OPEN PEER REVIEW

The Digitalization of Welfare and Legal Exclusion: Algorithms, Automation, and Administrative Justice

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The articulation of sociotechnical systems, legal proceduralism, and human rights perspectives is commendable. However, the article would benefit from explicitly mapping how these frameworks guide the analysis in subsequent sections.

This paragraph is impactful. Consider including the legal citation or court decision name, to guide readers seeking legal precedents.

This analysis would be enriched by quantitative data, such as the number or percentage of wrongful terminations, or references to class-action lawsuits where applicable.

It would be beneficial to propose legal standards or cases that attempt to address this opacity, such as the use of right to explanation clauses in data protection law.

Strong argument. Consider discussing recent developments in algorithmic accountability legislation (e.g., EU AI Act or Algorithmic Accountability Act in the US).

While valuable, you should discuss the challenges of implementing audits (e.g., lack of expertise, resistance from developers, or cost burdens on agencies).

Clarify the ambiguities and limitations of Article 22 GDPR. Many scholars argue it provides no substantial remedy in practice—engaging this debate would strengthen the section.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

Consider elaborating on how different jurisdictions conceptualize discretion, and how this tension plays out in law (e.g., common vs. civil law systems).

The critique of the UK system is strong. However, the discussion could be improved by contrasting outcomes in urban vs. rural regions, or policy design vs. implementation gaps.

Excellent comparative insight. Could you elaborate on what institutional safeguards (ombuds offices, data ethics boards, etc.) make these models more accountable?

This is a crucial point. Suggest adding references to empirical studies or statistics showing the scale of exclusion due to digital illiteracy in welfare access.

The sentence is accurate. Consider citing a technical audit or data analysis study that illustrates how bias manifests in public sector algorithms.

This is a strong normative stance. However, the conclusion would benefit from specific policy proposals or a brief agenda for future empirical research.

Excellent final call. To improve the impact, suggest mentioning co-design practices, public technology audits, or digital ombudsperson institutions as concrete ways forward.

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2.   Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.