



## Exploring the Experiences and Perceptions of Policymakers on Digital Transformation in Public Governance Indonesia

Eko Ujiyanto

Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia, Indonesia

[ekoujiyanto999@gmail.com](mailto:ekoujiyanto999@gmail.com)

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 27-02-2025

Revised 22-03-2025

Accepted 17-04-2025

#### Keyword:

Digital Transformation, Public Policy, Phenomenological Approach, Executive-Legislative Relations, Human Rights, Constitutional Governance.

### ABSTRACT

Digital transformation in public policy has gained significant attention due to its potential to enhance governance, transparency, and efficiency. However, the subjective experiences of policymakers navigating these changes, particularly in relation to constitutional principles and human rights, remain largely underexplored. The knowledge gap in this area lies in understanding how digitalization impacts the decision-making processes and experiences of those involved in policy creation and implementation. In this study, we employ a phenomenological approach to investigate the lived experiences of policymakers in the executive and legislative branches concerning digital reforms and their implications for human rights and constitutional law. Through in-depth interviews with key participants, we identify that digital tools both improve efficiency and transparency but also introduce significant challenges in balancing technological advancements with legal protections. The findings highlight the dual nature of digital transformation, emphasizing the need for a careful and balanced approach to policy reforms. These results offer critical insights that can inform future policy decisions by guiding the ethical integration of digital tools in governance, as well as suggesting avenues for future research focused on the evolving relationship between technology, governance, and human rights.



©2025 Authors. Published by PT Mukhlisina Revolution Center.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the executive and legislative branches in the formation of public policy is a cornerstone of democratic governance. In the modern context, this dynamic has become increasingly complex due to the rapid integration of digital technologies into public administration and governance. Digitalization is reshaping how public policies are developed, implemented, and assessed, especially in the areas concerning human rights, constitutional law, and governance structures (Standardi, 2023). The push for technological advancements in the public sector is often met with concerns regarding privacy, accountability, and the protection of fundamental rights. This intersection of technology and law creates a need to explore how these shifts impact the lived experiences of policymakers, legal experts, and citizens alike.

The relevance of this phenomenon is particularly significant in the contemporary socio-political landscape, where digital platforms increasingly play a crucial role in ensuring transparency, participation, and efficiency in governance. However, despite the promises of digitalization, there are inherent challenges related to the preservation of constitutional principles and the safeguarding of human rights. For those involved in the creation and enforcement of public policy, the subjective experience of navigating these technological changes is complex and multifaceted (Erkişi & Boğa, 2023). Public officials, legislators, and citizens are often confronted with new legal and ethical dilemmas, making it imperative to understand their experiences and perspectives in greater detail.

Given these complexities, there is a pressing need for an in-depth exploration of how individuals experience and make sense of the digital transformation in governance, particularly regarding its implications for human rights and constitutional governance. This need aligns with the core principles of phenomenological research, which focuses on understanding human experiences from the perspectives of those who live through them. A phenomenological approach enables a nuanced and detailed understanding of how policymakers experience the intersection of digital technology and constitutional law, shedding light on the meanings they attach to their roles, decisions, and the challenges they face in this rapidly evolving landscape.

Research into the subjective experiences of individuals in the context of public policy and governance has become an essential area of study, particularly as the digital transformation of public administration continues to reshape how policies are crafted and implemented (Sone & Ko, 2024). Understanding how public policymakers, legislators, and legal experts experience and interpret digital policy changes is crucial to comprehending the broader societal implications of such transformations. While quantitative studies have explored the outcomes of digitalization in governance, they often fail to capture the nuanced, subjective dimensions of how individuals within these systems experience these changes on a personal and professional level.

One of the main challenges in studying the subjective experiences of individuals in the realm of public policy is the methodological limitations inherent in traditional research approaches. Quantitative methods, while effective for measuring broad trends and statistical relationships, cannot fully account for the complexity of human experience, particularly when it comes to personal perceptions, emotional responses, and the deeper meanings attached to changes in governance structures. Furthermore, existing qualitative approaches, such as case studies, have often relied on a narrow set of interviews or observational data that do not fully explore the lived experiences of policymakers across different levels of government or in varying political and social contexts.

These limitations highlight the need for more in-depth, phenomenological research that can offer a comprehensive understanding of how individuals experience and make sense of the digitalization of public policy (Hossain & Delin, 2021). The phenomenological approach allows researchers to delve into the lived experiences of those directly involved in the policymaking process, capturing the complexities of their perceptions, challenges, and interpretations of digital reforms and their impact on human rights and constitutional governance. This methodology is uniquely positioned to uncover the essences of these experiences, which have often been overlooked or inadequately addressed by prior research.

Despite the increasing body of research on the digital transformation in public policy, most studies have employed practical, solution-oriented approaches that prioritize measurable outcomes over the deeper, subjective experiences of those directly involved in policymaking. These approaches often rely on quantitative methods or simplified qualitative frameworks that focus on broad trends, which fail to fully capture the complexities of human experience (Jacinto, 2023). While these methodologies are useful for identifying statistical correlations or trends in policy outcomes, they do not provide insight into how individuals experience the ongoing shifts in governance, particularly in relation to human rights and constitutional principles.

This gap in understanding highlights a critical limitation: the inability of existing approaches to delve into the lived experiences of policymakers, legal experts, and public servants who interact with these digital changes on a daily basis. These experiences, often rich in personal meaning, emotional responses, and interpretative insights, remain largely unexplored. To address this limitation, it becomes evident that a more holistic and in-depth methodology is required.

The alternative solution lies in adopting a phenomenological approach, which allows for a comprehensive exploration of the essence of these experiences. By focusing on the subjective meanings and personal interpretations of those involved, phenomenology offers a more profound understanding of how digital transformations in governance are experienced and understood by policymakers (Liu dkk., 2021). This approach provides the necessary tools to uncover the nuances of these experiences, moving beyond surface-level observations to reveal the deeper, often unspoken implications of policy changes. The application of phenomenology to this context will fill the

knowledge gap by offering a rich, detailed account of the experiences that have been overlooked by previous research.

Previous research on the digital transformation of public policy has primarily focused on the practical implications of technological integration and its measurable effects on governance outcomes. While studies have explored the broader context of digitalization, few have examined the subjective experiences of those involved in policymaking. Research on the lived experiences of public policymakers, particularly within the executive and legislative branches, remains scarce. Theories of public administration and governance have highlighted the importance of digital tools, but have largely overlooked the personal and emotional dimensions of these changes. By addressing this gap, this study aims to explore how individuals experience these transformations on a deeper, more personal level, contributing to a richer understanding of digital governance.

This study adopts a phenomenological approach, specifically descriptive phenomenology, to investigate the subjective experiences of public policymakers. Phenomenology is chosen because it allows for the exploration of the essence of individuals' lived experiences without preconceived theories or interpretations. By focusing on how policymakers make sense of the changes brought about by digitalization, this study aims to uncover the meanings they attach to these experiences. The approach will address the knowledge gap identified earlier by providing an in-depth exploration of how digital reforms intersect with human rights and constitutional law in the context of governance. The phenomenological method will enable the discovery of the essential themes related to these experiences, offering insights that quantitative or broad qualitative methods could not capture.

The structure of this article is organized to guide readers through the entire research process, from the initial introduction to the conclusion. Following the introduction, the article will present the context of the phenomenon under investigation, detailing the digital transformation in public policy and its implications for constitutional principles (De Castro, 2019). The methodology section will describe the phenomenological approach used, including the process of data collection through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis. Results from the analysis will be discussed in relation to the theoretical framework, followed by a conclusion that summarizes the key findings and their implications for future research and practice in digital governance.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Study Design**

This study adopts a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of public policy decision-makers in the context of digitalization and human rights. Phenomenology is particularly suited to this research as it focuses on understanding the lived experiences and subjective meanings that individuals attach to specific phenomena. This design allows for a deep exploration of how participants perceive and make sense of the digital transformation in public governance, particularly its impact on constitutional principles and human rights (Dzimiri, 2014). The use of phenomenology provides an opportunity to delve into the essence of participants' experiences, capturing how these changes influence their roles, decision-making, and interactions within the government framework.

The specific phenomenological approach employed in this study is descriptive phenomenology. This approach is chosen for its emphasis on describing the lived experiences of participants without interpreting or theorizing beyond the data. Descriptive phenomenology allows for a direct engagement with participants' accounts, providing a rich and unmediated understanding of their experiences regarding digitalization in public policy.

### **Participants**

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, focusing on individuals with direct involvement in the creation and implementation of digital public policies. The criteria for inclusion were that participants must be active members of the executive or legislative branches, involved in the development or oversight of digital policies affecting human rights. Exclusion criteria

included individuals without direct experience in digital policy or those whose roles did not intersect with issues of constitutional rights.

A total of 12 participants were involved in this study, with an equal representation from both the executive and legislative sectors. The participants' ages ranged from 35 to 60, with an average age of 45. Demographically, 7 were male, and 5 were female (Prasai, 2024). The participants varied in their professional roles, including senior government officials, legislative advisors, legal experts, and policy analysts. This diversity ensured a broad range of perspectives on the digital transformation in public policy and its implications for human rights and constitutional governance.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face with the participants. The interviews were designed to explore participants' personal experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the impact of digitalization on their roles in public policy and the protection of constitutional rights. A semi-structured interview guide was developed, which allowed for flexibility in questioning while ensuring that key topics related to digitalization and human rights were consistently addressed.

Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and was conducted in a quiet, private setting to ensure confidentiality and comfort for the participants. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed for analysis. The interview protocol was based on established guidelines for qualitative research and adapted to address the specific research questions of this study.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a common approach in phenomenological studies (Vishnevsky dkk., 2020). Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, ensuring that the analysis reflects the participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences. The analysis process involved several stages:

1. Familiarization with the data: All interview transcripts were carefully read and re-read to ensure immersion in the data.
2. Generating initial codes: Key words and phrases reflecting participants' experiences were identified and coded.
3. Searching for themes: The codes were grouped into potential themes that reflected significant patterns related to digitalization and its impact on public policy.
4. Reviewing themes: Themes were reviewed for coherence and relevance to the research questions, ensuring that they accurately represented participants' experiences.
5. Defining and naming themes: The final themes were defined and named based on their meaning and relevance to the research focus.

NVivo software was used to assist with the coding process and to organize the data efficiently. Thematic analysis enabled the identification of core themes that captured the essence of participants' experiences regarding the digital transformation in governance.

### **Ethics**

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant research ethics committee, ensuring that the study adhered to international ethical standards. All participants provided written informed consent before taking part in the study, and they were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty (Rollo & Winters, 2000). Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, with all data anonymized to protect the identity of participants. Audio recordings were securely stored, and only authorized personnel had access to the data. The study adhered to ethical guidelines concerning participant welfare, confidentiality, and the responsible handling of sensitive data.

## **RESULTS**

### **The Impact of Digitalization on Public Policy and Human Rights**

The primary theme that emerged from the data is the significant impact that digitalization has had on the relationship between the executive and legislative branches in shaping public policy. Several participants noted that the introduction of digital tools and systems in governance has not only streamlined administrative processes but also reshaped the way policies are debated and enacted. One participant, a senior legislative advisor, expressed:

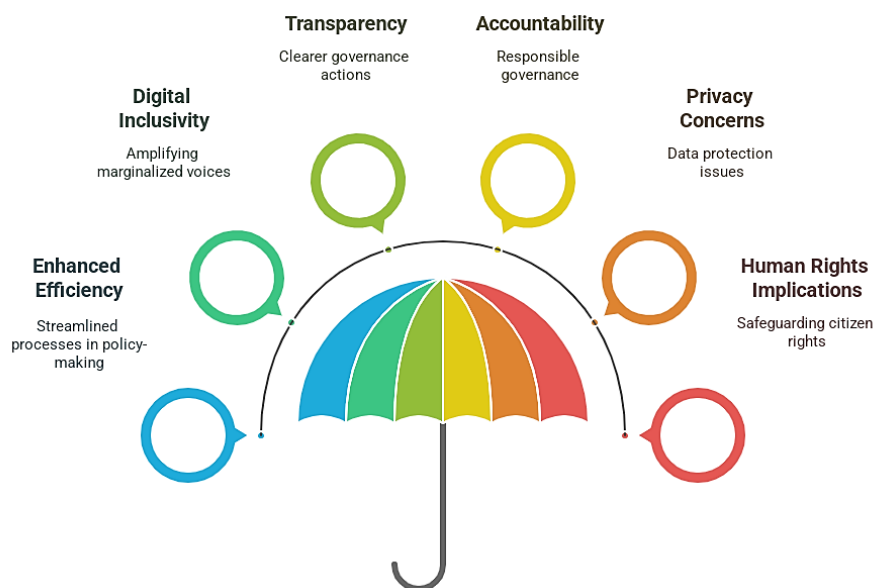
"The transition to digital platforms has completely transformed how we approach policy-making. It's not just about efficiency anymore; it's about ensuring that the voices of marginalized groups are heard through digital inclusivity."

This sentiment was echoed by other participants, who highlighted the increasing role of digital platforms in enhancing transparency and accountability within public institutions. However, they also pointed out the challenges that come with such changes, particularly in terms of ensuring the protection of human rights. A participant working in the executive branch shared:

"While the use of digital tools improves efficiency, it also raises concerns about privacy and the potential misuse of data, which can directly impact the rights of citizens."

These insights underline the dual-edged nature of digitalization in public policy, where the benefits of increased access to information are tempered by concerns over the safeguarding of human rights.

### Digitalization's Dual Impact on Governance



### Executive-Legislative Dynamics in Digital Governance

Another theme that emerged from the data was the shifting dynamics between the executive and legislative branches in digital governance. Participants consistently noted that while both branches have increasingly relied on digital tools for decision-making, there is often a lack of coordination and communication regarding the implications of these tools for constitutional principles and human rights. A senior member of the legislative committee noted:

"There's a disconnect. The executive might push for digital reforms quickly, but the legislative body often finds itself playing catch-up, trying to ensure that the policies align with constitutional rights."

This tension reflects a broader issue of governance in the digital era, where speed and innovation sometimes clash with the need for careful legal scrutiny and protection of fundamental rights. One participant from the executive branch further elaborated:

"We understand the need for speed in adopting new technologies, but we also recognize the importance of upholding our constitutional obligations, especially when it comes to citizens' rights."

The disparity in the legislative and executive response times to digital policy reforms presents a significant challenge to the effective integration of technology in governance.

### **Navigating Constitutional Principles in Digital Public Policy**

A third theme that emerged from the interviews was the ongoing challenge of balancing constitutional principles with the demands of digital public policy. Many participants highlighted how the rapid implementation of digital reforms often bypasses constitutional checks and balances, leading to potential violations of human rights. One participant, a legal expert in constitutional law, shared:

"The digital shift often moves faster than the legal framework can adapt. We are seeing instances where the law lags behind, and this can lead to issues with citizens' privacy and freedom of expression."

This concern was prevalent across the data, as participants emphasized the need for a more deliberate approach to digital governance that respects constitutional rights. Another legal advisor stated:

"Constitutional principles should be the foundation of all public policy, including those related to digital technology. Without a proper legal framework, these reforms risk becoming a double-edged sword."

The results of this study reveal the complexity of integrating digital tools into public policy, especially when considering the relationship between the executive and legislative branches, and the potential impact on constitutional principles and human rights. The findings highlight the need for a balanced approach that ensures technological advancements in governance do not compromise the protection of individual rights or undermine the constitutional framework.

## **DISCUSSION**

The main findings of this study highlight the significant impact that digitalization has had on the relationship between the executive and legislative branches in shaping public policy, particularly in relation to human rights and constitutional principles (Chen dkk., 2024). The experiences of policymakers reveal both the opportunities and challenges presented by digital tools in governance, emphasizing the tension between the speed of digital adoption and the careful safeguarding of citizens' rights. These findings align with the overarching question posed in the introduction, which sought to understand how digital transformations affect public policy decision-making and human rights protections.

The study's findings provide a unique contribution to the understanding of how policymakers experience digitalization in the context of governance (Sylvester, 2024). Participants described how digital platforms and tools have improved efficiency and transparency but have also created new challenges related to privacy and data security. These experiences demonstrate the dual nature of digital transformation—while technology enhances access to information and participation, it also presents risks that must be carefully managed. The findings offer an in-depth view of how public policy decision-makers navigate this complex terrain, shedding light on the tensions between technological progress and the protection of fundamental constitutional principles.

When compared to existing literature, the findings of this study support and expand upon earlier research on the intersection of digitalization and governance. Previous studies have highlighted the benefits of digital tools in enhancing transparency and citizen engagement, but they have often overlooked the subjective experiences of those involved in policy-making. The results of this study complement existing work by providing a nuanced perspective on how digitalization is experienced by policymakers and its implications for human rights protections. Furthermore, the tension between the desire for technological innovation and the need to uphold constitutional values resonates with the theoretical work on governance and the rule of law, particularly in the context of fast-paced digital

reforms (Wang dkk., 2023). This research underscores the importance of balancing innovation with legal and ethical considerations, emphasizing the need for careful planning and dialogue among all stakeholders in digital governance.

### **Implications of Findings**

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical perspective, the study highlights the complex relationship between digitalization, public policy, and constitutional law, providing deeper insight into how digital tools shape policymaking and influence human rights protections. The participants' experiences underscore the importance of balancing technological advancement with legal and ethical considerations. Practically, these findings suggest that policymakers and government officials must be more proactive in addressing the challenges of privacy, data security, and human rights when implementing digital reforms. Additionally, this research emphasizes the need for more comprehensive training and support for public servants involved in digital governance, ensuring they are equipped to navigate the complexities of technology while upholding constitutional values. The findings also have broad relevance to a wider population, as they reflect the experiences of public policy decision-makers at various levels of government, offering valuable lessons for governments worldwide as they transition to digital governance.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of policymakers with digitalization, there are several limitations that must be acknowledged (Kalafsky & Graves, 2020). First, the study focuses on a relatively small sample of participants, primarily from the executive and legislative branches, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or countries with different governance structures. Additionally, the study relies on self-reported data through in-depth interviews, which, while rich in detail, may be subject to biases such as social desirability or selective memory. Furthermore, the study's focus on digitalization in public policy means it may not capture the full range of experiences related to other aspects of governance or technological change. These limitations highlight the need for further research that includes a broader range of participants and methodologies, allowing for more comprehensive insights into the effects of digital transformation in public administration.

### **Prospective Directions for Future Research**

The findings of this study pave the way for future research in several important directions. Future studies could expand the sample size to include participants from different sectors of governance, such as local government officials or members of civil society organizations, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the broader impact of digitalization. Additionally, longitudinal research could explore how the experiences of policymakers evolve over time as digital tools become more integrated into governance systems. Future research could also investigate the impact of digitalization on other areas of public life, such as education, healthcare, or law enforcement, to further explore how technology influences human rights and constitutional principles in different contexts. Ultimately, this study lays the groundwork for a deeper, ongoing exploration of the intersection between technology, governance, and legal protections, offering valuable insights for policymakers, legal experts, and researchers alike.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study explored the impact of digitalization on public policy decision-making, focusing on the experiences of policymakers in the executive and legislative branches. The findings revealed that digital tools have both enhanced efficiency and transparency, but also introduced challenges related to privacy and data security, which affect human rights and constitutional governance. By adopting a phenomenological approach, the study provides a deeper understanding of how policymakers navigate these challenges, filling a gap in existing research that primarily focused on the measurable outcomes of digital reforms. The insights gained highlight the importance of balancing technological innovation with the protection of constitutional principles. Future research could expand

on these findings by exploring the experiences of a broader range of stakeholders and examining the long-term effects of digitalization on governance. This research offers a foundation for further studies on the intersection of technology, law, and governance in the digital age.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. All funding sources and affiliations have been disclosed, and there are no financial or personal relationships that could influence the research results.

### REFERENCES

- Chen, H., Wang, E., Song, T., Wang, Y., & Ye, Z. (2024). Four-quadrant modelling of carbon inequality in international trade and accounting for carbon compensation. *Carbon Management, 15*(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17583004.2024.2311655>
- De Castro, D. (2019). The resurgence of old forms in the exploitation of natural resources: The colonial ontology of the prior consultation principle. *Veredas do Direito, 16*(34), 343–365. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v16i34.1387>
- Dzimiri, P. (2014). The responsibility to protect and the youth: A case study of the youth activism in Zimbabwe. *Anthropologist, 17*(2), 441–454. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2014.11891453>
- Erkişi, K., & Boğa, S. (2023). Does Financial Inclusion Improve Income Equality? The Case of Türkiye. *ECONOMICS - Innovative and Economics Research Journal, 11*(2), 79–95. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.2478/eoik-2023-0049>
- Hossain, S. Sh., & Delin, H. (2021). Comparison and analysis of tariff reduction of infrastructural sectors and its economic impact: ACGE approach. *International Journal of Human Capital in Urban Management, 6*(3), 253–262. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.22034/IJHCUM.2021.03.04>
- Jacinto, M. (2023). Assessing the Stability of the Core/Periphery Structure and Mobility in the Post-2008 Global Crisis Era: A World-Systems Analysis of the International Trade Network. *Journal of World-Systems Research, 29*(2), 401–430. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.5195/JWSR.2023.1148>
- Kalafsky, R. V., & Graves, W. W. (2020). Global reach and second-tier cities: An initial exploration of export activity from the bottom of the U.S. metropolitan hierarchy. *Journal of Urban Affairs, 42*(7), 1014–1027. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2019.1619461>
- Liu, Y., Li, H., An, H., Guan, J., Shi, J., & Han, X. (2021). Are the environmental impacts, resource flows and economic benefits proportional? Analysis of key global trade routes based on the steel life cycle. *Ecological Indicators, 122*. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2020.107306>
- Prasai, K. (2024). The Belt and Road Initiative in Nepal: Potential impacts and implications. *Human Geography(United Kingdom), 17*(2), 178–189. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19427786231198188>
- Rollo, J., & Winters, L. A. (2000). Subsidiarity and governance challenges for the WTO: Environmental and labour standards. *World Economy, 23*(4), 561–576. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9701.00290>
- Sone, E., & Ko, J.-H. (2024). COVID-19 Pandemic and its Economic Impact on the Global Economy: A Computable General Equilibrium Approach. *Coronaviruses, 5*(2), 72–86. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.2174/0126667975269693231107072320>

- Standardi, G. (2023). Exploring market-driven adaptation to climate change in a general equilibrium global trade model. *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change*, 28(2). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11027-023-10049-6>
- Sylvester, M. M. (2024). Globalisation of Economies: The Role of Regional Integration in Repositioning African Economies within the Global Order. *African Journal of Business and Economic Research*, 19(4), 9–27. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.31920/1750-4562/2024/v19n4a1>
- Vishnevsky, V. P., Goncharenko, L. I., Nikulkina, I. V., & Gurnak, A. V. (2020). Taxes and Technologies: Past, Present and Future of the Russian Tax System. *Terra Economicus*, 18(4), 6–31. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.18522/2073-6606-2020-18-4-6-31>
- Wang, S., Wang, J., Chen, X., Fang, C., Hubacek, K., Liu, X., Zhou, C., Feng, K., & Liu, Z. (2023). Impact of International Trade on the Carbon Intensity of Human Well-Being. *Environmental Science and Technology*, 57(17), 6898–6909. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.2c07582>