

In the course of our studies, I have encountered various topics and perspectives that have significantly affected my understanding and challenged my preconceptions. Among these, utilitarianism stands out as a particularly thought-provoking subject, as it has forced me to reconsider my previously simplistic idea of maximizing good and has led to a deeper understanding of its complex nature. Utilitarianism, with its principle of maximizing overall happiness or utility, initially appeared straightforward to me, a moral framework that simply required calculating the consequences of actions and choosing the one that produces the greatest good for the most people. However, as I delved deeper into the philosophy, I came to the realization that the application of utilitarian principles is far from simple. One key aspect that has reshaped my perspective is the recognition of the inherent difficulties in measuring and comparing different types of utility. For instance, utilitarianism often faces criticism for its inability to adequately account for the varying differences in types of happiness or suffering. Not all pleasures or pains are equal, and assigning a value to each is subjective. The concept of utility extends beyond individual experiences such as justice, fairness, and rights. This complexity complicates the simple idea of maximizing happiness, as it requires weighing competing values and considering the long-term consequences of our actions. My perspective on utilitarianism has then evolved to recognize the need for a more specific approach that takes into account the aspects of utility quality while also understanding the inherent limitations of measuring said utility. For instance, imagine a scenario where a policy leads to a temporary increase in overall happiness but sacrifices long-term well-being or infringes upon fundamental rights. While the immediate gain in utility might seem appealing from a utilitarian standpoint, the long-term consequences and the ethical implications cannot be ignored. My takeaway on Utilitarianism is that it offers a strong baseline for moral decision-making, but its actual practice requires careful consideration of the happiness and the long-term effects.

Exploring the realm of information ethics has been an eye opening journey that has significantly increased my opinion regarding the importance of respecting individuals' autonomy and privacy, particularly in the context of data consent. Initially, I may have underestimated the ethical significance of obtaining explicit consent for the collection, use, and sharing of personal data. In an increasingly digitized world where even more amounts of personal information are collected and processed, the issue of data consent has become a frequent issue. Individuals are often unaware of the extent to which their data is being harvested and exploited, raising concerns about privacy infringement. This realization has led me to appreciate the ethical necessity of ensuring that individuals have full agency and control over their own data. Companies and organizations have significant influence and authority in determining how personal data is utilized, often without clear, concise transparency or accountability mechanisms in place. This power dynamic can lead to exploitative practices and violations of individual privacy rights even without their knowledge. My respect for data consent is not merely a matter of individual rights but also a foundational principle for building trust and fostering ethical relationships between individuals and organizations. As a result of my engagement with information ethics, my view on the importance of data consent has become firmer, and I now believe that it should be regarded as a non-negotiable ethical requirement in any context where personal information is involved. Individuals must be given the option to make informed decisions about the use of their personal data, and organizations have an ethical obligation to

uphold their rights and preferences. My main takeaway is that in information ethics, the principle of data consent should be regarded as a non-negotiable ethical requirement. Upholding individuals' rights to control their own data is essential for promoting autonomy and privacy in an increasingly digitized society.

Reflecting on the whistleblower Chelsea Manning's leaks has been deeply introspective given my previous experience in the military. Manning's decision to disclose classified documents, including the "Collateral Murder" video depicting a U.S. helicopter attack in Iraq, has forced me to confront uncomfortable truths about the nature of warfare and the moral ambiguities inherent in military service. As someone who once tried to serve in a combat role, Manning's actions have created feelings of guilt regarding my own motivations and desires. Watching the footage of innocent civilians, journalists, even children killed from the perspective of the helicopter gunner has challenged my romanticization of military service. I can remember a time where I would have watched the video and felt excitement at the thought of getting to participate in the brutality of war. I have come to realize the importance of critically examining the societal implications of military actions. While the desire to serve one's country and protect fellow service members is commendable, it must come second to a commitment to upholding the principles of justice and humanity. Manning's decision to expose evidence of wrongdoing and civilian casualties speaks to a profound sense of moral courage and integrity, even as it has led to her ostracization and imprisonment. The important takeaway is that Chelsea Manning has exposed an important moment of the ethical responsibilities of military personnel and the moral complexities of armed conflict. Service members, new and old, must critically examine their motivations and aspirations to prioritize moral integrity and ethical behavior.