

Democratic Transitions?

Will the Internet Bring About More Democracy and Better Governance?

Workshop on Internet, Governance and Democracy in Denmark and Asia

Aalborg University, 24 September 2003, 9.00 -18.00

Why the Internet and Democracy?

The Internet and other modern information and communication technologies (ICT) challenge existing political thinking, systems and processes all over the world. In fact, some think that the Internet will bring about more transparency in policy-making and governance, as well as enhancing democratic participation and empowerment of citizens. Alternatively, some would argue that the Internet is simply a new tool for reinforcing traditional patterns of political behaviour and governance. No matter which position is taken, the Internet has certainly provided new opportunities for politicians, governments and civil society.

Why Asia and Denmark?

Asia comprises vastly divergent countries with different political traditions. In comparison, Denmark is a small and, politically, fairly homogeneous country. However, in both cases, the Internet acts as a frontrunner of globalization and forces policy-makers, governments and civil society alike to consider how to use the Internet in political processes and government and how to protect diversity.

Denmark and Asia may well have contrasting experiences with the Internet. But there are common interests as well. In the field of Internet and democracy, both Asia and Denmark are facing the challenge of democratic transitions. The Internet has opened new avenues for political communication, dialogue and action as well as for interaction between state and citizen.

The workshop brings together leading specialists from Asia and Denmark who will present the latest research findings on these issues. They will analyse and discuss the changes and challenges that the Internet has brought about.

The workshop is part of the cultural festival 'Images of Asia' that will be held in Denmark in August and September 2002. One of the focuses of the festival is the dialogue between Asia and Denmark and the role of the media in Asia.

Participation is free. **Registration** by e-mail to: Anders Højmark Andersen (anders@nias.ku.dk), Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), www.nias.ku.dk



'Democratic Transitions?'

Programme

Aalborg University, 24 September 2003, 9.00 - 18.00

- 9.00 **Opening**
- Sven Caspersen, President, University of Aalborg
 - Olaf Gerlach Hansen, Director, Danish Centre for Culture and Development
- 9.40 **Session 1: E-democracy**
- Dr. Jens Hoff (Denmark): *E-democracy in Denmark*
 - Dr. Indrajit Banerjee (Singapore): *The Internet and Democracy in Asia*
- 11.00 Break
- 11.20 **Session 2: E-Governance and E-Administration**
- Prof. Arne Remmen (Denmark): *Administrative Reforms via ICT - Perspectives and Problems*
 - Dr. Ang Peng Hwa (Singapore): *E-regulation in Asia*
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.30 **Session 3: The Internet and Civil Society – Diversity, Empowerment, Inclusion?**
- Vinaya Kumar Kasajoo (Nepal): *Use of Internet for Democracy, Development and Empowerment in Nepal*
 - Nana Skovrup (Denmark): *To Overcome Digital Divides – Strategies and Experiences from the Digital North Denmark*
 - Jennifer Lasimbang (Malaysia): *Indigenous Peoples' Experiments with ICT as a Tool for Political Participation and other Socio-Cultural Struggles in Sabah, Malaysia*
- 16.15 Break
- 16.30 **Session 4: Youth, the Internet and Political Participation**
- Johannes Andersen (Denmark): *The Internet Culture of Youth - Does it Mean Anything for Politics?*
 - Prof. Bu Wei (China): *Adoption, Usage, and Impact of the Internet: Youth Participation and the Digital Divide in China*
- 17.10 Discussion
- 17.40 **Wrapping-up:** Jens Hoff and Indrajit Banerjee

The workshop is organized and sponsored by: The Department of Economics, Politics and Public Administration of Aalborg University ■ The Digital North Denmark ■ Danish Center for Culture and Development (DCCD) ■ MODINET – Center for Media and Democracy in the Network Society ■ Danish Association for International Co-operation (MS) ■ Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS)