

Techno-Topology

Interculturality and the Technological Mediation of Place

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The human sense of space is technologically mediated. Technologies like earth observation technologies, artificial intelligence, and the internet of things function as 'patial sense-makers': they mediate people's interpretation of place and space. In this lecture I will investigate the dynamics of this sense-making process, and its connections to interculturality. I will do so by connecting the theory of technological mediation to the debate about place.

Technological Mediation Theory investigates technologies from the perspective of their mediating role in human-world relations. When technologies are used, they typically function as 'hermeneutic devices': by connecting us to the world around us, they also help to shape sense-making and interpretative frameworks. This technologically mediated sense-making process takes place in a cultural context, though, in which technological mediations are conditioned by cultural and societal appropriations. This results in a complex dynamic interaction, in which technologies are not only culturally appropriated, but also impact the frameworks from which this appropriation takes place.

In the lecture, I will investigate patial sense-making in three technological domains: smart city technologies, earth observation technologies, and climate engineering technologies. Analyzing these three different techno-topologies, with concrete case-studies, will also make it possible to address the normative dimension of these technologies. By making visible the ethical and political significance of topo-technologies, we can also unlock the ethical and political potential of techno-topological investigations.