

The U.S. Ban on TikTok:

Analyzing Through Utilitarian and Kantian Ethical Frameworks

Thesis Statement

The U.S. TikTok ban is ethically unjustifiable as demonstrated by both Utilitarian and Kantian ethical frameworks, though for different reasons. Utilitarianism reveals the ban causes more harm than good through economic and social impacts, while Kantian ethics exposes the policy's inconsistency with universal moral principles and treating individuals as ends in themselves.

I. Utilitarian Analysis of the TikTok Ban

- Explanation of Utilitarian principles: maximizing aggregated happiness/utility
- Analysis of consequences: economic impacts on creators, businesses, and users
- Limitations on free expression and digital innovation
- Security benefits do not outweigh collective harms in a net utility calculation

II. Kantian Ethical Perspective

- Explanation of Kantian ethics: categorical imperative and universalizability
- Application to TikTok ban: If universal, would create a world where nations arbitrarily block foreign platforms
- Analysis of treating others as ends: The ban treats users as means to political ends
- Demonstration that the ban fails Kant's moral test for inconsistency

III. Comparison of Ethical Frameworks

- Why Kantian ethics provides the stronger framework for this case
- Limitations of the Utilitarian approach in international relations
- How Kantian ethics addresses the moral inconsistency identified in Essay 1's Normative Objectivism section

IV. Counterargument & Rebuttal

- Opposing view: "National security concerns override ethical consistency"
- Rebuttal using Kantian principles: Security achieved through inconsistent means undermines moral authority
- Why a principled approach would seek alternatives to outright bans

V. Conclusion

- Restatement of thesis supporting Kantian ethics as the superior framework
- Broader implications for international tech policy and moral consistency
- Call for policies that balance security concerns with ethical principles

References

1. [The TikTok Ban: What You Should Know](#)
2. [The Grim Reality of Banning TikTok](#)

Revision Report

In my first essay, I analyzed the TikTok ban primarily through relativism and objectivism, concluding that objectivist ethics revealed problematic inconsistencies in U.S. policy. This revision deepens the analysis by examining the case through specific normative theories: Utilitarianism and Kantian ethics.

I've maintained my critical stance on the TikTok ban, now showing how both Utilitarian and Kantian frameworks support this position through different reasoning. This approach strengthens my original argument by demonstrating how formal ethical theories provide more specific grounds for objection than general moral positions.

The Utilitarian analysis expands on my previous discussion of economic and social harms, while the Kantian perspective develops my original concerns about ethical inconsistency with more philosophical depth through concepts like universalizability and dignity.

While both theories oppose the ban, I argue that Kantian ethics provides the stronger framework due to its emphasis on principled consistency, which connects directly to my original critique of moral double standards identified in the first essay's Normative Objectivism section.