



# MORAL BIOENHANCEMENT AS A CHALLENGE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

SILVIYA SERAFIMOVA

DEPARTMENT OF ETHICAL STUDIES  
BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



# OBJECTIVE

- The primary objective of this talk is to show why moral bioenhancement (MBE) understood as a use of biomedical technology for the purposes of making people morally better (Persson and Savulescu 2012; Persson and Savulescu 2013) raises some crucial concerns about the achievement of both intra- and intergenerational justice.



# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- I examine:
  - 1. Why the approval of MBE as a preventive measure against the so-called global existential threats (which include but are not limited to the use of weapons of mass destruction, devastating global climate change and some other disastrous phenomena (Persson and Savulescu 2012)) does not mean that MBE implies a just treatment by default.
  - 2. Why even if MBE is successfully introduced making individuals “more moral” in short terms, its implementation does not necessarily support intergenerational justice per se.
    - 2.1. Specifically, I address the benefits of distinguishing between what is defined as *moral ex ante*, viz. before MBE’s deliberate modification of individuals’ behavior and dispositions and what is defined as *moral ex post*, viz. after the introduction of MBE.



# RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MORAL AND JUST WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF MBE

- 1. On the level of intragenerational justice:
  - One cannot argue for a continuation between what is *moral ex ante* and what is *moral ex post* in terms of intragenerational justice.
  - 1.1. Some critical comments upon Persson and Savulescu's tit-for-tat strategy
  - 1.2. Achievement of intragenerational justice by MBE
- moral (self-)development versus collective moral improvement



- 2. On the level of intergenerational justice
- 2.1. The pitfalls of achieving intergenerational justice via MBE are similar to those raised by the traditional act utilitarianism.
- 2.2. Achievement of global intergenerational justice
- The role of *moral ex post* and *just ex post*, as refracted through the lens of Persson and Savulescu's science-sophy.



# CONCLUSION

- 1. Adopting the wrong presumption of equating what is *morally permissible* with what is *just* in the MBE debates leads to mismeasuring moral improvement with moral development and thus, neglecting the constructive role of moral self-development in the field of MBE.
- 2. Giving preference to moral improvement over that of moral development does not contribute to clarifying how one considered as unproductive traditional moral enhancement and one vague, yet to come MBE can benefit the achievement of what Persson and Savulescu coin science-sophy.
- 3. Achieving global justice via MBE is still an impossible mission. This is due to the fact that neglecting the role of moral self-development makes difficult to prove that what is *moral* and *just ex post* displays a gradual moral development from the intragenerational stage of *moral* and *just ex ante*.

