In 2016, Cambridge Analytica was hired to support Trump’s presidential campaign. Cambridge Analytica was mainly funded by two Republicans, Robert Mercer, and Stephen K. Bannon. According to New York Times article, Facebook and Cambridge Analytica: What You Need to Know as Fallout Widens, written by Kevin Granville in 2018, “The idea was to map personality traits based on what people had liked on Facebook, and then use that information to target audiences with digital ads.” Originally, Cambridge University had developed this technology. Although, it is Dr. Kogan a professor from Cambridge who agreed to work with Cambridge Analytica. “Dr. Kogan built his own app and in June 2014 began harvesting data for Cambridge Analytica.” (Granville 2018) People were being assured by Facebook and by Cambridge that all of their data was only being used for academic purposes. It was in 2015, that Facebook revealed that Dr. Kogan had turned over his research to Cambridge Analytica.

Originally, it was believed that only 50 million users were affected. According to The Facebook Timeline of Scandal and Strife, written by Justin Sanders in 2019 on creativefuture.org, “…Facebook told everyone that Cambridge Analytica had information on around 50 million users. Today, Mark Zuckerberg tells reporters that figure is actually, probably closer to, oh, 87 million users.” As it turns out, there was a much bigger number of individuals impacted. The presidential campaign may have been influenced by these targeted adds. Those who voted for Trump and are pleased with his presidency, may find this hack or data breach to have been a good thing. Although, this does imply that Facebook has permitted the violation of the digital privacy of 87 million people, which I think is something that everyone can agree to be a negative outcome. It also means that many of these voters may have been manipulated in ways that are not of sound judgment.

According to, Ethics Defined: Utilitarianism, by McCombs School of Business in 2018, “Utilitarianism holds that the most ethical choice is the one that will produce the greatest good for the greatest number.” Dr. Kogan may have been thinking of his actions through this lens. He knew that he was going to be violating the privacy and rights of millions of people, but he decided to do so anyways. Perhaps in his eyes, getting Trump voted into office was for the greater good. Of course, it harmed a large number of people, but the benefits outweighed the cost. To Dr. Kogan this was a risk and a tradeoff. He had no idea what kind of president Trump would be when he was
elected but based off the information in his present situation, he may have decided that Trump becoming elected would be the best outcome. To him this might have been a way of benefiting many while harming a few.

I disagree with your ethical analysis of Brittney Kaiser. I don't think she was following a Virtue Approach. I believe her actions were more closely related to Deontology. If you watch the video provided by our professor from McCombs School of Business, titled Ethics Defined: Deontology, from 2018, it states “It just requires that people follow the rules and do their duty.” I believe this is how Brittney Kaiser was acting. At some level, she knew what she was doing was wrong. She knew that Cambridge Analytica was harming others, but she was just doing her job. She was following the rules. The only reason she would make herself out to be a whistleblower later was for reasons of self-preservation. I believe it had nothing to do with virtue theory. I have quote from Kaiser on the article, Brittany Kaiser’s work with Cambridge Analytica helped elect Donald Trump. She’s hoping the world will forgive her, written by the Washington Post in 2019. It states “I used to make excuses to my friends and family on why I was there and that it was okay to be working with these people and that what they were doing wasn't all that bad, and I was just doing my job.” She felt that she was doing her duty. As soon as the case blew up, she tried to look for a way out. She could have exposed Cambridge Analytica earlier, but she chose not to.