**INVITATION TO SINO-NORDIC WORKSHOP**

**Development, opportunities and challenges of the digital transformation of welfare services in China and the Nordic countries**

Hosts: Professor Rune Halvorsen (Oslo Metropolitan University),Professor Minna van Gerven (University of Helsinki) and Professor Felicia Tian (Fudan University)

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**Time: Thursday 14- Friday 15 December 2023** (lunch to lunch)

**Venue: Fudan University, Shanghai**

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| **Practical information**  Deadline for submitting abstract (200-400 words): Friday 3 November  Deadline for submission of full papers (5-6 pages): Friday 8 December  There is **no conference fee.** The organizers will cover lunch and dinner for the participants.  Please send an email to [biao.he@ut.ee](mailto:biao.he@ut.ee)/ [biaohe@oslomet.no](mailto:biaohe@oslomet.no) to express your interest in attending the seminar.  We may cover reasonable domestic travel expenses and accommodation (1 night) for a limited number of participants. The participant should agree on this with Biao He well in advance of the seminar. |

*The workshop welcomes participants from both academic and non-academic sector. The workshop will be open for researchers (including early-stage researchers and PhD students), policymakers, market sectors, and NGOs in the Nordic countries and China with expertise on e-governance, information systems, digitalisation and automatisation of welfare services, AI, social policy, public administration and governance.*

**background**

The emerging digital economy is having a profound effect on the provision of welfare services both in China and the Nordic countries. According to UN e-Government Survey 2020, the global average e-governance development index (EGDI) has increased. While the Nordic countries and Estonia, are still leading in digital transformation, China has now stepped into the very high EGDI group for the first time.

Digitization is expected to continue changing service offers and public administration. Expectations range from hopes for increased efficiency, justice and accountability, to dreaded problems such as social exclusion, dehumanization and inequality. This calls for empirical observation and critical analysis of new digitized service offerings. Ongoing transformations will promote new types of services and service users, new needs and solutions, and new and potentially fruitful ways to cooperation between service providers and public administration on the one hand, and service users and communities on the other, in both the health and social sector. Not least, the relationship between the public and private sectors has undergone major changes as almost all digital infrastructure is provided by private sector. Information about individuals crosses the line between the public and private sectors (e.g. health and banking information). We still know rather little about challenges and opportunities for managers, service providers and service users of e.g. digital case processing and digital platforms in education, e-health, rehabilitation and welfare services

The roll out of digital social services by default aims to increase efficiency, transparency and social justice. But for those with limited or no access to digital connections this can exacerbate exclusion and inequality. The provision of digital welfare services differs enormously across the regions and in the asymmetric way they affect life chances for different population groups and communities, including persons with experience of economic hardship, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

**Call for papers**

The workshop welcomes papers that address the current situation and process of digital transformation in Nordic and Chinese welfare services. For instance:

* What do the e-governance policy frameworks look like and how do they influence welfare governance in two regions?
* What are the common and different challenges and barriers in the digital transformation between the Nordic region and China?
* How has e-governance impacted on citizen-government communication, cross-section administration, transparency and accountability of welfare governance?
* How have the government and non-government sectors facilitated the digital transformation? What are the governments doing to avoid digital exclusion? How can the experiences from one region inspire another?

Papers may examine the constellations of actors’ involvement in the rollout of digital services, e.g. the role of the state, market, civil society organisations and communities of families. Who are the actors implementing these changes and how do different communities respond? We invite papers analysing these developments at the supranational, national, regional and/or local level. We are interested in the consequences of the reforms for take up of entitlements by claimants of welfare services, including persons living in rural areas, the elderly and persons with disabilities. For instance:

* Which mechanism or factors foster or hamper citizens’ use of digitalized welfare services?
* What do we know about the accessibility, availability, and usability of government websites?

We welcome single country studies, cross-national and comparative papers as well as theoretical, conceptual and empirical contributions, paying attention to gender and inequalities in access to and take up of welfare services among different regions and population groups.

**Programs**

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| **14 December 2023 Thursday (Arrival Day)** | |
| Participants check in the hotel before 1200  Lunch and break 1200-1400 | |
| **14 December 2022 Thursday**  **Afternoon Session: 1430-1700 (Beijing Time)**  **Moderator: Professor Rune Halvorsen** | |
| 1400-1430 | Registration |
| 1430-1500 | Opening Remarks\*2 |
| 1500-1525 | Speaker 1 |
| 1525-1550 | Speaker 2 |
| 0950-1000 | Coffee Break |
| 1600-1625 | Speaker 3 |
| 1625-1650 | Speaker 4 |
| 1650-1700 | Concluding comments |
| 1800-2000 | Dinner and Social Gathering |
| **15 December 2022 Thursday**  **Morning Session: 0900-1100 (Beijing Time)**  **Moderator: Professor Minna van Gerven** | |
| 0900-0925 | Speaker 1 |
| 0925-0950 | Speaker 2 |
| 0950-1000 | Coffee Break |
| 1000-1025 | Speaker 3 |
| 1025-1050 | Speaker 4 |
| 1050-1100 | Concluding comments |
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| 1130-1300 Checkout and Lunch | |