain circumstances (absence of preferences, or the assumption that preferences would agree with the decision) allows euthanasia, abortion, and infanticide. The ESC and its representatives are nowhere in favor of infanticide. If they accept abortion and euthanasia, they argue in the case of euthanasia with human dignity, it would be against human dignity to maintain life in a state if it is suffering and does not resemble life. ESC advocates do not look at the value of life before birth and after birth in the same way; they value life after birth more. They justify abortion if it ends human suffering.

The ESC differs most markedly from preferential utilitarianism in the important role of human dignity. Singer does not recognize the principle of human dignity, which reminds him of speciesism. On the contrary, the ESC considers it crucial. The founder of ESC, Gluchman, considers humanity and dignity to be the essence of moral good, they are considered the highest values within this ethical system. Positive social consequences should be realized precisely through humanity and dignity in the life of the individual [26]. Human dignity and humanity are close to speciesism. “Dignity quantitatively expressed by the number 1 can be understood as a kind of turning point that belongs to all human beings and it is assigned to them on the basis of their membership to the class *Homo sapiens*” [36, p. 141].

Peter Singer’s preferential utilitarianism is not a hybrid ethical theory. Actions are judged based on one criterion — the preferences of beings who are affected by our possible actions. In this sense his standpoint is unified. At first glance, his ethical principles might seem contradictory since on one hand he promotes vegetarianism and animal protection, on the other hand he has no reservations about abortion, euthanasia, or infanticide. However, one should not get confused by this. His principles are consistent. They are based on Singer’s understanding of a person as for him a person does not necessarily mean a *homo sapiens* but can be an animal too.

Despite the claim that ethics of social consequences can be considered a hybrid ethical theory and Singer’s preference utilitarianism cannot, it is possible to find some common features between the two in the field of bioethics. Ethical standpoints provide



many possible viewpoints on the basic questions of bioethics. Singer's standpoint focuses on strict conditions relating to abortion and euthanasia. If we compare this standpoint to the ethical opinions of Wojtyła and many other philosophers and ethicists, we can say that their opinions are not compatible. In Singer's opinion, human life has differentiated value, not constant value. As Benatar recalls, Singer's views on population policy significantly restrict the permissibility of procreation [37]. Villanueva argues that due to the straightforward, minimalist nature of Singer's preference utilitarianism, his arguments have remained highly defensible and persuasive [38]. Singer claims that the killing of a fetus or newborn baby does not mean killing of a person. Singer is not calling for meaningless killing of foetuses or babies, but he is not principally against their killing in cases where they are handicapped, they suffer or it seems there is no hope for improvement of the condition which makes them suffer. Singer's standpoint is similar in the case of euthanasia too, provided it is not involuntary euthanasia. In the case of a person it would be murder.

Ethics of social consequences has experienced certain development and it is not related exclusively to human beings. We have already mentioned that Gluchman, the founder of ethics of social consequences, has moved from a strong anthropocentric position to a weak anthropocentric position. "As an open theory able to accept and work with external stimuli it has widened the concept of consequences in a way to include both human community as well as natural entities" [18, p. 47] Gluchman has widened the original axiological focus of ethics of social consequences and included the natural world as well. The same applies to the second generation of ethicists who study the field of ethics of social consequences and whose work cannot be marked as strongly anthropocentric. Let us take a closer look at the comparison of bio ethical viewpoints of ethics of social consequences with Singer's preferential utilitarianism. The standpoint of the founder of ethics of social consequences, Vasil Gluchman, is in cases of abortions and euthanasia the same. However, there are principal differences in his approach to these problems. In Gluchman's opinion, an animal can never be a person. Despite that, he speaks of animal dignity depending on its evolutionary level. According to him a human is a person right after his/her birth whereas Singer denies this. Gluchman works with the notion of humanity also in the bio ethical sense of the word. He assumes that that it would be an attack on human dignity to preserve life in a form which does not resemble life at all and which is nothing but suffering. However, Gluchman, just like Singer, assigns different value to life before birth and after birth. In his assertions there is nothing which would approve of infanticide. The rationale is human dignity, which we acquire by being born in the human race. Accepting abortion or euthanasia is in accordance with Gluchman's concept of humanity which says that the essence of humanity is altruistic help for others. He considers the above-mentioned forms of killing humane because, as he says, they stop suffering. On the other hand, preference utilitarianism and ethics of social consequences strongly disagree with using violence against persons or able-bodied people who are innocent. This idea is also culturally determined.

In relation to Gluchman's grasping of dignity of different forms of life, Jemelka remarks that it is necessary to open new topics with respect to ontological and axiological reflection of the value of life within the field of ethics of social consequences [39]. Representatives of ethics of social consequences are aware of the differences between preferential utilitarianism and ethics of social consequences. "Unlike Singer, ethics of social conse-

quences directly links the moral value with its manifestation in the world” [40, p. 203]. The same author points out another difference. Unlike Singer, ethics of social consequences differentiates between the death of a person and death as a biological attribute; however, it can see some links between the two as well. Moreover, it also perceives death through the definition of dignity. Máhrík et al [41, p. 39–40] point out the importance of the teleological dimension, which must be implemented into ethical considerations about categories such as the value and meaning of life, the essence of human dignity and the phenomenon of human death [42].

Preferential utilitarianism would consider the momentary preferences of the mother and zero preferences of the fetus [43, p. 71–72]. The approach of ethics of social consequences is different, however. What matters are the consequences, not preferences. Beside these, there are also other criteria such as intentions and motives. If the social consequence of this case was the death of an unborn healthy fetus just because the mother’s preferences were not in accordance with welcoming and accepting the baby, we believe this would be unacceptable for representatives of ethics of social consequences who do not base their decisions on preferences. Human assumptions are finite and contingent, thus never able to constitute a safe ground “to counter the forces of depersonalization and dehumanization” that influence ethical decision making of human moral agents [44, p. 187].

## Conclusion

The present study compared the bioethical views of ethics of social consequences and preference utilitarianism. Attention was mainly paid to bioethics within the aforementioned ethical approaches. Nevertheless, worth mentioning is also a significant impact of both approaches on social ethics. Furthermore, the study focused on selected areas of bioethics, while both approaches’ fundamental standpoints and their argumentative justification were compared.

Singer allows both abortion and euthanasia and accepts infanticide under certain conditions. In his view, a baby under one month is not considered worthy of protection. On the other hand, he advocates for the protection of animals. Ethics of social consequences accepts abortion and euthanasia under certain conditions. In contrast to preferential utilitarianism, infanticide is impermissible for the ethics of social consequences. Within bioethics, both concepts allow euthanasia and abortion under certain conditions. However, the conditions differ. While in preference utilitarianism, it is of key importance whether a man is a person (which can be an animal but not a person) and whether he/she has any preferences, in the ethics of social consequences, the end of human suffering is considered a good social consequence. In the ethics of social consequences maintaining a life full of suffering is considered a step against human dignity. The ethics of social consequences never considers an animal as a person, distinguishing it from preference utilitarianism. The ethics of social consequences connects moral value with its manifestation in the world. It distinguishes between the death of a person and death as a natural biological process and perceives the issue through the prism of human dignity. The ethical approaches in question can solve the same ethically relevant situation differently. While preference utilitarianism will be determined by current preferences (e.g. of the human fetus, the mother), the ethics of social consequences will perceive the solution through

the contribution of social consequences that are likely to occur in the future, as well as through the concept of humanity and human dignity. Singer's preference utilitarianism is ontologically based on Quine's monistic ontology. Both ethical approaches clearly define their position against speciesism, and currently, both (ethics of social consequences only in a later phase of development) cannot be considered biocentric. While the ethics of social consequences can be considered a hybrid ethical theory, since an agent can change his/her position in accordance with common sense morality, preference utilitarianism is not. Preference utilitarianism considers people's preferences the fundamental driving force of ethically relevant action.

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Received: February 10, 2021

Accepted: July 5, 2022

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## Сравнение биоэтических взглядов в творчестве Питера Сингера и в этике социальных последствий\*

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**Для цитирования:** *Ambrozy M. M. Comparison of bioethical views in the work of Peter Singer and in ethics of social consequences // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Философия и конфликтология. 2022. Т. 38. Вып. 4. С. 452–464. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu17.2022.401>*

В статье поставлена задача сравнения этики П. Сингера и этики социальных последствий (ЭСП) в области биоэтики. Говоря об этике социальных последствий, мы в основном ориентируемся на ее основателя В. Глухмана, но также обращаем внимание и на его учеников. Во-первых, мы анализируем отдельные биоэтические взгляды П. Сингера. Мы пытаемся представить его этику преференциального утилитаризма через призму его понимания личности. В этом смысле мы рассматриваем взгляды П. Сингера на проблемы абортов и детоубийства. Мы обсуждаем взгляды Сингера на убийство животных и людей с точки зрения его критики видовой деятельности и с точки зрения предпочтения Сингером преференциального критерия. Мы коснемся и взглядов Сингера на эвтаназию. Речь пойдет также о биоэтических взглядах на этику социальных последствий. Это неутилитарный консеквенциализм. Мы обращаем внимание на то, в какой степени генетика, согласно Глухману, определяет мораль, и на то, является ли защита жизни для ЭСП абсолютной ценностью. Мы также обсуждаем вопрос об отношении ЭСП к абортам. Рассмотрены отдельные биоэтические отношения других представителей ЭСП. Мы стремились составить два упомянутых понятия, понять онтологическую основу взглядов Сингера. Мы анализируем концепцию личности Сингера и утверждаем, что ЭСП противоречит человеческому достоинству, положительным социальным последствиям для человека. Сингер не работает с человеческим достоинством. Мы не считаем преференциальный утилитаризм гибридной этической теорией, в отличие от ЭСП. Преференциальный утилитаризм и ЭСП допускают как аборты, так и эвтаназию в ограниченных случаях. ЭСП — только в том случае, если жизнь противоречит человеческому достоинству и преимущественному утилитаризму, если она соответствует предпочтениям человека или если речь идет не о человеке. Глухман признает вышеупомянутые решения альтруистической помощью страдавшим. Тем не менее ЭСП не считает животное человеком и не допускает детоубийства, как это делает преференциальный утилитаризм.

*Ключевые слова:* утилитаризм предпочтений, этика социальных последствий, биоэтика, человек, человечность, защита жизни.

Статья поступила в редакцию 10 февраля 2021 г.;  
рекомендована к печати 5 июля 2022 г.

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\* Данная статья является частью исследовательского проекта IG-KSV-ET-01-2021/12 «Этика в контексте его внедрения в общество».