


# Chapter 3

## Balancing Public Safety and Individual Rights in AI-Driven Public Administration in Nigeria

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The chapter examines the complex ties among privacy, surveillance, and public safety in today's world of AI-driven governance. The chapter will further examine what happens when a data-driven decision-making process works without transparency in Nigeria. Historically, those in authority have had an easier time keeping power when the decision-making process is hidden from the citizens. It will outline compelling strategies for mitigating the privacy risks that come with using AI in law enforcement, such as strong democratic oversight, the use of AI in a “data minimized” way, and the design of AI systems that ensures privacy is maximized. The chapter concludes by arguing that these strategies—and the informed, equitable future they make possible—are better than the alternative: a society governed by AI systems that infringe on individual rights and are not safe or secure.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Across the world AI is becoming more and more popular within governments, in ways, such as to improve operational effectiveness or optimize services, such as the support of law enforcement agencies (Berryhill, Heang, Clogher, & McBride, 2019). But as governments transit to using AI systems for surveillance, privacy concerns are mounting, making it an important task to reconcile public safety with the rights of individual (Xia, Semirumi, & Rezaei, 2023).

Artificial Intelligence is being applied in numerous areas of public administration, ranging from law enforcement through healthcare and transportation to social services (Bignami, 2022). AI can be powered by mining personal data like biometric standards and online behavior. By using AI technologies, the way governments respond to emergencies or manage resources can be made more efficient and help in reducing criminal activity. Yet, the reasons for surveillance must be carefully examined. It is intended as a way to keep citizens safe, but might also become a tool for repression and persecution (Feldstein, 2019). Surveillance overreach is a concern and, if there are no safeguards in place, this becomes an ugly turn in the spirit of public safety; away from mere privacy invasions to potential zeroing-in on people, inhibiting dissent and violating personal freedoms. Balancing public safety and individual rights means establishing robust legal systems and ethical frameworks to govern the use of faces from AI in public administration. Strong data protection legislations should be put in place by governments which ensures transparency and no misuse of such data. The types of data collected, how they are stored and maintained, and who has access to these information should be something that citizens can know.

Public agencies also have a duty to embrace ethical AI principles that uphold accountability and fairness. This ensures continuous AI privacy impact assessment and bias identification and mitigation. Fair and just AI policies — those that fully respect fundamental rights yet help keep us safe — are built collaboratively by better-engaging stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, technology specialists, as well as community representatives. Civil society organizations are key stakeholders advocating for privacy rights and holding public institutions accountable. Through making the costs of AI and surveillance explicit, organizations can help generate public demand for stronger safeguards. They can also advocate for more public engagement around surveillance technologies in general so that people are more aware of how they are used today.

Open and transparent initiatives, public consultations, and educational efforts can contribute to de-mystifying AI technologies allowing citizens to be aware of their rights and advocate more effectively for a responsible governance. Because for an AI-impacted public administration, that fine line between public safety and individual rights can become more complicated. The promise of AI is so great,

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