Innovation in China

- Sustainable living
- Government & Society
- Smart Cities

Netherlands-Asia Honours Summer School 2015

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We are very proud to present to you the Chinese Innovation Magazine, composed by excellent undergraduate students from all 13 Dutch research universities that participated in the fourth edition of the Netherlands-Asia Honours Summer School (NAHSS). This magazine is the result of an intensive 7-week programme of the 100 NAHSS students in Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei and Hong Kong and half a year of preliminary investigation in the Netherlands.

The NAHSS is a unique joint effort of the Dutch research universities, Dutch and Chinese companies and Dutch ministries. With this triple helix collaboration of public, private and academic partners we aim for talented Dutch students to better understand and experience Asian business, academia and culture. To achieve this goal, the students follow academic summer courses at the best universities in Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei or Hong Kong and participate in a business week in Shanghai. Besides this, they conduct two research projects in multidisciplinary project groups. The first is formulated by NAHSS partners and answers to specific questions. The second relates to the overarching theme of NAHSS 2015, ‘Chinese Innovation’, which contributes to new insights into various sectors.

By means of this magazine, the students present their findings on ‘Chinese Innovation’ to all interested and especially to the NAHSS partners, whose collaboration is indispensible and therefore highly valued and appreciated. Divided into nine sectors – health, sustainability, food, e-commerce, connectivity, mobility, lifestyle, culture, public policy, energy, education and technology - compelling insights and opportunities are uncovered to strengthen bilateral relations in the abovementioned sectors and to come to innovative forms of cooperation.

The NAHSS Supervisory Board is impressed by the dedication the students showed to the programme and the research projects in particular. We are pleased to share the results of their projects and hope it will be of inspiration for all of you.

On behalf of the NAHSS Supervisory Board,

Marjan J. Oudeman LLM,
(President Utrecht University, Chair NAHSS Supervisory Board)
An introduction to innovation in China

Esmee Engelmann, Esther van Haren, Gerben van Manen, Hein Koster, Joan van Heijster, Noor Godijk, Robert Verschuren, Suze Bloks, Tesse Balkema, Vito Havik
Patients in the cloud, doctor behind the computer. Professor Chunxue Bai (lung surgeon, Fudan University Shanghai) saw less than 40 patients a day before the application of e-health technologies, at the moment he provides medical advice to over 200 patients a day. Whether we are speaking of the latest breakthroughs in the health sector, or about developments in public transport and the food processing industry: China is innovating. Who thinks China lacks the creativity to make the transition from ‘Made in China’ to ‘Made by China’, is wrong. The Eastern superpower is building towards an innovative economy and society. Yet there still are structural problems that limit innovation in China, or even counteract the process of innovation. Think for example of censorship and state control of information. While the Western media extensively reported about the disastrous situation in Tianjin, there was hardly any mention in the Chinese media about the explosion in the large chemical factory south of Beijing. China truly has its own unique ways, which manifest themselves both as opportunities and as limitations. The nowadays focus on innovation could well be decisive for China’s future place in the global economy. Get your chopsticks ready, we will show you what’s on the menu in China’s ‘innovation kitchen.

“Bleep. Bleep. Bleep.” The bleeping of your Octopus Card is such a familiar sound that you’re almost going to miss it when you’re back in the Netherlands. The Octopus Card in Hong Kong is a good example of a field in which China has actually been innovating: public transport. Travelling by public transport is so easy in Hong Kong that one actually does not realize the innovations that are happening during your trip. The most eye-catching is the Octopus Card, the public transport chip card of Hong Kong, which has been in use since the 1990s and since then has been playing a bigger and bigger role in the life of millions of Hong Kong people. This card does not only bring you from the one to the other side of town, but it also works as a debit card for countless shops such as the 7-Eleven, McDonald’s and Starbucks. The technique behind this card is not that innovative itself, but the fact that the card has become an indispensable part of Hong Kong people’s lives and has so many users can certainly be called innovative. The success of the Octopus Card is connected with the very well controlled and functioning metro network of Hong Kong.
**E-health**

Another example of impressive innovation is the fast and integrated application of e-health technologies in the health care system of China. E-health involves a broad spectrum of electronic applications, devices and systems that together create new possibilities in the health care sector. You can think of technologies to safely and directly share electronic patient data between doctors and health care institutions, or a smart phone application that allows you to consult a doctor on the other side of the country via a real-time video connection. These interesting innovations mainly occur in the major cities of Shanghai, Beijing and in the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. At the moment, China is facing various health care problems, amongst others the gap between care takers and care givers, partly caused by the one-child-policy, the increase in (long-term) chronically ill, and the health care deficit among 800 million poor Chinese farmers living in the countryside. E-health has the future: it increases the accessibility of care, reduces health care costs, saves time needed for care, for the patient as well as the physician. Nowadays thousands of patients from the city and neighbourhood of Shanghai make use of E-health to keep in contact with a specialist. China is innovative with e-health because of its large-scale application possibilities, connectivity, rapidly developed regulations and law, and the (as it seems) easy social acceptance. Because some reformations in health care in China are relatively compared to more developed countries, China is able to skip some steps and effectuate faster transitions. Peking University People’s Hospital in Beijing is an example: a very good hospital that has never used tons of paperwork like other hospitals. Top-notch technologies are used to provide the most efficient health care. Because of this the hospital has got the exceptional status of HIMMS-7 health care institutes, which is the highest score an institution can get for the use of e-health. This status is only granted to hospitals that are totally free of any paperwork and make exclusively use of electronic patient files (www.himms.org). Compared to the common HIMMS-5 and HIMMS-6 hospitals in the Netherlands this maximum score of the Beijing hospital is an exceptional achievement.

**Urban planning**

The success of the metro network in Hong Kong is mainly due to a very inventive model known as trans-oriented development. This model basically implies that a city is designed around the pre-existing public transport network. The main thought behind all of this is that literally everything is within walking distance of, for example, a metro station. Hong Kong has copied this inventive “little trick” from Japan and managed to give a unique spin to it: Hong Kong can now consider itself one of the most efficient and sustainably organised cities in the world. This is mainly due to the concept of mixed use buildings, which can be found everywhere as soon as you take one step out of the metro. In most cases you will find yourself in an ordinary shopping mall, but it is actually a lot more that. Above the shopping mall are also workspaces and on top of that even residential spaces as well. This extremely efficient use of the scarcely available space results in the emergence of multifunctional buildings in the near vicinity of the metro.
**Food industry**

Next to progressive developments there are companies that make excellent use of problems occurring in China. An intriguing example: China is able to create ‘super babies’. Although the effects of the food scandals of 2008 are still noticeable, citizens gained confidence in baby milk powder brands such as Nutrilon, which promises an IQ gain. The absurd commercials of such baby milk powder fabricants emphasize that babies will become extremely smart. They show babies that can calculate like Einstein or play the piano like Mozart. Starting at the age of zero, children in China are being trained to score as high as possible on the Gaokao. This test determines the university the child will be attending and by doing so also how successful the child will become in life. In short, performance is top priority in China. This explains why these milk powder commercials lay such a heavy emphasis on IQ gain. Moreover, the previously mentioned food scandals let to the obligation for every restaurant to place a smiley indicating the hygiene above their cash register. The sadder the face, the higher the risk on food poisoning. Furthermore, food packages contain pictograms, called eat icons, and a QR-code that makes clear what the food contains, also for people who do not read Mandarin.

**Privacy**

In the Western World, privacy related questions are subject to debate at the introduction of a new product - think for example of discussions about Google Glass or the Dutch electronic patient record. In China, this is different. Internet is accepted as the ideal means to increase efficiency in all sectors, and to connect those different sectors with each other. Explicit privacy considerations in respect of this online connectivity rarely give rise to discussion. When applying for a summer school at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, prospective female students have to give information about their periods, and everyone is asked to describe their families’ complete medical history. This personal information appears to be available for every single employee at the university. Another example of the different perspective on privacy is the nonresponse of the Chinese with respect to the social credit system that the government will make obligatory for all citizens in 2020. Do you want to buy a house in China? Or to set up your own business? If you don’t have enough social credit points – indicating ‘good behaviour’ – this will not be possible in the future. In the West, this system is associated with oppression, while the Chinese students didn’t see any problems. Their different perspective towards privacy seems to fit seamlessly into ancient cultural practices in which sharing plays a central role. Furthermore, the majority of the Chinese people are simply accustomed to the fact that the State exercises a high degree of control over the personal lives and data of its population. This offers the country many advantages, including the relatively high speed by which innovations like e-health can be implemented and get embedded in the Chinese culture. The Chinese attitude holds up a mirror to the West that shows that privacy may retard innovation. The success of quick implementations gives us food for thought: are we not taking our privacy policy too far?

Although China is innovating in several sectors – and doing it fast – in other sectors the development is lagging behind – China still suffers from structural problems that hinder innovation.
Education

"Never stop questioning". The slogan of the Hong Kong tutoring app, SnapAsk, describes exactly the challenges the Chinese education system is facing. Where SnapAsk encourages to ask questions, most Chinese students see a barrier to ask questions, mainly caused by the hierarchical culture. Timothy Yu, founder of SnapAsk, believes that an app such as SnapAsk, in which students can ask questions to university top students in a personal way, can contribute to a slow culture change. "We can’t change the whole system at once and just say that everybody has to be creative and a critical thinker. SnapAsk encourages students to ask questions in a secure environment, without being ashamed. Hopefully this can contribute to the culture of asking questions in the real classroom." And this is necessary. The focus in the Chinese education system is on memorizing facts and achieving excellent results: this leaves no room for creative and entrepreneurial spirits, like that of Yu. All of this, combined with a huge competition among students, results in children having lesser chance to personally develop themselves outside of the education system. Wei Wei, a Chinese entrepreneur even states that the Chinese education system kills the "innovation gene" of the Chinese youth at a young age. However, SnapAsk shows that there are possibilities in this sector to foster change in a creative way.

From copying to creating

An innovating society requires three important conditions. First of all, the society needs sufficient financial resources to implement new ideas. Secondly, the people who will implement the ideas need a high level of knowledge and the skills to think “out of the box”. Third, an effective cooperation between the government, universities and the business industry is essential. Looking at China, generally speaking it doesn’t lack the first condition, although the distribution of state-owned and private enterprises is not always beneficial. The second condition is still a work in progress, but innovations like SnapAsk are promising. To make sure that they preserve their position as a superpower, China has to prove in the upcoming years that its society is equipped with creative minds, changeable systems and overarching cooperations. The first innovations are succeeding, the first step is taken. Therefore, despite the commotion about the Chinese economy, the stock market and the entrenched label “copycats”, it is wise to keep an eye on China. Innovative solutions for problems like environmental pollution and an ageing society might well come from the East.
In addition to the education system, the financial sector has an impact on innovation in China. Both the way the government deals with the current stock market crash and its focus on how the banks provide loans show how the Chinese financial system has a negative effect on innovation. First of all, the rigorous interventions by the Chinese government - lowering interest rates and the devaluation of the currency - indicate that the Chinese government still tries to keep control over the economy. A crisis can have a huge impact on innovation, as it forces all businesses to higher efficiency and creates a need to innovate. However, if the government intervenes too much, these forces cannot do their good work. Secondly, for start-ups, small and medium private enterprises it is more difficult to get funding, compared to state-owned enterprises (SOEs). This has a negative influence on innovation. The financial choices of the Chinese government may contribute to the speed in which China is making a shift from a productive to an innovative society.
Sustainable living

For the full report, or other NAHSS projects, visit findings.nahss.nl
1. Recent developments and innovations in the Chinese Food Sector
China, soil quality is so poor that even rice farmers refuse to eat their own products. According to a report by the China Food and Drug Administration, 48% of the Chinese population is dissatisfied with food safety. Moreover, 74.5% does not believe that this will improve in the near future.

Green living
The dwindling confidence of Chinese consumers in domestic food products can largely be explained by the multiplicity of food scandals. Consequentially, consumers seek alternative food sources. Hence, the demand for organic or halal food is growing. On Chongming island, located a two-hour drive from Shanghai, a group of farmers grows organic food. A large farm on the island has over 10,000 families ordering through a

Imported rice
According to Japan’s National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations, 160 tonnes of Japanese rice are imported on a yearly basis while prices are about 20 times higher than domestically produced rice. What is the reason for this development in the food sector? This is not a shortage of rice to feed the vast Chinese population, but nationwide distrust in domestic food products. In parts of China, soil quality is so poor that even rice farmers refuse to eat their own products. According to a report by the China Food and Drug Administration, 48% of the Chinese population is dissatisfied with food safety. Moreover, 74.5% does not believe that this will improve in the near future.

The potato as a staple food
The Chinese government has recently declared the potato the new staple food. Traditionally, the Chinese cuisine consists mainly of products made of rice and wheat. Now, as China is suffering from a severe water shortage, the government encourages eating potatoes. China’s Ministry of Agriculture has been actively posting about potatoes and their nutritional values on social media such as Weibo.
subscription service and also sells their products through Carrefour department stores. Apart from food distribution, the island’s farmers aim to teach consumers about sustainable, eating locally and are “spearheading a fledgling movement that has long existed in the Western world but is only beginning to emerge in modern China: green living.”

**E-commerce**

As to another way of purchasing food products from trustworthy suppliers, the demand for imported products has surged. Those products have to pass strict inspection standards set by the General Administration for Quality supervision Inspection and Quarantine (GAQIQ) to meet food safety requirements. A popular means for buying high-quality, foreign products is E-commerce. Currently being a $420,000,000 market, its annual growth rate of 36% is expected to increase even further with the government stepping into this digital revolution. According to research conducted by PriceWaterhouseCoope rs (PwC), 96% of Chinese consumers, shops online on a monthly basis. Rather than doing this through the computer, mobile phones are the main device used to place an order. Inevitably, this far-extending digitalization of life has substantial consequences for the food sector.

**Online shopping**

While in Europe online grocery shopping is still in its infancy, it quickly gains ground in China. Popular online stores include Yihaodian (YHD) and Fields China. Those and other companies often deliver free of charge and many products will be brought to one’s house within three hours.

WeChat, the Chinese equivalent of Whatsapp, has an option to scan QR-codes. Every advertisement, product and company has its own code and people make widespread use of this function. Scanning a QR-code not only enables customers to follow the company online, but also to directly purchase a company’s products. In addition, a number of supermarkets allow payment through WeChat, taking away the need to bring a wallet.

**Pop-up stores**

Although online shopping has become very convenient and suits the fast-paced life of urban citizens, not all consumers are convinced of the products’ quality before physically seeing and touching it. Solving this problem, the innovative concept ‘O2O’, also known as ‘online to offline’, has gained popularity. Basically, O2O means that there is a small (pop-up) store or stand where people can come and try the product. When customers are convinced of the quality, they simply scan the QR-code and immediately purchase the product. This way, the e-commerce sector reaches an even wider group of consumers and is believed a promising opportunity for food distributors.

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“**In other countries, e-commerce is a way to shop, in China it is a lifestyle**”

— Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba

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**Smart Chopsticks**

On April Fool’s day 2014, Baidu, the leading search-engine in China, published a video introducing a new product: Smart Chopsticks. When they would come into contact with spoiled or contaminated food, they would give a signal which could be read on an app. Although intended as a joke, the Chinese public received the Smart Chopsticks with so much enthusiasm, that Baidu decided to actually create Smart Chopsticks. In September 2014, Baidu released the first prototype, which is able to sense the quality of cooking oil, a major concern in China.
“In 2015, 30% of the population will be aged 60 or over.”

“Medical professionals include family and society in the care of an elderly.”

Primary care: the first time a person expresses his/her health concern to a health professional. This is usually a primary care physician, a family doctor or a general practitioner.

Secondary care: health care provided by medical specialists. It includes acute care.

Tertiary care: this type of care is specialized care, usually for inpatients with complex health problems that require intensive treatment.
In China, the healthcare system currently rests on two pillars: Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Western medicine. TCM has been around for thousands of years, while Western medicine was not introduced until the beginning of the 19th century. The Chinese government spends considerable amounts of time and money on the development and integration of the two ways of practicing medicine in order to create a well-functioning national healthcare system. This is, however, not without challenges since TCM has a pre-scientific view of biology and illness and is therefore the opposite of Western medicine. TCM is not based on scientific research and so regarded unreliable in the eyes of specialists in Western medicine. According to TCM practitioners interviewed in Hong Kong, Hong Kong Chinese are well aware of the different backgrounds of both schools. Subsequently, TCM practitioners will be consulted when minor health concerns arise and Western medical attention will be sought in the case of severe health problems. This is, however, not the only criteria commonly applied. TCM also appears as an effective way to treat illnesses or symptoms that cannot be explained by Western medicine and is used as complementary treatment to its counterpart. An example of this can be found in relieving side effects of therapies used to treat cancer, such as chemo- or radiotherapy.

**E-health for elderly**

Elaborating on the healthcare system in Asia, we would like to touch upon a case study that has been done on healthcare in Hong Kong and how the increasing number of elderly people will be dealt with. In 2050, 30% of the population will be aged 60 or over, leading to an increase in secondary and tertiary care. The reason behind is the high risk of serious medical complications when entering this age group. However, it is exactly here where problems arise in the Hong Kong healthcare system; it cannot facilitate the increase of people in need of secondary and tertiary care. The reason behind is the high risk of serious medical complications when entering this age group. However, it is exactly here where problems arise in the Hong Kong healthcare system; it cannot facilitate the increase of people in need of secondary and tertiary care. To deal with its aging population, the Hong Kong government has developed a strategy that involves citizens with caretaking of elderly through education and training. For example, medical professionals are trained in including family and society in the care of an elderly so that the time a patient needs to spend in a hospital can be reduced. Moreover, policy changes have made it possible that every elderly patient receives a personalized treatment and discharge plan, based on a thorough assessment of factors such as social situation, infrastructure and psychological state, in addition to the basic assessment of the patient’s medical situation. This tailored discharge plan aims at accelerated hospital discharge while making sure that there are plenty of social facilities to prevent patient falls.

The increasing innovations in health applications on TV, Internet and mobile platforms (E-health) will come to play an important role in this. While plenty of applications are already available, a direct link between these applications and the health care system is still missing. In order to fully utilize these innovations, the information generated by these applications needs to reach healthcare professionals, so it can be used for personalized patient treatment.

**Integrating two systems**

As a result of increasing life standards and subsequently life expectancy, the age structure of China’s population is rapidly changing. The percentage of the population aged 0-14 years has dropped from 40% in 1975 to just over 20% in 2015 and is projected to further decrease to 15% in 2050. On the other hand, the percentage of the population aged 60 and over is steadily increasing to approximately 30% in 2050. This means that in the future, ageing is likely to become a burden for which China needs to prepare itself, especially in the health sector. Careful plans need to be made to ensure healthcare systems will not be overwhelmed by an enormous increase in chronic diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and osteoporosis, which naturally develop among older people.

In China, TCM and Western medicine have been integrated to form the foundation of China’s national healthcare system. Furthermore, the Chinese government has supported the spread of TCM since 1995. Since then, significant progress has been made in acupuncture, which is now used worldwide. Moreover, 80% of 129 of the states member to the World Health Organization (WHO) officially recognized the use hereof as an effective form of treatment. In the 2014-2022 WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy, the WHO states that the integration as well as the globalization of Western and traditional medicine are of great importance to healthcare systems worldwide. Not only will it contribute to the quality of and accessibility to healthcare, it will also keep surging costs under control. China’s efforts to spread TCM, whilst incorporating it with Western medicine, is this in line with the WHO’s vision.
Throwing away your solid household trash is a costly business in Taipei. The municipality implemented a pay-as-you-throw garbage collection system where citizens have to purchase special, more expensive trash bags to dump their household waste. This encourages people to recycle, since every item that is recycled doesn’t need to go into this more expensive trash bag and thus saves you money. The goal, reducing waste volume, has been reached as the daily household waste has been lowered from 1.14 kg in 1997 to 0.43 kg in 2011. Some Dutch municipalities are now also piloting this system that Taipei already implemented in the year of 2000.
Baran Bulgan, Dioni de Vos, Eva Schouten, Ivana Mik, Julian Jagtenberg, Lara Depla, Martijn Wessels, Michelle Kusters, Ruben van Dijk, Shirin Senden

No trashcans
It is a situation all travelers in Taipei will find themselves in: with a piece of garbage in your hand, you start looking for a trashcan. Two or three streets later, you start to realize that you haven’t seen a public trash can yet. Rebellious as you are, the thought of throwing the plastic wrapping on the street crosses your mind. However, then you also start to notice how spotlessly clean the streets are. This is intriguing, trashcans are nowhere to be found, but the streets are extremely clean. The citizens of Taiwan take their trash home with them and at home they dispose of it in the appropriate recycling bin. For us as Dutch people this was quite a strange phenomenon as we were not used to walking with a banana peel for two hours. However, it is a beautiful illustration of the power of culture and habits on human behavior. When we would ask a Taiwanese person why he or she didn’t throw his garbage on the street, they would stare back at us with surprise on their face. ‘Why on earth would you do such a thing?’ could be read in their eyes. Without even thinking about the environmental consequences, this behavior was simply not an option. How did the government of Taiwan realize this?

Firstly, it is related to financial reasons as leaving your trash on the streets is illegal and punished by a fine. But this is not the only reason for the city being so clean, education is also of great importance. Children are taught why it is important to recycle garbage and what the impact of waste on environment is. These children then proceed to educate their parents. In Taipei this ultimately led to a great social control. Among the general public it is considered wrong to pollute the streets with trash and therefore people feel ashamed to do it.

Short term vs long term
The results of this social control and the trash policy in Taiwan (as is explained in the previous box) are great, Taiwan has one of the highest recycling rates in the world and a very low volume of trash that they need to process. One could thus conclude that sustainability is an issue of high importance on the political agenda of Taiwan. However, in the end the people of Taiwan are merely human and thus an economic benefit is not excluded from decision making. This is illustrated by the fact that at the one hand there are government programs to make people aware of the troubles facing our planet and the urgency of using fewer natural resources while at the other hand the energy, water and gas prices of Taiwan are highly subsidized by the government. The general attitude in Taiwan is one of knowing that something needs to happen but being unwilling to really act upon it. It is nice if a product is green, but people are not willing to pay more for this greenness. The government is willing to start an educational project about recycling but diminishing the subsidy on energy is unimaginable since the political costs are too high, even though this would have a substantial effect on people’s energy usage. Thus, the Taiwanese are similar to the Dutch: we tend to pick short-term gain over long-term gain, and in this lies the real challenge of sustainability.

T-shirts made of plastic bottles
Before the FIFA world cup in Brazil even started, the French newspaper Le Figaro claimed Taiwan to be the winner of the famous cup. The story behind this claim? Taiwan managed to put their label ‘Made in Taiwan’ on the outfits of not one but ten national teams participating in the World Cup. All their clothes were made from an abundant resource in Taiwan, which consumes about 4.5 billion plastic bottles a year. For one soccer outfit they used materials recycled from eighteen plastic bottles; this equaled thirteen million bottles (which could fill twenty-nine soccer fields) in total for all ten teams. Just one of many examples how Taiwan uses innovation and sustainability to stay on top.

“Taiwan has one of the highest recycling rates in the world”
Government & Society

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4. China’s Education System
When Wageningen University introduced napping places in their library last year, it was common for students to make fun of it with friends. “What’s the use of going to the library for taking naps?”, was often asked. The opening of these lounge areas in the university’s library was a result of the increasing number of Chinese students in the city of Wageningen, which indicated the needs of Chinese students for such facilities. Daily life at Peking University supports this hypothesis. Study desks are regularly occupied by two arms with a head resting on it, instead of being occupied with study books. Some students will even bring their own pillows to the lectures, and have a quick nap in the twenty minutes between the lectures.

**Stupid questions?**
The workload and expectations set on Chinese students are extremely high, resulting in endless working days and daily sleeping sessions. As a university degree is seen as the only way to a successful future, the pressure on Chinese children to attend university is enormous. It’s either make it or break it, especially for the numerous one-child families. Families with relatively young children are strolling along Peking University’s campus, visualizing what the ultimate accomplishment looks like and raising the pressure on the kid just a little bit more. Some parents would even quit their job to help their child graduate from college. The performance requirement is inherent to the hierarchical Chinese culture, which can be found in classrooms in both primary and higher educational institutes. Criticizing and discussions on the lecture topic, that are composed by the lecturer, are rare and results are often based on the relative comparison with fellow-students. This does not only take away interaction as a lecture form, but also poses a huge burden on students who are having a hard time understanding the material. “There are no stupid questions” which is a well-known saying in The Netherlands, seems, unintentionally substituted for “there are only stupid questions” in the Chinese classrooms, judging from the ambience there. No student is willing to show his incomprehension to his fellow-students. The development of SnapAsk provides a solution for students with problems like these and might even be the mark of the first innovations towards a more open and accessible educational system, making college life more convenient. Although this application is not implemented yet in mainland China, it has proven its success in Hong Kong.

**Creativity in education**
As has been explained, education in China is mainly focused on memorizing and answering question rather than on asking questions, thereby leaving little room for creativity. Students are required to learn and memorize facts and entire passages, but are not triggered to look beyond this and search for the “why” and implementations of acquired knowledge. The gap between university and businesses requires interventions, since graduating university by memorizing doesn’t provide the student with the skill to put his knowledge into practice. This adds to the increasing interest in students from Chinese universities of applied sciences (UAS), with the number of these institutes rapidly growing.

Over the past few years the government regulations on education have been changing, emphasizing more and more on the role of creativity in classrooms of both primary and higher education institutes. The problem of lacking creativity in the Chinese educational system has to be solved in order to enhance China’s capacity for applied, innovative research and development in the future. However, the effect and implementations of these new regulations and plans are moderate as for example complete academic freedom, a key element required by those new plans to stimulate creativity, still isn’t assured. The emphasis on creativity in education in order to innovate, pinpoints the urgency of some adjustments to the current educational system.

Maybe, these developments would also release some of the pressure on the Chinese students, and reduce their amount of napping sessions needed to get through the day.
SnapAsk-app

SnapAsk is an app developed for students. The app gives students the opportunity to ask a question to top students from different universities in Hong Kong, paying one euro for each question. These top students will respond to your question personally within a maximum of 17 seconds. Currently there are 1000 students working for SnapAsk, responding to all kinds of questions. The application is very popular with Hong Kong students and will most likely become available in the Chinese mainland in the future.
120 million Chinese people went on a vacation abroad last year. Together, they spent a total of 160 billion dollars during their vacation(s), thereby being the biggest vacation-spenders worldwide. These figures might seem astonishing at first sight, but in the light of China’s total population of almost 1.4 billion, the travelling sector aimed at foreign vacations is still in its infancy. The vast majority of the Chinese population is not travelling abroad yet, but the growth of the tourism sector in recent decades is rather spectacular. Moreover, the prognosis is that this growth will only continue, and the Chinese might well become the biggest group of globetrotters in the world by quite a distance very soon. This raises interesting challenges for the Dutch tourism sector, as they will have to adapt their traditional marketing strategies if they want to attract this increasing group of curious Chinese tourists. This article examines the history, present and future of the Chinese outbound tourism market and examines which role the Dutch play in this.

**Booming tourism**

From 1949 to 1978, it was virtually impossible to travel abroad for Chinese inhabitants due to severe restrictions imposed by the Communist Party. When Deng Xiaoping came to power, the travel restrictions were slowly eased. An increasing number of countries received the ‘Approved Destination Status’ - a bilateral tourism agreement between China and the country of destination - which allows
tourist groups to go through a simplified visa application procedure. As time went by, the restrictions for individual travel were also lifted and the government currently even encourages inbound and outbound tourism. Combined with a rise in GDP per capita, this has led to a great increase in abroad vacations. As income levels are likely to keep rising, the expectation is that the outbound tourist market will only keep growing in the coming years.

Traditionally, the Chinese tourist travelled in groups, purchased large amounts of luxury goods and wanted to see as many places as possible in a short amount of time. This picture is now slowly changing. A trend towards more individual and self-organized travelling is emerging among the younger Chinese, and the range of destinations is expanding. Major global cities remain the key destinations for Chinese tourists, with Seoul ranking as number one destination currently, but European cities such as Venice and Paris are increasingly popular as well.

Reaching out
The Netherlands is not yet a favourite destination among Chinese travellers. It is often not included in the 15-day Europe tours due to a lack of famous sights and major global cities. Yet, with the trend towards more self-organized travelling and longer stays, the prospects of the Netherlands as a destination are getting brighter. To realize its potential as a future destination for Chinese tourists, it is important that the Dutch tourism sector follows the right marketing strategy and knows the preferences of Chinese tourists. Local hotel ‘De Dames van de Jonge’ in Giethoorn has given the right example in this respect. They offer warm water everywhere and have no hotel rooms that include the unlucky number 4. Other effective strategies include offering Chinese meals, advertising with recognizable Dutch symbols such as cheese and tulips, and emphasising the possibility to buy souvenirs. Also, Chinese tourists increasingly plan their tours online and attach great value to reviews by others, so visibility on a Chinese travel website is highly recommendable for any hotel, restaurant or museum. Making the Chinese tourist come to the Netherlands is certainly not impossible, but you do have to reach out to them.

A typical trip for Chinese tourists through the Netherlands
In 2014, almost 250,000 Chinese people visited the Netherlands. On average, they spend only 1.5 days in our country. During their trip, they usually visit Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Zeeland. Some of the most popular attractions are visiting the Zaanse Schans, Madurodam and Kinderdijk, or cruising around in the canals of the capital city. Since they travel in such large groups, they spend 16% of their time on getting in and out of the bus! During their stay in the Netherlands, they are most interested in our traditional culture, such as tulips, cows and mills. However, it is important that the tours are offered in Chinese and that they can eat Chinese meals rather than typical Dutch food.

Chinese people use recreational vehicles
A vehicle that is gaining popularity quickly under the traveling Chinese is the recreational vehicle (RV), or camper. This way of traveling is in line with the growing independency of the Chinese travellers. Chinese people like to take RV’s to experience a sense of freedom; they can go wherever they like, whenever they like. Linked to this increasing number of RV’s is the number of campsites. At the moment there are 200 campsites in China, which is very small compared to any country in Europe. But campsites are becoming more popular, with 500 new sites being planned or already under construction. Here lies a huge potential for the local Chinese tourist sector as well as for Western investors.
Due to cross-cultural differences, decision making and policy implementation in China is all but similar to the Dutch way of ruling the country that we are so familiar with. To improve communication, negotiation and resolution-finding between China and the Netherlands, a better understanding of both governing cultures is key.

Based on a four-year term electoral system, popular support and public accountability are essential to policy making in the Netherlands. Therefore, on the one hand, policy making often comes down to reaching consensuses, also known as ‘polderen’, in order to satisfy as many people as possible. On the other hand, there is strong emphasis on making the right decision, for which extensive research is required and lots of organizations need to be consulted. As a result, policy making in the Netherlands can take years and years. Outcomes of conducted analyses are strategically used by politicians to support their claims, resulting in strong debate on the subject. As to one extreme example, the policy making process regarding the construction of a highway took over 60 years.

**Trial and error**

A situation like this would be unthinkable in China. Of course, unlike the Dutch regime, the Chinese government holds absolute power. But this is not the only reason. Due to its geographic size and diversity, the process of governing in China is both complex and challenging. To tackle this issue, the Chinese government has put a ‘trial-and-error process’ in place. Whereas governmental decisions in the Netherlands are expected to be correct at all times, policies in China are implemented in a strongly experimental way, assessed and adjusted when necessary. This way of policy making became dominant in China in the 1980s, when the country reformed and opened up its economy under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. Because of the uniqueness of the Chinese reformation process, he claimed that no guidebook way of development was suitable. Experimentation was necessary, which he described as “crossing the river by feeling for the stones”.

**Special zones**

In order to prevent the country from national disasters by untried models, new and experimental policies are often initially implemented in a specific geographical region. This way, pros and cons become clear and lessons can be learnt before nationwide implementation. As part of this strategy of ‘model cities’, Special Economic Zones have been opened since the 1980s to test liberal trade policies. A more recent example is the opening of Experimental Free Trade Zones in different parts of China. The first zone was opened in September 2013 and is situated in Shanghai. It allows foreign investors sole ownership of firms in certain industries, and up to 51% ownership in joint ventures with Chinese partners in state-protected industries. Another development worth mentioning is the country’s experiments with full convertibility of its currency.
Free Trade Zones and the New Silk Road

As mentioned, the Experimental Free Trade Zones are targeted at specific regions. However, they could synergize with China’s New Silk Road initiative to strengthen China’s role in the new world order. Under this initiative, a network of road, rail and maritime infrastructure is to boost the world’s economy and to tighten relationships between a large range of countries in Asia, Europe and Africa. This way, the “old” Silk Road that connected China with the rest of the world, both economically and culturally, is revitalized. Supporting China’s process of global integration, those Free Trade Zones not only make it easier for foreign companies to invest in China, but also serve as nodes for China’s outward investment in countries along the Road. In other words, China slowly increases its soft power by showing intentions to collaborate extensively on joint economic interests. This way, China is taking its place on the global stage by “crossing the river by feeling for the stones”.

The measures mentioned above, as well as other measures, turned out to be an economic success, leading to its implementations being extended to other parts of China. For instance, three economic zones will be opened in the Pearl River Delta region, in an attempt to pull Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau together into one economic region. Moreover, lessons learnt from the Shanghai Free Trade Zone will be used to optimize the newly developed trade zones – and perhaps have a long-term influence on China’s national economic policy.

China’s trial-and-error way of policy making has not only led to success stories, some experiments have failed and led to an increase in corruption, pollution or inefficiency. Notwithstanding, successful new and innovative policies can be implemented through this strategy of trial-and-error, that otherwise would not have been tried. Perhaps the Netherlands could improve its decision making process and embrace innovative though untried policies by not over-investigating those policies beforehand, but by learning step-by-step on a small-scale base.
Smart Cities

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7. Public transport
A public transportation system that works well is crucial in fast growing cities like Hong Kong. Such cities are prone to air pollution, a developed public transportation system helps to reduce the attractiveness of possessing a car and helps in this way to fight pollution. In Hong Kong, the system developed in half a century from an almost inexistent network to a mass transportation system that covers almost 90% of all daily travels. In this regard, the Mass Transit Railway (MTR), being used by 4.46 million people on a daily basis, should not be left unmentioned. MTR Corporation, the company responsible for the excellent public transport in Hong Kong, keeps tweaking the network and the stations to reduce congestion and changing time between lines. While the company is extremely capable of construction and maintenance of the network, there are lots of other components relevant to let the system succeed. Several quite innovative methods, which are used in this small part of China, could be very interesting not only for the mainland but also for some European countries. These methods include, amongst others, technological advancements and psychological interventions.

Payment system
Payment for MTR use is dealt with by the ‘Octopus Card’, a chip card that cannot only be used for public transport, but also at convenience stores, restaurants, vending machines and much more. Some striking numbers show the substantial presence of the Octopus Card in Hong Kong daily life: the card is used by 95% of the population, more than 20 million cards are circulating and together all used cards have generated 12 million daily transactions, which are worth more than 130 million Hong Kong Dollar. The usability and accessibility of the card greatly improve the appeal of using the public transport system.

Telecommunication network accessibility
MTR Corporation collaborates with internet provider companies that ensure full network coverage, resulting in rarely failing telecommunication access at MTR stations and on trains. While MTR Corporation outsourced the installation and the maintenance of the network, the company makes profit by requiring a fee to the internet providers that want to operate in the MTR tunnels and at the stations. Due to the attractiveness of operating along the MTR network, this does not appear to be a problem for the providers. Citizens using the MTR do not have a problem financially contributing to the service either, even though fees might not be clearly mentioned on the monthly invoice. To them, being connected while travelling is a must and when the quality drops, they will blame both the internet providers and MTR Corporation.

Signposting
The famous MTR symbol which is known by Hong Kong Chinese and foreigners alike can be found anywhere in the city and will point one in the direction of the station, which is often only a short walk from one’s current location. Even though overwhelming advertisements and glittering neon-lights make the streets of Hong Kong visually dazzling, it seems always easy to spot a MTR symbol. Guiding millions of people to the right place even in very crowded situations, this small yet very helpful tool is an essential innovation to all metropolises.

The Octopus Card
Over the years, user statistics show the enormous popularity of the Octopus Card, a concept that keeps innovating. Just one example is the alternative design the Octopus Card can have. The concept already appears in different types of cards, such as the most common on-loan card and the Airport Express Tourist Card. Besides these different types, the Octopus Card can also appear in different product forms, such as mobile phone covers, watches, wristbands and key chains.
Social control

According to social psychologist Geert Hofstede, the region of Hong Kong, like most Asian countries, can be described as a collectivist culture. This means that the collective is valued over the individual; benefits to society as a whole are most important, the self comes later. In order to deal with the large flow of people that uses the MTR every day, MTR Corporation makes use of the high level of social control that is inherent to the collectivistic cultures by reminding people of their duties towards others. Being based on a long-standing tradition and therefore not totally fitting the box ‘innovation’, this phenomenon can be seen as an interesting difference compared to Western countries. Moreover, effectively using cultural values to improve safety and cleanliness of the public transportation system can be seen as an innovative intervention.

Customer satisfaction

The overarching theme of above mentioned innovations is the customer centric approach of the railway operator. A high level of traveller satisfaction must be an essential goal of the railway operator. All provided services along the railway network must contribute to a pleasant trip from once place to another. Services like easy payment, internet connection, clear signposts and social security are essential to make a train ride a comfortable way of travelling.

In the Netherlands, many different companies need to collaborate to increase the quality of a train journey. Especially the two technological innovations of the MTR, the Octopus Card and the excellent internet connectivity at the stations and in the tunnels, require a profound stakeholder analysis. Some experts retain that there are too many stakeholders in the Netherlands to make innovations such as extended payment possibilities of the OV-chipkaart work, while others think it is just a fact of willingness to improve and innovate combined with the need of a leading company.

Earlier mentioned aspects of human behaviour are quite difficult to implement in the Netherlands because of the substantial cultural and physical differences between Dutch and Chinese cities. However some aspects can provide some help in managing crowds and travellers’ behaviour. The increased visibility of, for example, the NS logo in Dutch cities could raise awareness of train travelling and stimulate the use of public transport as an alternative to travelling by car. This small adjustment could reduce traffic jams and carbon emissions. Increasing this number will thus contribute to sustainable transport, especially since only 12.6% of commuters in the Netherlands use public transport on a daily basis.

Reducing violence

The MTR, Hong Kong’s subway system, is known for using social control to influence behaviour. In the Netherlands, the use of this technique could play a role in reducing violence against train personnel. This is a frequently reported problem, often resulting in serious bodily harm and physical disability of train personnel. While travellers currently refrain from assisting train personnel in case of violence or aggression, raising awareness of these incidents and pointing out travellers’ own safety might change their behaviour. Visual appeals both in the train and on the stations can be used to create awareness. In order to increase the effectiveness of the intervention, designs should refer to the individual’s own safety.
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China’s internet sector is booming; the number of internet users and businesses keep increasing. In mid-2015 China already contained over 640 million internet users, but this still means that only about half of the population has access to the internet. To put it differently, the number of Chinese internet users can double in the years to come. Moreover, China’s twelfth five-year plan indicates a strong push for long term development in the internet and high-tech sector. As part of this strategy, the Chinese government aims to have its entire population connected through a 4G network by 2020. While this all sounds stunning, the odd outcome of this aspiration will be that people living in rural areas might not have running water while enjoying access to the internet.

Internet as backbone
The Chinese government is extremely eager to expand its internet sector for three reasons. First of all, the government seeks to turn the ICT sector into the backbone of the Chinese economy. Various industries become increasingly dependent on ICT and hence, the importance of this sector will only continue to grow over the coming years. Moreover, access to the internet contributes to efficiency improvements in these and other industries. Secondly, investing in the ICT sector is not only an economically strategic choice but also a must to rule the country efficiently. China’s enormous geographical size and large population put forward many challenges that traditional, physical infrastructure is unable to overcome. Currently, internet seems to be the only means to connect people all over the country at all times and to offer access to services and products, while reducing costs. Lastly, internet offers enormous opportunities to the Chinese government in terms of surveillance and security. While an increased use of the internet might seem to offer greater freedom in personal lives, it meanwhile facilitates increased monitoring opportunities.

Beating Silicon Valley
The specific circumstances of China have granted the Chinese Internet sector a unique character. The first thing that comes to mind when people from Western countries think about Internet and China is censorship. However, in the coming years, this thought might very well be replaced by some of the names of the Chinese applications or telecom giants such as WeChat, Huawei or Alibaba. For some part, the success of these actors can be traced back to the Chinese protectionism, but they are also true innovators. WeChat is the Chinese alternative to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and its users consider these Western apps inconvenient and old-fashioned. Therefore, it is more likely that the Western companies have to start fearing for their future, than that their Chinese counterparts have to. Silicon Valley might still be the Walhalla of ICT but when it comes down to business opportunities China easily beats California: the Chinese population outnumbers any other market.

M-commerce
The majority of Chinese internet connect through their mobile device and hence, mobile commerce (m-commerce) is rising rapidly. A lot of mobile marketing is done through WeChat: customers are invited to follow a WeChat account and subsequently, they will receive promotional offers on their mobile phone. SMS is also still very popular and customers often receive text messages with special offers. Currently, businesses are experimenting with iBeacon in Shanghai. This tool enables a company to track a customer’s location through Bluetooth and to send messages when approaching the store. Taking care of payment transactions for purchases made, various mobile platforms emerge. Existing applications like WeChat have already included this function and Alibaba has also created its own mobile payment service ‘AliPay’. While m-commerce is not completely unknown in Europe and the US, China is without a doubt a frontrunner in this field.
Internet infrastructure
Currently, the major Chinese telecom players Huawei and ZTE are unfolding an extremely fast internet network throughout the country. Compared to other countries, internet infrastructure in China develops a lot quicker. The country moved from Edge to 4G almost immediately, nearly skipping 3G. Moreover, while 4.5G is not available yet, a 5G network is already being developed. Huawei invested more than $600 million in this network, which will offer speeds up to 10Gbps, 100 times as fast as 4G. Apart from enabling users to download data at extremely high speed, the new technology that comes along with a 5G network is able to handle more connections simultaneously. Therefore, it will boost opportunities for the ‘Internet of Things’, a network connecting physical objects through embedded electronics, software and sensors. To make this work, Huawei is currently working on better integration of telecommunication in city landscapes. The company is now, for example, able to put broadcasting devices inside light poles. This way of subtly storing electronics throughout a city will contribute to handling the enormous amount of simultaneous connections required for our future lives: the Internet of Things.

“The Chinese population outnumber any other market”
9. Mobility of the future

Gogoro’s Smartscooter
Speaking of innovation in the mobility and energy sector, Gogoro’s Smartscooter can serve as a perfect example. This new company, which was founded in Taipei in the year 2011, launched its smart scooter this year. The scooter itself shows what convenience the implementation of connectivity into mobility can provide. Since the Smartscooter contains several sensors and is connected to the Internet, the scooter can be controlled and information can be looked at with the use of a simple application. What more is innovative about this scooter is the battery swapping infrastructure which enables the drivers to quickly change batteries at a central point instead of being obliged to wait for your own battery to be fully charged. This system is not only very useful, it also shows us a new way of storing and distributing energy.

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Many companies are wondering, what their role within society will be in fifteen years. The world is changing at an ever-faster pace, requiring companies to adapt. The world is encountering problems such as overpopulation and pollution. Will consumers in 2030 still need the services they are using right now? Probably not. If their business models are changing anyhow, then how can companies play a role in making cities more livable in the future?

Connectivity
One of the most prevalent impacts on our surroundings will be the emerging connectivity of mobility. How will all physical objects be connected within the transport sector? Four different interrelated aspects play crucial roles: visions, techniques, innovations and policies. Take Taipei as an example. This city in Taiwan is locked in between sea and mountains. The population density is very high and the population will only grow the following years, whilst the city cannot grow in square meters. In order to tackle these problems, Taipei has made some big steps within the transport sector. In this respect, the Netherlands can learn a lot from Taipei.

Incremental
Are you ready for a future in which a car will drive itself? On the one hand, you might not feel that comfortable yet with the idea of rushing towards a crossroad at a speed of 100 km/h. On the other hand you probably already make use of the cruise control function in your car. Big changes are not so easily accepted, but step by step people adapt to a changing world.
Many techniques are actually already available for the future and are being implemented in Taipei. For example, improving the ways energy is conventionally stored can change the transport sector. When batteries are more compact and more sustainable, the transport sector can – and will - be changed. Vehicles will be able to travel further while charging faster, thereby using less energy – an effect amplified by a reduction of the weight.

Integration
A way to keep innovating, while also remaining true to the status quo appreciated by the customer, is to integrate existing techniques in new innovations. This is already happening at a fast pace. Whilst the size of computers reduced from the size of a room to the size of a smartphone, the transport sector has only experienced marginal changes in the last years. This is one of the major reasons why the transport sector is so interesting. Fortunately, many innovations can be found already within the transport sector that make use of connectivity, such as smart bikes, smart scooters and a self-regulating metro system. Techniques and innovations alone are not enough to change the transport sector. A country should be open and willing to adapt policies allowing the transport sector to change. A government that only invests in short term solutions is not open for disruptive new ideas. Seeing the Netherlands’ general flexibility, it could be one of the first countries to work towards a more efficient, sustainable transport system. So by providing connectivity (within mobility) businesses can be one of the key players in our future.

YouBike
The YouBike-system is another example of an innovative means of transport. While the YouBike is obviously less innovative than Gogoro’s Smartscooter, it shows us how connectivity makes a cheap and sustainable type of mobility possible. The bikes can be found all over the city of Taipei and can be rented with the use of the EasyCard (the more functional counterpart of the Dutch OV-chipkaart). Because the prize of renting a YouBike is negligible, it is a very convenient way of transport for short distances. The only downside of this system is the lack of cycle paths in many parts of the city.

YouBike

YouBike 
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