



Partners in Research and Knowledge

LEIDEN ASIA CENTRE

Annual report 2015-2016

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1. Introduction and Mission

The 21st century is often regarded as the age of Asia. It is projected that the Asian region as a whole will continue to dominate global developments in terms of politics and culture, as well as economic and demographic shifts. Leiden University is well-placed to study and interpret these developments, owing to the longstanding links with and rich experience in investigating Asia.

In 2015 the Modern East Asia Research Centre (MEARC), was transformed into an expertise centre for *socially relevant and applicable knowledge on modern East Asia*. The LeidenAsiaCentre aims to expand its expertise and to do so in collaboration with a growing number of societal partners, in particular the business sector, civil society, the media, government and academic and non-academic knowledge centres.

The LeidenAsiaCentre **achieves this by**:

- Consulting with non-academic partners in identifying research questions;
- Conducting original academic research, taking into account the needs of stakeholders in society;
- Building and expanding a broad network within the Dutch government, the media, educational institutions, the business sector and civil society;
- Disseminating knowledge by means of lectures, conferences, intensive training courses and publications, including web publications.

In 2014 the Modern East Asia Research Centre (MEARC) received a grant of several millions euros through the Leiden University Fund. The grant originated from the Vaes-Elias Fund.

The Board of MEARC¹ together with the three directors² decided to use these funds to put MEARC on a completely new footing including a change of governance structure as well as a change of name. The **LeidenAsiaCentre** was officially launched in January 2016.

¹ André van Heemstra (Chair), Douwe Breimer (Treasurer) and Ralph Kröner (Member)

² Professors Frank Pieke, Kasia Cwierka and Remco Breuker

2. Governance

In the course of 2015-2061 the LeidenAsiaCentre underwent a governance transformation resulting in an autonomous **Executive Board** (*Bestuur*, consisting of the current three directors) with oversight being provided by the **Supervisory Board**.

The mandate of the Executive Board has been widened and the Supervisory Board's (*Raad van Toezicht*) main task is to see to it that activities undertaken by the LeidenAsiaCentre reflect the policy decided upon by the various governing bodies of the centre.

In addition to the Supervisory Board it was felt that the overall strategy of the LeidenAsiaCentre would benefit from the input of an **International Advisory Board**. Consisting of academics and executives working on (East) Asia and drawn from a variety of disciplines and perspectives, this body will meet once a year to review the research and outreach activities of the centre, to advise on relevant developments and to strengthen the LeidenAsiaCentre network.

Members of the **Supervisory Board** as of January 2017:

- Mr. André van Heemstra (Chair)
- Prof. Mark Rutgers, Dean Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University (per March 2017)
- Mr. Ralph Kröner
- Mrs. Stan De Klerk-Waller, Chair of the Leids Universiteits Fonds (LUF)
- Dr. Ben Knapen

Members of the **International Advisory Board** as of January 2017:

- Prof. Bill Callahan (LSE)
- Prof. Emiko Ochiai (Kyoto University)
- Prof. Gert Oostindie (KITLV)
- Dr. Philippe Peycam (IASS)
- Prof. Jennifer Robertson (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor)
- Dr. Monika Sie Dhian Ho (Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael)
- Lay Hwee Yeo (European Union Centre/ Singapore Institute of International Affairs/ National University of Singapore)

3. Research

The LeidenAsiaCentre has expressed its ambition to become the leading centre of applied knowledge with respect to Asia. Our focus is primarily on East Asia: China (including Taiwan), Japan, Korea, Singapore and, since recently, Vietnam.

The selection of research topics is directed towards developments with direct relevance for either Europe or the Netherlands. Emphasis is on the nature and consequences of globalisation that leads to an increased intertwining between Asia and Europe in the broadest sense: economically, culturally, politically and strategically.

What distinguishes LeidenAsiaCentre from other Asia-oriented research centres is the way in which stakeholders from society are involved at each stage of a project. All projects which commenced after 2015 are conducted under the following model. Research is only initiated when interest outside academia has been clearly identified. Only when partners indicate their commitment to a selected theme will funds be made available. This ensures that the research reflects specific concerns within Dutch society - more broadly - and that the results are being disseminated among a variety of non-academic circles. Researchers are mostly hired from outside Leiden for a short period of time (3 to 12 months) or work free-lance. A flexible number (3-6) of interns and student-assistants are part of each team. The centre's fulltime manager is in charge of the daily business of the centre and support of the project teams.

Over the past 18 months, this approach has resulted in a total of five reports on a variety of topics and several conferences, presentations and public speeches. Working with partners outside of academia has proven worthwhile. It has given us access to new sources of information, made us ask different questions and look at matters from angles that might have been neglected otherwise.

The Executive Board, the Supervisory Board and the International Advisory Board express their confidence that this may lead to a solid program where independent academic research and societal interest are brought together to open up new, exciting fields within the study of current developments in East Asia.

3.1 Current research

Themes and projects

The LeidenAsiaCentre organizes its research projects within wider core themes. Our three core themes are:

1. Europe and Asia
2. People, rights and human rights
3. Lifestyle and culture

3.1.1 Europe and Asia

Asia is becoming more directly and visibly present in Europe; and conversely Europe is becoming more prominently present in Asia. This is particularly valid for East Asia. Japanese, South Korean and Taiwanese companies have been established in Europe for decades. Over the past ten years these have been joined at a rapid rate by companies from China. The same applies to tourists, students and (knowledge) immigrants, for whom Europe is becoming increasingly important as a destination. Conversely, European investments, students, tourists, expats and migrants are becoming more prominently present in East Asia. What are the consequences of this growing exchange of people between two of the world's most densely populated areas? What are the resulting possibilities and challenges for individuals, organisations, companies and governments in European countries? Our research in this field focuses first on connections between China and the Netherlands and will at a later stage be broadened to East Asia and Europe. The following projects have been implemented so far under this theme:

1. China in the Netherlands

This project comprises three sub-projects:

- Chinese investments and companies in the Netherlands
- Chinese students and knowledge migrants/expats in The Netherlands
- Chinese tourism in the Netherlands

2. The Netherlands in China

This project comprises three sub-projects:

- Chinese journalists and newsgathering in Europe
- The image of the Netherlands in Chinese media and social media
- The image of the Netherlands and Europe among news editors from China in Europe

In the fall of 2016 researchers submitted their individual reports, which were published in the form of papers. A Dutch-language comprehensive overview was published by the team's leaders, Frank Pieke and Garrie van Pinxteren (**Nederland door Chinese ogen, Uitg. Balans**) All reports (English) were published in February 2017 and can be found at our website.

Project leaders: **Prof Dr Frank Pieke and Garrie van Pinxteren**

Researchers: **Bei Wang, Prof Dr Pál Niyri, Tianmu Hong, Trevor Stam**

Interns and student-assistents: **Jialu Zhang, Julin van Velthuizen, Laurens Steehouder**

3.1.2 People, rights and human rights

Human rights are universal, but at the same time this universality raises a lot of questions. The human rights debate is often used to denounce abuses in other countries (including in Asia) but is equally often subject to misuse.

Western countries have often tended to criticize other countries (their former colonies, communist countries or other non-democratic countries, for example) about their non-observance of human rights. Though the human rights debate may serve other interests, this does by no means mean that their criticism is unfounded. The interdependence of Asia and Europe has many advantages, but also creates circumstances susceptible to human rights violations. For example, Asian migrants, both in Europe and in Asia itself, are often forced to work in deplorable conditions. The increasingly transnational nature of human rights issues also means that protecting human rights can no longer be left to sovereign states. It is a problem for all of us, for which we have to find common solutions that take into account the cultural and political distinctiveness of individual countries. It is therefore all the more important to have a factually correct and practically adequate understanding of people, rights and human rights in Asia and the different ways in which human rights issues manifest themselves.

The following project has been concluded under this theme:

(duration of the project: December 2015-September 2016)

1. Slaves to the System

The Slaves to the System project has investigated the phenomenon of forced labour of North Korean workers outside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The research team collected information through witness testimonies, field research in Poland (the test case for this preliminary report), and archival research into company structures, visas, bilateral treaties, and Polish and North Korean governments. The report was presented on July 6, 2016 during a well-attended public meeting with all team members present. Prof Dr Leo Lucassen (International Institute for Social History) gave a keynote speech on labour and

migration. The report and additional information can be found via the following link:
<http://www.leidenasiacentre.nl/projects-en/slaves-of-the-system-research-on-north-korean-forced-labour-in-the-eu>

Project leader: Prof Dr Remco Breuker

Researchers: **Kyowook Oh, Christine Chung,**

Kim Kwang-cheol, Imke van Gardingen

Interns: **Marte Boonen, Anoma van Veere**

3.1.3 Lifestyle and culture

The standard of living in large parts of East Asia approaches or surpasses that of the Netherlands and other Western European countries. Prosperity and globalisation open up ever broader channels of cultural exchange and lead to growing similarities between the two regions. This theme investigates these exchanges, as well as other developments closely related to the everyday lives of East Asian societies. .

The following projects has been conducted under this theme:

**1. From Garbage to Art:
Environmental consciousness in Japan in the post-Cold War era**

The project commenced in May 2014, before the new format described earlier was implemented. It involved two researchers from Leiden University working together on an academic topic without involvement of societal partners. The objective of this project was to reconstruct the processes that are at the root of the growing environmental awareness in Japan.

The project resulted in two concrete products. The first one is an exhibition 'Too Pretty to Throw Away: Packaging Design from Japan', which was on display at Japan museum Sieboldhuis (10.06.2016-28.08.2016), Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Cracow (9.11.2016-28.02.2017), and Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw (31.05.2017-17.09.2017). A catalogue with the same title, in three languages (Dutch, English and Polish), published by Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Cracow accompanies the exhibition.

The second product of the project is the edited volume *Consuming Life in Post-Bubble Japan: A Transdisciplinary Perspective* to be published by Amsterdam University Press in November 2017 (with the

publication date of 2018). Hard copy edition and an e-book (open access) will be published simultaneously, which should ensure a wide dissemination of the result of this project.[→](#)

Researchers: *Prof Dr Kasia Cwiertka and Dr Ewa Machtoka*

3.2 New projects for 2017

Through potential partners from outside academia, three new areas of interest have emerged. One is a major challenge Asia and Europa are facing: the ageing of their societies. The other focuses on a phenomenon of concern to both China and the West: the future of international cooperation in the realm of Cyber Space. Finally, the Dutch creative industry has engaged the LeidenAsiaCentre to enhance its work on China's dynamic urban development.

1. Aging Japan: Leading the way into the future (January 2017-May 2018)

Japan was labelled an 'aged society' already in 1994, when its share of citizens over 65 exceeded 14 percent – the highest in the world at the time. Twenty years later, the percentage of people older than 65 exceeded 25 percent. Currently one in eight Japanese is older than 75, and predictions indicate that by 2030 nearly one-third of Japanese will belong to the elderly category.

This rapid demographic shift is not an isolated Japanese phenomenon, but rather a sign of a global trend. Never before in human history has our planet been inhabited by so many people older than 65, and the number is expected to almost triple by 2050. Declining fertility combined with the rising life expectancy, which are chiefly responsible for the rapid population aging currently underway, are most pronounced in OECD countries, but similar tendencies can also be observed in the developing regions.

These unprecedented demographic changes are expected to have profound social, political and economic consequences worldwide. One aspect that has received particular attention so far are the skyrocketing costs of medical and nursing care for elderly, which pose a direct threat to the survival of the welfare state, especially in Europe. However, as marketing scholars have pointed out, the impact of the population ageing is very likely to be far more extensive and not necessarily solely negative. The current generation of elderly adults, unlike their parents, commands a larger disposable income and places more emphasis on self-reliance and quality of life. Their consumer preferences can thus potentially influence consumer markets and entire industries. Never before have retirees been so well-educated,

so active, and so comfortable with a consumption-based lifestyle. While demographic calculations provide us with a glimpse of a bigger picture, they do not offer any indications on what it will be like to live in a ‘hyper-aged’ society. This is precisely the objective of this project.

Partners

The project is conducted in cooperation with German Institute for Japanese Studies: <https://www.dijitokyo.org/project/health-tech-japan/>). Dr. Susanne Brucksch leads the project in Tokyo, working with three junior researchers.

The academic consultant of the project include:

Dr Michel Bleijlevens, Universiteit Maastricht

Dr. Johan Hoorn (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), expertise: social robotics

Dr. Florian Kohlbacher (The Economist Corporate Network North Asia), expertise: marketing

Prof. Jennifer Robertson (University of Michigan), expertise: anthropology

The project is supported by the following societal partners:

Mr. Jan-Hein Christoffels ([Innovation, Science & Technology Counsellor](#), Netherlands Embassy in Tokyo)

Mr. Marc Gerritsen (Head of Economic Affairs, Netherlands Embassy in Tokyo)

Ms. Monique Philippens (former director KPN Care, now strategic advisor “Diagnose 2030”)

Eras Draaijer, IMDI (Innovative Medical Devices Initiative),

RvO (Netherlands Enterprise Agency) and the

VWS (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport)

2. China’s role in regulating cyberspace (January 2017- February 2018)

The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the emergence of China as a primordial global power are two of the most impactful political events of our generation. They are also profoundly intertwined at various levels: China not only sees ICTs as essential to its continued development, it is also enmeshed in rapidly evolving international discussions concerning Internet governance and cyber security.

Yet while a growing number of policy initiatives and processes now involve China, detailed local knowledge concerning its approaches to cyber issues remains limited among stakeholders around the world. The information platform proposed here will go a considerable way in remedying this knowledge asymmetry among various stakeholders, including policymakers and researchers engaging with China, as well as civil society organizations.

The ultimate objective is to build a research programme concerning China's cyber governance and create a knowledge and monitoring platform that provides three main services: public services, proprietary services and bespoke services. Public services will include a database of translated Chinese regulatory and policy texts, as well as a regularly updated series of essays written by members of the programme's research network. Proprietary services will include a newsletter providing a digest of relevant Chinese media reports, as well as regular reports on specific topics in Chinese cyber governance.

Partners

The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, Clingendael Institute, and a variety of academic centres focussing on cyber security. Links with the National Cyber Security Centre will be secured through the MFA.

3. China's urban redevelopment and opportunities for the Dutch Creative Industry sector (October 2016-Fall 2017)

The need in China to focus on redevelopment of cities and the lack of local expertise and tools in guiding this process offer a range of opportunities for cooperation with the Dutch creative industry.

The Netherlands is a world-leader in urban redevelopment and sustainable cities. The transition from production-oriented cities to more service-oriented urban economies generates the need for a more diverse urban fabric, providing opportunities for architects, water experts, the leisure industry, landscape architects, and experts in the fields of circular economy. Given the fact that the Netherlands has extensive experience with these issues, an inventory of possibilities to provide services for Chinese cities facing such a transformation process may shed light on what business opportunities may arise in the coming years.

The project focusses specifically on Shenzhen to identify the type of cooperation, assistance and services needed. Researcher Brechtje Spreeuwerts is both a Sinologist and an architect and has five years of working experience in a number of Chinese cities, notably in Shenzhen. She is currently a fellow at LeidenAsiaCentre.

The project is entirely financed by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Top Sector Creative Industry.

Partners

Dutch Culture, Dutch Creative Industries (secretariat Top Sector Creative Industry), OCW, MLA+ Urbanism Architects.

4. Slaves to the System: North Korean forced labour, the global dimension.

This new project broadens the scope of the project on North Korean forced labour within the European Union that was concluded in 2016. The research will focus on the global dimension

of the issue, to get a better grip of where in other parts of the EU and ILO member states North Korean labourers are working, and under what conditions. This time LeidenAsiaCentre works in close cooperation with the 'Walk Free Foundation', the FNV (Netherlands Trade Union Confederation) and the North Korean Database (NKDB). (March 2017-February 2018).

4. Outreach

4.1 General outreach

Network building

The LeidenAsiaCentre has already developed a solid network in the Netherlands within central government, municipalities, media and the academic world. This network will be further expanded with contacts from the business sector and civil society, both in the context of current research projects and through specific networking activities and events.

Training programmes and education

The LeidenAsiaCentre can provide tailor-made courses and training programmes upon request. An example is the centre's contribution to a three-year programme of summer courses for diplomats to be posted in Asia, to be provided by Leiden University for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

4.2 Outreach activities

Complementary to our research activities are lectures, seminars and conferences organized either by the centre itself or in close cooperation or on the request of third parties. They are listed underneath.

2015

Activity	Date	Location	Partners
Expert meeting with King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima.	October 1, 2015	Leiden University	Leiden University
Start research projects "China in the Netherlands" and "The Netherlands in China"	October 1, 2015	Leiden	
Start of the research project "Slaves to the System, research on North-Korean forced labour in the EU"	November 1, 2015	Leiden	
Book presentation: "Over de Grens", translation of "Dear Leader"	November 30, 2015	Amsterdam	Arbeiderspers Publishers, Spui25

2016

Activity	Data	Location	Partners
Expert workshop “Slaves to the system”	January 8, 2016	Leiden	Research team
Launch of the LeidenAsiaCentre	January 27, 2016	Leiden University, Klein Auditorium	
Closed workshop on China’s State Enterprises at the Dutch MFA	February 16, 2016	The Hague (MFA)	MFA
China Cafe on trends in Chinese tourism in the Netherlands	March 3, 2016	Leiden	Guanxi
Expert meeting “China in Cyberspace”	April 22, 2016	The Hague (MFA)	Various government agencies
Expert workshop “Slaves to the system”	May 3, 2015	Leiden	Research team
Expert meeting with Clingendael on the “New Middle Eastern Policy of China”	May 23, 2016	The Hague, Clingendael	Clingendael, MERICS
National conference on “Tourism from China”	June 9, 2016	Voorschoten	NBTC, Dutch Culture
Exposition “From Garbage to Art”	June 9 – August 28 2016	Leiden, SieboldHuis	SieboldHuis, (NWO-project)
Lecture “Japanse verpakkingen in historisch perspectief” by Katarzyna J. Cwiertka	June 12, 2016	Leiden	
First meeting Sounding Board for “China and the Netherlands”	June 14, 2016	Leiden	See list of participants in attachment
Presenting final findings “Slaves to the System”	July 6, 2016	Leiden University, Klein Auditorium	
International Conference on “The role of history education in establishing sustainable peace in East Asia”	July 7, 2016	Leiden	Euroclio, South Korean History NGOs
Lecture: “Japanse warenhuizen en de cadeaucultuur” by Katarzyna J. Cwiertka	August 28, 2016	Leiden	
Presentation and discussion Frank Pieke’s book “Knowing China; a	September 20, 2016	Amsterdam	Spui25, AUP

twenty-first century guide”			
Delegation of the China-EU association	October 7, 2016	Leiden	Clingendael
Contribution to Tech Talk Asia (LURIS)	October 20, 2016	Leiden, Bioscience Park	LURIS
Presentation and discussion of Frank Pieke’s book “Knowing China”	November	Brussels	Cambridge University Press, EU-Asia Centre
Meeting of experts on ‘ageing Japan’	November 21,	Leiden	Deutsches Institut für Japanstudies, Tokyo
Exposition “From Garbage to Art”	November 9-end of January	Krakow	

5. Finances

Research and other activities of the LeidenAsiaCentre are made possible through an endowment gift from the Vaes-Elias Fund, administered by the Leiden University Fund (LUF). The centre’s financial, administrative and HR tasks are managed by the Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS/ the Humanities Faculty of Leiden University) with financial oversight provided by Capital Support. The Foundation LeidenAsiaCentre is recognized as an ANBI (charity) by the Dutch Tax Authorities.

Budget	2014	2015
Research projects (research staff incl.)	68.950	48.676
Outreach, other staff and other expenses	<u>36.050</u>	<u>54.259</u>
Total Expenses	105.000	102.925

The Supervisory Board has commissioned the Board to implement a long-range research and activity program within the framework of an approved long-range budget. Given the size of the Vaes-Elias Fund, the horizon of the LeidenAsiaCentre stretches beyond the mid-twenties.

6. Partners

Societal partners

The LeidenAsiaCentre works together with societal partners in the Netherlands to identify relevant research topics and to formulate the most appropriate – in some cases supplementary – research questions. This will create knowledge that responds to a direct societal need. The Centre itself will be responsible for the research, which will be carried out by independent researchers and other experts and consultants both within and outside of the Netherlands. We also collaborate actively with our partners in disseminating the results of this research.



In 2015-2016 so-called sounding boards were organized, consisting of representatives from some of the partner organisations to monitor the research projects.

6.1 . Composition of Sounding Boards

CHINA AND THE NETHERLANDS SOUNDING BOARD

- Sabine Amft (NUFFIC)
- Ardi Brouwer (formerly Wereldomroep radio)
- Marjo Crompvoets (Dutch Consulate-General, Guangzhou)
- Esther van Damme (MFA)
- Ingrid D 'Hooghe (Leiden University and Clingendael Institute)
- Monique Knapen (Dutch Culture)
- Peter Mulder (OCW)
- Boudewijn Poldermans (NCH)
- Frans Paul van der Putten (Clingendael Institute)
- Jürgen Rienks (association of Dutch universities VSNU)
- Hielke Venema (RvO)

SLAVES OF THE SYSTEM SOUNDING BOARD

- Prof Dr Clara Boonstra (Free University, Amsterdam)
- Shirley (Xiaolei) Chen, (former judge employment law in China)
- Mike Glendinning (European Alliance for Human Rights in Europe)
- Jang Jin-sung (formerly visiting fellow Utrecht University and former court poet in Pyongyang)