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WHAT IS CONSEQUENTIALISM?
A PROPOSAL FOR A SYSTEMATIC CLASSIFICATION

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to distinguish between different forms of consequentialistic theory. The first form (C1) is straightforwardly implied by the teleological structure that every consequentialistic ethics displays. It focuses on the *intended consequences* of an action and is typical of many teleological theories, as for example virtue or value ethics. Consequentialistic theories usually called (C2) are, by contrast, *outcome moralities*: morally relevant characteristics are constituted not only by the intended, but also by the *caused consequences* of an action. Supporters of C1 disagree on this point. While accepting teleology, they follow deontology in rejection of C2. The author argues that objections against C2 depend mainly on the fact that teleologists interpret C2 in its *welfaristic* version (C2a). There is another possibility, however, namely the construction of, in Sen's terminology, a *non welfaristic* consequentialistic system (C2b). The author gives detailed analysis of the form that a C2b consequentialistic theory might take and discusses, in the light of the results achieved, the main criticisms usually brought by both virtue ethicists and deontologists against C2. On the basis of this analysis, the final part of the paper argues that virtue ethics, although incompatible with C2a, is very similar in its formal structure to C2b consequentialistic theories.