

# Seminar 1

## Programmable City Project

### The Threat of Algocracy: Reality, Resistance and Accommodation

We live in an age of algorithmic decision-making. The question raised by this paper is whether the use of such decision-making in the public sphere is problematic. Suppose that the creation of new legislation, or the adjudication of a legal trial, or the implementation of a regulatory policy relies heavily on algorithmic assistance. Would the resulting outputs be morally problematic?

As public decision-making processes that issue coercive rules and judgments, it is widely agreed that such processes should be morally and politically *legitimate*. Could algorithm-based decision-making somehow undermine this legitimacy? I argue that it could by making such decisions more opaque. In this manner it gives rise to a 'threat of algocracy' – a situation in which algorithm-based systems structure and constrain the opportunities for human participation in, and comprehension of, public decision-making. This is a significant threat, one that is difficult to accommodate or resist.

#### Speaker:

*Dr John Danaher* is a lecturer in Law at NUI Galway, whose research interests lie, broadly, in the areas of philosophy of law and emerging technologies and law.

**15:00-17:00, Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015**

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