Inequality and the Smart City

Rachel Franklin

School of Geography, Politics and Sociology, Newcastle University, UK
*Email: Rachel.franklin@newcastle.ac.uk

In this talk, I provide an overview of the promise and perils of the smart city, linking these to broader-scale technological changes occurring at global to local scales. I then focus on the criticism that many elements of smart cities—for example, increased surveillance or algorithmic bias—may create or magnify societal and spatial inequalities. The heart of the talk engages with one specific component of the smart city-inequality debate: how and for whom knowledge is produced within cities, with a focus on sensor placement, coverage gaps, and uncertainty variability. A case study for Newcastle (UK) is presented to help illustrate the issues. In concluding, I highlight the importance of this aspect of smart city inequality, especially with regard to public health and policy efficacy.