ENSURING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract. *This article examines the impact of digital public administration and artificial intelligence on the protection of human rights. The study focuses on how the increasing use of automated decision-making systems in public governance creates both opportunities and risks. While digital technologies improve efficiency and accessibility of public services, they also raise concerns related to transparency, accountability and fairness. The research adopts a qualitative approach combining doctrinal legal analysis with comparative and socio-legal methods. It analyzes international frameworks and national legislation, with particular attention to the legal regulation of digital governance in Uzbekistan. The findings demonstrate that algorithmic systems may undermine fundamental rights, including privacy, equality and due process, especially when transparency and accountability mechanisms are insufficient. The study concludes that effective protection of human rights in digital public administration requires a comprehensive legal framework, institutional safeguards and a human rights-based approach to technological governance.*

Keywords: *Digital Government; Artificial Intelligence; Human Rights; Data Protection; Algorithmic Bias; Public Administration.*

I. Introduction

The rapid development of digital technologies has significantly transformed public administration, leading to the emergence of digital government systems that aim to improve efficiency, accessibility and service delivery. Governments increasingly rely on AI and automated decision-making tools to process large volumes of data and support administrative functions, including social services, law enforcement and public service provision (Madan et al., 2022). These technologies enable faster and more data-driven decision-making, which is often presented as a key advantage of digital transformation in the public sector (Janssen et al., 2025). However, the integration of AI into public administration also raises fundamental concerns regarding transparency, accountability and the protection of individual rights. Scholars have emphasized that

algorithmic systems may operate as “black boxes”, making it difficult for individuals to understand or challenge decisions that directly affect their lives (Meijer & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2020). At the same time, research demonstrates that such systems may reproduce or even amplify existing social inequalities when they are based on biased or incomplete data (Gordon, 2019; Eubanks, 2018). This creates a significant tension between technological efficiency and the principles of fairness and justice in public governance. As a result, the growing reliance on AI in public administration necessitates a critical examination of its implications for human rights. Issues related to privacy, non-discrimination and due process have become central in contemporary academic and policy debates (Mantelero, 2018).

The importance of addressing these challenges is reflected in international legal and policy frameworks that aim to regulate the use of digital technologies and protect human rights in the digital age. Foundational instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establish basic guarantees of equality, dignity and privacy that remain applicable in the context of digital governance. More specific regulatory frameworks, including the General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union, introduce safeguards related to data processing and automated decision-making, emphasizing the need for human oversight and accountability (GDPR, 2024). In addition, international organizations have developed principles for the responsible use of AI, highlighting transparency, fairness and human-centered approaches as key requirements for public sector innovation (OECD, 2019). Despite these developments, significant gaps remain between formal regulatory frameworks and their practical implementation, particularly in countries undergoing digital transformation. In the context of Uzbekistan, the development of electronic government systems has been supported by national legislation, including the Law “On the Electronic Government” and the Law “On Personal Data”, which establish the legal foundations for digital public administration. However, the extent to which these frameworks effectively ensure the protection of human rights in practice remains insufficiently explored. Therefore, this article aims to examine the relationship between digital public administration and human rights, focusing on the risks associated with AI-driven decision-making and the adequacy of existing legal safeguards. The study seeks to contribute to the ongoing academic discussion by combining theoretical analysis with a legal perspective, with particular attention to the Uzbek context.

II. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design that combines doctrinal legal analysis with elements of comparative and socio-legal approaches. The doctrinal method is applied to examine the existing legal framework governing digital public

administration, with a particular focus on legislation regulating electronic government and personal data protection. The analysis includes key national legal instruments, such as the Law "On the Electronic Government" and the Law "On Personal Data", as well as relevant international regulatory frameworks. In addition, a comparative approach is used to evaluate how different jurisdictions address challenges related to artificial intelligence and automated decision-making, particularly in relation to human rights protection. The European Union's regulatory framework, including the General Data Protection Regulation, is used as a reference model for assessing safeguards related to data processing and algorithmic governance (GDPR, 2024). This enables the identification of common regulatory principles and existing legal gaps. The study also relies on academic literature to provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the transformation of public administration in the digital era. This approach ensures a structured and comprehensive analysis of both legal norms and governance practices.

Furthermore, the research incorporates a socio-legal perspective to assess how legal rules operate in practice and interact with institutional and technological environments. This perspective is particularly important in the context of AI-driven systems, where formal legal provisions may not fully address practical challenges such as algorithmic opacity or bias (Busuioc, 2020). The study examines how these risks affect the realization of fundamental human rights, including privacy, equality and access to effective remedies. In addition, the research draws on interdisciplinary scholarship on algorithmic governance and fairness to evaluate the limitations of automated decision-making systems (Selbst et al., 2019). Special attention is given to the gap between formal legal regulation and its practical implementation, particularly in countries undergoing rapid digital transformation. The scope of the study is limited to the analysis of legal frameworks and academic literature, without empirical data collection. However, this limitation allows for a more in-depth doctrinal and conceptual examination of the issue. Overall, the methodological approach is designed to bridge the gap between legal theory and real-world governance challenges in the digital context.

III. Results

The analysis demonstrates that the integration of artificial intelligence into public administration significantly transforms traditional decision-making processes, making them faster and more data driven. AI systems are increasingly used in areas such as risk assessment, allocation of public resources and administrative decision-making, which enhances efficiency but also introduces new forms of governance based on automated logic (Valle-Cruz et al., 2020). These developments contribute to the emergence of algorithmic governance, where decisions are partially or fully delegated

to technological systems. While such systems can improve consistency and reduce human error, they also shift the nature of administrative power, making it less transparent and more difficult to scrutinize (Meijer & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2020). Empirical studies indicate that both public officials and citizens may perceive automated decision-making as less legitimate when its logic is not clearly explained (Hillo et al., 2025). This highlights the importance of transparency and explainability in maintaining trust in digital public services. At the same time, the increasing reliance on data-driven systems raises concerns about the quality and neutrality of the data used. As a result, algorithmic systems may reinforce structural inequalities embedded in historical data. This creates a risk that digital public administration, instead of promoting fairness, may reproduce existing social disparities (Gordon, 2019; Eubanks, 2018).

The findings also show that the use of AI in public administration creates significant challenges for the protection of fundamental human rights, particularly in relation to privacy, equality and due process. Automated systems often rely on large-scale data processing, which increases the risk of unlawful data collection and insufficient protection of personal information (Mantelero, 2018). Moreover, individuals affected by algorithmic decisions may face difficulties in understanding how decisions are made and in challenging them effectively. This raises concerns regarding access to remedies and procedural fairness in administrative processes. Research on algorithmic accountability emphasizes that existing governance frameworks often lack clear mechanisms for assigning responsibility when decisions are made by AI systems (Busuioc, 2020). In addition, studies on fairness in sociotechnical systems demonstrate that technical solutions alone cannot eliminate bias without addressing broader social and institutional factors (Selbst et al., 2019). These findings suggest that the risks associated with AI in public administration are not only technological but also legal and structural in nature. Consequently, ensuring human rights in digital governance requires not only technological safeguards but also robust legal and institutional frameworks. Overall, the results indicate that while digital public administration offers significant benefits, it simultaneously introduces complex challenges that must be addressed through a human rights-based approach.

IV. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that the challenges associated with artificial intelligence in public administration cannot be addressed solely through technological improvements but require a comprehensive legal and institutional response. While AI systems enhance efficiency and decision-making capacity, they simultaneously create risks that directly affect fundamental human rights, including privacy, equality and

procedural fairness. In particular, the lack of transparency in algorithmic systems undermines the ability of individuals to understand and contest administrative decisions, which is a core element of the rule of law (Meijer & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2020). This raises concerns about the compatibility of automated decision-making with basic legal principles such as accountability and access to justice. Moreover, the presence of algorithmic bias demonstrates that technological systems are not neutral but reflect existing social and structural inequalities (Gordon, 2019; Eubanks, 2018). As a result, the use of AI in public administration requires safeguards that go beyond technical accuracy and include ethical and legal considerations. Scholars emphasize that ensuring fairness in algorithmic systems requires addressing both data quality and broader institutional contexts (Selbst et al., 2019). Therefore, the discussion of AI in public governance must be grounded in a human rights-based approach. This approach places the protection of individuals at the center of digital transformation.

At the international level, several legal and policy frameworks have been developed to address these challenges and promote responsible use of digital technologies. Foundational human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, establish general principles of dignity, equality and privacy that remain applicable in digital environments. More specific regulatory frameworks, including the General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union, introduce concrete safeguards related to personal data protection and automated decision-making, including the right not to be subject to decisions based solely on automated processing (GDPR, 2024). In addition, international organizations have articulated principles for trustworthy AI, emphasizing transparency, accountability and human oversight as key requirements (OECD, 2019). These frameworks reflect a growing consensus that technological innovation must be aligned with human rights standards. However, scholars note that the existence of formal regulations does not automatically ensure their effective implementation in practice. Differences in institutional capacity, legal culture and technological development may limit the effectiveness of these safeguards. Consequently, there remains a gap between international standards and their practical application in national contexts. This gap is particularly visible in countries undergoing rapid digital transformation.

In the context of Uzbekistan, the development of digital public administration has been supported by several legislative initiatives aimed at modernizing governance and improving public service delivery. The adoption of the Law “On the Electronic Government” represents an important step toward the institutionalization of digital governance mechanisms. At the same time, the Law “On Personal Data” establishes legal requirements for the collection, processing and protection of personal

information. These legal frameworks demonstrate a formal commitment to regulating digital technologies and ensuring the protection of individual rights. However, the practical implementation of these norms raises important questions regarding their effectiveness in addressing the risks associated with AI and automated decision-making. Existing legislation does not always provide clear mechanisms for algorithmic transparency, accountability or effective remedies for individuals affected by automated decisions. This creates potential gaps in the protection of human rights within digital public administration. Moreover, the rapid pace of technological development may outpace the evolution of legal regulation, further increasing these risks. Therefore, there is a need for continuous legal adaptation and the development of more specific regulatory instruments addressing AI governance. Strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring effective enforcement are also essential for bridging the gap between law and practice.

V. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the integration of artificial intelligence into digital public administration creates both significant opportunities and complex risks. While AI enhances efficiency, consistency and data-driven governance, it also introduces challenges related to transparency, accountability and the protection of fundamental human rights. In particular, the use of automated decision-making systems raises concerns regarding privacy, non-discrimination and access to effective remedies. The findings confirm that these challenges are not solely technological but also legal and institutional in nature. As a result, relying only on technical improvements is insufficient to address the risks associated with digital governance. Instead, a comprehensive regulatory approach is required, combining legal safeguards with institutional oversight mechanisms. The study highlights the importance of aligning digital transformation processes with human rights principles. This ensures that technological innovation does not undermine fundamental legal protection.

In the context of Uzbekistan, existing legal frameworks, including the Law “On the Electronic Government” and the Law “On Personal Data”, provide an important foundation for regulating digital public administration. However, the analysis shows that these frameworks require further development to effectively address the challenges posed by AI and algorithmic decision-making. There is a need to strengthen transparency requirements, clarify accountability mechanisms and ensure accessible remedies for individuals affected by automated decisions. In addition, greater attention should be given to the practical implementation of legal norms, including institutional capacity and enforcement mechanisms. Future research should focus on developing more detailed regulatory models and assessing their applicability in different legal

systems. At the same time, policymakers should prioritize the integration of human rights standards into digital governance strategies. Ultimately, a human rights-based approach is essential to ensure that digital public administration serves both efficiency and justice. This approach allows balancing innovation with the protection of individual rights in the digital age.

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