Social Chemistry 101
Learning to Reason about Social and Moral Norms

Maxwell Forbes
Jena D. Hwang
Vered Shwartz
Maarten Sap
Yejin Choi
But first

Vote: most widespread & important NLP tech in 2021?

1. Language Models
2. HMMs
3. Expectation-Maximization (EM)
4. Logistic Regression (AKA max. ent.)
5. CRFs
Today my roommate used the blender at 5am!
Today my roommate used the blender at 5am!

I was...
Today my roommate used the blender at 5am!

I was... in disbelief. I hadn't realized that we could do that. It was so amazing.
Today my roommate used the blender at 5am!

I was... in disbelief. I hadn't realized that we could do that. It was so amazing.

very upset and banged on the door and yelled for her to be quiet.
Today my roommate used the blender at 5am!

I was... in disbelief. I hadn't realized that we could do that. It was so amazing.

very upset and banged on the door and yelled for her to be quiet.

so excited that I got up at 5:15 to go for a run and wept tears of joy!
Communication requires understanding **cultural norms**.
Communication requires understanding cultural norms.

**Social Norms**
E.G. It’s rude to make loud noises during the night.

**Moral Norms**
E.G. It’s important to be considerate of others’ physical needs, like sleep.

**Ethical Norms**
E.G. You should follow household rules for everyone’s benefit.
Social Norms
E.G. It’s rude to make loud noises during the night.

Moral Norms
E.G. It’s important to be considerate of others’ physical needs, like sleep.

Ethical Norms
E.G. You should follow household rules for everyone’s benefit.

Challenging to capture
Who decides? Where do we find them?

Challenging to utilize
How do we use abstract moral rules?
Descriptive norms
E.g., descriptive ethics: have everyday people describe

Challenging to capture
Who decides? Where do we find them?

Challenging to utilize
How do we use abstract moral rules?
Social Norms
E.g. It's rude to make loud noises during the night.

Moral Norms
E.g. It's important to be considerate of others' physical needs.

Ethical Norms
E.g. You should follow household rules for everyone's benefit.

**GROUNDED DESCRIPTIVE NORMS**

Descriptive norms
E.g., descriptive ethics: have everyday people describe

Grounded
Evoked from situations, tied to people involved

Challenging to capture
Who decides? Where do we find them?

Challenging to utilize
How do we use abstract moral rules?
Recent Related Work

**SCRUPLES**
Lourie et al., 2020

Who is morally right?

**ETHICS**
Hendrycks et al., 2020

What is good / bad?

**WOULD YOU RATHER?**
Tay et al., 2020

What do people prefer?

**LIFE RITUALS**
Acharya et al., 2020

Important events across cultures
INTRODUCING

Rules of Thumb (RoTs)

SITUATION

my roommate ran the blender at 5am
INTRODUCING

Rules of Thumb (RoTs)

SITUATION

my roommate ran the blender at 5am

RULE OF THUMB

it’s rude to make loud noises while others are sleeping
INTRODUCING
Rules of Thumb (RoTs)

SITUATION

my roommate ran the blender at 5am

RULE OF THUMB
it's rude to make loud noises while others are sleeping

GROUNDED TO CHARACTER
ACTION
Rules of Thumb (RoTs)

INTRODUCING

Narrator: asking my boyfriend to stop being friends with his ex

SITUATION
Rules of Thumb (RoTs)

INTRODUCING

It's okay to ask your significant other to stop doing something you're uncomfortable with.

RULE-OF-THUMB

Narrator: asking *my boyfriend* to stop being friends with *his ex*.
It’s not right to tell another person who to spend time with.

**RULE-OF-THUMB**

Multiple Perspectives

It's okay to ask your significant other to stop doing something you're uncomfortable with.

**RULE-OF-THUMB**

**Narrator:** asking *my boyfriend* to stop being friends with *his ex*

**SITUATION**
It’s not right to tell another person who to spend time with.

RULE-OF-THUMB

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

It's okay to ask your significant other to stop doing something you're uncomfortable with.

RULE-OF-THUMB

Narrator: asking my boyfriend to stop being friends with his ex

SITUATION

MULTIPLE CHARACTERS

You should make sure your SO doesn't feel like a lower priority than your ex.

RULE-OF-THUMB
Four sources for ~100k situations

1. r/AmITheAsshole
   Lourie et al., 2020
   Asking my boyfriend to stop being friends with his ex

2. r/confessions
   ...

3. ROCStories
   Mostafazadeh et al., 2016
   ...

4. Dear Abby
   Pushy party guests make themselves too much at home
~300k Rules of Thumb
~300k Rules of Thumb

grep "smok"  # preview RoTs about smoking

“Trying to warn a coworker about the dangers of smoking is caring.”

“You should not smoke inside.”

“It’s okay to ask someone not to smoke in your car.”

“It’s bad to expose others to second hand smoke.”

“Depending on where you live, there’s nothing wrong with a little recreational smoke.”
~300k Rules of Thumb
~300k Rules of Thumb

EACH WITH
12 structured attributes
Narrator: asking *my boyfriend* to stop being friends with his ex.

You should *make sure your SO doesn't feel like a lower priority than your ex*. 
Narrator: asking my boyfriend to stop being friends with his ex

You should make sure your SO doesn’t feel like a lower priority than your ex.

- strong
- CULTURAL PRESSURE
- good
- SOCIAL JUDGMENT
- common
- ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT
- legal
- LEGALITY
- hypothetical
- PERFORMING ACTION
- care/harm
- loyalty/betrayal
- MORAL FOUNDATIONS

Perkins and Berkowitz, 1986; Kitts and Chian, 2008 Haidt et al., 1993; Malle et al., 2014 Graham et al., 2009
It's not right to tell another person who to spend time with.

**Narrator:** asking *my boyfriend* to stop being friends with his ex

You should make sure your SO doesn’t feel like a lower priority than your ex.

- **LEGALITY**
  - legal

**RULE-OF-THUMB**

**SITUATION**

**STRUCTURED ANNOTATION**

- **strong**
- **good**
- **common**

- **CULTURAL PRESSURE**
- **SOCIAL JUDGMENT**
- **ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT**

- **hypothetical**
- **PERFORMING ACTION**

- **care/harm**
- **loyalty/betrayal**

- **MORAL FOUNDATIONS**

---

Perkins and Berkowitz, 1986; Kitts and Chian, 2008

Haidt et al., 1993; Malle et al., 2014

Graham et al., 2009
Narrator: asking my boyfriend to stop being friends with his ex.

You should make sure your SO doesn't feel like a lower priority than your ex.

- strong CULTURAL PRESSURE
- good SOCIAL JUDGMENT
- common ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT
- legal LEGALITY
- hypothetical PERFORMING ACTION
- care/harm
- loyalty/betrayal

MORAL FOUNDATIONS

---

Perkins and Berkowitz, 1986; Kitts and Chian, 2008
Haidt et al., 1993; Malle et al., 2014
Graham et al., 2009
SOCIAL-CHEM-101 Dataset

> 4.5 MILLION FREE TEXT + STRUCTURED ANNOTATIONS
... wanting to call the cops on my neighbors ...
… wanting to call the cops on my neighbors …

- letting the authorities know when you are in danger: **LEGAL**
- making trouble in your neighborhood: **TOLERATED**
- stealing things from your neighbors: **ILLEGAL**
... wanting to call the cops on my neighbors ...

- letting the authorities know when you are in danger
- making trouble in your neighborhood
- stealing things from your neighbors
Situation $s$  Attributes $\vec{b}$  Rule-of-Thumb $r$
Forward language modeling

\[ s_1, s_2, s_3, s_e, b_1, b_2, b_3, b_m, r_1, r_2, r_3, \ldots, r_n \]

Situation \( s \) | Attributes \( \tilde{b} \) | Rule-of-Thumb \( r \)
\[ p(r | s, \vec{b}_r) \]
### Social Chemistry 101 — Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation $s$</th>
<th>Rule-of-Thumb $r$</th>
<th>$p(r \mid s)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$s_1$, $s_2$, $s_3$, ... $s_k$</td>
<td>$r_1$, $r_2$, $r_3$, ... $r_n$</td>
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<td>$b_1$, $b_2$, $b_3$, ... $b_m$</td>
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\[ p(r \mid s) \]

\[ p(\vec{b}_r \mid s) \]

\[ p(r \mid s, \vec{b}_r) \]

\[ p(\vec{b}_r \mid s, r) \]

\[ p(r, \vec{b}_r \mid s) \]
“Running the blender at 5am.”

SITUATION

“it’s rude to call the cops on your neighbors”

RULE-OF-THUMB

TOOLBOX

Social Judgment  
Agency  
Anticipated Agreement  
Cultural Pressure  
Legality  
Moral Foundation

STRUCTURED ATTRIBUTES
“Running the blender at 5am.”

“it’s rude to call the cops on your neighbors”

**Social Judgment**

**Cultural Pressure**

**Agency**

**Anticipated Agreement**

**Legality**

**Moral Foundation**

**Structured Attributes**

**Situation**

**Generate Rules-of-Thumb**

**Classify Attributes**

**EASY ✓**
"Running the blender at 5am."

"it's rude to call the cops on your neighbors"

Model picks attributes

$p(r, \vec{b}_r | s)$

0.67 µF1
AVG. ADHERENCE

Structured Attributes

Social Judgment
Agency
Anticipated Agreement
Cultural Pressure
Legality
Moral Foundation

Model must follow attributes

$p(r | s, \vec{b}_r)$

0.63 µF1
AVG. ADHERENCE
Example Outputs

SITUATION
Paying off my husband’s loans without asking

RULE-OF-THUMB
You should help out your partner financially.

RULE-OF-THUMB
It’s expected that partners should agree on how to handle the family finances.

My rating: good job, model: A
Example Outputs

SITUATION
I decided to throw all my bait into the water.

RULE-OF-THUMB
It’s bad to be wasteful.

FROM DATASET

RULE-OF-THUMB
It’s ok to take part in a game of chance.

GENERATED BY MODEL

My rating: pretty nice abstraction, fair point: A
Example Outputs

**Situation:**
Tattooing my boyfriend while he was sleeping

**Rule-of-Thumb:**
You should never put a permanent mark on someone without their consent

**Rule-of-Thumb:**
It's wrong to do something that could hurt your significant other.

My rating: pretty good, but too generic… C+
Social Chemistry 101

maxwellforbes.com/social-chemistry

Takeaway
- ~300k descriptive norms: cultural, moral, and ethical
- dense structural annotations on every instance
- challenging conditional generation task
Multiple characters

It’s not right to tell another person who to spend time with.

**Narrator:** asking **my boyfriend** to stop being friends with his ex

You should make sure your SO doesn’t feel like a lower priority than your ex.
It’s not right to tell another person who to spend time with.

Narrator: asking my boyfriend to stop being friends with his ex

You should make sure your SO doesn’t feel like a lower priority than your ex.

It’s okay to ask your significant other to stop doing something you’re uncomfortable with.

expected/OK
Multiple characters

It's not right to tell another person who to spend time with.

Narrator: asking my boyfriend to stop being friends with his ex

Different perspectives

It's not right to tell another person who to spend time with.

Narrator: asking my boyfriend to stop being friends with his ex

It's okay to ask your significant other to stop doing something you're uncomfortable with.

You should make sure your SO doesn't feel like a lower priority than your ex.

You should make sure your SO doesn't feel like a lower priority than your ex.

Social Chemistry 101
... wanting to call the cops on my neighbors ...
... wanting to call the cops on my neighbors ...
... wanting to call the cops on my neighbors ...

- Social Judgment
  - GOOD: having an open and honest dialogue with your neighbors.
  - EXPECTED: calling the cops when you see a crime.
  - BAD: calling the authorities if your neighbor is being rude.

- Legality
  - LEGAL: letting the authorities know when you are in danger.
  - TOLERATED: making trouble in your neighborhood.
  - ILLEGAL: stealing things from your neighbors.
... wanting to call the cops on my neighbors ...

**Social Judgment**
- **GOOD**
  - having an open and honest dialogue with your neighbors.
- **EXPECTED**
  - calling the cops when you see a crime
- **BAD**
  - calling the authorities if your neighbor is being rude

**Legality**
- **LEGAL**
  - letting the authorities know when you are in danger
- **TOLERATED**
  - making trouble in your neighborhood
- **ILLEGAL**
  - stealing things from your neighbors

**Cultural Pressure**
- **PRESSURE FOR**
  - trying to make everyone comfortable in your home
- **DISCRETIONARY**
  - not being friends with your neighbors
- **PRESSURE AGAINST**
  - calling the cops on your neighbors
... wanting to call the cops on my neighbors ...

Anticipated Agreement
- UNIVERSAL: calling the cops if someone is committing a crime
- COMMON: calling the cops on a stranger disturbing your neighbors
- CONTROVERSIAL: reporting neighbors that are breaking minor laws

Social Judgment
- GOOD: having an open and honest dialogue with your neighbors
- EXPECTED: calling the cops when you see a crime
- BAD: calling the authorities if your neighbor is being rude

Legality
- LEGAL: letting the authorities know when you are in danger
- TOLERATED: making trouble in your neighborhood
- ILLEGAL: stealing things from your neighbors

Cultural Pressure
- PRESSURE FOR: trying to make everyone comfortable in your home
- DISCRETIONARY: not being friends with your neighbors
- PRESSURE AGAINST: calling the cops on your neighbors
It’s not right to tell another person who to spend time with.

It’s okay to ask your significant other to stop doing something you’re uncomfortable with.

You should make sure your SO doesn’t feel like a lower priority than your ex.
Rules of Thumb (RoTs)

**INTRODUCING**

It’s not right to tell another person who to spend time with.

bad authority/subversion

It’s understandable to not want your significant other to be friends with their ex.

expected/OK loyalty/betrayal

It’s okay to ask your significant other to stop doing something you’re uncomfortable with.

expected/OK care/harm

Narrator: asking **my boyfriend** to stop being friends with **his ex**

It’s fine to stay friends with an ex.

expected/OK loyalty/betrayal

You should make sure your SO doesn’t feel like a lower priority than your ex.

good care/harm loyalty/betrayal
Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick.

It's kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.
SITUATION
Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick

ROT
It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.
Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick.

It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.
SITUATION
Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick

It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

ROT BREAKDOWN

ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (ROT)

< 1%  ~5% - 25%  ~ 50%  ~ 75% - 90%  > 99%

ROT CATEGORIZATION

Morality / Ethics  Social Norms

ATTRIBUTE KEY

Grounded  Social

TAKING ACTION

ACTION CANDIDATE

narrator  my GF  no one listed

ATTRIBUTE KEY

Grounded  Social
Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she's sick. It's kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

**Morality / Ethics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROT CATEGORIZATION</th>
<th>Morality / Ethics</th>
<th>Social Norms</th>
<th>Advice</th>
<th>It is what it is</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care / Harm</td>
<td>Fairness / Cheating</td>
<td>Loyalty / Betrayal</td>
<td>Authority / Subversion</td>
<td>Sanctity / Degradation</td>
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**ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (ROT)**

- duties: ~5% – 25%
- allowed: 50%
- forbidden: ~75% – 90%
- illegal: > 99%

**LEGALITY**

- Strong pressure against
- Pressure against
- Discretionary
- Pressure for
- Strong pressure for

**CULTURAL PRESSURE**

- Probably not
- Explicitly not
- Hypothetical
- Probable
- Explicit
SITUATION
Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick

ROT
It's kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

ROT BREAKDOWN

ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (ROT)
- < 1%
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- ~ 50%
- ~ 75% – 90%
- > 99%

ROT CATEGORIZATION

ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (ROT)

Grounded

Social

MORAL FOUNDATIONS
Care / Harm
- Fairness / Cheating
- Loyalty / Betrayal
- Authority / Subversion
- Sanctity / Degradation

MORAL FOUNDATIONS
Social Norms
- Advice
- It is what it is

ROT TARGETING

narrator
my GF
no one listed

LEGALITY

SOCIAL JUDGMENT
SITUATION

Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick

It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

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<tr>
<th>ORIGINAL JUDGMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>it’s kind</td>
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</table>
SITUATION
Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she's sick

It's kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

ROTTING

ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (ROT)

< 1% ~ 5% – 25% ~ 50% ~ 75% – 90% > 99%

ROT CATEGORIZATION

Morality / Ethics Social Norms Advice It is what it is

MORAL FOUNDATIONS

Care / Harm Fairness / Cheating Loyalty / Betrayal Authority / Subversion Sanctity / Degradation

ROT TARGETING

narrator: my GF no one listed

ACTION BREAKDOWN

sacrificing your well-being to take care of a sick person

AGENCY

Agency Experience

ORIGINAL JUDGMENT

it's kind

LEGALITY

Strong pressure against Pressure against Discretionary Pressure for Strong pressure for

CULTURAL PRESSURE

Probably not Explicitly not Hypothetical Probable Explicit

TAKING ACTION

ACTION CANDIDATE

narrator: my GF no one listed

ATTRIBUTE KEY

Grounded Social
Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick. It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.
Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick.

It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

**MORAL FOUNDATIONS**
- Care / Harm
- Fairness / Cheating
- Loyalty / Betrayal
- Authority / Subversion
- Sanctity / Degradation

**ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (ROT)**
- < 1%
- ~5% - 25%
- ~75% - 90%
- > 99%

**GAUS**

**LEGALITY**
- Strong pressure
- Pressure against
- Pressure for
- Strong pressure for

**CULTURAL PRESSURE**
- Probably not
- Explicitly not
- Hypothetical
- Probable
- Explicit

**ACTION BREAKDOWN**

**ACTION CANDIDATE**
- sacrificing your well-being to take care of a sick person

**AGENCY**
- Experience

**ORIGINAL JUDGMENT**
- it’s kind

**SOCIAL JUDGMENT**
- Expected / OK

**ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (SOCIAL JUDGMENT)**
- < 1%
- ~5% - 25%
- ~75% - 90%
- > 99%
Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick. It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

**ROT Breakdown**

**Action Breakdown**

Sacrificing your well-being to take care of a sick person.

**Agency**

- Experience

**Original Judgment**

- It’s kind

**Social Judgment**

- Very bad
- Bad
- Expected / OK: Good
- Very good

**Anticipated Agreement (Social Judgment)**

- < 1%
- ~5% - 25%
- ~50%
- ~75% - 90%
- > 99%

**Legality**

- Illegal
- Tolerated
- Legal
**SITUATION**

Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick

**ROT**

It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

**ROT BREAKDOWN**

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**ROT CATEGORIZATION**

- Morality / Ethics
- Social Norms
- Advice
- It is what it is

**MORAL FOUNDATIONS**

- Care / Harm
- Fairness / Cheating
- Loyalty / Betrayal
- Authority / Subversion
- Sanctity / Degradation

**ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (ROT)**

- narrator
- my GF
- no one listed

**ACTION BREAKDOWN**

**ACTION**

sacrificing your well-being to take care of a sick person

**AGENCY**

- Agency
- Experience
- it’s kind

**SOCIAL JUDGMENT**

- Very bad
- Bad
- Expected / OK
- Good
- Very good

**ANTIQUATED AGREEMENT (SOCIAL JUDGMENT)**

- < 1%
- ~ 5% - 25%
- ~ 50%
- ~ 75% - 90%
- > 99%

**LEGALITY**

- Illegal
- Tolerated
- Legal

**CULTURAL PRESSURE**

- Strong pressure against
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SITUATION
Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick

ROT
It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

ROT BREAKDOWN
- ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (ROT)
  - < 1%
  - ~5% - 25%
  - ~50%
  - ~75% - 90%
  - > 99%

- ROT CATEGORIZATION
  - Morality / Ethics
  - Social Norms
  - Advice
  - It is what it is

- MORAL FOUNDATIONS
  - Care / Harm
  - Fairness / Cheating
  - Loyalty / Betrayal
  - Authority / Subversion
  - Sanctity / Degradation

- ROT TARGETING
  - narrator
  - my GF
  - no one listed

ACTION BREAKDOWN
ACTION
sacrificing your well-being to take care of a sick person

- AGENCY
  - Agency
  - Experience

- SOCIAL JUDGMENT
  - Very bad
  - Bad
  - Expected / OK
  - Good
  - Very good

- ANTICIPATED AGREEMENT (SOCIAL JUDGMENT)
  - < 1%
  - ~5% - 25%
  - ~50%
  - ~75% - 90%
  - > 99%

- LEGALITY
  - Illegal
  - Tolerated
  - Legal

- CULTURAL PRESSURE
  - Strong pressure against
  - Pressure against
  - Discretionary
  - Pressure for
  - Strong pressure for

- ACTION CANDIDATE
  - narrator
  - my GF
  - no one listed
SITUATION

Narrator: Not wanting to be around my GF when she’s sick

ROT

It’s kind to sacrifice your well-being to take care of a sick person.

<table>
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