

Review

Artificial Intelligence Governance and the Future of Human Societies: Dignity, Meaning and Civilizational Responsibility

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) governance has converged around transparency, accountability, safety, privacy, fairness, human rights, human oversight and risk management. However, this vocabulary remains limited when AI is understood as a sociotechnical force shaping agency, work, truth, democratic trust, meaning and long-term human futures. This article is a critical conceptual review, with a structured Scopus-based mapping of 48 peer-reviewed articles, a critical documentary analysis of six international AI governance frameworks and a supplementary interpretive engagement with *Magnifica Humanitas*. Using a PRISMA-informed flow diagram for transparent reporting and abductive thematic synthesis, the study identifies four fragmented literatures: AI ethics and governance; anthropological accounts of dignity, autonomy, agency and vulnerability; spiritual and theological approaches to meaning and moral formation; and civilizational analyses of democracy, war, transhumanism and existential risk. The findings do not suggest that these concerns are absent from AI ethics; rather, they show that they remain dispersed and are not consistently translated into governance criteria. This article proposes the Anthropological, Spiritual and Civilizational (ASC) Framework as a diagnostic heuristic for extending trustworthy AI toward dignity, truth, social justice and humane futures. The framework is conceptual and requires future empirical and expert validation.

Keywords: artificial intelligence governance; AI ethics; trustworthy AI; human dignity; spirituality; civilizational risk; human-centered AI; digital society; responsible AI; human futures



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1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has developed from a specialized computational field into an infrastructure that structures contemporary social life. AI systems increasingly mediate education, health care, work, public administration, communication, security, scientific research, cultural production and democratic deliberation. As these systems expand from discrete tools into sociotechnical environments, the central governance question is no longer only how to make AI systems technically reliable. It is also how to ensure that AI remains ordered around human dignity, agency, justice, meaning and the common good.

The rapid growth of AI has produced an equally rapid expansion of ethical guidelines, policy frameworks and regulatory initiatives. Mapping studies have shown that

AI ethics documents converge around transparency, justice and fairness, non-maleficence, responsibility and privacy, while diverging in their interpretations, justifications, domains of application and implementation [1]. More recent reviews have confirmed the proliferation of AI governance guidelines and recommendations, making AI ethics a mature but crowded normative field [2]. The language of trustworthy AI, responsible AI and a good AI society has therefore become central to contemporary governance debates [3–5].

The conceptual concern examined here is, therefore, not that questions of agency, autonomy, embodiment, dignity, personhood, meaning, moral formation or flourishing are absent from contemporary AI ethics. These themes have been widely discussed across AI ethics, philosophy of AI, philosophy of technology and political theory. The issue is that they often remain distributed across adjacent literatures and are not consistently integrated into operational AI governance. This diagnosis is also informed by foundational works in the philosophy and sociology of technology: Ellul's analysis of technological society, Winner's account of the politics of artifacts, Feenberg's critical theory of technology and Jasanoff's work on sociotechnical imaginaries all show that technologies are not neutral instruments but participate in organizing power, institutions, social imagination and collective futures [6–9]. Read through an ASC lens, these traditions illuminate complementary dimensions of the present inquiry: the anthropological dimension concerns how technological systems shape agency and personhood; the spiritual dimension concerns meaning, values and the conditions of human formation; and the civilizational dimension concerns the organization of power, institutions and collectively imagined futures.

This convergence is visible in major international frameworks. UNESCO places human rights, dignity, inclusion and sustainability at the center of AI ethics; the OECD frames AI through trustworthy innovation, democratic values and inclusive growth; NIST operationalizes trustworthy AI through risk management, reliability, accountability and transparency; the European Union AI Act establishes a binding risk-based legal architecture; the Rome Call for AI Ethics articulates a moral humanistic vocabulary around transparency, inclusion, accountability, impartiality, reliability, security and privacy; and the G7 Hiroshima Process focuses on advanced AI systems, systemic risk, democratic protection and safe, secure and trustworthy AI [10–15].

These developments are important because they move AI ethics beyond abstract concerns and toward institutional accountability, technical standards, rights protection and regulatory design. Yet they also reveal a limitation. Most frameworks protect human beings as rights-holders, data subjects, users, stakeholders, consumers or affected parties. These categories are indispensable, but they do not fully capture the person as embodied, vulnerable, relational, morally responsible, spiritually oriented and historically situated. AI ethics must therefore move beyond isolated principles toward the conditions of human flourishing [16], and algorithmic harm must be understood through structures of power, dependency and vulnerability rather than isolated bias alone [17,18].

The anthropological dimension of AI has become increasingly salient. The literature on autonomy, agency, personhood, dignity and human–machine boundaries shows that AI systems can shape the conditions under which choices are formed, preferences are stabilized, decisions are delegated and responsibility is distributed [19–22]. Dignity becomes especially fragile when AI systems classify, predict, assist, replace or govern vulnerable persons, including patients, older adults, disabled persons, workers and those exposed to automated decision-making [23–26].

A second underdeveloped dimension concerns spirituality, meaning and moral formation. AI is increasingly entering religious education, theological reflection, spiritual technologies, pastoral communication and moral deliberation. Studies on AI and theology, Catholic education, Islamic ethics and digital spirituality show both opportunities and risks:

AI may support reflection, engagement and access, but it may also reduce spiritual life to automated personalization, commodified experience or simulated intimacy [27–32]. Works on embodiment and theological anthropology further show that AI cannot be evaluated only by its efficiency or functionality; it must also be assessed in relation to interiority, ritual, transcendence and lived human experience [33,34].

A third dimension concerns the civilizational consequences of AI. AI-driven disinformation, political manipulation and cognitive warfare can erode public trust and democratic deliberation [35–37]. Lethal autonomous weapons raise questions about whether decisions involving violence, vulnerability or social destabilization can remain meaningfully subject to human judgment [24]. Debates on transhumanism, posthumanism, mind uploading and existential risk show that AI also participates in cultural imaginaries about overcoming embodiment, mortality, dependency and human limits [33,34,38].

Despite the richness of these literatures, the anthropological, spiritual and civilizational dimensions of AI remain insufficiently integrated. AI ethics studies often concentrate on principles, compliance and implementation. Anthropological studies deepen understanding of dignity, autonomy and vulnerability, but are not always translated into governance criteria. Spiritual and theological studies offer categories of meaning, transcendence, stewardship and moral formation, but remain marginal to mainstream AI policy. Civilizational studies address democracy, war, transhumanism and existential risk, but are often disconnected from operational governance frameworks. The problem is not absence, but fragmentation.

Magnifica Humanitas enters this debate as a distinctive normative intervention. The document frames AI not merely as a technical emergency or regulatory challenge, but as a transformation concerning the safeguarding of the human person, truth, work, freedom, peace, solidarity and the common good [39]. Its symbolic contrast between Babel and Jerusalem can be read analytically as a contrast between sociotechnical systems ordered toward domination, homogenization and the concentration of power, and sociotechnical systems ordered toward shared responsibility, plurality, justice, relationality and communion.

This article asks how the anthropological, spiritual and civilizational dimensions of AI are addressed in the Scopus-indexed literature and international AI governance frameworks, and how they can be integrated into a broader conceptual account of human-centered AI governance. It contributes to social inquiry on technology and society in three ways. First, it maps the dominant principles and thematic clusters through which the scientific literature addresses AI ethics, dignity, meaning and civilizational risk. Second, it compares these findings with major international governance frameworks in order to identify what is already well consolidated and what remains conceptually underdeveloped or insufficiently translated into governance criteria. Third, it proposes an Anthropological, Spiritual and Civilizational (ASC) Framework as a diagnostic heuristic and research agenda for extending trustworthy AI. The framework does not reject transparency, fairness, safety, privacy or accountability; it deepens them by asking what kind of human person, moral meaning and civilizational future AI governance is designed to protect and promote. The framework is not presented as an empirically validated governance instrument, but as a conceptual proposal requiring further expert, empirical and applied validation.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Design and Rationale

This study adopts a critical conceptual review design with a structured Scopus-based literature-mapping component, critical documentary analysis and conceptual framework development. The design is appropriate because the object of analysis is interdisciplinary and conceptually heterogeneous: the anthropological, spiritual and civilizational dimen-

sions of AI appear across AI ethics, governance studies, philosophy of technology, theology, religious studies, human flourishing, transhumanism, posthumanism, democratic theory, cognitive warfare and existential risk. The manuscript is not presented as a systematic review, meta-analysis or technical integrative review in a strict methodological sense. Instead, it uses structured search, screening and extraction procedures to support a critical conceptual synthesis. The review is informed by scoping review methodology and qualitative metasynthesis and conceptual integration procedures suitable for heterogeneous fields [40–42].

The study is guided by five research questions: (1) What principles dominate current international AI governance frameworks? (2) How does the Scopus-indexed literature address the anthropological, spiritual and civilizational dimensions of AI? (3) How do international AI governance frameworks conceptualize the human person? (4) What conceptual contribution does *Magnifica Humanitas* offer to AI ethics and governance? (5) How can the scientific literature, international governance frameworks and *Magnifica Humanitas* be integrated into an ASC Framework for human-centered AI governance? No review protocol was preregistered.

2.2. Data Source and Search Strategy

Scopus was selected because of its multidisciplinary coverage of social sciences, humanities, computer science, law, philosophy, health sciences, education and governance studies. This decision makes the review transparent and reproducible, but it also means that relevant work indexed only in the Web of Science, IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, PubMed or specialized theological and philosophy databases may not have been captured. The search was conducted on 29 May 2026 and targeted four domains: anthropological AI, spiritual and theological AI, civilizational AI and trustworthy/responsible AI governance. The search blocks combined AI-related terms with concepts such as human dignity, human flourishing, personhood, moral agency, spirituality, religion, transcendence, transhumanism, posthumanism, existential risk, technological power and governance. Table 1 summarizes the four Scopus search blocks used in the review.

Table 1. Scopus search strategy by thematic block.

Search Block	Analytical Focus	Main AI Terms	Main Conceptual Terms	Governance Terms
Anthropological dimension	Human dignity, personhood, agency and autonomy	"artificial intelligence", "generative AI", "large language model*", "machine learning"	"human dignity", "human flourishing", anthropolog*, personhood, "human person", "moral agency", "human autonomy", "human-centered AI", "human-centred AI", "human values"	ethic*, governance, "responsible AI", "trustworthy AI", "AI ethics", "AI governance"
Spiritual and theological dimension	Spirituality, religion, transcendence, meaning and moral formation	"artificial intelligence", "generative AI", "large language model*", "machine learning"	spiritual*, religion, religious, theolog*, transcendence, "meaning of life", "ultimate concern", "moral formation", "inner life", "human meaning", "existential meaning"	ethic*, governance, society, human, "human flourishing", "responsible AI", "AI ethics"

Table 1. Cont.

Search Block	Analytical Focus	Main AI Terms	Main Conceptual Terms	Governance Terms
Civilizational dimension	Civilizational risk, technological power and human futures	"artificial intelligence", "generative AI", "large language model*", "machine learning"	"civilizational risk", "existential risk", civilization, civilisation, transhumanism, posthumanism, "future of humanity", "human future", "technological power", "socio-technical transformation", "algorithmic power", "technological society"	ethic*, governance, society, humanity, democracy, "responsible AI", "AI ethics", "AI governance"
AI ethics and governance	Trustworthy, responsible and regulatory AI principles	"artificial intelligence", "generative AI", "large language model*", "machine learning"	"AI governance", "artificial intelligence governance", "AI ethics", "responsible AI", "trustworthy AI", "human-centered AI", "human-centred AI", "AI regulation", "algorithmic governance"	transparency, accountability, privacy, fairness, "human rights", "human oversight", "risk management", safety, explainability, "non-discrimination"

Note: The asterisk (*) denotes the truncation wildcard used in Scopus to retrieve variant word endings.

2.3. Eligibility Criteria and Study Selection

Studies were eligible if they were published between 2019 and 2026, written in English or Spanish, indexed in Scopus and classified as journal articles or reviews. Studies were included if they addressed AI ethics or governance; human dignity, autonomy, moral agency, personhood, vulnerability, work or human flourishing; religion, theology, spirituality, transcendence, existential meaning or moral formation; transhumanism, posthumanism, existential or civilizational risk, democratic resilience, cognitive warfare or the future of humanity; or conceptual insights relevant to AI and the human future. Purely technical studies, papers focused only on algorithmic performance, tangential AI references and excessively sector-specific studies without conceptual relevance were excluded.

The selection process was reported using a PRISMA-informed flow diagram for transparency of identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion decisions [43]. The use of the flow diagram did not classify the manuscript as a systematic review or meta-analysis. The initial searches retrieved 12,597 records. After duplicate removal, 10,062 unique records remained. Filters for year, language, source type and document type produced 4675 eligible records. The title, abstract and keyword screening identified a high-relevance pool of 398 records. From this pool, 80 records were prioritized for closer review through a second-level conceptual screening based on four criteria: (a) AI was a central analytical object rather than a secondary context; (b) the article addressed at least one anthropological, spiritual or civilizational dimension with conceptual depth; (c) the contribution was transferable beyond a narrowly sector-specific setting; and (d) the article offered categories relevant to governance, ethical evaluation or long-term social implications. This step did not treat agreement with the ASC Framework as an inclusion requirement; it prioritized records with conceptual relevance to the review questions. After the second-level screening, 60 full texts were assessed. Twelve articles were excluded at the full-text stage, leaving 48 studies for the qualitative synthesis. Figure 1 summarizes the identification, duplicate removal,

automatic filtering, thematic screening, prioritization, eligibility assessment and final inclusion process.

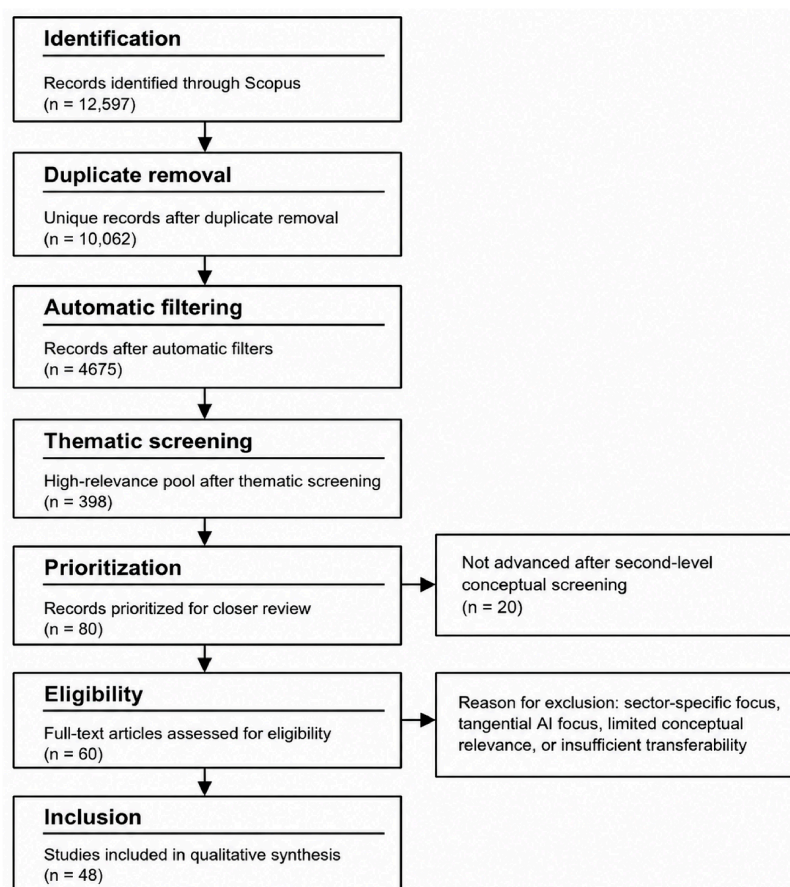


Figure 1. PRISMA-informed flow diagram for the structured Scopus-based literature-mapping component.

2.4. Documentary Corpus

The primary documentary corpus included six international AI governance frameworks: UNESCO, OECD, NIST, the European Union AI Act, the Rome Call for AI Ethics and the G7 Hiroshima Process [10–15]. *Magnifica Humanitas* was analyzed as a supplementary normative interpretive source rather than as a coequal governance framework. Its inclusion was justified by its explicit framing of AI around personhood, dignity, truth, work, peace and civilizational discernment [39]. The six governance frameworks represent different institutional modalities: ethical recommendation, intergovernmental policy principles, technical risk management, binding regulation, faith-based ethical declaration and multilateral code of conduct. *Magnifica Humanitas* was used to illuminate the anthropological, spiritual and civilizational categories that are less visible in procedural governance documents.

2.5. Data Extraction, Coding and Thematic Synthesis

A structured extraction matrix captured the bibliographic identification, source, study type, main focus, ASC dimension, key concepts, conception of AI, conception of the human person, governance principles, conceptual contribution, relevance to the ASC Framework and inclusion rationale. The documentary sources were analyzed for dominant principles, understanding of the human person, treatment of dignity and rights, risk and safety, justice and inclusion, spirituality or moral formation, civilizational implications and governance orientation.

The analysis used an abductive thematic synthesis. Deductive coding began with the dominant AI governance categories: transparency, explainability, accountability, responsibility, safety, robustness, privacy, fairness, non-discrimination, human oversight, risk management, human rights, democratic values, sustainability, AI literacy and labor transition. Inductive coding allowed categories to emerge from the scientific literature and supplementary interpretive reading of *Magnifica Humanitas*: dignity, embodiment, fragility, vulnerability, moral agency, relationality, interiority, meaning, transcendence, ethical formation, technological power, algorithmic domination, common good, truth, work, peace, intergenerational responsibility and civilizational future. The ASC vocabulary functioned initially as a set of sensitizing concepts derived from the research questions and preliminary reading, not as a fixed selection rule. During the synthesis, these concepts were refined abductively and organized into the proposed ASC heuristic. The coding followed iterative qualitative and code-mapping procedures [41,44,45].

2.6. Analytical Rigor and Reproducibility

Analytical rigor was strengthened through transparent reporting, explicit delimitation of the review as Scopus-based, predefined eligibility criteria, a structured extraction matrix, combined deductive and inductive coding, and triangulation across the peer-reviewed literature, international governance frameworks and the supplementary interpretive source. No novel software was developed. The ASC Framework was developed through reflective conceptual integration: the existing principles of trustworthy AI were preserved, but interpreted through broader anthropological, spiritual and civilizational concerns. The coding and conceptual organization were conducted by a primary analyst and discussed among the authors during manuscript development; no inter-rater reliability coefficient was calculated. This is consistent with the conceptual review design but is acknowledged as a limitation.

2.7. Quality Appraisal and Methodological Limitations

Because the final corpus included conceptual, normative, philosophical, theological, policy-oriented and review-based studies, a conventional risk-of-bias assessment designed for experimental or clinical evidence was not applicable. Instead, the quality appraisal focused on thematic relevance, conceptual contribution, transparency of argumentation, explicit engagement with AI governance or human implications, and usefulness for answering the review questions. Articles were not included because they endorsed a particular normative position, but because they contributed analytically to at least one of the four clusters identified in the synthesis.

This appraisal strategy is consistent with the critical conceptual character of the review. The purpose is not to aggregate effect sizes or evaluate intervention outcomes, but to map how different fields conceptualize the human implications of AI and to identify patterns of convergence, fragmentation and under-representation. To strengthen reproducibility, the search blocks, eligibility criteria, PRISMA-informed selection process, extraction domains and coding categories are reported in the manuscript, and the screening log, extraction matrix and coding framework are presented in the Supplementary Materials.

3. Results

3.1. Selection and Composition of the Evidence Base

The final corpus comprised 48 studies distributed according to their predominant analytical orientation: anthropological dimension (n = 18; 37.5%), spiritual/theological dimension (n = 11; 22.9%), AI ethics and governance (n = 10; 20.8%) and civilizational dimension (n = 9; 18.8%). These categories were used as predominant orientations rather

than mutually exclusive disciplinary labels, because several studies contributed secondarily to more than one ASC dimension. This distribution shows that the ASC dimensions are not absent from the literature. They are present, but dispersed across separate debates rather than consolidated into a unified field of AI governance. Table 2 reports the distribution of the final corpus by the predominant thematic orientation.

Table 2. Predominant orientation of final Scopus corpus.

Predominant Orientation	n	%
Anthropological dimension	18	37.5
Spiritual/theological dimension	11	22.9
AI ethics and governance	10	20.8
Civilizational dimension	9	18.8
Total	48	100.0

3.2. Principle Convergence and Thematic Clusters

Across the Scopus corpus, the most recurrent governance principles are transparency, accountability, fairness, privacy, safety, human oversight, risk management, human rights and responsible innovation. This pattern is consistent with earlier mapping work showing convergence around transparency, justice and fairness, non-maleficence, responsibility and privacy, while also demonstrating that no principle is universally shared and that substantial divergence persists in interpretation and implementation [1,2].

The AI ethics and governance cluster shows that the field has moved from principle formulation toward implementation concerns. Transparency, fairness and accountability remain weak if they are not translated into institutional practices, audit procedures, design requirements, regulatory obligations and professional responsibilities [3,5,46–53]. Birhane further shows that algorithmic injustice cannot be reduced to isolated bias; it must be interpreted through relational structures of power and social harm [17].

The anthropological cluster is the largest. It includes works on dignity, autonomy, agency, vulnerability, personhood, human flourishing, care, decision systems, social robots, autonomous weapons and human–AI boundaries [19–26,54–61]. Four themes emerge: AI reshapes autonomy through recommendation, prediction and behavioral steering; it distributes responsibility across actors; it reopens questions of personhood and legal or moral status; and it affects vulnerability and work, especially among those subject to automated decision-making [16,62,63].

The spiritual and theological cluster shows that AI is entering religious education, theological reflection, spiritual technologies, pastoral communication and moral deliberation [27–34,64–68]. AI can support education and reflection, but it can also reduce spiritual life to automated personalization or simulated intimacy. Religious and theological traditions contribute categories often absent from secular AI governance: stewardship, trusteeship, imago Dei, humility, discernment, relational responsibility and the common good.

The civilizational cluster frames AI as a force reshaping collective life. AI-driven disinformation, political communication and cognitive warfare affect truth and democratic resilience [35–37]. Lethal autonomous weapon systems raise questions about the delegation of violent decisions to autonomous or semi-autonomous systems [24]. Debates on transhumanism, posthumanism, mind uploading and existential risk connect AI with imaginaries of overcoming embodiment, vulnerability, mortality and human limits [32–34,38]. Table 3 synthesizes the contributions and limitations of each thematic cluster.

Table 3. Cross-cluster synthesis of 48 included studies.

Cluster	Main Contribution	Main Limitation
AI ethics and governance	Principles and implementation concerns for trustworthy and responsible AI	Often procedural; limited account of personhood and meaning
Anthropological dimension	Dignity, autonomy, agency, vulnerability, personhood, work and flourishing	Not consistently translated into governance criteria
Spiritual/theological dimension	Meaning, transcendence, discernment, stewardship and moral formation	Marginal to mainstream AI governance
Civilizational dimension	Democracy, war, transhumanism, existential risk and the future of humanity	Often disconnected from operational governance frameworks

3.3. International Frameworks and the ASC Gap

The documentary analysis of UNESCO, OECD, NIST, the EU AI Act, the Rome Call and the G7 Hiroshima Process confirmed convergence around transparency, accountability, safety, privacy, fairness, human rights, human oversight, risk management, democratic values, inclusion and sustainability [10–15]. Yet it also revealed that dignity is usually treated as a rights-based or legal principle rather than as a full anthropology of the person; spirituality is largely absent; and civilizational concerns are translated mainly into risk, security, democracy or misuse. Table 4 compares the dominant orientation and ASC limitation of each international framework.

Table 4. Dominant orientation and ASC limitation of six international AI governance frameworks.

Framework	Dominant Orientation	ASC Limitation
UNESCO	Human rights, dignity, inclusion and sustainability	Limited account of personhood, interiority and spirituality
OECD	Trustworthy innovation, democratic values and inclusive growth	Human person treated mainly through policy categories
NIST	Risk management, robustness, reliability and accountability	Limited attention to meaning or civilizational future
EU AI Act	Binding risk-based legal regulation	Rights protection without a deeper anthropology of the person
Rome Call	Ethical humanistic declaration and algor-ethics	Closest to moral vocabulary but less operationally enforceable
G7 Hiroshima Process	Advanced AI, foundation models, systemic risk and democratic protection	Civilizational issues framed mainly as safety and security

3.4. Magnifica Humanitas and the ASC Framework

The supplementary analysis of *Magnifica Humanitas* identified a distinctive interpretive contribution. Unlike governance frameworks that primarily approach AI through risk,

rights, transparency, safety or compliance, the document frames AI as a question about the human person and the future of civilization [39]. It interprets AI as one of the res novae of the present age; rejects both technological rejection and technological naivety; and contrasts Babel, understood as technological power organized around domination and homogenization, with Jerusalem, understood as shared responsibility, plurality, justice, relationality and the common good. Because the document is recent and does not yet have an established independent academic reception, it is used here as a supplementary normative lens, not as evidence equivalent to the international governance frameworks.

Taken together, the 48 studies, six frameworks and supplementary interpretive reading of *Magnifica Humanitas* support the development of the ASC Framework as a proposed diagnostic heuristic. The anthropological dimension asks what conception of the human person is assumed, protected or weakened by AI. The spiritual dimension asks how AI affects meaning, interiority, transcendence, discernment and moral formation. The civilizational dimension asks what social future AI helps produce. Figure 2 presents the framework. Table 5 summarizes the proposed ASC synthesis derived from the integrated corpus.

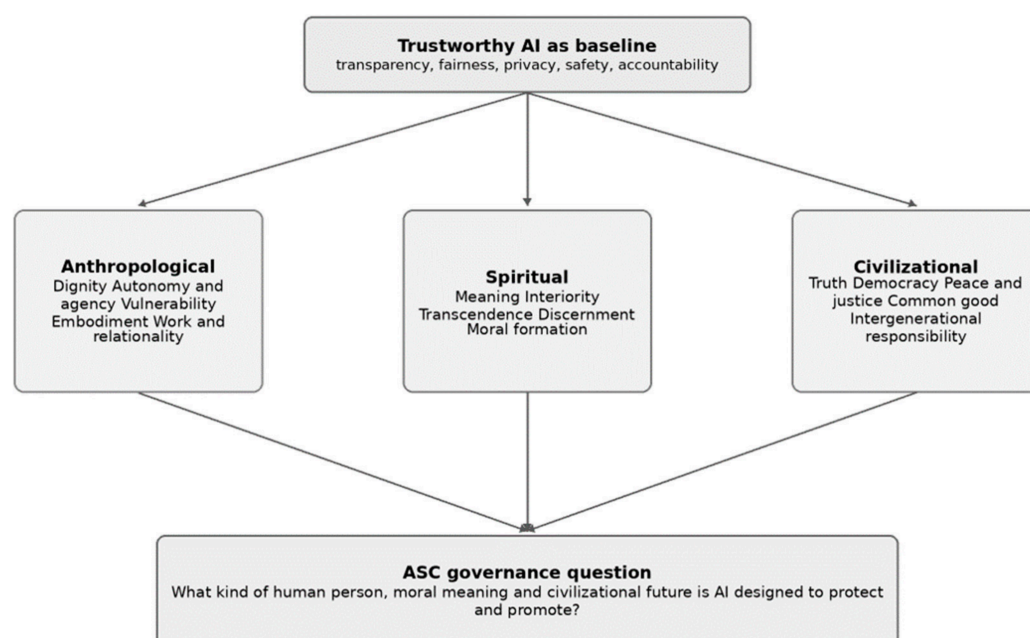


Figure 2. The Anthropological, Spiritual and Civilizational (ASC) Framework for AI governance.

Table 5. Proposed ASC heuristic synthesis.

ASC Dimension	Central Question	Core Categories	Governance Implication
Anthropological	What conception of the human person is assumed by AI?	Dignity, autonomy, agency, vulnerability, embodiment, work, and relationality.	Governance must protect the person beyond user rights and data protection.
Spiritual	How does AI affect meaning, interiority and transcendence?	Meaning, discernment, hope, moral formation, interior life, and transcendence.	Governance must consider moral formation and human meaning, not only compliance.
Civilizational	What future does AI help produce?	Truth, democracy, peace, justice, common good, technological power, and intergenerational responsibility.	Governance must address long-term social, democratic and civilizational consequences.

3.5. Social Translation of the ASC Gap

The conceptual synthesis indicates that the ASC gap is not merely a philosophical omission; it is a social governance problem. A governance framework can satisfy procedural requirements while still leaving unresolved how AI systems reshape social relations, institutional dependence, cultural memory, vulnerability, public truth and collective agency. For this reason, the ASC Framework should be read as a diagnostic heuristic and research agenda rather than as a validated operational governance instrument or competing principles list.

At the social level, the anthropological dimension asks whether AI systems preserve the agency of persons and communities or convert them into predictable, governable and replaceable data subjects. The spiritual dimension asks whether AI infrastructures support meaningful deliberation and ethical formation or intensify automated distraction, simulated intimacy and commodified forms of meaning. The civilizational dimension asks whether AI strengthens democratic trust, plural social futures and peace, or contributes to manipulation, dependency, cognitive warfare and concentration of technological power. These questions translate the review findings into a practical research agenda for societies undergoing rapid AI-mediated transformation. Table 6 translates the ASC Framework into social governance diagnostic questions.

Table 6. Social governance diagnostics derived from the ASC Framework.

ASC Domain	Social Risk if Neglected	Governance Diagnostic Question	Operational Implication
Anthropological	Reduction of persons to users, data subjects or functional capacities.	Does the AI system preserve meaningful agency, dignity and vulnerability-sensitive participation?	Assess effects on autonomy, dependency, work, care, embodied life and responsibility.
Spiritual	Flattening of meaning, simulated intimacy, automated moral guidance or commodified interiority.	Does AI support or weaken discernment, ethical formation, attention and human meaning?	Evaluate impacts on education, religious or existential practices, moral development and human attention.
Civilizational	Erosion of truth, democratic trust, peace, cultural plurality and intergenerational responsibility.	What kind of collective future does the system help normalize or institutionalize?	Assess long-term effects on democracy, security, culture, public knowledge and technological dependency.

4. Discussion

4.1. Principal Findings

The findings confirm that AI ethics has achieved significant normative maturity. Across the scientific corpus and international frameworks, transparency, accountability, fairness, privacy, safety, human rights, human oversight and risk management form a stable vocabulary of responsible AI. This convergence is a major achievement because it gives regulators, designers and institutions shared criteria for identifying harms, assigning responsibility and improving system governance. However, earlier work on AI ethics guidelines already showed that convergence around principles does not eliminate disagreement about interpretation, justification or implementation [1].

The present review extends that diagnosis by showing that the limitation is not only implementation, but also conceptual integration. The dominant vocabulary is strong regarding harm prevention, compliance and accountability, but weaker for articulating how existing debates on agency, dignity, embodiment, meaning, moral formation and civiliza-

tional responsibility should be translated into governance criteria. It can ask whether a system is explainable, fair or privacy preserving, but it does not always ask whether the system preserves meaningful agency, sustains dignified work, strengthens social trust, protects interiority, supports moral formation or contributes to peace and the common good.

4.2. Contribution to AI Governance and Social Theory

The ASC Framework deepens the meaning of the human in human-centered AI by drawing AI governance into a broader conversation on the philosophy and social theory of technology. In many governance documents, the human appears as a user, consumer, data subject, rights-holder or affected party. These categories are necessary, but they remain thin when AI is considered as a sociotechnical infrastructure that shapes institutions, habits, work, attention, cultural memory and social imagination. Ellul's account of technological society, Winner's claim that artifacts can have politics, Feenberg's critical theory of technology and Jasanoff's concept of sociotechnical imaginaries all anticipate this point: technological systems participate in configuring the social order, power, agency and collective futures [6–9].

From this perspective, the ASC Framework should be understood as a proposed diagnostic heuristic rather than an operationally validated governance model. The anthropological literature shows that AI governance needs a theory of personhood, agency, vulnerability and relationality. The spiritual literature shows that human beings cannot be reduced to measurable preferences or behavioral outputs. The civilizational literature shows that AI governance must anticipate long-term transformations in democracy, security, culture and the distribution of technological power. The framework organizes these concerns, but future research must validate, refine and operationalize it through expert consultation, Delphi procedures, institutional case studies and applied governance testing.

For example, a university considering the deployment of generative AI could use the ASC heuristic to examine not only privacy, transparency and academic integrity, but also whether the system preserves meaningful student and teacher agency, affects processes of intellectual and moral formation, and contributes to long-term institutional dependency on external technological infrastructures. Similarly, a public authority evaluating an AI-enabled decision system could use the framework to complement a conventional risk assessment by asking how the system affects the dignity and vulnerability of affected persons, public trust and truth, and the distribution of technological power over time. These examples illustrate how the ASC Framework may function as a diagnostic complement to existing governance tools rather than as a substitute for them.

This contribution is particularly relevant for a social sciences readership because it reframes AI governance as a question about social formation, not only technological control. AI systems do not merely process information; they reorganize the conditions under which people learn, work, trust, deliberate, belong, remember and imagine the future. A governance model that ignores these dimensions may succeed in reducing some technical risks while still allowing deeper forms of social dependency, cultural homogenization or moral displacement to intensify. The present article therefore offers a conceptual agenda for further research rather than claiming that the ASC Framework is already an empirically validated governance tool.

4.3. Role of Magnifica Humanitas in the Synthesis

Magnifica Humanitas is valuable as a supplementary interpretive source because it supplies an integrative normative vocabulary. It does not replace the scientific literature, policy frameworks or established philosophy of technology. Rather, it connects questions often separated across distinct domains: dignity, technological power, truth, work, peace,

spirituality, social justice and the common good [39]. Its contrast between Babel and Jerusalem is analytically useful beyond confessional contexts. Babel names sociotechnical systems organized around domination, homogenization, efficiency and concentration of power. Jerusalem names systems oriented toward shared responsibility, plurality, justice, vulnerability and communion.

The analytical value of this document lies in its capacity to make visible the civilizational stakes that remain implicit or dispersed in many governance frameworks. At the same time, its evidentiary status differs from the six international AI governance frameworks because it is a recent normative document with limited independent academic reception. In the present review, it therefore functions as a supplementary normative interpretive source within a triangulated corpus, not as a substitute for empirical evidence, policy analysis or established scholarship in AI ethics and philosophy of technology.

4.4. Implications for Institutions and Public Policy

The implications are practical. For AI ethics, principles lists should be complemented by anthropological and civilizational questions. Governance audits should not only verify explainability, privacy, fairness or accountability, but also ask whether the deployment contexts protect human agency, avoid dependency, preserve meaningful human judgment and prevent the normalization of domination through data infrastructures. This does not weaken trustworthy AI; it clarifies the social purposes that trustworthy AI should serve.

For higher education, AI policy should address not only plagiarism, privacy or assessment, but also discernment, digital sobriety, research integrity, moral responsibility and humanistic formation [29,47]. Universities are not merely sites of AI adoption; they are institutions that form judgment, epistemic responsibility and social imagination. For public policy, governance should anticipate long-term consequences, including labor displacement, epistemic manipulation, democratic erosion, cognitive warfare, cultural homogenization and concentration of technological power. In Latin America and other Global South contexts, this also requires attention to technological dependency, data sovereignty, institutional capacity, inequality and whose cultural values are encoded into AI infrastructures.

4.5. Limitations and Future Research

This study has limitations. It is based on the Scopus-indexed literature, so relevant studies in the Web of Science, IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, PubMed or specialized theological and philosophy databases may have been missed. This may have excluded technically oriented work on AI safety and human–computer interaction, legal scholarship, biomedical AI ethics, engineering conference papers, theological monographs and philosophy of technology sources not indexed as Scopus journal articles. The final corpus included only journal articles and reviews, excluding books, chapters, reports and conference proceedings, although several foundational books were added to the theoretical framing. The documentary corpus was limited to six international frameworks, with *Magnifica Humanitas* treated as a supplementary interpretive source, and therefore does not represent all national or regional AI strategies. *Magnifica Humanitas* is recent, so its academic reception is still emerging. The review was not preregistered, no formal inter-rater reliability coefficient was calculated, and no conventional risk-of-bias or certainty-of-evidence assessment was performed because the study is conceptual rather than an intervention review. Within this conceptual review design, the abductive thematic synthesis was conducted reflexively through iterative code mapping, repeated comparison across the scientific and documentary corpora, and discussion among the authors during the development of the conceptual framework. Finally, the ASC Framework remains a proposed heuristic and requires empirical, expert and applied governance validation.

Future research should validate and operationalize the ASC Framework through Delphi studies with AI ethicists, philosophers of technology, theologians, policymakers, educators, technologists and civil society actors. Comparative studies could examine how university AI policies, national strategies or institutional governance frameworks address the ASC dimensions. Empirical work should also investigate how students, professionals and citizens understand the relationship between AI, autonomy, work, meaning, truth and the future of humanity. Finally, future reviews could expand the database coverage beyond Scopus and compare whether the same thematic fragmentation appears in legal scholarship, engineering venues, religious studies databases and regional policy documents.

5. Conclusions

AI governance should not only ask whether systems are transparent, fair, safe and accountable. It should also ask what kind of human person, moral culture and civilizational future those systems are helping to build. This study shows that the anthropological, spiritual and civilizational dimensions of AI are present in the scientific literature, but fragmented across separate debates and not consistently translated into governance criteria. International frameworks have made substantial progress in harm prevention, rights protection and procedural governance, yet they remain comparatively thin in relation to personhood, meaning and civilizational responsibility. The ASC Framework responds to this gap as a proposed diagnostic heuristic for extending trustworthy AI toward governance questions related to dignity, moral agency, meaning, truth, technological domination, peace and the common good. For social research, the central implication is that AI must be studied not only as a technology to be regulated, but as a social force that participates in forming persons, institutions, cultures and futures. The future of AI governance therefore depends not only on better regulation or technical standards, but on a deeper account of the humanity that AI is being asked to serve. The ASC Framework is therefore offered as a conceptual starting point requiring further validation and operational refinement.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/soc16070226/s1>, Table S1A: PRISMA-adapted screening log; Table S1B: Eligibility criteria applied during screening and full-text assessment; Table S1C: Full-text exclusion log [69–80]; Table S2: Data extraction matrix for the 48 Scopus-indexed studies included in the qualitative synthesis [3,5,16–38,46–68]; Table S3: Coding framework for the abductive thematic synthesis.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

Abbreviation	Meaning
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ASC	Anthropological, Spiritual and Civilizational
EU	European Union
G7	Group of Seven
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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