

Crowd-sourcing the Smart City: Big Geosocial Media Data, Ethics and Urban Governance

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Abstract: Using big data to better understand urban questions is an exciting field with challenging methodological and theoretical problems. It is also, however, potentially troubling when big data (particularly derived from social media) is applied uncritically to urban governance via the ideas and practices of smart cities. This talk reviews both the historical depth of central ideas within smart city governance – particular the idea that enough data/information/knowledge can solve society problems – but also the ways that the most recent version differs. Big data and metrics derived from them can provide useful insight and policy direction. But one must be ever mindful that metrics don't simply measure; in the process of deciding what is important and possible to measure, these data are simultaneously defining what cities are.

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