

Artificial Intelligence, Information Disorder, and Public Administration in Africa: Navigating Governance Challenges in Contemporary States

Oluwaseun Kugbayi and Adeleke Adegbami

Abstract

This study examines the interrelations of Artificial Intelligence (AI), information disorder, and public administration, with a particular reference to the continent of Africa. AI has created opportunities that facilitate the effective delivery of government services, public policies and data-driven decision-making. AI adoption and integration in African states, however, remain uneven owing to structural constraints, including weak or ineffective regulatory frameworks and low technical capacity. The limitations notwithstanding, the rapid expansion of digital platforms intensifies the spread of misinformation and disinformation, which has continued to undermine public trust, policy processes, and governance. The study draws on existing literature and adopts the *Iro-Otito* – Misinformation Theory to explain information disorder in Africa. The study argues that misinformation and disinformation are persuasive in the short term; however, they erode institutional legitimacy whenever contradicted by lived realities. Furthermore, the study reveals that AI systems can intensify and mitigate information disorder, depending on governance frameworks, data quality, and ethical safeguards. The study thus concludes that the rapid expansion of digital platforms, which has intensified the spread of misinformation and disinformation, is undoubtedly antithetical to the quality of governance as it has continued to undermine public trust, policy processes, and governance activities.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Information Disorder, Public Administration, Governance.

Oluwaseun Kugbayi, oluwaseunkugbayi@gmail.com, Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4354-7327> and Adeleke Adegbami, adeleke.adegbami@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng, Department of Public Administration, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3582-1680>

The Nigerian Journal of Business and Social Sciences, Volume 13, 2026 (Special Issue)
A Journal of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria
© 2026

1. Introduction

The development and growth of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have undoubtedly transformed governance, businesses, and processes worldwide. In recent years, AI has been deployed in public administration to support efficient decision-making and effective service delivery. Alongside the benefits being offered by AI, there is a growing concern about the proliferation of information disorder, which continues to threaten institutional credibility and policy effectiveness. The intersection of AI and information disorder has thus become a serious area of investigation in governance and public administration.

The intersection of AI and information disorder in Africa has become complex owing to weak regulatory frameworks and varying levels of digital literacy. Algorithm-driven platforms, in contemporary times, frequently intensify misleading or false information, causing societal tensions and undermining people's confidence in public institutions (Ahsan & Siddiqua, 2025). The speed at which AI-enabled systems circulate information has continued to complicate the government's ability to manage public communication and maintain policy credibility. This is manifesting in many African countries where misinformation has influenced electoral processes, public health responses, and security narratives, among other governance and business processes (Abdulazeez et al., 2025).

The extant literature has shown that the governance implications of AI extend beyond technical efficiency to encompass ethical, regulatory, and institutional dimensions. Margetts and Dorobantu (2019) argue that the application or integration of AI into governmental systems requires a rethinking of administrative capacity and capability. For this reason, public institutions must develop new skills to handle algorithmic decision-making and its societal impacts. Gwagwa et al. (2020) likewise argue that AI governance requires robust frameworks that address transparency, accountability, and fairness in its application, especially within the public sector, where decisions regarding citizens' rights and welfare are made.

According to Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), information disorder poses governance challenges when AI-driven systems amplify the spread of distributed content. Spreading false information can twist public discourse and weaken state legitimacy. This consequently produces a complex environment in which policy decisions are made amid uncertainty and contested information, posing a challenge for public administrators. In such a situation, the government's ability to navigate information disorder is more closely linked to its capacity to control or regulate digital ecosystems and to build adaptive information resilience. In view of the foregoing, this study examines the intersection of AI, information disorder, and public administration, and the effects of this intersection on contemporary governance systems in Africa.

2. Conceptual Clarifications: Artificial Intelligence, Governance, and Public Administration

A clear conceptual grounding is indispensable to understanding the intersection of artificial intelligence, governance, and public administration in Africa. For Valizada (2026), Artificial Intelligence refers to computational systems designed to perform tasks that require human intelligence in less time than would otherwise be required. AI encompasses the design of algorithms and models that can analyse large volumes of data, identify their patterns, and generate predictions and recommendations in a shorter period with minimal human

intervention. This is largely due to advances in machine learning, which enable AI systems to improve their performance over time with access to data.

It is necessary to distinguish between AI, digital media, and digital technologies. Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computational systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence (Valizada, 2026). Digital technologies, by contrast, represent the broader infrastructure and tools that enable the Creation, storage, and transmission of digital information (Li et al., 2024). Digital media is a subset of digital technologies and refers specifically to content and communication platforms through which information is produced, shared, and consumed (Li et al., 2024). While digital technologies provide the enabling environment, digital media facilitates communication, and AI enhances automation and intelligent processing within these systems.

In public administration, AI encompasses a range of applications, including machine learning algorithms for data analysis, natural language processing for automated communication and document handling, and predictive analytics for forecasting policy outcomes and resource allocation. These are the tools deployed to public administration to facilitate administrative efficiency and support evidence-based policymaking (Vatamanu & Tofan, 2025). It should therefore be noted that AI is not just a technical innovation; it is also a socio-technical system embedded in institutional and political settings, and it depends on data quality and existing governance and ethical frameworks for its effectiveness.

Governance, on the other hand, is the structure, processes, and institutional arrangements through which authority is exercised and public resources are managed for country development and citizen welfare (Adegbami & Kugbayi, 2024). Traditionally, the Word governance is associated with formal governmental activities and businesses; however, in contemporary discourse, it has evolved to encompass a broader framework that recognises the role of multiple actors and networks. This advancement accommodates the growing complexity of modern societies, in which decision-making authority is dispersed across public, private, and non-state actors (Efthymiou, 2025).

In essence, governance is now viewed beyond the state, encompassing interactions among private firms, civil society organisations, and international institutions, all of which contribute to policy outcomes and public value. The involvement of multi-actor arrangements enhances collaboration, negotiation, and shared responsibility, rather than profiling hierarchical command-and-control structures (Wu & Thomann, 2023). Governance is therefore now better understood as a dynamic and interactive process linking formal institutions, informal norms, and diverse stakeholders operating at local, national and international levels.

In contemporary times, the government has more than before incorporated technological dimensions, including the use of digital platforms and AI in governance systems, under the auspices of digital governance. Digital governance covers the use of information and communication technologies to enhance public service delivery, citizen engagement, and administrative processes (Efthymiou, 2025). In essence, this influences how decisions are made and services are delivered.

Concerning public administration, it could be said to constitute the operational arm of governance. Public administration is primarily concerned with public policy implementation, management of public institutions, and the delivery of essential services to citizens. In essence, public administration translates political decisions and policy frameworks into

concrete actions through bureaucratic structures and public service systems. In other words, a key role of public administration is to ensure that government objectives are realised and that public resources are efficiently and equitably utilised (OECD, 2015). Beyond this, public administration incorporates planning, budgeting, human resource management, and performance evaluation as its major functions. All these functions are indispensable to the overall governance systems and proper functioning of the state.

In contemporary times, therefore, public administration is expected to be guided by principles of efficiency, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to citizens' needs. With the advent of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, however, public administration has been transformed, incorporating data-driven decision-making and automated service delivery systems. This means that the integration of AI into public administration has marked a shift from traditional bureaucratic systems to "algorithmic governance," in which decision-making processes are data-driven and automated (Erhirhie, 2025). This is why it could rightly be said that, although governance and public administration in Africa are shaped by historical, political, and socio-economic dynamics, in contemporary times they are being conditioned by the adoption of artificial intelligence, with the implications of spreading information disorder, thereby constituting challenges to public administration.

3. *Irọ-Otító* - Misinformation Theory

The theoretical framework developed and adopted for this study is *Irọ-Otító* - Misinformation Theory. The theory is developed within the broader project of epistemic decolonisation. In other words, the development and adoption of the theory are premised on its deep roots in Yoruba traditions and culture. The theory also marks a significant departure from the usual application of a foreign theory to locally collected data (Adegbam, 2022, 2023). Thus, *Irọ-Otító* - Misinformation Theory, which derives its propositions from Yoruba philosophical thought, is to distinguish African knowledge systems as legitimate sources of explanation for global phenomena.

Irọ and *Otító* are two Yoruba words, meaning falsehood and truth. *Irọ-Otító* - Misinformation Theory is rooted in a Yoruba philosophical saying or proverb, "*ti irọ ba wọ aṣọ otító, akoko ni yoo tu aṣọ naa*," which literally means, "if falsehood wears the garment of truth, time will eventually strip it naked."

The proverb captures profound assumptions about the truth and falsehood, especially concerning the temporality and legitimacy of falsehood. The proverb suggests that falsehood cannot survive on its own; rather, it survives only when it disguises itself as truth. In essence, falsehood can only gain legitimacy for a while; over time, contradictions will set in between misinformation and lived realities, thereby revealing the temporality of falsehood and restoring truth.

The theory is deeply rooted in Yoruba philosophy; *otító* (truth), for instance, is seeing beyond a mere factual accuracy. In other words, the meaning of *otító* (truth) goes beyond mere correctness, encompassing sincerity, legitimacy, morality, and Justice. This is to say that *otító* (truth) is not, by any means, a proposition or an abstraction, but a unique value required to sustain harmony and good governance.

In a similar vein, *irọ* (falsehood) should not merely be conceived as "inaccurate" but as a moral and social disruption that can threaten cordiality, unity, and the corporate existence of

institutions. So, falsehood can produce influence or advantage at the initial stage; nevertheless, Yoruba epistemology assumes that such influence or advantage will be short-lived.

The theory presents "*akoko*" (time) as an epistemological device through which societies evaluate the authenticity of information. *Akoko* (time) does not function as a chronological progression but as a process of development through which concealed contradictions become visible. As such, *akoko* (time) functions as a social Judge, uncovering claims, policies, or narratives that do not correspond with lived realities.

The *Iro-Otito* - Misinformation Theory rests on the following interrelated assumptions relating to information production, legitimacy, governance, and social accountability.

- Falsehood hardly survives through open deception but by camouflaging itself as truth.
- The legitimacy of information depends upon factual correctness, social acceptance and perceived credibility.
- In due course, time exposes contradictions between misinformation and social realities.
- Governance systems that depend upon misinformation always experience declining legitimacy over time.

Contemporary information ecosystems have been profoundly reshaped by digital technologies, social media, and artificial intelligence (AI), enhancing communication, access to information, and governance processes. However, these same systems have also facilitated the rapid spread of misinformation, disinformation, and manipulated content. The rise of AI-generated outputs has further blurred the boundary between truth and falsehood, creating complex challenges for public administration and governance. While Euro-American theoretical traditions offer valuable analytical insights, their applicability to Africa remains limited due to epistemological and contextual differences. Scholars advocating the decolonisation of knowledge, from Fanon (1963), Cabral (1973), and Davidson (1992) to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), caution against the uncritical application of external theories and emphasize the need for indigenous conceptual frameworks grounded in African histories and epistemologies.

The *Iro-Otito* (misinformation) theory then provides a culturally grounded lens for understanding information disorder. It posits that falsehoods gain acceptance not through overt deception but by mirroring the appearance and authority of truth, as seen in AI-generated misinformation. The theory further argues that the legitimacy of information is often determined more by social acceptance and perceived credibility than by factual correctness, as individuals interpret information through existing beliefs, political loyalties, and cultural assumptions. However, it maintains that misinformation is inherently temporary, as contradictions between falsehoods and social realities are eventually exposed through temporal verification, institutional scrutiny, and empirical evidence. Thus, governance systems that rely on misinformation may initially sustain authority, but later experience declining legitimacy as trust erodes.

4. of AI in African Governance and Public Administration

The adoption and integration of Artificial Intelligence into public administration in Africa have increased in recent years. This development is largely driven by broader digital transformation agendas and the current trend to improve governance outcomes. This explains

why governments across the World are integrating AI into their public sector activities. Evidence shows that AI policy activity has intensified significantly in Africa since 2020, and several countries are embedding AI in their national development strategies, prioritising sectors such as public administration, health, agriculture, and Education (OECD, 2026). To this extent, the integration of AI into digital governance systems and public service infrastructures has become a key trend in AI adoption across public administration in Africa. Thus, countries including Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana have made remarkable progress in integrating AI into their national digital strategies, thereby strengthening innovation ecosystems and institutional frameworks. The integration of AI into these countries' governance systems is highly manifest in areas such as automated tax systems, biometric identification, smart city initiatives, and AI-driven data analytics for policymaking.

There are also sector-specific applications of AI in public health, where AI tools are used for disease surveillance and diagnostics. For instance, in the United States, AI-driven platforms such as BlueDot have been utilized to track and predict the spread of infectious diseases (Adeoye et al., 2025). Similarly, Rwanda and India have adopted AI-powered health systems for disease monitoring and telemedicine (Sargsyan et al., 2024). In agriculture, AI is used to support crop monitoring, climate forecasting, and precision farming, while in public finance, machine learning algorithms are deployed for fraud detection and revenue optimisation. The use of AI is also extended to areas such as public transportation management, language processing, and citizen engagement platforms across countries (Wolniak & Stecula, 2024). All these improve the delivery of services to the citizenry. To strengthen AI use, the African Union's Continental AI Strategy and related initiatives began by promoting and coordinating AI development, data governance, and innovation ecosystems among member states, including the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (African Union, 2014). The introduction of the Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy (African Union, 2024) marks a more structured, policy-driven approach to AI integration in public administration in Africa.

Thus, the adoption and integration of AI in public administration in Africa offer important opportunities for improving service delivery and administrative efficiency in the African public sector. Since AI systems can process large volumes of data in real time, they help governments make more informed and timely decisions, particularly in sectors where limited human and financial resources constrain their administrative systems. For instance, AI adoption can significantly contribute to the economy by increasing productivity and spurring economic growth. Africa is expected to experience measurable gains in output as adoption scales across sectors (Azaroual, 2024). In addition, AI has the potential to reinforce transparency and accountability in governance. It can assist in data-driven monitoring, especially of public expenditures, service delivery outcomes, and policy implementation processes. These opportunities can be accessed and enjoyed only when structural constraints, such as infrastructure deficits, limited technical expertise, and funding, which have been the bane of the full realisation of AI's benefits in many African countries, are addressed (Ughulu, 2025).

In Nigeria, AI is used more in financial governance and public sector data management. For example, AI-driven fraud detection systems in the banking sector have significantly enhanced financial oversight and reduced illegitimate financial transactions (John et al, 2025). However, the adoption of AI in the banking sector remains uneven due to cost and capacity limitations. Similarly, Kenya has substantially integrated digital and AI into its public

administration. The country has adopted and applied electronic case management systems in its judiciary and has been practising online case filing, tracking, and virtual hearings. The innovations have tremendously improved efficiency and accountability within its legal system. Kenya has thus positioned itself as a leader in AI policy and innovation compliance, achieving this through strategic partnerships and investments in digital infrastructure.

South Africa, on the other hand, has taken a more structured, policy-driven approach to its AI adoption. The ongoing development of a national AI policy framework, which includes the launch of regulatory and ethical oversight institutions, testifies to the country's commitment to balancing innovation with governance safeguards (Dludia, 2026). This is why AI applications in South Africa have spanned public safety, service delivery optimisation, and economic planning, among others, signifying the country's determination to become a major player in AI governance compliance in Africa.

5. Information Disorder in African Digital Ecosystem

Information disorder has become a defining challenge facing Africa's developing digital ecosystems. The proliferation of internet access and mobile technologies has reshaped the production, dissemination, and consumption patterns of local information across the continent. While digital connectivity has improved civic participation and access to information, it has also created fertile ground for the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and malicious information (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Structural, technological, and sociopolitical factors further exacerbate these categories of information in Africa.

A combination of interconnected factors drives the spread of misinformation and disinformation in Africa's digital space. One of the drivers is the surge in internet penetration supported by mobile technologies. According to GSMA (2023), more than 570 million internet users across Africa primarily access the internet via mobile devices. While this widespread internet access has delivered information equity, the lack of digital literacy across the continent has made many users vulnerable to misleading content.

The situation is worse due to low levels of media and information literacy. The limited capacity to evaluate online information contributes to the spread of misinformation. Also, socio-political issues such as ethnic differences, political polarization, and distrust in government institutions create fertile ground for disinformation to flourish. Bradshaw and Howard (2019) state that the spread of false information by politically motivated actors during electoral cycles in Nigeria and Kenya affects voters' perceptions and behaviour. Economic incentives also play a role, since the digital attention economy promotes emotionally charged information. Disinformation is frequently propagated because it resonates with users' emotions and gains prominence on digital platforms (Bakir & McStay, 2018). There are also informal information networks and messaging systems, such as WhatsApp. The rapid peer-to-peer sharing of unverified information on these platforms further accelerates the spread of false narratives.

Social media platforms are also at the centre of the dynamics of information disorder in Africa. Millions of users rely on Facebook, Twitter (now X), and WhatsApp as their main sources of news and information. The reach and influence of these platforms often exceed those of traditional media channels. However, these platforms rely on automated processes

designed to increase user engagement, which can inadvertently prioritize sensational, controversial, and misleading content.

Algorithmic amplification is also a key factor in determining information flows. It affects the visibility of content to users. Gillespie (2018) observes that the platform algorithms are not neutral. They are meant to optimise attention and magnify content that tends to elicit powerful emotional responses. This creates an environment where disinformation spreads quickly when it aligns with existing biases. The effect of algorithmic amplification is made worse by the dominance of a few global technology platforms, whose content moderation standards may not always reflect local languages.

The enormity of this challenge has already been discussed in the literature. Organized social media manipulation has been observed in several African nations (Bradshaw & Howard, 2019). These operations often involve networks of bots, trolls and actors leveraging the algorithmic systems to amplify false narratives. Encrypted messaging apps like WhatsApp are also good for private conversations. This makes it harder for regulators and fact-checkers to track and rebut misinformation. This, in turn, makes its governance more complicated.

The impact of information disorder on governance in Africa is multifaceted. It affects all the sectors from democratic processes to national security and public trust in institutions. One of the greatest repercussions is on the integrity of elections. Misinformation and disinformation efforts have been found to alter voter behaviour, skew public debate and weaken faith in electoral outcomes (Abdulazeez et al., 2025). In the area of Security, information disorder fuels instability. In some African countries, there have been outbreaks of violence linked to false narratives associated with ethnic or religious tensions. Extremist groups have also used digital platforms to propagate propaganda and recruit members (Mohammed et al., 2025). This highlights the interplay between information disorder and broader security concerns.

It also affects public trust in government institutions. It hinders governments' ability to implement policies successfully, as the dissemination of false information erodes faith in official communications. This was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when falsehoods regarding the virus and vaccines impeded public health responses across the continent (WHO, 2020). Public institutions lose their legitimacy when citizens' distrust of the state grows. This, in turn, makes governance and policy execution more difficult.

6. Challenges of AI Governance in African States

Institutional deficiencies play a complex role in regulating artificial intelligence (AI) in African states. Regulatory environments and socio-economic differences cause these vulnerabilities. AI offers transformative prospects for public administration and governance in Africa, but structural and systemic difficulties hamper its effective governance. These issues are critical in situations where the rate of digital adoption surpasses the development of regulatory and institutional capacities. As a result, the deployment of AI technologies occurs within fragile governance environments. One of the major challenges to AI governance in African states is the fragility of regulatory and institutional frameworks. Many countries across the continent are still in the initial stages of developing national AI policies. Where such policies exist, their implementation is limited. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's reports show that a few African governments have established

official AI governance structures, and fewer have functioning regulatory systems to govern AI use.

This legislative gap results in a fragmented governance environment in which AI technologies are implemented without clear guidance on their ethical use, accountability, and risk management. Good AI governance needs values such as transparency, Justice and explicability (Floridi et al., 2018). These criteria are difficult to enforce when institutional control is insufficient. In many African countries, digital technology regulatory authorities lack the technical expertise and resources to effectively monitor AI systems. The lack of integrated legal frameworks in Africa impedes the regulation of cross-border digital operations. Gorwa (2019) asserts that AI governance is now increasingly dominated by private technology companies. This raises questions about sovereignty and accountability. This difficulty is further aggravated by the limited bargaining Power of individual states to negotiate the terms of regulation with global digital platforms. This indicates that governance decisions affecting African users are often made outside the continent.

Data governance is also a core pillar of AI systems, but it has remained a significant issue in many African states. AI technologies rely on large amounts of data for training and operation. This brings the question of data collection, storage, and use to the centre of debates about governance. Most African countries, however, lack strong data protection laws, exposing users to privacy breaches, abuse, and surveillance. However, considerable progress has been made with the passing of the Nigeria Data Protection Act, 2023 in Nigeria and the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 in South Africa. The implementation and enforcement of these laws is uneven. The 2014 African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention) also provides a continental framework for data governance. However, the rate of ratification and domestication has been slow across member states. Even though the African Union also introduced the Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy in 2024, few member states have started its domestication.

Weak data AI governance leads to inequality and erodes trust in digital systems. Incomplete datasets increase the danger of algorithmic bias and discrimination due to poor data governance. According to Mittelstadt et al. (2016), data infrastructures in Africa are unceasingly emerging. This increases the likelihood of biased AI systems. This is further worsened by the fact that much of the data used by AI systems is created and owned by foreign firms. This raises more problems about data sovereignty and digital dependency. Questions about privacy are also escalating with the growing adoption of AI in surveillance and security applications. African governments have embraced digital monitoring techniques for crime prevention and public safety, but these technologies typically operate without adequate legal protections. This gives rise to contradictions between objectives, interests, and individual rights.

Limitations in Capacity provide another important obstacle to effective AI governance in African states. These limitations appear in technological knowledge, infrastructure and financial resources. According to the World Bank (2021), there are still major gaps in digital infrastructure in Africa, including differences in internet access, electricity supply, and technological readiness. These are a big step backwards in adoption and governance of AI systems.

Constraints on human capital compound these issues. The development and governance of AI require specialised abilities in data science, machine learning and digital policy. These talents are lacking in many African countries. The lack of competence hinders governments' capacity to create, implement, and supervise AI systems. Margetts and Dorobantu (2019) suggest that implementing AI in public administration requires technical competence and interdisciplinary teamwork. Dependence on foreign technologies and expertise produces dependencies that erode indigenous innovation and governance independence. Azaroual (2024) points out that many African countries rely on imported AI technologies that may not be suited to local demands or regulatory environments. This reliance raises questions about the long-term sustainability and capacity of African states to take ownership of their digital destiny.

7. Implications of AI and Information Disorder for Governance in Africa

The convergence of artificial intelligence (AI) and information disorder has dire implications for governance and public administration in Africa. While AI offers opportunities to improve administrative efficiency and public service delivery, its interplay with fragile information ecosystems raises concerns that impact institutional trust and policy effectiveness. One of the implications of AI-generated information disorder in Africa is its impact on democratic government. AI technology can generate and disseminate synthetic media at scale, shaping public perception and influencing election outcomes. Evidence from West Africa shows that disinformation has become a critical component in elections, with political players deploying fake news and coordinated digital efforts to influence voter behaviour (Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2022)

The use of AI-generated content contributes to these dangers by spreading disinformation. For instance, survey data from across African electoral organizations show that AI tools are being used in voter engagement and election management but also pose vulnerabilities to the spread of disinformation (CDD West Africa, 2025). West Africa alone accounts for over 43% of the targeted disinformation campaign on the continent. This shows the West African states are susceptible to information manipulation by domestic and foreign actors (CDD West Africa, 2025). Moreover, AI-enhanced information disorder feeds on the crisis of truth, a situation in which citizens find it difficult to distinguish genuine information from fake. World Economic Forum identified AI-powered misinformation as One of the most significant global threats that undermine democratic institutions and intensify societal polarization (Nwankwo et al., 2026). In Africa, trust in government institutions is already shaped by historical and socio-political factors. The proliferation of misinformation further erodes public confidence. Similarly, governance processes themselves can be compromised by AI misuse. A recent case in South Africa revealed that an official AI policy document had to be withdrawn after it contained fabricated AI-generated references, raising concerns about accountability, transparency, and the integrity of policymaking (Reuters, 2026).

AI and information disorder also undermine the quality of public service delivery. Misinformation influences how citizens perceive government programmes and impedes policy execution. Also, the spread of misleading information on social media and messaging platforms makes it difficult for governments and citizens to communicate. The available literature indicates that WhatsApp-based political communication demonstrates how encrypted channels are used to distribute AI-generated fake narratives at high speed (Bosch et

al., 2025). This stretches the administrative capacities of public institutions, which have to invest in fact-checking, digital communication measures and crisis response processes.

The application of AI in governance also raises issues regarding security and citizens' liberty. Governments deploy AI surveillance systems to strengthen security and monitor cities, but these technologies can also be repurposed for political control and suppression of opposition. Some African countries have made significant investments in artificial intelligence-based surveillance infrastructure, such as biometric and facial recognition technologies, without the necessary legal protections (The Guardian, 2026). This has implications for governance twofold. On the one hand, AI would enhance the government's capabilities in crime prevention and border control. On the other hand, the lack of regulatory mechanisms enables abuse. This puts democratic government and human rights in danger.

The adoption of AI and the management of information disorder provide new layers of complexity to public administration in Africa. Governments are now confronted with a rapidly changing digital environment characterized by algorithmic decision-making, international flows of information, and hybrid threats. While AI systems increase efficiency, they are not neutral. They tend to replicate existing social and political biases embedded in their training data (Helberger et al., 2024).

8. Conclusion

The study revealed that the convergence of artificial intelligence (AI) and information disorder is a key governance concern in modern African states. While AI has great potential to transform administrative efficiency, service delivery, and data-driven decision-making, its entry into public administration occurs within institutional environments often characterized by regulatory gaps, limited capacity, and socio-political complexities. These problems not only hinder the practical application of AI but also increase the dangers of algorithmic bias, digital exclusion and the escalation of disinformation. This shows that the governance implications of AI in Africa are not only technical but also involve broader problems of legitimacy, accountability and institutional resilience.

The study further shows that information disorder, amplified by AI-powered systems, distorts policy-making and complicates state-society relations. The study draws attention to the temporality of falsehood and its consequences for government legitimacy through the lens of Iro-Otitọ – Misinformation Theory. Misinformation may have a short-term impact by appearing to be reliable information, but its conflicts with lived realities will eventually erode institutional confidence. This understanding is critical in African governance arenas because digitally transmitted falsehoods could further erode the fragile trust in public institutions. Thus, the issue for public administration is not just to manage technological innovation but to create information integrity and epistemic accountability. In conclusion, the study submits that managing the double dynamics of AI and information disorder calls for a rebalancing of governance frameworks in Africa. This includes improving regulatory institutions, investing in digital literacy and integrating indigenous epistemological viewpoints into policy solutions. By situating technological transformation within local socio-cultural and institutional realities, African states can better harness the benefits of AI while mitigating its risks.

References

- Abdulazeez, I., Omale, Z., & Chukwuebuni, O. F. (2025). Implications of Social Media Disinformation and False Narratives for Public Opinion among the Nigerian Electorate. *International Journal of Sub-Saharan African Research*, 2(4), 306–324.
- Adegbami, A. (2022). Rationality in Governance: Oba (Dr.) Sikiru Kayode Adetona's Model. In A. A. Agagu, L. Gbadamosi and A. A. Tobi (eds.), *Reinventing Governance in Nigeria: The Oba (Dr.) Sikiru Kayode Adetona Model*. Ago-Iwoye: Olabisi Onabanjo University Press, Ago-Iwoye. pp. 221-240 ISBN 978-978-59279-7-9 (PB)
- Adegbami, A. (2023). Governance, Recycled Politicians and Recycling Politics in Nigeria. *Pan-African Journal of Governance and Development*, 4(2): 149–174. A Publication of the Jimma University, Jimma, Oromia Region, Ethiopia. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/pajgd/article/view/260285>
- Adegbami, A. (2025). Poor Governance System in Nigeria: Can It Be Remedied Using the Yoruba Indigenous Governance Model? *Journal of Governance and Public Affairs* 2 (2), 53–84. The Journal of the Department of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22437/zyqrna96>
- Adegbami, A., & Kugbayi, O. (2024). Armed Banditry and Challenges of National Development: Is Nigeria's Governance System Failing? *Institutiones Administrationis-Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 4(1), 103-114.
- Adeoye, A., Onah, C. O., Orobator, E. T., Akintayo, E. A., Inuaeyen, J. U., Umoru, D. O., ... & Demola, M. B. (2025). AI and machine learning for early detection of infectious diseases in the US: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Medical Science, Biology, and Chemistry*, 2(1), 54-63.
- African Union (2024). Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy: Harnessing AI for Africa's Development and Prosperity. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/44004-doc-EN-Continental_AI_Strategy_July_2024.pdf
- African Union. (2014). *African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention)*. <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-union-convention-cyber-security-and-personal-data-protection>
- Ahsan, M., & Siddiqua, A. (2025). Fake News, Misinformation, and the Transformation of Public Discourse. *Journalism, Politics and Society*, 3(02), 78–87.
- Azaroual, F. (2024). Artificial Intelligence in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities. https://www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/2024-09/PB_23_24%20%28Azeroual%29%20%28EN%29.pdf
- Azaroual, F. (2024). *Artificial intelligence in Africa: Challenges and opportunities*. Policy Center for the New South. https://www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/2024-09/PB_23_24%20%28Azeroual%29%20%28EN%29.pdf
- Bakir, V., & McStay, A. (2018). Fake News and The Economy of Emotions: Problems, causes, solutions. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 154–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1345645>
- Bakir, V., & McStay, A. (2018). Fake news and the economy of emotions: Problems, causes, solutions. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 154–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1345645>
- Bradshaw, S., & Howard, P. N. (2019). The global disinformation order: 2019 global inventory of organised social media manipulation. *Oxford Internet Institute*. <https://demtech.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/93/2019/09/CyberTroop-Report19.pdf>

- Cabral, A. (1973). *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- CDD West Africa. (2025). *Artificial intelligence (AI) and democratic stability in West Africa: a game-changer or a passing disruption?* [https://www.cddwestafrica.org/uploads/reports/file/ARTIFICIAL-INTELLIGENCE-\(AI\)-and-democratic-stability-in-West-Africa-a-game-changer-or-a-passing-disruption-\(4\).pdf](https://www.cddwestafrica.org/uploads/reports/file/ARTIFICIAL-INTELLIGENCE-(AI)-and-democratic-stability-in-West-Africa-a-game-changer-or-a-passing-disruption-(4).pdf)
- Centre for International Governance Innovation (2022). Disinformation is undermining democracy in West Africa. <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/disinformation-is-undermining-democracy-in-west-africa/>
- CIPESA. (2025). Safeguarding African democracies against AI-driven disinformation. <https://cipesa.org/2025/11/safeguarding-african-democracies-against-ai-driven-disinformation/>
- Davidson, B. (1992). *The black man's burden: Africa and the curse of the nation-state*. James Currey.
- Dludia, N. (2026). South Africa unveils draft AI policy, proposes new institutions and incentives. https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/south-africa-unveils-draft-ai-policy-proposes-new-institutions-incentives-2026-04-10/?utm_source
- Efthymiou, I. P. (2025). The role of e-government and e-governance in modern societies. In *Public governance practices in the age of AI* (pp. 45–68). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Fanon, F. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.
- Floridi, L., Cowls, J., Beltrametti, M., Chatila, R., Chazerand, P., Dignum, V., et al. (2018). AI4People—An ethical framework for a good AI society. *Minds and Machines*, 28(4), 689–707. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-018-9482-5>
- Gillespie, T. (2018). *Custodians of the internet: Platforms, content moderation, and the hidden decisions that shape social media*. Yale University Press.
- Gorwa, R. (2019). What is platform governance? *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(6), 854–871. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1573914>
- GSMA. (2023). *The Mobile Economy Sub-Saharan Africa 2023*. <https://www.gsma.com/solutions-and-impact/connectivity-for-good/mobile-economy/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/20231017-GSMA-Mobile-Economy-Sub-Saharan-Africa-report.pdf>
- Gwagwa, A., Kraemer-Mbula, E., Rizk, N., Rutenberg, I., & De Beer, J. (2020). Artificial intelligence (AI) deployments in Africa: Benefits, challenges and policy dimensions. *The African Journal of Information and Communication (AJIC)*, 26, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.23962/10539/30361>
- John, S. A., Shonubi, J. A., Azuikpe, P. F., & Ologun, V. O. (2025). Adoption of an AI-driven fraud detection system in the Nigerian banking sector: An analysis of cost, compliance, and competency. *Economic Review of Nepal*, 8(1), 16–33. <https://doi.org/10.3126/ern.v8i1.80740>
- Li, H., Li, Q., Xu, Z., & Ye, X. (2024). Digital technologies. *Journal of Digital Economy*, 3, 240–248.
- Margetts, H., & Dorobantu, C. (2019). Rethink government with AI. *Nature*, 568(7751), 163–165. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-01099-5>

- Mohammed, I., Aondover, E. M., Akin-Odukoya, O. O., & Saint, E. J. (2025). Disinformation as a Tool for Recruitment by Terrorist Groups in Nigeria. *Konfrontasi: Journal Kultural, Ekonomi dan Perubahan Sosial*, 12(1), 23–35.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2018). *Epistemic freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and decolonization*. Routledge.
- Nwankwo, S. U., Orji-Egwu, A. O., & Igwurube, J. C. (2026). Synthetic Truths and Social Distrust: Evaluating How AI-Generated Content Shapes Public Perception of Credibility in the Nigerian News Landscape. *International Journal of Sub-Saharan African Research*, 4(1), 763–775.
- OECD (2025). Government at a Glance 2025. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/government-at-a-glance-2025_0efd0bcd/en/full-report/roles-and-responsibilities-for-public-administrative-services-design-and-delivery_e939ff96.html
- OECD. (2023). Disinformation and misinformation. https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/disinformation-and-misinformation.html?__cf_chl_tk=kDMKtoLR00qTw5SnXGkKyXD8P.EVmbOrcY2mlHqz1qQ-1779955340-1.0.1.1-mrgFd.R89NKilF6fgPyahIJJtfUmpX192LkxNI4Kofs
- OECD. (2026). *AI governance in Africa*. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-artificial-intelligence-case-studies_c517fcf5-en/ai-governance-in-africa_1ff55135-en.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Reuters. (2026). South Africa withdraws its AI policy due to fake AI-generated sources. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/south-africa-withdraws-ai-policy-due-fake-ai-generated-sources-2026-04-27/>
- Sargsyan, A., Hovsepyan, S., & Muradyan, A. (2024). Ubiquitous and powerful artificial intelligence (AI). In *Digitalization of Medicine in Low-and Middle-Income Countries: Paradigm Changes in Healthcare and Biomedical Research* (pp. 255–271). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- The Guardian. (2026). Invasive AI-led mass surveillance in Africa violating freedoms, warn experts. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/mar/12/invasive-ai-led-mass-surveillance-in-africa-violating-freedoms-warn-experts>
- Ughulu, J. (2025). Artificial Intelligence: The Priority of African Leaders with Nigeria as a Case Study. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Research*, 9(4), 85-97. <https://doi.org/10.51505/IJEBMR.2025.9406>
- Valizada, K. (2026). Artificial Intelligence and the Design of Politics in the Modern World. *Acta Globalis Humanitatis et Linguarum*, 3(1), 6–18.
- van Bosch, E. (2025). *The Perceived Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Cyber Security Operations in the South African Banking Sector* (Master's thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (South Africa)).
- Vatamanu, A. F., & Tofan, M. (2025). Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Public Administration: Challenges and Vulnerabilities. *Administrative Sciences*, 15(4), 149. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci15040149>
- Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking. *Council of Europe Report*. <https://edoc.coe.int/en/media/7495-information-disorder-toward-an-interdisciplinary-framework-for-research-and-policy-making.html>

- Wolniak, R., & Stecuła, K. (2024). Artificial intelligence in smart cities—applications, barriers, and future directions: a review. *Smart cities*, 7(3), 1346–1389.
- World Bank. (2021). *Digital economy for Africa initiative*.
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/all-africa-digital-transformation>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2020). Managing the COVID-19 infodemic: Promoting healthy behaviours and mitigating the harm from misinformation and disinformation.
<https://www.who.int/news/item/23-09-2020-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic-promoting-healthy-behaviours-and-mitigating-the-harm-from-misinformation-and-disinformation>
- Wu, J., Thomann, E. (2023). Governance in Public Policy. In: van Gerven, M., Rothmayr Allison, C., Schubert, K. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Public Policy*. Springer, Cham.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90434-0_66-1