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CS4320

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Exercise 4.1 - Systems Theory: The Ethical Dilemma of Edward Snowden

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| **Ethical Quandary** | **technical system** | **sociotechnical system** |
| NSA invaded privacy |  | x |
| Snowden broke NDA | x |  |
| Snowden violated Espionage Act | x |  |
| Snowden informed public |  | x |
| Legality vs morality | x | x |
| National security risk | x | x |
| Morality of whistleblowing |  | x |
| Government surveillance infringes on freedom |  | x |
| NSA misled Congress illegally | x |  |
| Should people be aware that they are being monitored? |  | x |

Edward Snowden blowing the whistle on the NSA for its practices regarding surveillance is ethically complex and has legal and moral implications which impacted the American government and its citizens. I consider America’s system of government and its laws, as well as the NSA and its rules and contracts, as the technical system in this situation. I consider the public and its right to information and safety as the sociotechnical system.

With the technical system, the biggest issues are Snowden’s violation of his contract with the NSA and his violation of the Espionage Act. We can also consider the technical system when considering the legality of the NSA’s actions, the national security risk Snowden may have caused with his leaks, and the ethical debate of legality vs. morality. With the sociotechnical system, I considered the moral issues involving the NSA’s invasion of privacy and whether people should have been aware of this, Snowden’s sacrifice to inform the public, and the morality of whistleblowing. I think the national security risk and legality vs. morality debate can be considered with this system as well.