Internet control in Asia

FAIFE Committee

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Finnish Parliament Library

Introduction

– Based on international reports

  • Open Net Initiative, Reporters Without Borders, Freedom House, UN, Unesco

– Countries referred serve as examples of diversity in internet control

Eduskunnan kirjasto

Asia on Internet

- Global power shift to south and east

- China to be dominant language by 2015

- 42 % of Internet users globally

- 21 % Internet penetration rate

Asian political and cultural ideas have a global impact

Global impact

–Strong international impact

- China among countries to propose extended control through ITU and by utilizing generally DPI in new generation networks (WCIT 2012)

Eduskunnan kirjasto

Stronger control

- –Tradition of stronger government control in relation to communications

- –Restrictive regulation increasing

- –Different cultures of governance
  - Model of governance has impact, but it is not the only denominator

Eduskunnan kirjasto

Political and cultural stability protected

- Political stability strongly protected
- Requirements of security and public order intertwined to forms of control
- Cultural values to be protected

Public order, mass control

- Requirements of security and public order intertwined to forms of control

- Mass movement strictly controlled due rich populations

Public acceptance

- Social acceptance

- In some countries online communities participate on censorship

Vagueness

- Vague interpretation of laws
  - Violation of rules may be exaggarated or politically motivated in some countries

- Vague surveillance arrangements
  - Non-transparent censorship and surveillance practices

What is your stand on Asian configurations of internet control?

Do you find restrictions acceptable or relevant from cultural or political perspective?

Structures of censorship

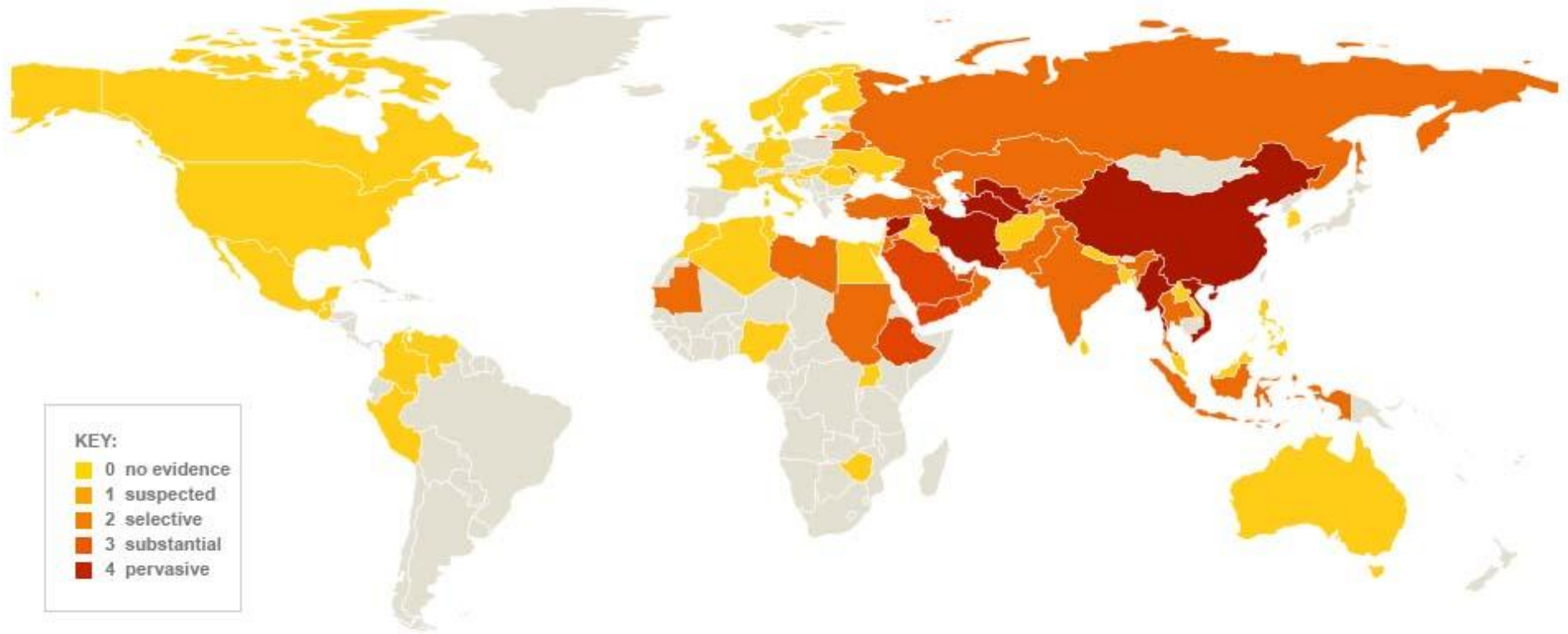# Freedom of Information in Asia

Best

Australia, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea,
South Korea, Taiwan

Worst

Bangladesh, Burma, China, Vietnam
(*Reporters without Borders*)

Burma, China, North Korea, Vietnam, Yemen
(*Media censorship, Reporters without Borders*)

Open Net Initiative, Interactive Map of Censorship,
http://www.theguardian.com/technology/datablog/interactive/2012/apr/16/web-filtering-
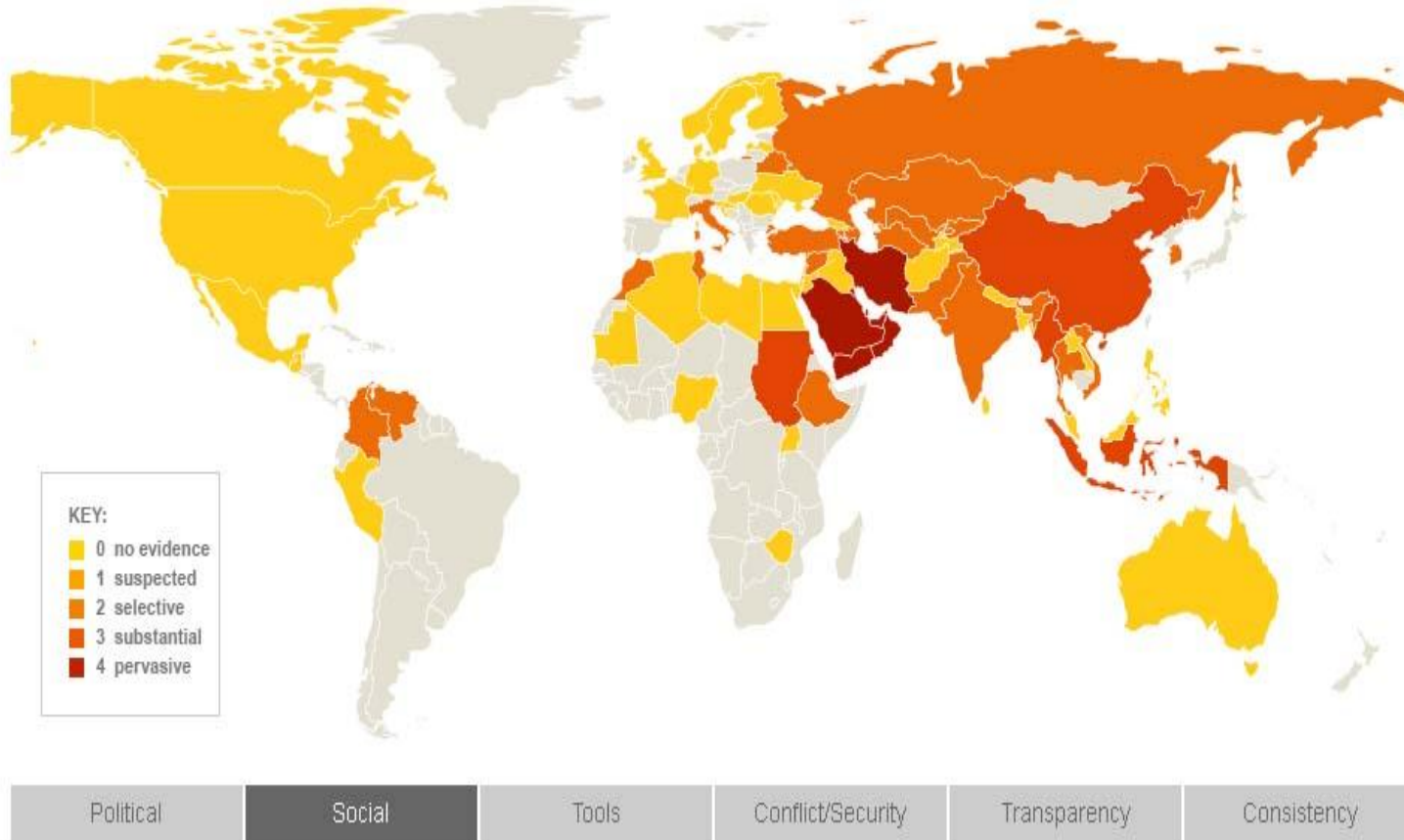censorship

Category: **Social**

KEY:
- 0 no evidence
- 1 suspected
- 2 selective
- 3 substantial
- 4 pervasive

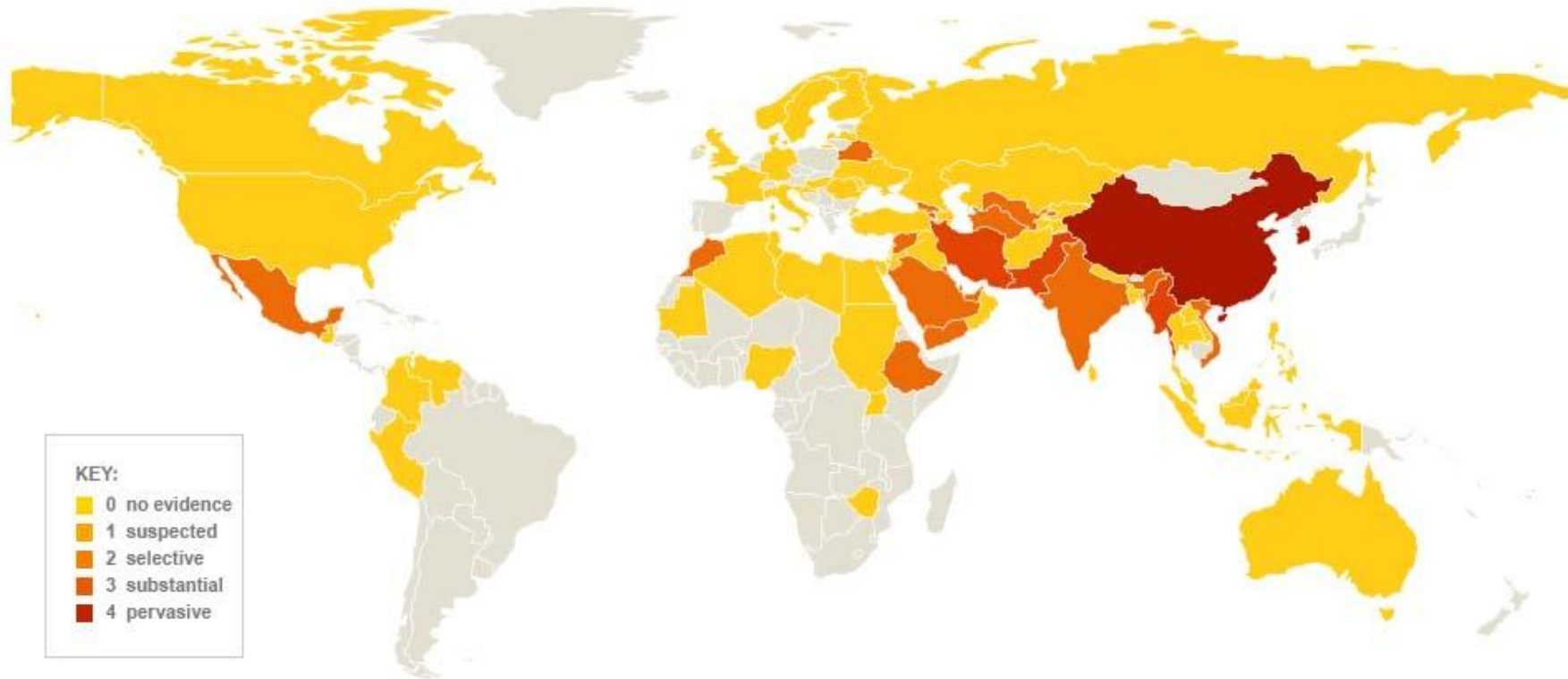| Political | Social | Tools | Conflict/Security | Transparency | Consistency |

Open Net Initiative, Interactive Map of Censorship,
http://www.theguardian.com/technology/datablog/interactive/2012/apr/16/web-filtering-censorship

Open Net Initiative, Interactive Map of Censorship,
http://www.theguardian.com/technology/datablog/interactive/2012/apr/16/web-filtering-
censorship

Conclusions

- In global comparison countries of strong internet control can be found in Asia

Strong control, but differences between countries

Censored issues

- National security, terrorism
- State power, national identity
- Public order
- Religious issues and blasphemy
- Morale concerns

What is your view of the freedom of information in your country?

Are these global reports in line with reality?

China

China

Situation

- Strong government control
  - "Great Firewall of China"
    - World's most sophisticated online censorship and surveillance system

- Large scale user basis
  - 564 million internet users
  - 40 000 micro-blogs
  - Local search engine (Baidu), Twitter (Weibo) etc.

China

Issues

- Online pornography
- Internet fraud
- Dissemination of rumors and false reports

China

Methods

- − Compulsory blogger identification
- − Compulsory user tracking software
- − Keyword filtering
- − Blogs and websites shut down
- − Blackouts and cut-off connections
- − ISP liability

China

Consequences

- 30 journalists, 69 netizens in prison (2013)

"It is a real cat and mouse game between government technicians and "hacktivists" or companies that offer data encryption and ways of circumventing the Great Firewall. In the words of a Freegate engineer, it is a matter of staying one step ahead and keeping future improvements in circumvention technology up one's sleeve."

- Enemies of Internet 2013

South Korea

"South Korea may represent the future of the Internet: it represents a society that is both highly tech savvy and heavily monitored."

- Country reports, Access contested, 2010

South Korea

Situation

- Basically pluralist society
- One of the most advanced and connected Internet networks in the world (speed, users)
- More constraints than in other democratic countries
  - Pervasive security based filtering

South Korea

Methods

- – Filtering
- – Users' informed about it (access denied due to the..)

South Korea

Issues

- Conflict and security based issues
- "Any contact with North Korea" (National Security Law)
- Election related issues
- Pornography, gambling

Vietnam

Vietnam

Situation

- State control over all communications
- Legislative and regulatory framework to control Internet use
- Pervasive political filtering
- Own version of Facebook
- Harsh repression of dissidents

Vietnam

Methods

- Anonymity prohibited
- Monitoring software in internet cafes
- Site-blocking and slowing down connections
- ISPs under government control

Vietnam

Issues

- Independent media
- Human rights
- Anti-government information, political reform

Vietnam

Consequences

- Arrested bloggers and journalists
- Dissident harrassment
- Police brutality

Singapore

Singapore

Situation

– Basically positive approach to Internet development

– Media control

- Media development authority (MDA)
- Internet Code of Conduct
  - Focus on contents in Singapore area
  - Hyperlinks and mirrored cites not included

Singapore

Methods

- Filtering (Blue Coat)
- DPI (Deep packet inspection)
- ISP liability
  - Monitoring of content; not Internet and users

Singapore

Issues

- Cultural issues
  - "Public interest, public order, national harmony, good taste, decency…"

- Racial, ethical and religious material, sex

- Election-specific regulations, no political videos or podcasts

Conclusions

- Power

- Tradition of government control

- Complexity

- Protection of political and cultural stability

- Control of public order and movements of masses

- Public acceptance

- Vagueness in interpretation of laws and surveillance arrangements

- Diversity

How do you see the future of internet control in Asian region?

What are possible development directions?

Resources

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- Open Net Initiative, Global Internet Filtering. Country reports.

  http://opennet.net/

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  http://en.rsf.org/

Resources

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  http://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/2013_globalcorruptionbarometer_en/1?e=2496456/3903358

- Transparency International (2013), Global corruption map
  http://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/results

- UNESCO (2013), Global survey on Privacy and Freedom of Expression.

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- WCIT-12 leak shows Russia, China, others seek to define 'government-controlled Internet' / ZDnet

  http://www.zdnet.com/wcit-12-leak-shows-russia-china-others-seek-to-define-government-controlled-internet-7000008509/