

Peer Review

Review of: "Algorithmic Management as Private Labour Regulation: A Framework for Standards, Monitoring, Sanctions, and Worker Due Process"

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The preprint is extremely well-written. What I learned from reading the manuscript is that the authors have constructed a clear picture (theoretical construct) of the lifecycle of algorithmic management used as an employment relations tool.

The paper provides a very cogent description of the stages of the algorithmic management lifecycle, starting with an employer's use of algorithmic tools to inform workers how a job should be done (standard-setting). They proceed to describe a more advanced use involving the employer assessing the worker's performance algorithmically in accomplishing the task (detection and audit). Finally, a more advanced use still is the use of algorithmic tools to impose disciplinary action on the worker (sanctioning and escalation) and even termination of employment.

There are many published articles that catalogue the use of algorithmic tools in these three phases, and the psychological effects on the worker who is on the receiving end of these employer actions, but the authors see that life cycle in governance terms as a form of "private sector" regulatory action as contrasted with "public sector or governmental" regulatory action. The major addition that the paper makes to the literature is to bring a clearer picture of these processes, and the essential and critical value of "contestability," i.e., the right of workers to contest sanctions. What kind of "evidence" does a worker have to present in exercising their contestability rights? Contestation procedures are an essential element of all public sector labor regulatory actions, and we may need to apply aspects of those procedures to the employment setting. As the authors point out, many research questions now arise to understand "when [and how] algorithmic management becomes a governance regime inside the employment relationship."

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.