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Digital Methods from Denmark

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CostFree

LocationWhitehead Building. Ian Gulland Lecture Theatre.

DepartmentCentre for the Study of Invention and Social Process, Sociology

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Please join us for an afternoon of Experiments with Data Publics prepared by members of the Techno-Anthropology Group at the University of Aalborg in Copenhagen:

1. Experiments with a data-public

Anders Koed Madsen and Anders Kristian Munk, University of Aalborg in Copenhagen

Democracy, it is said, is in a state of crisis. What exactly defines the crisis depends greatly on who, when and where you ask the question, of course, but the credo is frequently heard. Denmark is no exception and the recent reform of the Danish school system, traditionally a highly praised token of participatory democracy, has been a case in point. So what happens when elected politicians recognize that they can no longer act as trusted representatives and decide that a radically new dialogue with the public is called for? And what happens when they decide that this dialogue must be constituted where the public is already venting its frustrations, i.e. on social media? In this talk we consider our recent experience of being enrolled as data-experts in a participatory democratic experiment that attempted to use Facebook and digital methods to collectively envision the school of the future in the municipality of Aalborg.

2. Tracing a data public: Facebook as a doubly debate-generating device

Author: Andreas Birkbak (University of Aalborg in Copenhagen and CSISP, Goldsmiths visiting fellow)

There is a huge interest in the contribution (or not) of social media to public debate. In this presentation, I examine Facebook pages related to a contentious issue in Copenhagen (congestion charges). Rather than simply extending public debate, what seems to be at stake with Facebook is also what counts as debate. In order to understand this, it is useful to pay attention to how social media like Facebook are debate-generating in two ways. There is debate 'on' social media and there is debate 'about' social media. These two debates tend to be kept separate. If they are brought together, we might gain insights into how debate is crafted with Facebook, and the conditions for such debate to count as public debate.

This event is hosted by the Centre for the Study of Invention and Social Process (CSISP), Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths.