

# UNESCO - Recommendation on the Ethics of AI (sub-group on the social and cultural dimension)

1 July 2022

**Towards a participatory approach in AI design and risk management**



Prof. Avv. Alessandro Mantelero  
Jean Monnet Chair in Mediterranean Digital Societies and Law  
Politecnico di Torino - DIGEP | Associate Professor



© Mantelero 2022

## HRESIA for AI

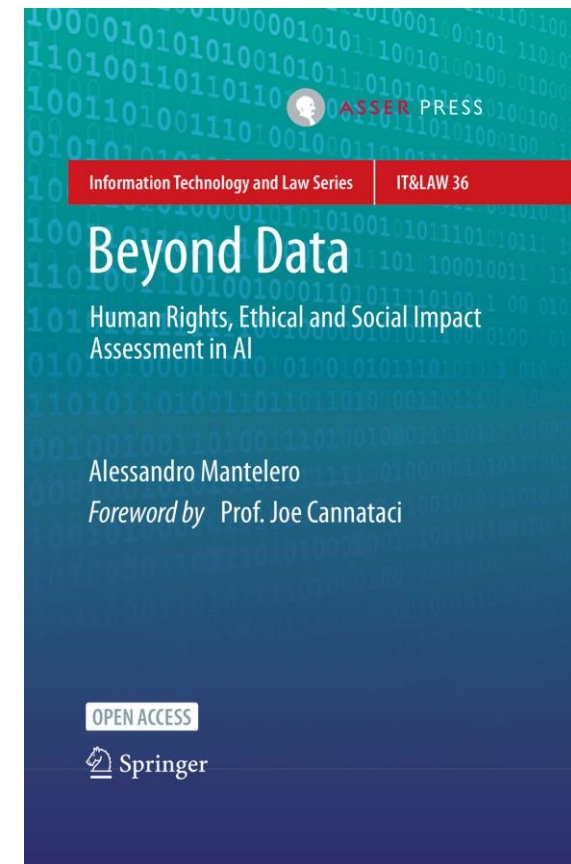
Key role of risk assessment in AI regulation

Difference between HRIA, DPIA, SIA and EIA

An integrated model: HRESIA

Open Access

[https://link.springer.com/book/  
10.1007/978-94-6265-531-7](https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-94-6265-531-7)



## Participation in HRESIA for AI

### Who

- ✓ Role of experts
- ✓ Role of rightsholders/stakeholders (participation)
  - Participation can provide a better understanding of potentially affected rights
  - Focus on specific impacted categories
  - Evaluation of the substitution of AI-based solutions with alternative responses to the problems AI purports to address (substitution rate)
  - Contribution to the vernaculisation of human rights
  - Participation as a human right (right to participate in public affairs when AI systems are used in decision-making)



## How

- ✓ Participation methods require specific expertise (social scientists)
- ✓ Preliminary desk analysis: impacted interests and targets of participatory initiatives
- ✓ Limitations of questionnaires-based approach and role of engagement

## What

- ✓ Information to participants on the project goals and structure (limited disclosure and confidentiality agreements in case of conflicting interests)
- ✓ Personal/relational information provided at interviews and participation (confidentiality)
- ✓ Detailed technical knowledge and the need to provide easily accessible, general and neutral information about the technologies and their functioning
- ✓ Co-design

## When

- ✓ Initial stage of product/service design, project development and implementation, further changes



## Main objectives of participation

- ✓ Reducing assessment bias
  - Participation helps experts to think outside the box
  - The fieldwork may offer a better understanding of the problems and AI impacts
- ✓ Increasing trust in AI
  - Active engagement of stakeholders, rights-holders and users in the design process and risk assessment
  - Transparency in risk assessment
  - Co-design approaches



## Risks of the participatory process

- ✓ 'Participation washing' (need for independent external human rights and social experts)
- ✓ Voluntary nature of participation (biases in social composition, polarisation, risk of exclusion due to technology-based tools, participants covertly acting on behalf of certain stakeholders)

## Possible remedies

- ✓ Deliberative pooling and participant selection, affirmative actions and incentives for low-status and low-income citizens, and other strategies commonly used in participation practice
- ✓ Limiting citizen engagement in AI design to the strictly necessary not to reduce interest and the level of participation







**Alessandro Mantelero**

**alessandro.mantelero@polito.it**

**@mantelero**



**Politecnico  
di Torino**

**Jean Monnet Chair in Mediterranean  
Digital Societies and Law**



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

**Project: 101047818 - DIGIMED - ERASMUS-JMO-2021-CHAIR**