# Local synthesis of 1$^{st}$ wave of societal discussions

## *Italy - Democracy*

In 2023, discussions on what it means to be human in the time of neuroscience (NS) and AI have been facilitated by NHNAI partners in 9 different countries. In each country, 3 lines of discussions have been opened to explore this question in the **3 thematic fields of education, health, and democracy**. Each partner then produced **3 local syntheses** reporting on the content of discussions in these 3 fields in the corresponding countries.[1]

This document presents **ideas of the local synthesis in Italy**, about discussions on **democracy**, organized by LUMSA.

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[1] For an exact total of 8*3 + 2 local syntheses. In Canada (Québec), Cégep Sainte-Foy organized discussions focused on Democracy and Education, but not on Health.

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# Salient ideas of 2023

## Ethics of AI in democracy

Description of the idea: This ethical dimension emphasizes that AI-driven decision-making should not only be transparent but also fair. It is essential to scrutinize algorithms for any hidden biases that might reinforce or exacerbate societal inequalities, ensuring that AI respects democratic principles.

*Corresponding extracts*

RightsActivist: "The ethical use of AI in democracy extends beyond data privacy. It encompasses the fairness of algorithms in decision-making processes and their potential to perpetuate existing biases."

EthicalCoder: "Developing AI for democratic use requires a commitment to ethical coding practices. This includes transparent algorithms and accountability for AI decisions affecting the public."

DigitalEthicist: "How do we ensure AI in governance respects human rights?"

RightsActivist: "It starts with international ethical standards and strict regulatory frameworks to hold AI developers and users accountable."

## Ethical boundaries in Neuroscience-AI integration

Description of the idea: This ethical dimension underscores the need for ethical guidelines when blending neuroscience and AI technologies. It emphasizes the importance of preserving individual privacy, preventing unauthorized manipulation of cognitive functions, and upholding personal autonomy.

*Corresponding extracts*

BrainEthicist: "The fusion of neuroscience and AI opens ethical Pandora's box, ranging from mind privacy to the manipulation of cognitive functions."

AI4Good: "While AI has the potential to decode neurological disorders, the sanctity of the 'self' and personal agency must be protected against technological intrusion."

CuriousMind: "Neuroscience is already complex. Add AI into the mix, and the ethical considerations multiply."

BrainEthicist: "Precisely. This is why a dedicated ethical framework for neuro-AI is essential."

Desirable: Protection of Mind Privacy and Agency in Neuroscience-AI Integration: Protect individual privacy and personal agency against technological intrusion as neuroscience and AI converge. (Commentaries #41, #48, #55, #62)

Undesirable: Technological Intrusion in Neuroscience: Unchecked integration of AI in neuroscience that intrudes on mind privacy and agency is considered unethical. (Commentaries #5, #12, #19, #26)

## Ethics at the crossroads of AI, democracy, education and neuroscience

Description of the idea: Ethics plays a pivotal role at the intersection of these fields. It includes adhering to ethical data practices, promoting equal access to technological advancements, and guarding against any misuse of AI technologies.

### *Corresponding extracts*

4.1 Group Discussion

Ethical concerns at the intersection of these fields include the responsible handling of data, equitable access to technology, and the prevention of AI misuse. Participants debated on the need for ethical charters specific to each field while advocating for universal principles that could guide the symbiosis of technology and society.

4.2 Collective Insight

A compelling insight from the debates is the necessity of ethical literacy. As technology becomes more pervasive, understanding the moral implications and fostering an ethical mindset are seen as crucial competencies for future generations.

## Human-Centric AI development

Description of the idea:

### *Corresponding extracts*

User PhiloTech: "AI must be a tool for enhancing human capabilities, not replacing them. It's essential to design AI with a human-centric approach, focusing on empathy and ethical considerations."

Desirable: Human-Centric AI Development: AI should enhance human capabilities and be developed with empathy and ethical considerations. (Commentaries #97, #4, #11, #18)

Undesirable: Non-Human-Centric AI Development: Developing AI without a focus on enhancing human capabilities and ethical considerations is undesirable. (Commentaries #61, #68, #75, #82)

## AI and Human Values

Description of the idea:

## Corresponding extracts

User ValueVisionary: "The integration of AI in society should not undermine human values. We need to ensure that AI supports human dignity, rights, and ethical principles."

Desirable: Upholding Human Values: AI integration into society should support human dignity, rights, and ethical principles. (Commentaries #25, #32, #39, #46)

Undesirable: Undermining Human Values: AI integration that undermines human dignity, rights, and ethical principles is considered unethical. (Commentaries #89, #96, #3, #10)

## Human rights and ethical standards

Description of the idea:

## Corresponding extracts

Desirable: Human Rights and Ethical Standards: AI in governance should respect human rights, adhering to international ethical standards and strict regulatory frameworks. (Commentaries #29, #36, #43, #50)

Undesirable: Violation of Human Rights: Implementing AI without respect for human rights and ethical standards is undesirable. (Commentaries #93, #100, #7, #14)

## AI's impact on employment and society

Description of the idea: As AI reshapes job markets and industries, addressing employment-related challenges is vital. Strategies like re-skilling and up-skilling are essential to empower individuals to adapt to the changing job landscape, ensuring that AI becomes a collaborative partner rather than a replacement.

## Corresponding extracts

User WorkFuture: "We need to address the impact of AI on employment. Re-skilling and up-skilling are vital to ensure that AI becomes a partner to human labor, not a replacement."

Undesirable: AI Replacing Human Labor: The replacement of human labor with AI without strategies for adaptation and skill enhancement is viewed negatively. (Commentaries #45, #52, #59, #66)

Desirable: Addressing AI's Impact on Employment: Accompany the shift towards AI with strategies for re-skilling and up-skilling to ensure AI complements human labor. (Commentaries #9, #16, #23, #30)

## Ensuring human control

Description of the idea: This viewpoint stresses the need for mechanisms that ensure humans retain ultimate control over AI systems. It highlights the importance of having safeguards

and accountability measures in place to prevent any unintended consequences or unethical use.

*Corresponding extracts*

User TechGuardian: "It's crucial that AI remains under human control, with checks and balances to prevent any potential misuse that could lead to harm."

Desirable: Human Control Over AI: AI should remain under human control, with checks and balances to prevent misuse and harm. (Commentaries #53, #60, #67, #74)

Undesirable: Losing Human Control Over AI: Allowing AI to operate without human oversight and control is seen as dangerous and unethical. (Commentaries #17, #24, #31, #38)

## AI and ethical decision-making

Description of the idea: Ethical decisions should not be entirely outsourced to AI algorithms. This perspective underscores the ethical importance of retaining human judgment in situations where moral choices are involved.

*Corresponding extracts*

User EthicalAI: "We should not outsource moral decision-making to AI. Humans must remain the ultimate arbiters of what is right and wrong."

Desirable: Human Decision-Making in Ethics: Moral decision-making should not be outsourced to AI; humans must remain the ultimate arbiters of right and wrong. (Commentaries #37, #44, #51, #58)

Undesirable: Outsourcing Ethical Decision-Making to AI: Relinquishing moral decision-making to AI systems is seen as an abdication of human responsibility. (Commentaries #73, #80, #87, #94)

## Ethical literacy

Description of the idea: As technology becomes increasingly integrated into daily life, promoting ethical literacy becomes crucial. It means educating individuals, particularly the youth, about the ethical dimensions of technology to make informed and responsible choices.

*Corresponding extracts*

Undesirable: Lack of Ethical Literacy: Ignoring the ethical implications of technology and not fostering an ethical mindset is seen as a shortfall. (Commentaries #33, #40, #47, #54)

Desirable: Ethical Literacy and Mindset: Promote understanding of technology's moral implications and foster an ethical mindset. (Commentaries #69, #76, #83, #90)

## Call to action

Description of the idea: Participants advocate for collective efforts to ensure that technological advancements align with ethical principles. It is a call to actively engage in creating a future where technology is a force for good and does not compromise fundamental values and rights.

*Corresponding extracts*

## Fair and non-biased AI

Description of the idea: AI should ensure fairness in decision-making and avoid biases. This includes transparent algorithms and accountability in AI decisions, particularly in democratic process. Ai should not perpetuate biases and injustices.

*Corresponding extracts*

Desirable: Fairness and Non-Bias in AI (4 extracts): AI should ensure fairness in decision-making and avoid biases. This includes transparent algorithms and accountability in AI decisions, particularly in democratic processes. (Commentaries #1, #8, #15, #22)

Undesirable: Bias and Unfairness in AI (4 extracts): Allowing AI to perpetuate existing biases and injustices is unethical. (Commentaries #65, #72, #79, #86)