THE WHY NOT LAB

Co-Governance of Algorithmic Systems

Ensuring a seat at the table

by Dr. Christina J. Colclough, The Why Not Lab

What's the problem?

Examples of algorithmic systems in human resources

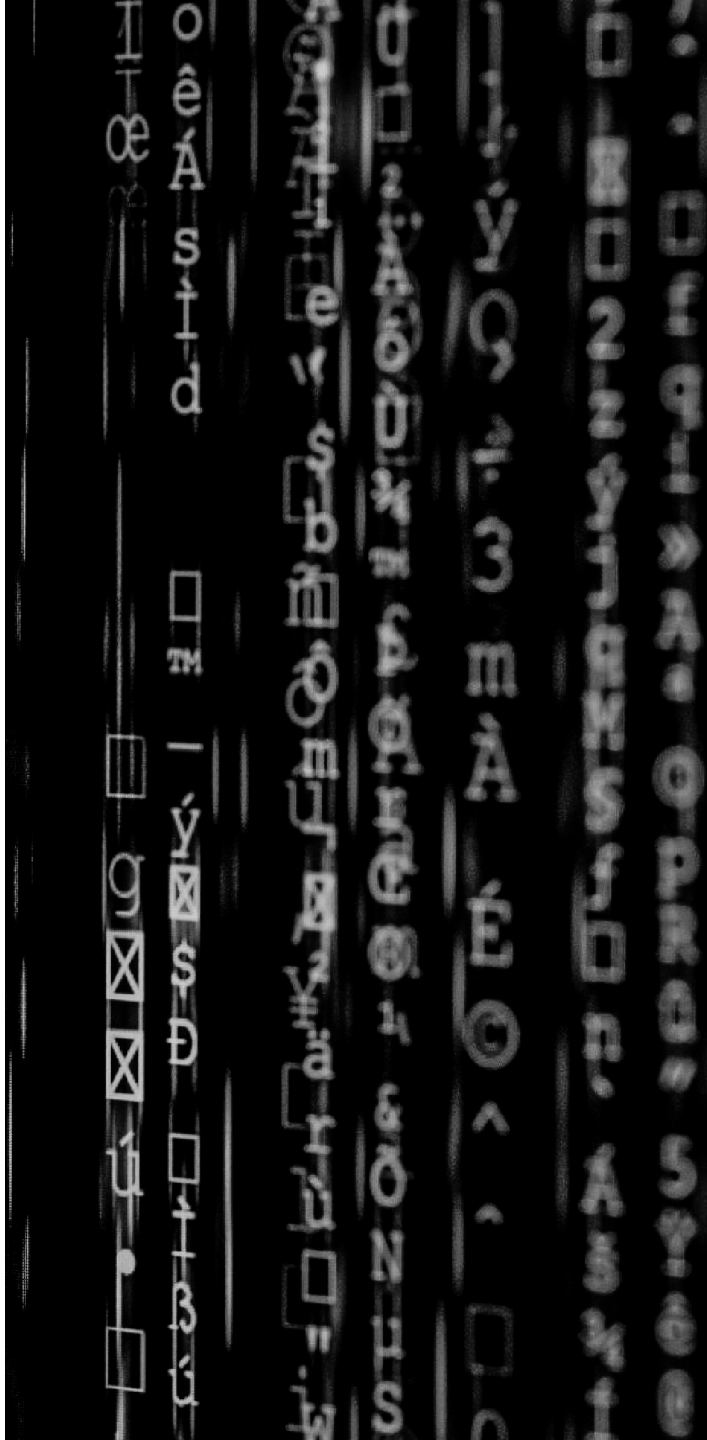
- Automated hiring/firing systems

  Candidate vetting, screening, selection

- Keyboard tapping monitoring
- PC use surveillance
- Customer service software

  evaluating tone of voice, words said, frequency of said words, “success” rate

- Office sensors
- Facial recognition
- Fraud detection
- Productivity/efficiency measures
- Location Data
- Scheduling systems



Who is in control?

- In-house systems
  1. Far less common
  2. More adaptable
  3. “Home grown” (potentially)
  4. Adapted (potentially) to Norwegian culture, norms, ethics
- 3rd Party systems
  1. Very common
  2. Often accompanied by 3rd party analysis tools
  3. Systems must be governable, changeable - but are they?
  4. Will 3rd parties deny adaptation to tools and hide behind IP?
  5. Risk of digital colonialism (the disregard of Norwegian culture, norms, ethics)

Potential harms & impacts of algorithmic systems on workers

1. Work intensification - working time - pace of work
2. Discrimination/bias in who gets an opportunity, who is denied

   risk of moving towards a narrow, exclusive labour market
3. Suppression of organising
4. Deskilling and job loss - contingent work forms on the rise
5. Lower wages, economic insecurity, less mobility
6. Mental health, physical health pressures
7. Loss of autonomy and dignity
8. Loss of privacy

Quantification of workers

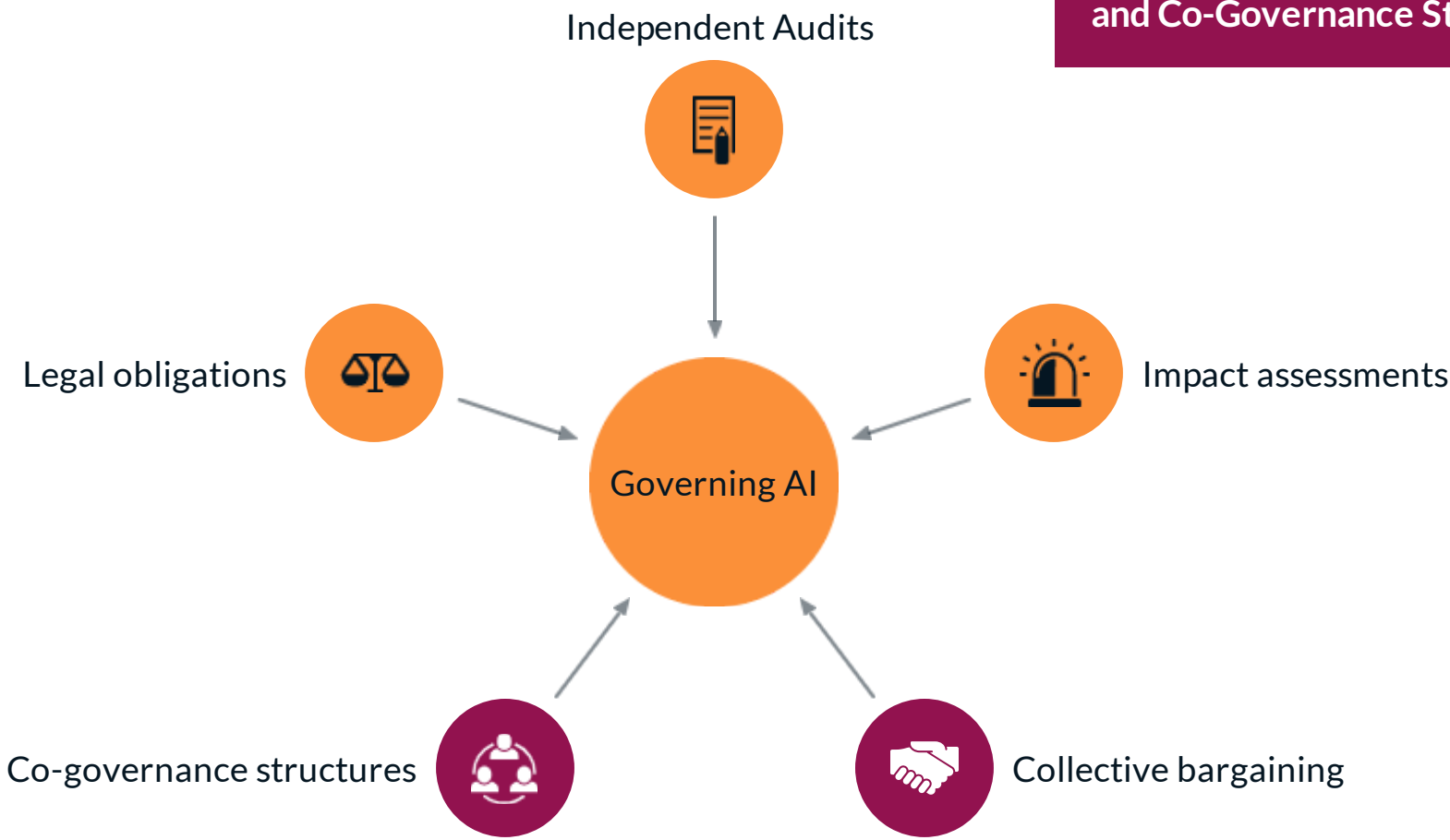
What's the solution?

Claiming transparency, fairness & accountability

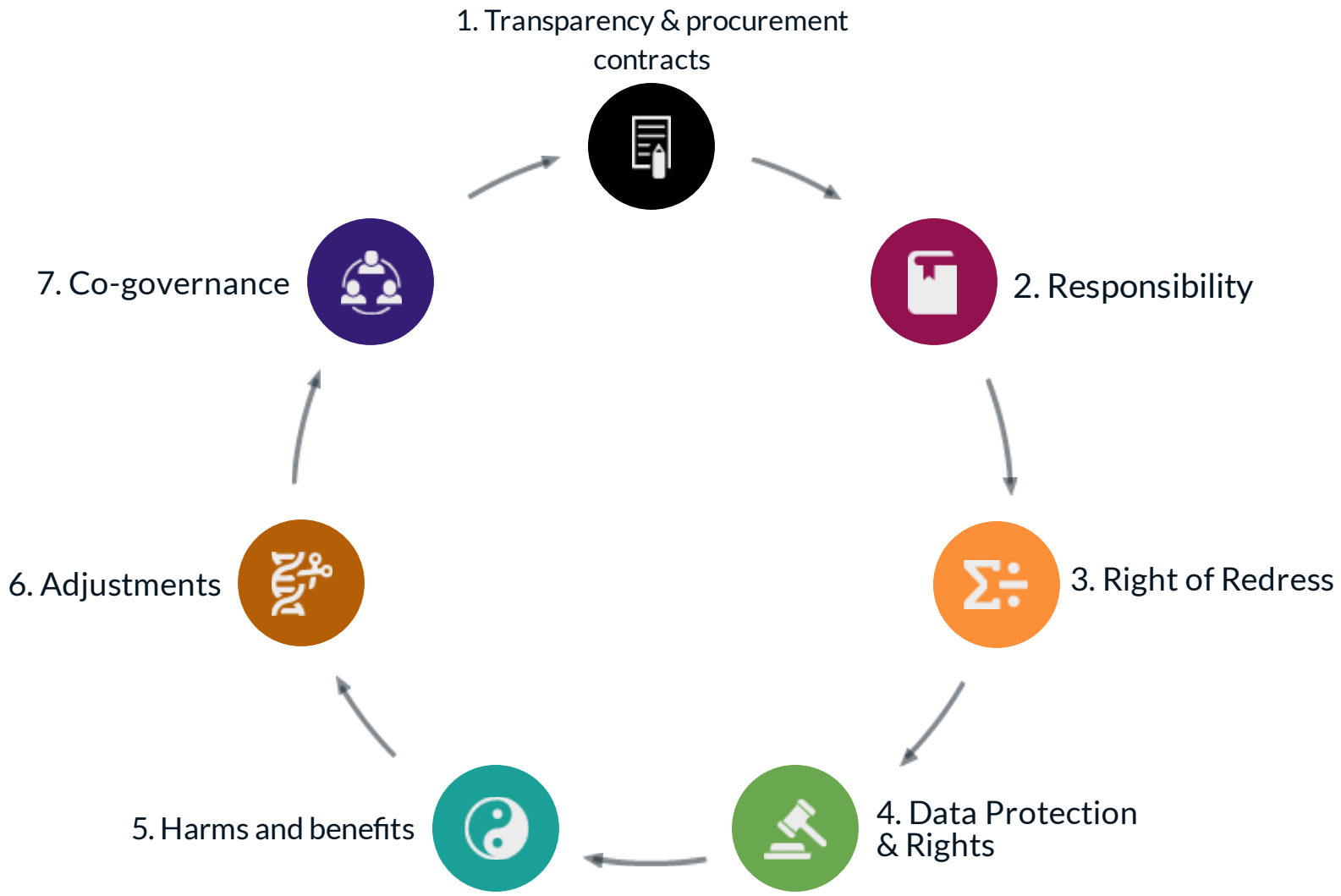
Getting a seat at the table

The Governance Suite

Algorithmic systems can be governed in multiple ways. The Governance Guide refers explicitly to Collective Bargaining and Co-Governance Structures



The 7 themes of the Co-Governance of Algorithmic Systems Guide



Theme 1: Transparency / procurement contract

1. Which digital systems is the employer using that affect workers and their working conditions? What are the purposes of these systems?
2. Who designed and owns these systems? Who are the developers and vendors?
3. What are the contractual arrangements between developer, vendor and the employer with regards to data access and control as well as system monitoring, maintenance, and redesign?
4. What transparency measures can be established to ensure disclosure of any algorithms being used in the digital system?

Theme 2: Responsibility

1. What oversight mechanisms does management have in place? Who is involved?
2. What remedies are in place if a system fails its objectives, harms workers, and/or if management fails to govern the digital system?
3. How do you ensure the system is in compliance with existing laws and collective agreements?
4. Which managers are accountable and responsible for these systems?

Theme 3: Right of Redress

1. What mechanisms can be established to ensure that workers have the right to challenge actions and decisions taken by management that are assisted by algorithms?

Theme 4: Data Protection & Rights

1. If personal data and personally identifiable information are processed in these systems, what protections for that data currently exist? What additional protections are needed?
2. Are datasets that include workers' personal data and personally identifiable information sold or moved outside the company?
3. What mechanisms can be established to ensure workers have the right to access, edit and/or erase personal data and personally identifiable information?

Theme 5: Harms/benefits

1. What assessments have you and/or a third party made of risks and impacts (positive as negative) on workers' well being and working conditions?
2. How do you control for and monitor possible worker harms in these systems, e.g. health and safety, discrimination and bias, work intensification, deskilling?
3. What is your plan for periodically reassessing the systems for unintended effects/impacts?

Theme 6: Adjustments

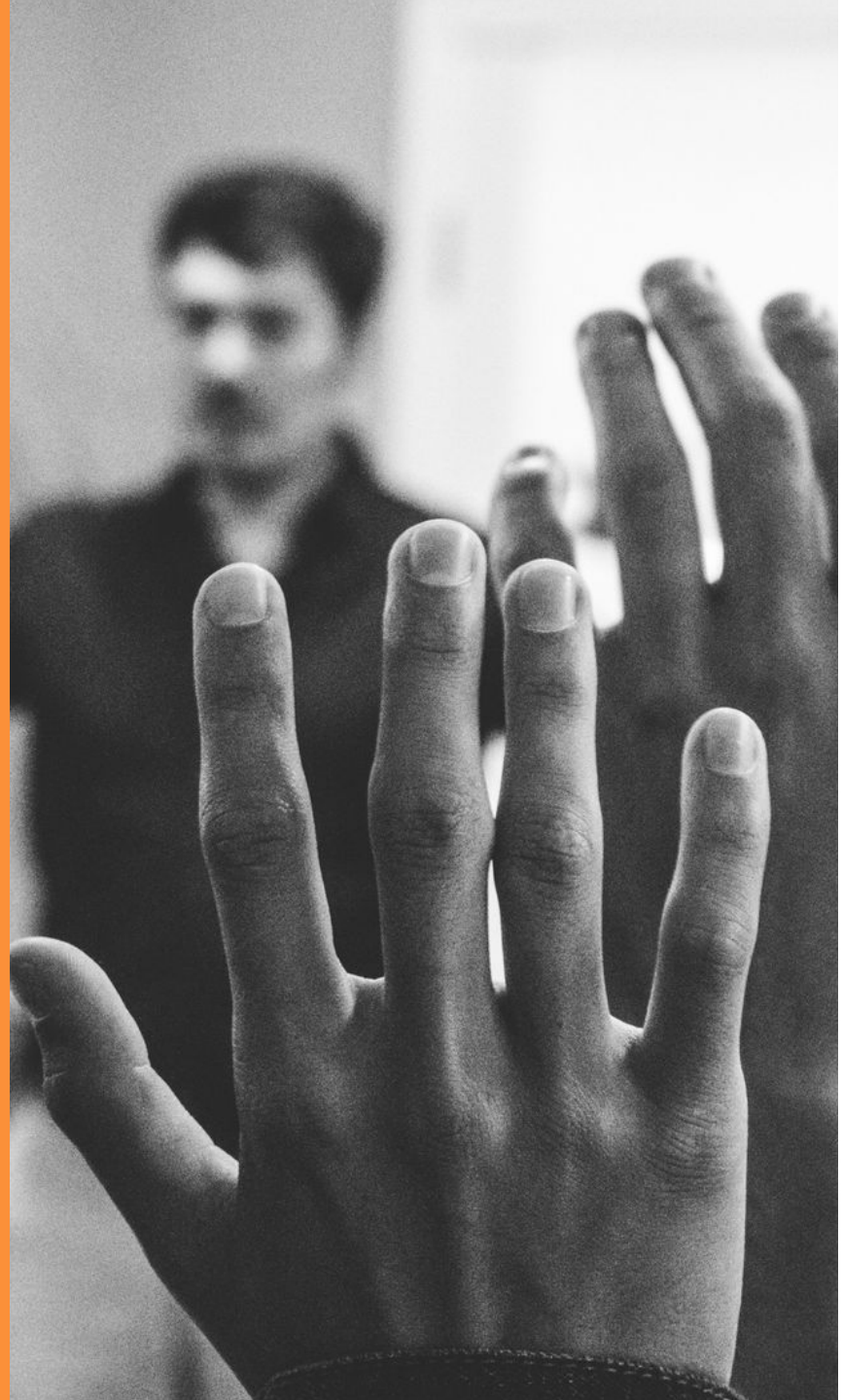
1. What are the mechanisms and procedures for amending the digital systems?
2. How will you log your assessments and adjustments?

Theme 7: Co-governance

1. What mechanisms can be put in place, so unions are party to this governance?
2. What skills and competencies do management and workers need to implement, govern and assess the digital systems responsibly and knowledgeably?

“Nothing about us, without us!”

Questions?



Thoughts?

Dr. Christina Colclough

Expert Future of Work & Politics of Technology

christina@thewhynotlab.com

@cjcolclough

www.thewhynotlab.com