This project is a part of my broader research programme aimed at individual and public decisions where there is no such certainty about the facts, the consequences of decisions, the identity of people involved, people's preferences, the ontological and moral status of some beings or – last but not least – about normative doctrines. I assume that ethics should care not only about decisions under idealized conditions, but also about decisions under different forms of epistemic limitations common in everyday situations. Finding out how to make moral decisions under different kinds of epistemic limitations is very important today, because the rapid progress of science and technique, in particular within biomedical research, is intertwined with new kinds of risks or uncertainties.

There are three main topics of this research project: 1) "Statistical victims, the non-identity problem, counterfactually open process" concerns making decisions when a decision-maker does not know the identity of all people involved; 2) "Normative uncertainty, meta-reasoning, rationality" is about making decisions under uncertainty about moral doctrines, value scales or the moral status of some beings; 3) "Blind chance, hypothetical choices, autonomy" is about making aggregative decisions under uncertainty about the agent's preferences.

The main question I want to put forward in my research programme is the following: to what extent is it possible to use of decision theory as a model for reasoning in ethics, in particular in practical ethics, including bioethics. According to normative decision theory, rational agents always choose the alternative with the greatest expected utility, and utility is a measure of the agent's preferences (what does not mean that each agent maximize only her own self-interest). Of course the normative decision theory has its own controversial assumptions (e.g. view of practical reasoning as means–ends reasoning; transitivity, completeness and independence axioms; interpersonal aggregation and the distribution of risk between agents; dealing with infinite values; the rationality of individual risk preferences; problems related to a distinction between first- and second-ordered probabilities). It is also inconsistent with real human preferences expressed after consideration (e.g. the Allais, Ellsberg, Petersburg paradoxes). Nevertheless the tentative hypothesis of the project is that despite its limitations this approach can produce very interesting applications that will be analyzed on a case to case basis. I also want to challenge the traditional distinction in normative and applied ethics between consequentialism and non-consequentialism and to replace it by a new distinction based on the different criteria of decision making under risk or uncertainty.

The impact of the project can be easile visible, in particular in the light of the spectacular progress of science and technology, especially in biomedical research, which is intertwined with new kinds of risks or uncertainties. On the one hand, thanks to recent development of science and technology, humanity got many new tools to change the world and prevent adverse events and processes; but on the other hand, this development has also led to serious new threats and hazards (e.g. human-induced climate change, genetic manipulations). Moreover, some of those possible threats and hazards are difficult to identify and evaluate as well as they contribute to shifts in well-established sets of values. Many normative regulations has been recently created to prevent those adverse changes. Nevertheless, creating such regulations and making decisions under uncertainty and risk are related to many philosophical questions that will be analyzed in this project.