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**A critical analysis of information and knowledge societies
with specific reference to the interaction between local and
global knowledge systems**

By

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Summary

A critical analysis of information and knowledge societies with specific reference to the interaction between local and global knowledge systems

Benefiting from the process of globalisation and becoming an information and knowledge society, has become the vision for many governments throughout the world. However, as it has been demonstrated in this thesis, becoming an information and knowledge society is much easier for developed countries that already possess some of the prerequisite criteria, such as an efficient and effective ICT infrastructure. By investing in such an infrastructure, the interaction and exchange of data, information, and knowledge from a local knowledge system with the global knowledge system is enabled. Through this two-way flow of information, the other criteria these countries have to comply with are stimulated, making it much easier and faster for these countries to achieve their goal.

However, for the developing countries that are still in the grip of the digital divide, the goal of becoming information and knowledge societies seem nearly unattainable. Owing to this digital divide that is experienced by developing countries, combined with other barriers such as the social barriers that include the overall health and education level of citizens, the citizens of these countries cannot take part in the interaction and exchange process. Thus, this interaction and exchange process cannot aid these countries in complying with the other criteria needed to become information and knowledge societies, and in this way, the progress of developing countries towards becoming information and knowledge societies are seriously hampered.

How does the interaction and exchange of data, information, and knowledge between developing countries' local knowledge systems and the global knowledge system contribute to their development and positive participation in the global information and knowledge society? This is the research question



that has guided this thesis. To get an answer to this question the author addressed the following issues:

- The author sketched the theoretical foundation of this thesis by providing a brief historical perspective of the Information Science domain. This provided a better understanding of concepts such as data, information, knowledge, global-, western-, and scientific knowledge as well as indigenous-, traditional-, and local knowledge as applied in this thesis. The underlying relationship between these concepts were also explored. Furthermore, the phenomenon of the global information and knowledge society was discussed as one of the opportunities presented by globalisation.
- The author then analysed the criteria of the information and knowledge society as discussed in Chapter 3, and identified indicators that the stated criteria are constructed from. To investigate whether developed countries are information and knowledge societies, these indicators were applied to Norway and the USA. It was concluded that both countries comply with the stated criteria and are thus information and knowledge societies.
- The author followed the same method of investigation and applied the indicators identified in Chapter 4 to two developing countries, namely Niger and South Africa. It was concluded that both these countries do not comply with the stated criteria and, thus, are not information and knowledge societies. Furthermore, barriers were identified by the author that inhibit these countries from becoming information and knowledge societies.
- Lastly, the author discussed proposed solutions and recommendations that can be used to overcome the various barriers that inhibit the progress of developing countries becoming information and knowledge societies.



Keywords

Information society;

Information and knowledge society;

Interaction and exchange process;

Local knowledge system;

Local knowledge;

Indigenous knowledge;

Global knowledge system;

Global knowledge;

Western knowledge;

Developmental barriers;

Information and communication technologies.



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