

Case Study 1 – Career, Honesty and Gender

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1 Question 1

Is it ethically right for Ben to conceal his idea from his employers? (Group A - Yes)

Group A - No Group B - Yes

The debate began with Group A asserting:

- Ben has the right to adhere to his moral beliefs.
- The idea is not fully developed, raising ethical and contractual considerations.
- From a utilitarian perspective, concealing the idea benefits more lives.

Group B countered by arguing:

- Concealing the idea breaches transparency and employer trust.
- Decision-making on such dilemmas should be left to legislators, not employees.
- Sharing the idea responsibly could prevent misuse.

Group A reinforced that the idea is not concrete and does not deprive the company of valuable information. They emphasized that Ben's pacifist stance was known when he was hired, so expectations should align with his beliefs.

Group B introduced counterarguments:

- Ben benefits from company resources and owes contribution in return.
- Military advancements can protect soldiers and deter threats.
- The idea could have broader scientific applications beyond military use.

Group A responded:

- The contract only covers developed ideas, and this one remains undeveloped.

- A perpetual arms race could result in catastrophic consequences.
- Forcing Ben to work against his beliefs could be unproductive and detrimental to morale.

Further counterarguments from Group B emphasized:

- Decisions of this magnitude should be made transparently within a committee.
- Concealment hinders company growth and potential partnerships.
- Military advancements often lead to public technological benefits.
- If Ben does not develop the idea, someone else will, potentially without ethical considerations.

Group A concluded by highlighting:

- The risks of escalating military capabilities, especially in the current political climate.
- The company is not in the military sector, so Ben did not sign up for this work.
- If technological advancements are inevitable, Ben still has the moral right to abstain.

2 Question 2

You are a computer engineer and you are assigned on the Manhattan Project. Do you think it is ethical to work on this project? (Group A No) Group A - No Group B - Yes 42:27