

Ethics

Part 1, Part 2, Additions and extensions

Matthew J. Salganik
Department of Sociology
Princeton University





- 1) Introduction
- 2) Observing behavior
- 3) Asking questions
- 4) Running experiments
- 5) Mass collaboration
- 6) Ethics
- Part 1, Part 2, Additions and extensions
- 7) The future

Computational social scientists should care about research ethics

Computational social scientists should care about research ethics

- ▶ fear-based reasons

Computational social scientists should care about research ethics

- ▶ fear-based reasons
- ▶ hope-based reasons

Computational social scientists should care about research ethics

- ▶ fear-based reasons
- ▶ hope-based reasons
- ▶ we have no choice

I want you to be able to:

- ▶ design ethically thoughtful research

I want you to be able to:

- ▶ design ethically thoughtful research
- ▶ explain your decisions to others

Two existing approaches:

- ▶ Rules-based approach

Two existing approaches:

- ▶ Rules-based approach
- ▶ Ad hoc approach

Two existing approaches:

- ▶ Rules-based approach
- ▶ Ad hoc approach

My preferred approach:

- ▶ Principles-based approach

Three examples

Examples:

- ▶ Emotional contagion

Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks

Adam D. I. Kramer^{a,1}, Jamie E. Guillory^{b,2}, and Jeffrey T. Hancock^{b,c}

^aCore Data Science Team, Facebook, Inc., Menlo Park, CA 94025; and Departments of ^bCommunication and ^cInformation Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1320040111>

Examples:

- ▶ Emotional contagion
- ▶ Tastes, Ties, and Time

Tastes, ties, and time: A new social network dataset using Facebook.com

Kevin Lewis^{a,*}, Jason Kaufman^a, Marco Gonzalez^a, Andreas Wimmer^b, Nicholas Christakis^a

^a Department of Sociology, Harvard University, United States

^b Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles, United States

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2008.07.002>

Examples:

- ▶ Emotional contagion
- ▶ Tastes, Ties, and Time
- ▶ **Encore**

Encore: Lightweight Measurement of Web Censorship with Cross-Origin Requests

Sam Burnett

School of Computer Science, Georgia Tech
sam.burnett@gatech.edu

Nick Feamster

Department of Computer Science, Princeton
feamster@cs.princeton.edu

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2785956.2787485>

What's the problem?

- ▶ Increasing power

What's the problem?

- ▶ Increasing power
- ▶ Inconsistent and overlapping rules, norms, and expectations

What's the problem?

- ▶ Increasing power
- ▶ Inconsistent and overlapping rules, norms, and expectations
 - ▶ Rules are slow to change

What's the problem?

- ▶ Increasing power
- ▶ Inconsistent and overlapping rules, norms, and expectations
 - ▶ Rules are slow to change
 - ▶ Little agreement about key concepts (e.g., privacy)

What's the problem?

- ▶ Increasing power
- ▶ Inconsistent and overlapping rules, norms, and expectations
 - ▶ Rules are slow to change
 - ▶ Little agreement about key concepts (e.g., privacy)
 - ▶ Blending of contexts

Ethical Frameworks

Consequentialism
Deontology



Principles

Respect for Persons
Beneficence
Justice
Respect for Law and Public Interest



Rules

Common Rule

► Respect for persons

Respect for persons:
Participants decide not you

- ▶ Respect for persons
- ▶ Beneficence

Beneficence:

Minimize risk, maximize benefits, then decide

- ▶ Respect for persons
- ▶ Beneficence
- ▶ Justice

Justice:
distribution of burdens and benefits of research

Justice:

distribution of burdens and benefits of research

- ▶ poorly education and disenfranchised citizens
- ▶ prisoners
- ▶ institutionalized and mentally disabled children
- ▶ old and debilitated hospital patients

Justice:

distribution of burdens and benefits of research

- ▶ poorly education and disenfranchised citizens
- ▶ prisoners
- ▶ institutionalized and mentally disabled children
- ▶ old and debilitated hospital patients

Also includes access to benefits of research

- ▶ Respect for persons
- ▶ Beneficence
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Respect for Law and Public Interest

Respect for Law and Public Interest:

- ▶ compliance
- ▶ transparency-based accountability

- ▶ Respect for persons
- ▶ Beneficence
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Respect for Law and Public Interest

How do you balance these four principles?

- ▶ Consequentialism (focus on ends)
- ▶ Deontology (focus on means)

- ▶ Consequentialism (focus on ends)
- ▶ Deontology (focus on means)

A few things to keep in mind:

- ▶ Both of these approaches can be taken to extremes

- ▶ Consequentialism (focus on ends)
- ▶ Deontology (focus on means)

A few things to keep in mind:

- ▶ Both of these approaches can be taken to extremes
- ▶ Most disagreements are between people taking different approaches

Ethical Frameworks

Consequentialism
Deontology



Principles

Respect for Persons
Beneficence
Justice
Respect for Law and Public Interest



Rules

Common Rule

Applying these ideas can be tricky, in part 2 I will:

- ▶ discuss 4 areas of difficulty
- ▶ offer 3 practical suggestions

Thank you