



# The ethical perspective

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# Main topics

1. Introduction. Why care about privacy?
2. Digital profiles
- 3. The ethical perspective: Fairness, harm & autonomy**
4. The economic perspective: Free markets & competition
5. The psychological perspective: Cognition & emotions
6. The sociological perspective: Communities & ideologies
7. Role: Users. Curation & Privacy-enhancing tools
8. Role: Experts. Whistleblowing & Collective action
9. Role: Policymakers. GDPR & Single Digital Market

# Take away – Course 1

- Why?
  - Privacy is not cake: Tech is downgrading human autonomy
  - Why now? Emerging policies, investigations, NGO collective action
  - Who cares?
- Sensemaking: Four perspectives
  - Ethical | Economic | Psychological | Sociological
- Taking action: Three roles
  - User | Expert | Policy-maker
- Privacy = choice in the new world order
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution
  - Digital infrastructures & Platform capitalism
  - Surveillance capitalism

# Take away – Course 2

- Illusion of control: Data vs. metadata
- Data flows are floods, not trickles
  - Legal harvesting at scale
  - Exposures & leaks
  - Data & China
- Digital profiles
- So what?
  - We are mined for time and attention
  - We are gently nudged in thought and action
  - We are replaced: automation
- Taking action
  - Critical technology analysis
  - Regulating tech, making tech & using tech

# Outline – Course 3

## 1. Ethical reflection

- Norms, principles, values
- Digital relativism
- Learned helplessness

## 2. Ethical analysis

- Highlighting the values at stake: fairness, harm, autonomy
- Ethical vs. impact analysis: economics, psychology and sociology

## 3. Examples of ethical analysis

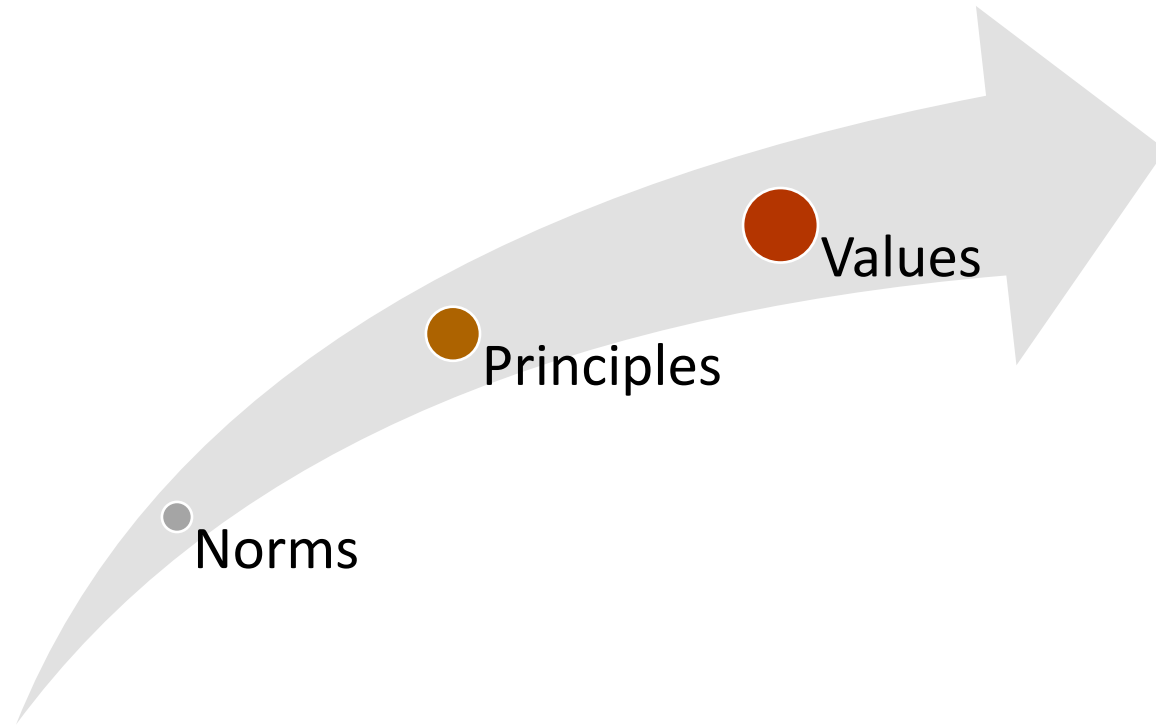
- Privacy and fairness: platform capitalism
- Privacy and harm: addiction to smartphones and social media
- Privacy and autonomy: surveillance capitalism, misinformation

A photograph of four apples on a wooden surface. Three are whole and red, and one is sliced in half, showing the core. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Norms, principles, values

Ethical reflection

# Ethical reflection: How should we act?



- Respect norms
  - Also: defy norms!
- Live by principles
- Pursue & balance values



What social norms  
are relevant for us,  
today?



# Norms | Principles | Values

- Wear a mask | Protect others & self | Health, solidarity
- Go on color green, wait on red | Avoid injuries, smooth traffic | Health, solidarity
- Do not lie | Be truthful | Truth, authenticity, trust
- Give to charity | Support others | Solidarity, intimacy
- Consume less, do not pollute | Save nature | Natural beauty & health
- Buy Romanian products | Help the Romanian economy | Welfare & nation
- Work hard | Prove yourself & Make a difference | Character strength
- Pray / Party / Travel / Read | Live a meaningful live | Religious spirituality, pleasure, experience, wisdom

## How should we act?

- Norms: respect or defy?
  - Go on color green
  - Wait on color red
- Principles
  - Coordinate action with others
  - Avoid harm through collisions
  - Gain time for self and others
  - Maintain awareness
- Values
  - Health
  - Time



# Norms vs. principles & values

- Norm: a driver should signal others on the highway the proximity of a Police car
- Principle 1: keep community solidarity, help others
- Value: solidarity, help
- Principle 2: collective safety through speed limits
- Value: traffic safety

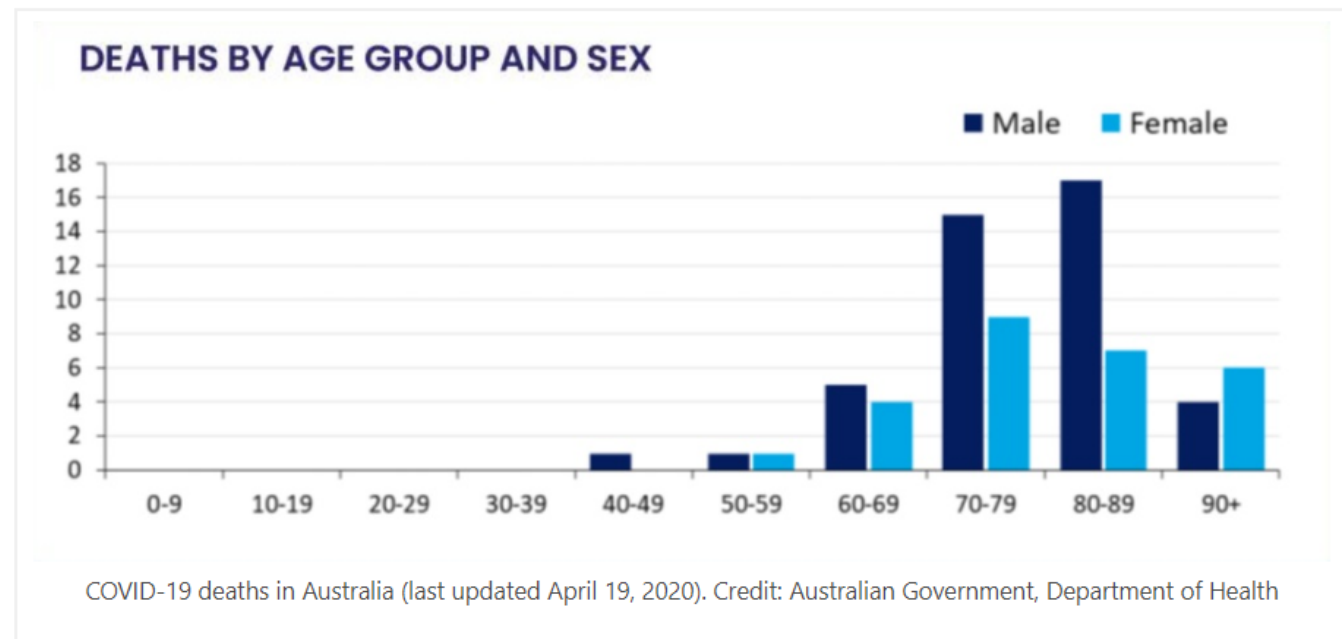


# Ethical perspective: in pursuit of values | 1

- **Difference** vs. fairness
- One major variable in severity of COVID-19 is age. But this can't explain the sex bias seen globally because the increased male fatality rate is the same in each age group from 30 to 90+
- Source: Australia Science Channel

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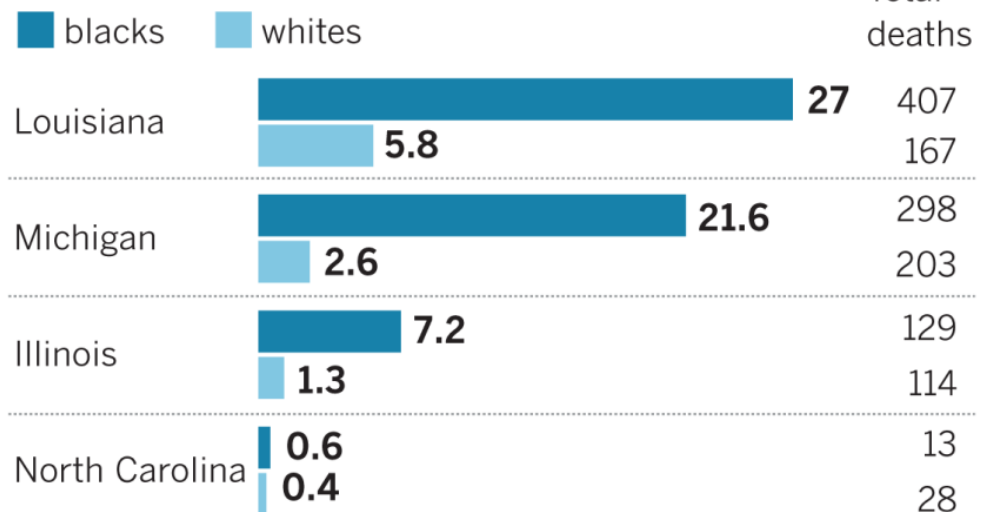
# Ethical perspective: in pursuit of values | 2

- Difference vs. **fairness**
- “In Michigan, black people have died at more than eight times the rate of white people. In Illinois, they have died at nearly six times the rate. In Louisiana, the difference is fivefold.”
- Graph source: Jarvie & Hennesy-Fiske 2020

## Coronavirus deaths and race

COVID-19 is disproportionately killing black Americans, according to data released by several states.

### Deaths per 100,000



Death totals as of Tuesday afternoon.

State governments, U.S. Census Bureau

Lorena Elebee / Los Angeles Times

## Digital relativism

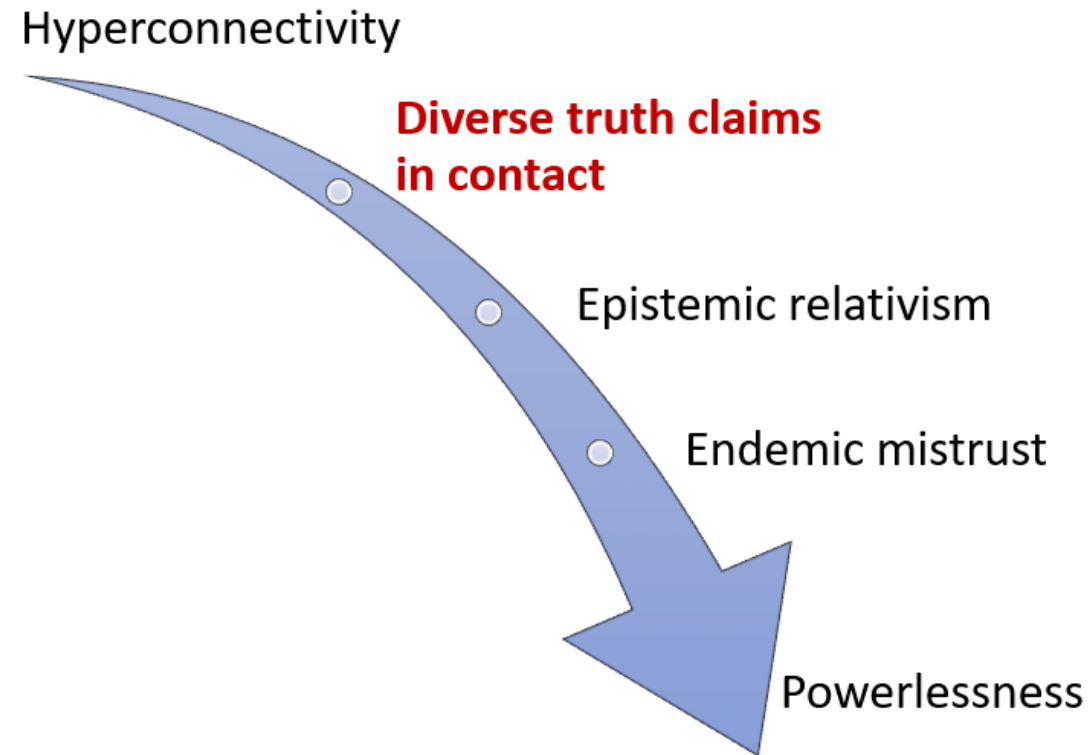
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- What principles and values are right?
- The Internet: polyphony at scale
- Divergent worlds in close proximity
- Mistrust
- Powerlessness

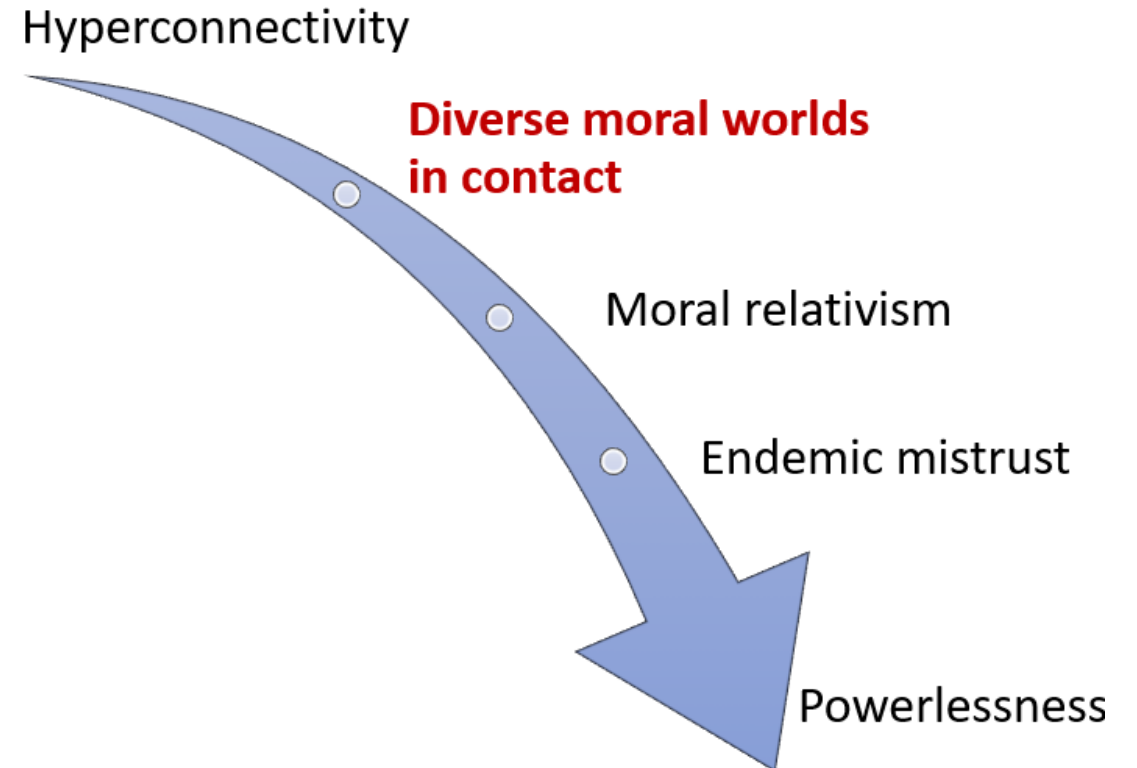


# Digital relativism | 2

## Expertise relativism

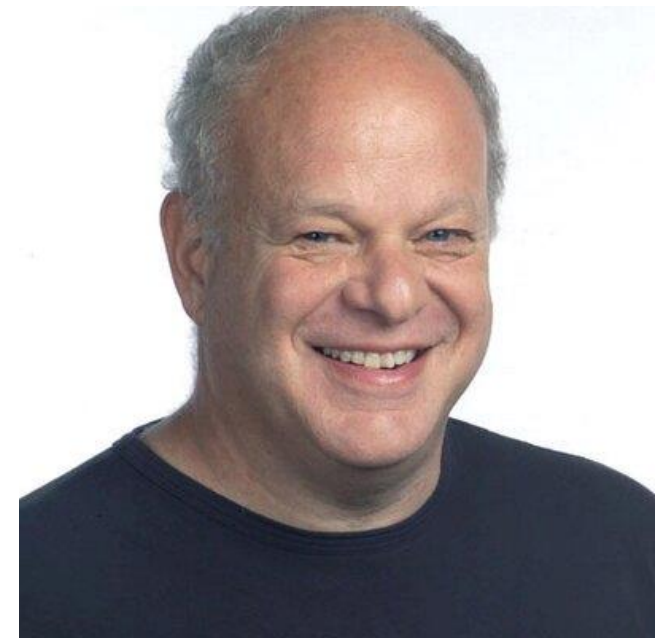


## Moral relativism




# Learned helplessness

- Martin Seligman: research on dogs subjected to electric shocks (in 1967)
- Learned helplessness = “interference with adaptive responding produced by inescapable shock” ([Seligman 1972](#))
- Chronically reproducing situations of perceived subjective failure
  - School failure
  - Involvement in abusive relationships
  - Anxiety in social situations
  - Acceptance of persistent prejudice
  - Addictions







How do you react  
when you receive  
fake news in social  
media groups?



Ethical analysis of tech  
controversies

# Tech controversies

- Privacy, digital surveillance and algorithmic regulation
- Digital tech, attention spans and instant gratification
- Misinformation, fake news
- Filter bubbles and echo chambers, digital polarization
- Hate speech and online harassment
- Intellectual property and digital piracy
- The gig economy

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## Ethical perspective

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- **Conflicting** norms, principles and values
- Should we post our emotions?
  - Self-expression and comfort vs. vulnerability through profiling
  - Gaining through profiling?
- Should we use Tiktok?
  - Self-expression vs. supporting an abusive Govt.

## Is Facebook Targeting Ads at Sad Teens?

The social network appears to leverage sensitive user data to aim ads at teenagers who say they feel “anxious” and “worthless.”

by **Michael Reilly**

May 1, 2017

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## Ethical perspective: focus on values

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- Fairness
- Welfare / Harm
- Autonomy




# Facebook completely bans QAnon and labels it a 'militarized social movement'

*Pages, groups, Instagram accounts, and other content now banned across all platforms*

By [Nick Statt](#) | [@nickstatt](#) | Oct 6, 2020, 5:28pm EDT





*What's at stake in  
allowing / banning  
QAnon groups on  
social media?*

# Ethical vs. impact analysis

Ethics \ Science	Economics	Psychology	Sociology
<b>Fairness</b>	Platform capitalism: unfair distribution of information, power, and wealth  Data dividends	Unequal quality of digital engagement  Enhanced vs. diminished cognition & abilities	Algorithmic biases  Unequal access to digitalization
<b>Harm</b>	Platform capitalism: harm to competitors  Gig & ghost economies: harm to working people	Online harassment  Self-harm related to social media consumption	Polarization  Mistrust in democracy and expertise  Decrease in social capital & public goods
<b>Autonomy</b>	Surveillance capitalism: gradual reduction of free choice through nudging (prediction products)	Addiction to social media and digital stimuli  Decreased control over our attention and time	Filter bubbles & misinformation machines: decreased control on information flows



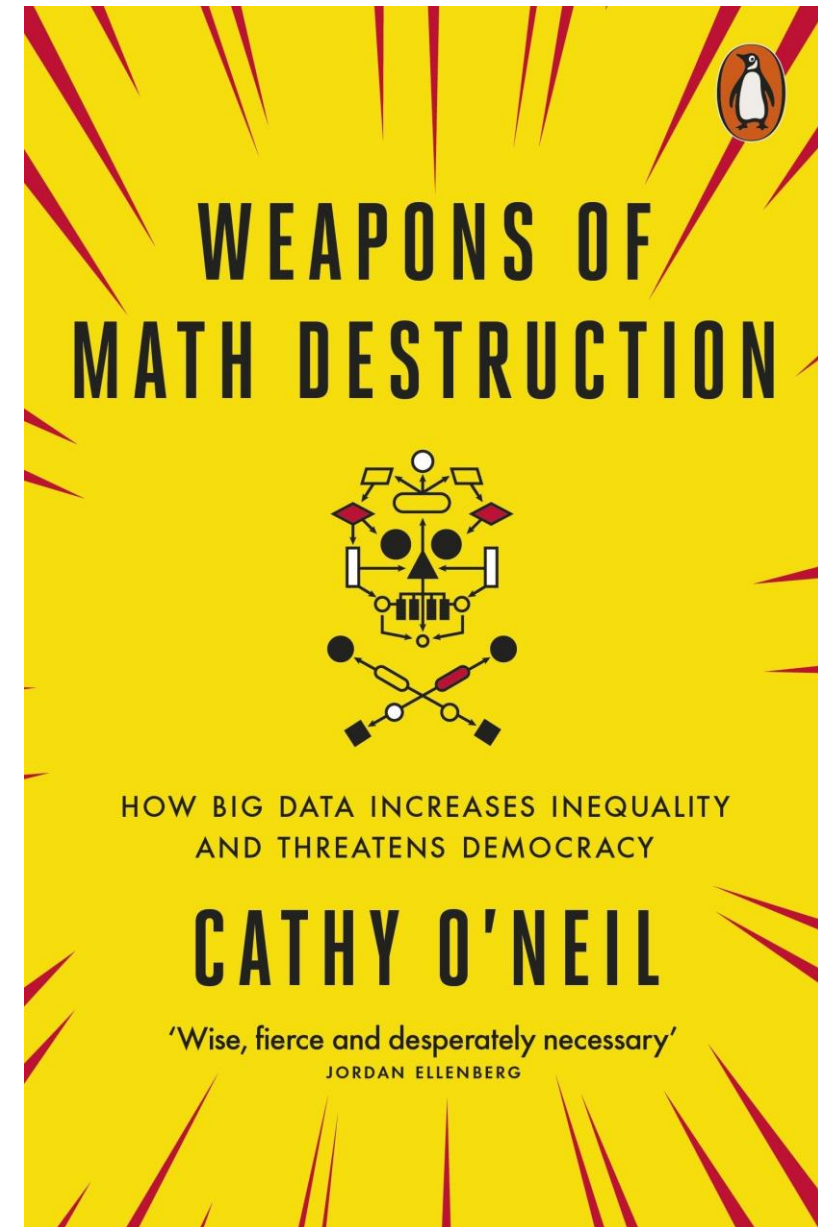
A still life composition featuring several slices of orange, a star anise, and a bundle of cinnamon sticks tied with twine. The items are arranged on a wooden surface with a piece of burlap cloth. The scene is dimly lit, creating a warm, rustic atmosphere.

# 3. Examples of analysis

Privacy & Fairness, Harm, Autonomy

## 3.1 Privacy & Fairness

- Data dividends: who gets them?
  - Unfair distribution of wealth in platform capitalism
- Algorithmic bias
  - Credit
  - Education
  - Policing
  - Justice

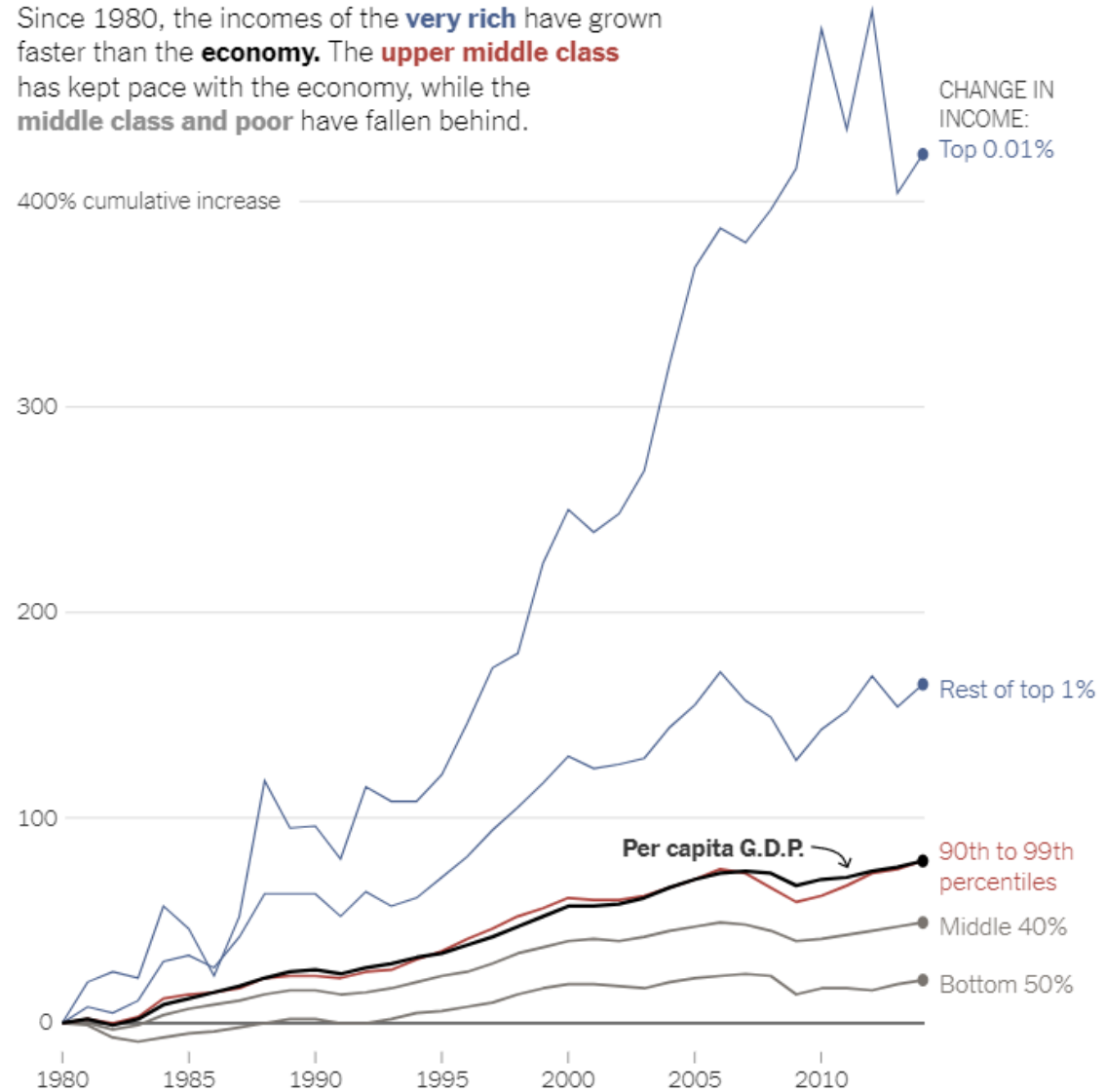


# Unfair distribution of wealth

The top 1% takes most of the newly created wealth in the USA

## The New York Times

Since 1980, the incomes of the **very rich** have grown faster than the **economy**. The **upper middle class** has kept pace with the economy, while the **middle class and poor** have fallen behind.



Note: Incomes are after taxes and include government transfers. - Sources: Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman (incomes); Bureau of Economic Analysis (G.D.P.) - By The New York Times

# Unfair grades: Algorithmic bias in UK 2020

- Algorithmic bias = Unfair privilege deriving from the data, success criteria, or other elements of the algorithmic learning & decision-making
- Large vs. small class = ?
- “determining your future based on someone else’s past has much greater implications” ([The Conversation](#))
- Other: [Wiki page](#)



# The “averaging society”

- “Algorithms supported by machine learning aim not to replicate the decisions of experts but rather to replicate the average decision-making from past data.
- This logic of averaging society is dangerous for a society that values individual creativity and achievement.”

[\(The Conversation\)](#)



## Unfairness of the Gig & Ghost Economy

- Creation of a large working force which receives the crumbs of digital capitalism
  - Low wages
  - No social security
  - No career path
  - Vulnerability to abusive customers
  - Dependency on platforms' rules



**/// I'm a delivery rider with suspected coronavirus. I haven't received a penny in help**




***Greg Howard***

People like me are key workers, yet we still have no safety net from the government and face poverty if we self-isolate, writes Greg Howard

🕒 3:46 PM

# Privacy & Harm

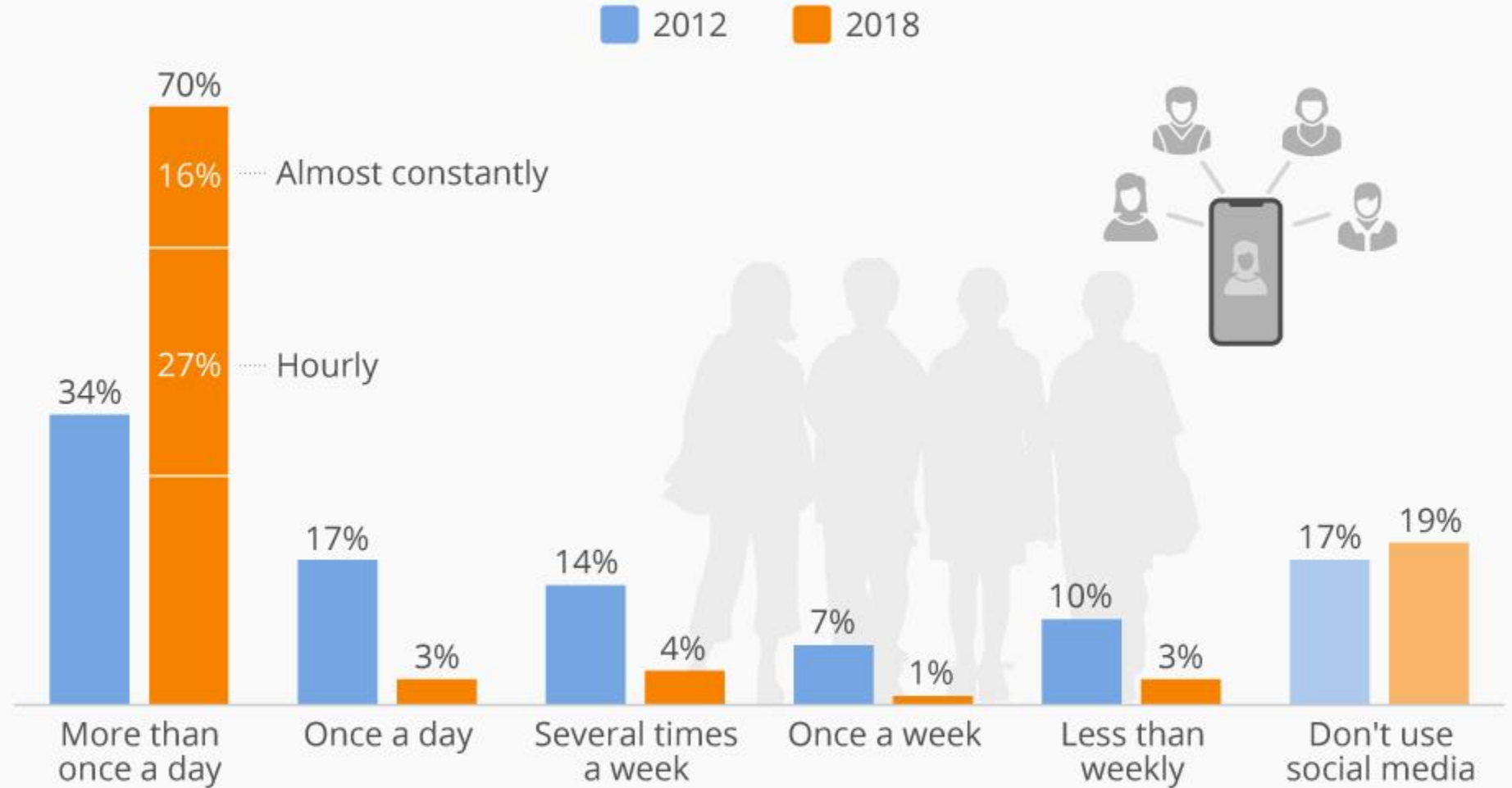
- Norwegian Consumer Council 2020 on AdTech harms:
  - discrimination and exclusion
  - data being used for unknowable purposes
  - widespread fraud
  - chilling effects of massive commercial surveillance systems
  - erosion of trust in the digital industry

App	Summary of findings
 Clue	Sends birth year to <b>Amplitude, Apptimize, and Braze</b> . Sends Advertising ID to <b>Adjust, Amplitude, and Facebook</b> .
 Grindr	Sends GPS coordinates to <b>AdColony, Braze, Bucksense, MoPub, OpenX, Smaato, PubNative, Vungle, and others</b> . Sends the IP address to <b>AppNexus and Bucksense</b> , and information about "relationship type" to <b>Braze</b> . Sends Advertising ID to all of these third parties and others, except <b>Braze</b> .
 Happn	Sends country, gender and age segment of the user to <b>Google</b> . Sends Advertising ID to <b>Adjust and Facebook</b> .
 Muslim: Qibla Finder	Sends IP address to <b>Appodeal</b> . Sends Advertising ID to <b>AppLovin, Appodeal, Facebook, and Liftoff</b> .
 My days	Sends GPS coordinates and Wi-Fi access point information to <b>Neura, Placed, and Placer</b> . Sends IP address and a list of installed apps on the phone to <b>Placed</b> . Sends Advertising ID to <b>AppLovin, Liftoff, Google, Ogury Presage, and Placed</b> .
 My Talking Tom 2	Sends IP address to <b>Mobfox, PubNative, and Rubicon Project</b> . Sends Advertising ID to <b>AppsFlyer, AppLovin, Facebook, IQzone, ironSource, Mobfox, Outfit7, and Rubicon Project</b> .
 OkCupid	Sends GPS coordinates and answers to personal questions to <b>Braze</b> . Sends detailed device information to <b>AppsFlyer</b> . Sends Advertising ID to <b>AppsFlyer, Facebook and Kochava</b> .
 Perfect365	Sends various location data such as GPS coordinates and Wi-Fi access point information to <b>Fysical, Safegraph, and Vungle</b> . Sends GPS coordinates unencrypted to <b>Receptiv</b> . Sends Advertising ID to <b>Amazon, Chocolate, Facebook, Fluxloop, Fyber, Fysical, InMobi, Inner-Active, Ogury Presage, Safegraph, Receptiv, Unacast, Unity3d, and Vungle</b> .
 Tinder	Sends GPS position and "target gender" to <b>AppsFlyer and LeanPlum</b> . Sends Advertising ID to <b>AppsFlyer, Branch, Facebook, and Salesforce (KruX)</b> .
 Wave Keyboard	Sends Advertising ID to <b>Crashlytics, Facebook, Flurry, OneSignal</b> .

Privacy & mental health harms

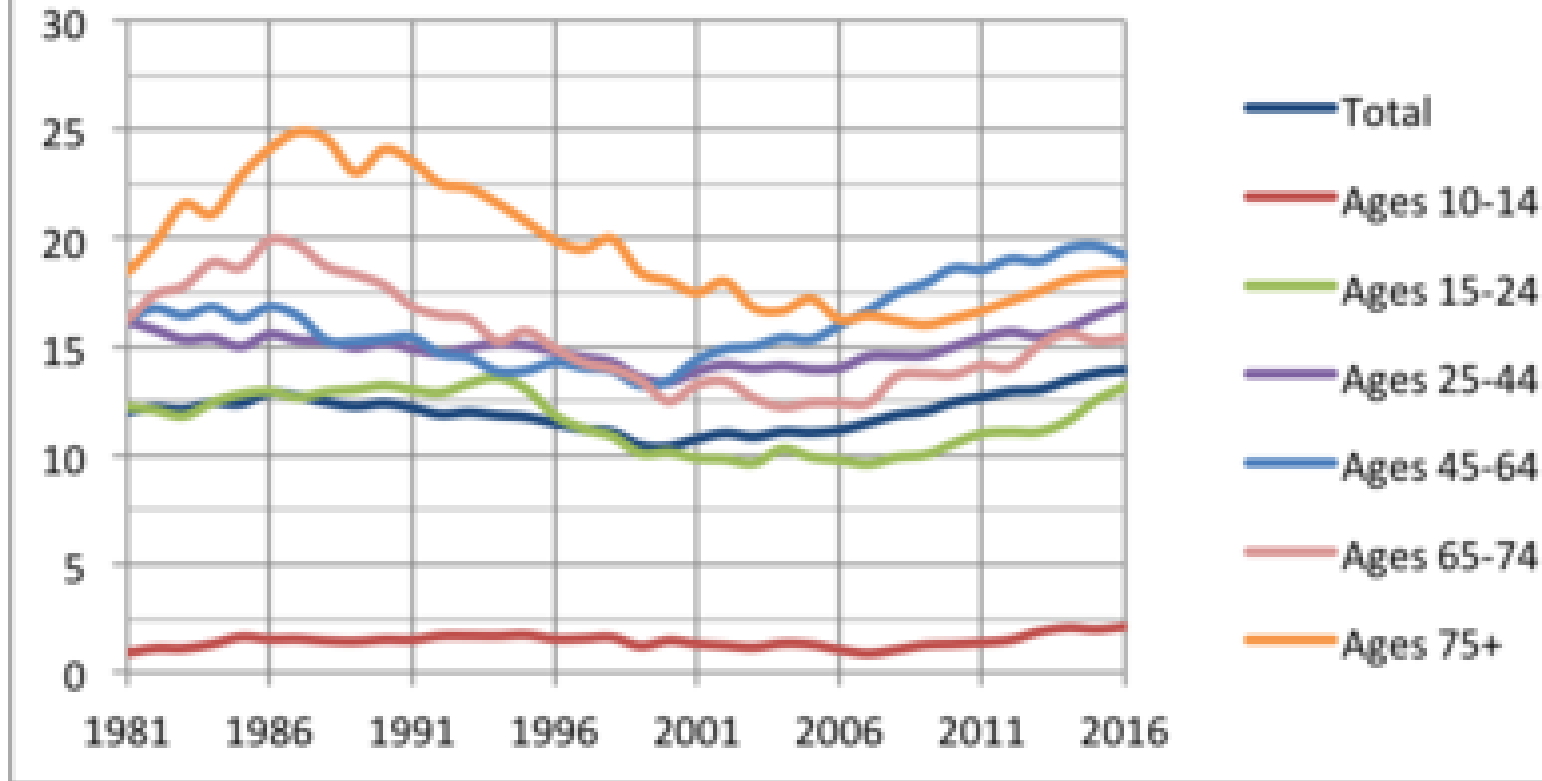
# Teens' Social Media Usage Is Drastically Increasing

Percentage of 13- to 17-year-olds in the U.S. who check social media...





## Crude U.S. suicide rate by age, 1981-2016

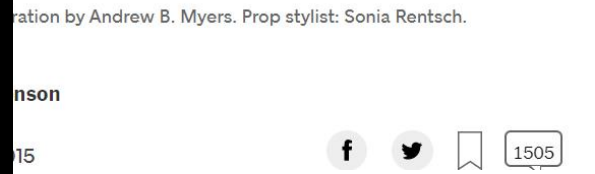
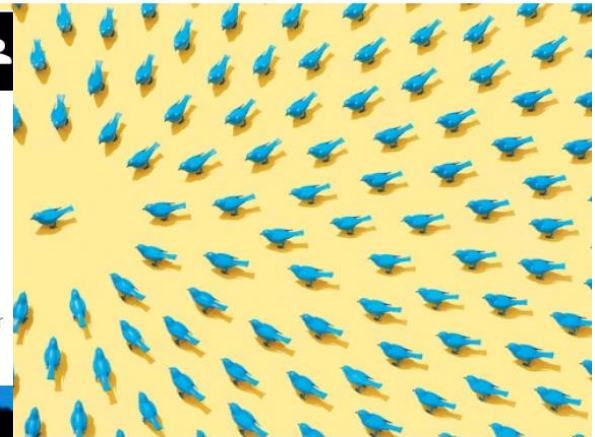


Deaths per 100.000 people

US suicide  
rate by age,  
1980-2016

# Harms from social media violence: Twitter outrage

- Welfare/Harm
  - Harm for exposed users
  - Harm for perpetrators



## 3.3 Privacy & Autonomy

- Digital addiction (see above)
- Surveillance capitalism
- Filter bubbles & misinformation

LILY HAY NEWMAN

SECURITY 03.27.2020 12:07 PM

### Google Bans Infowars Android App Over Coronavirus Claims

Apple kicked Alex Jones out of the App Store in 2018. The Google Play Store has finally followed suit.



# Loss of autonomy through nudging

- Jaron Lanier (The Social Dilemma): the resource is not our time or attention, but our **slight modification in behavior**
- Nudging through...
  - Targeted ads
  - Targeted messages
  - Information bubbles
  - Dark patterns in choice presentation



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# Shoshanna Zuboff: Surveillance capitalism

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- Data – Prediction products – Behavior modification
  - Business model
  - Scale
  - Consolidation
- Interviews: [The Intercept](#), [The Guardian](#)

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# Surveil-lance Cap-i-tal-ism, n.

- **1.** A new economic order that claims human experience as free raw material for hidden commercial practices of extraction, prediction, and sales; **2.** A parasitic economic logic in which the production of goods and services is subordinated to a new global architecture of behavioral modification; **3.** A rogue mutation of capitalism marked by concentrations of wealth, knowledge, and power unprecedented in human history; **4.** The foundational framework of a surveillance economy; (..) **8.** An expropriation of critical human rights that is best understood as a coup from above: an overthrow of the people's sovereignty.

# Surveillance capitalism

- “Once we searched Google, but now Google searches us. Once we thought of digital services as free, but now surveillance capitalists think of us as free.”
- “Economies of action”: systems designed to modify our behavior for commercial outcomes
- “It is no longer enough to automate information flows about us; the goal now is to automate us.”
- “We are trapped in an involuntary merger of personal necessity and economic extraction”

## **THE AGE OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM**

—  
**THE FIGHT FOR A  
HUMAN FUTURE  
AT THE NEW  
FRONTIER OF POWER**

—  
**SHOSHANA  
ZUBOFF**



ORTODOX.INFO.RO

### Leqătura dintre tehnologia 5G și coronavirus

Atunci când încercăm să înțelegem fenomenul coronavirusului, treb...

39

12 Comments 62 Shares



ORTODOX.INFO.RO

### Coronavirusul vindecat la Timișoara cu aspirină și nurofen, exact ca o gripă!

65

21 Comments 283 Shares



# Fără Botniță-Jos dictatura medicală 187.545 Members

Public group · 776 members



Fără Botniță-Jos dictatura medicală 187.545 Members



Andra Andrei

22 October at 07:39 · 🌐

A murit un voluntar in timpul testarii in faza a 3-a vaccinului facut de Astrazeneca.

Mai e cineva care vrea sa faca vaccin?

Intreb pentru un prieten.

👍 🤔 😞 21

8 comments 8 shares

👍 Like

➦ Share

The Americas

## Volunteer in Oxford coronavirus vaccine trial dies, reportedly did not receive experimental vaccine



# Business model vs. misinformation

- For the digital platforms we are not citizens, but eyeballs with credit cards (Voinea 2020)
- The AdTech business model needs large uncritical audiences
- Misinformation is incentivized by business models



# Take away – Course 3

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# References | 1

- Greg Sargent, 9 Dec.2019. [The massive triumph of the rich, illustrated by stunning new data](#). Washington Post
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