You are invited to the UGent Urban Academy Session

Exploring Digital Social Participation for urban governance in Ghent

29th May 2019, 2 pm - 4 pm
UGent Urban Academy / Green Hub, Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 31
(plinth UFO building, next to Arts Center Vooruit)

The session is the final event of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie project *Crowdsourcing Urban Sustainability Governance* and will be introduced by a brief presentation on the project aims, activities and results. The focus of the session is to discuss with you collectively or in two small groups, together with the positive outcomes, also the pitfalls and threats of digital participation in the planning and managing of the city. To this end we will introduce the projects results in the form of provisional conclusions and seek for your help to further explore both the bright and the dark side of digital social participation. We also want to collect and formulate new research questions on digital participation that Master students can discuss within the Urban Academy.

Digital social participation (DSP) processes are currently widely experimented in many European cities and promise to have a disruptive effect on the tokenistic forms of citizens participation and the traditional governance models. Nevertheless, critical scholars and internet activists recently raised doubts about the actual possibilities, intrinsic limits and external obstacles of technological citizenry and the use of DSP in urban governance. We will, thus, presents the results of a strategic qualitative scenario building analysis in the city of Ghent. This aims at investigating the potential effects of the digital turn on participatory governance; and to explore how different combinations of key-drivers identified by local informants (i.e. the increased provision of digital inclusion processes and the wide-spreading of a shared vision of the city development) are able to disclose potentialities, pitfalls and consequences of DSP. The resulting scenarios offer a privileged standpoint and a situated perspective for an expert discussion on the currently un-resolved issues brought about by DSP. These include the broadening and transformation of participation meaning and practices; the capability and possibility to govern digital social innovation and participation in a new public-private governance regime; the shift of power geometries and the empowerment mechanisms that can (or cannot) turn the hyperconnected city of futurist technology-optimist narrative into a City of People.

You will soon get a digital "CROWD_USG project pack" which will bring you (hopefully) inspiring challenges for the collective discussion.

Hopelijk tot dan!

Info and confirmation: Chiara.Certoma@UGent.be and Thomas.Block@Ugent.be

https://crowdusg.net/   http://www.cdo.ugent.be/   http://destadsacademie.be/