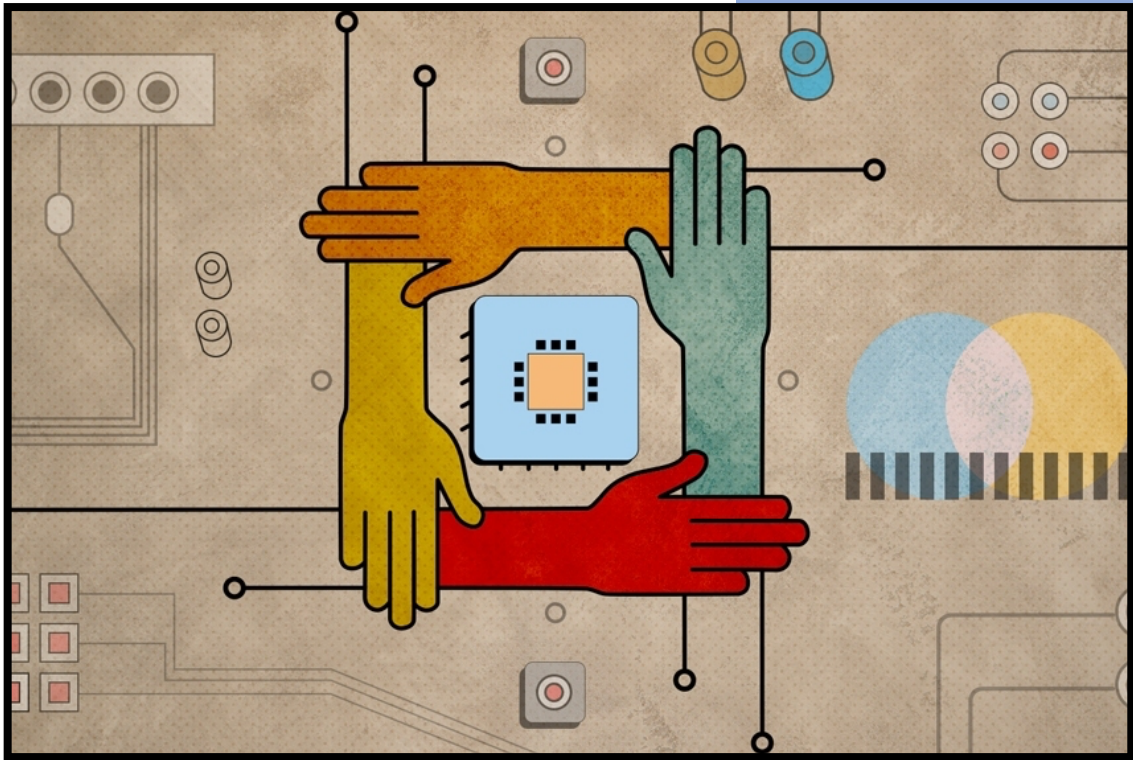


# Ethics



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# Portfolio Assignment 1 – Ethical models

There are many ethical decision-making models in the world. These models help people to analyze moral dilemmas in a structured way and make responsible choices. I chose to compare two models, namely the social constructivist model of Cottone (2001) and the collaborative model of Davis (1997).

The social constructivist model is a model that assumes that reality and therefore ethical choices are socially constructed. Decision-making takes place through interaction and consensus between those involved, with dialogue and joint meaning-making at the center (Johnson et al., 2021). This model clearly emphasizes context and relational processes instead of individual rationality. Example: a psychologist doubts whether confidential information of a child under 18 should be shared with the parents. He discusses this dilemma with colleagues, the parents, and the child itself. Together they negotiate the best approach, where consensus is sought instead of a one-sided decision.

The other model, called the collaborative model, also focuses on cooperation but with a more practical focus. It stimulates inclusive decision-making by explicitly involving the input of clients, colleagues, and other stakeholders. The goal of the model is to reduce power differences and to make decisions based on group consensus (Davis, 1997). Example: a hospital team wonders if patient medical data can be used for AI research. The model would prescribe that doctors, patients, ethicists, and data analysts meet together. In this way, the interests of all involved are included in the final decision.

The similarity between the two models is that they both emphasize that ethical decision-making is not an individual activity but arises in social interaction. They also both talk about the importance of dialogue, cooperation, and consensus to come to morally responsible choices.

Even though the models look very similar, there are still clear differences. The social constructivist model has a strong theoretical basis and sees ethics itself as a process of shared meaning-making. This makes it a philosophically rich model but less applicable in the real world. The collaborative model is more pragmatic and offers concrete guidelines to involve stakeholders and balance power relations. This makes it much more accessible for daily use in professional practice (Johnson et al., 2021).

My preference is therefore the collaborative model. The model is much better usable for professionals who work in teams and have to make direct choices. The emphasis of the model on inclusivity and participation makes it more practically relevant.

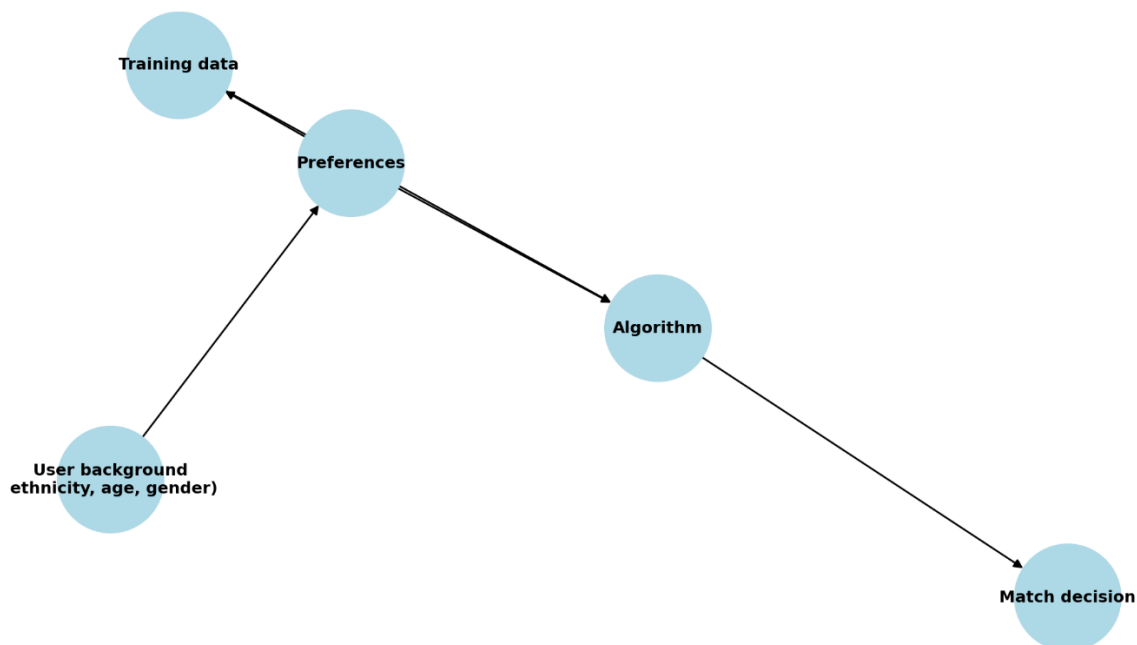
In the context of data ethics the collaborative model is also the most suitable. Data-related dilemmas such as privacy, for example, affect different stakeholders. It is therefore crucial to involve users, developers, policymakers, and other stakeholder groups in the decision-making. The collaborative model also offers concrete tools for this. The social constructivist model, on the other hand, helps to understand that ethical norms are socially determined, but it misses the practical structure that is needed for policy development and also implementation.

## Portfolio Assignment 2 - Casestudy dating app Breeze

The casestudy is about a (Dutch) dating app. This app matches users via an algorithm that picks out a likely match and sends them on a date. The problem was that there was a suspicion that the algorithm was biased and the possibility of discrimination existed (College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2023).

Because Breeze (the dating app) connects users based on an algorithm that determines whether they are a good match, a bias is introduced. This happens since, for example, if historical data is used that observes certain preferences of people based on demographic characteristics, it can influence the outcomes. As a result, people with a certain background, such as migration backgrounds, are matched less often by the algorithm. If you look at it this way, the chances are therefore smaller for someone with a non-Western background compared to someone with a Western background, and you can consider this as unfair. And this is therefore not ethical, since the algorithm carries out unintended discrimination.

### DAG. How Bias arises:



Looking back, I mainly focused on the outcome, which is not ethical since the algorithm discriminates and results in unequal opportunities. What I did not think about is that the algorithm probably also learns based on, for example, profile descriptions and interests. And if you for instance have different hobbies or a different religion, it could mean that you have a smaller chance of being matched. So actually, the problem is not only in the outcome but also in how the algorithm is trained. And in fact, a piece of correction was forgotten during the training of the model, which should ensure that when a profile is “different,” everyone still gets a fair chance, even if you are somewhat different.

If I had to give advice to the data scientist assigned to this case, I would say that it is always useful to first look at the situation and ask yourself whether the product you are going to build is actually fair. The ethical aspect should already be included in the product design itself and in the data collection. In addition, you can also test afterwards whether the model might systematically give people with a certain background fewer chances of being matched. Finally, it is important to implement continuous improvement throughout every step of the process and make it iterative.

## References

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