Forming Local Citizens in Bhutan: The Traditionalization of Participation - Empowerment, Domination or Subjugation?

Winnie Bothe, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract

'Gross National Happiness' is the name of a new development model invented by a small Himalayan Kingdom, Bhutan. This development approach is seen by an increasing number of people as a refreshing alternative to the conventional development models that often take growth as their main target. But how is it actually practiced in Bhutan and how does this influence the way in which the rural inhabitants are constructed as citizens? These are questions that you should get wiser on at the PhD defense of the thesis: Forming Local Citizens in Bhutan: The Traditionalization of Participation: Empowerment, Domination or Subjugation?

The thesis addresses questions of how local governance reforms are diverted by national discourses on citizenship, ones that serve to traditionalize the local citizens into roles as supplicants rather than promoting self-determining citizens. Thus, even if donors have success in localizing governance it may not result in the form of citizenship donors would like to see".