



Nordic Centre Newsletter *Summer 2019*

Spring has been a great time at Nordic Centre, with plenty of visiting scholars making use of our platform and making our environment an interesting place to be. We've hosted scholars in fields like journalism, political science, entrepreneurship, and philosophy – read an interview with one such scholar, Jukka Aukia from the University of Turku, inside. Meanwhile, our mobility funding, the Nordic Centre research platform, has never received more applications, and we have funded research stays in both the Nordic countries and China in fields like medicine, public health, mathematics education, and more.

This semester, we launched a new course along with the Finnish co-creation platform Demola, which brings Nordic and Chinese students together to develop a project in collaboration with representatives of a company. The course takes place every Friday afternoon at Nordic Centre, with two weekend-long “boot-camps” in the course of the semester, in which the teams brainstorm, develop ideas, research the field of their project through expert interviews and by other methods. Ultimately, they will pitch their ideas at the end of May; this “pilot-run” semester, there are two teams, one working on the plywood industry, the other on new modes of international experience for young college grads.

We would also like to warmly welcome the newest member of the Nordic Centre, Södertörn University, to the network. Located in Stockholm, Sweden, it features education and research in a wide range of fields, with a focus on contemporary societal relevance.

As summer is about to start, we look forward to receiving our member universities students for the annual courses Chinese Politics and Society and Business and Innovation in China – read an update on those inside.

*Magnus Jorem
Program Manager
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About

- The Nordic Centre at Fudan University is a platform for academic collaboration between the five Nordic countries and China
- If you wish to subscribe to the Nordic Centre newsletter, which is published four times please sign up at

nordiccentre.net

Masthead

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Recent courses and events

This semester Nordic Centre hosted a variety of events including courses and activities for visiting universities. In April, we organized a course for Lund University economics students centered on company visits, followed by one for Hanken School of Economics' EMBA students. We have also had the pleasure of hosting a public lecture by Uppsala University historian Lena Rydholm, who talked about the image of China in the Nordic region in the 18th century and how idealized understandings of China were used for political purposes, and connected this to the passing of the Freedom of Information Act in Sweden.

Other events included a BI Norwegian Business School workshop on organization in an insecure world, a workshop on sustainable development and planetary boundaries hosted by BI in Oslo in connection with the council meeting there, and a "women in business" panel hosted by Fudan School of Management and GoEast language school that Nordic Centre's program manager, Magnus, represented Nordic Centre at. Nordic Centre also hosted two quiz nights for students, questions being focused on Nordic and Chinese topics, requiring students to work together in teams to be successful. If you would like to test your own knowledge, turn to page 8.

Our upcoming events include a workshop on Ancient World History organized with the University of Copenhagen in July, our annual summer courses Chinese Politics and Society and Business and Innovation in China (read more on page 4), a public lecture by the world-famous literary scholar Julia Kristeva in the fall in connection with a tour promoting Norway's Holberg Prize, and a panel at this fall's SLUSH startup event in Shanghai.



Students get to know each other at Nordic Centre's welcome back mingle

Research activity funding results

The Nordic Centre Council met in Oslo on 11 April 2019 and decided to support the following applications for workshop and conference funding:

FUNDING FOR NC BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2020

EUR 20 000 to the University of Oslo & partner institutions for organizing the conference “Global ageing and related healthcare challenges.” The purpose is to 1) present latest research outputs on global aging and related healthcare challenges at cellular, individual, and societal levels; and 2) to bring discussions on problem-solving and future perspectives. Leading scientists from

broad disciplines within the Nordic countries and China will be invited to attend, within the disciplines of 1) Basic medical studies (mechanisms of ageing, and interventional studies), 2) Public Health (ageing epidemiology; public health issues), 3) Business (public health financial support), 4) Social sciences (focusing on the lonely elderly and policy making)

FUNDING FOR ACADEMIC EVENTS

EUR 5 625 to Umeå University & partner institutions for organizing the Nordic-China Entrepreneurship and Innovation Research Seminar and Workshop

EUR 6 500 to BI Norwegian Business School and partner institutions for organizing the Results dissemination and knowledge-sharing workshop on “Patterns of responsible innovation in farming; innovation and responsibility repertoires in different geographical contexts”.

EUR 7 000 to University of Oslo and partner institutions for organizing the Workshop “Land and Natural Resources: East and West”

Becoming a visiting scholar



Planning a research stay in Shanghai — or do you want assistance connecting to Chinese scholars working in your own field? If you are a researcher at one of our member universities, you can have an office space at Nordic Centre and receive various kinds of assistance from our team. Read more at nordiccentre.net/research#/scholars

We want you as our next visiting scholar!



Students visit Raute plywood factory

Demola: Lessons in innovation

Update on our new course:

We are now halfway through the new course that Nordic Centre, The School of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and the Finnish co-creation platform Demola have organized. The students have been working together both in bootcamp style workshops and independently to develop new innovative solutions for their specific cases. One case focuses on creating a solution for the Finnish plywood company Raute, and the other case focuses on developing new forms of international experience for young professionals in China and the Nordic region.

The latter team is working on a proposal to create a platform to facilitate worker exchanges between China and

the Nordic region. They hope that this platform will expand the idea of internships and traineeships to accommodate post graduates and working professionals. The Raute team is tasked with finding a way to innovate plywood production in China and make production more efficient and sustainable.

The course has given the students new insights into business development and innovation, as well as how to work in a culturally diverse team. We are excited to see what the teams come up with for their final projects and we look forward to future Demola projects — we already have some lined up for the autumn semester.

Summer courses 2019

Update on our annual summer courses

We are in the midst of planning this year's summer courses, which will take place from June 27 to July 10 (Chinese Politics and Society) and July 12 to July 25 (Business and Innovation in China). We are very excited to have professor Jørgen Delman from the University of Copenhagen teach the former, and to have associate professor Dmitrij Slepnirov from Aalborg University return to teach the latter. Both courses are full, and we very much look forward to receiving all the Nordic students for an exciting summer in Shanghai.

New member: Södertörn University

On April 11, the Nordic Centre council unanimously decided to welcome Södertörn University as the newest member of the network, which now counts 28 institutions. Södertörn University is a public university in Flemingsberg, Stockholm founded in 1996, and provides high quality research and education at all levels in a wide variety of disciplines, focused on humanities and social sciences with a contemporary societal relevance. We would like to give them a warm welcome, and look forward to working with their scholars and students.



Changing how we see data

Interview with visiting scholar Jukka Aukia

Words Julia Powanda

Jukka Aukia is one of our visiting scholars here at Nordic Centre, who, as he explained, “completely stumbled” into the field of Asian Studies. While completing his undergraduate degree, the University of Turku opened their center for East Asian Studies, where he took some minor level courses in the subject and found his interest.

Seeking to continue his studies in the same field, he did a Masters at the University of Amsterdam and graduated with a Master of Science in Contemporary Asian Studies, a social science take on contemporary Asian studies. He then shifted his focus to soft power—an approach to international relations involving economic and cultural influence—and wrote a PhD on the phenomenon around Chinese State soft power seeking; what the underlying influences and assumptions that guide the process are, as well as the main motivations behind it.

Current research:

China talks a lot about soft power, Jukka explains. In fact, official government policy emphasizes “cultural soft power.” Ultimately “China wants to return to the central stage of world affairs from where they — so to speak — were kicked out during the Opium Wars.” So, soft power is one of China’s tools to becoming a global power again, and “to tell the true story of China to the world.” “This is to say that China does not agree with Western liberal critique of the authoritarian state and lack of human rights.”

Jukka’s current research focuses on China’s activities in Eastern Europe. Basically, China is “seeking political influence by making promises of economic cooperation”. “A growing consensus is that they are not as influential as China threat discourses would assume them to be. Our results support this view.” In recent years “there has been growing concern among the institutions of the European Union and the Western press that China is buying Eastern Europe and that China is dividing the European Union. To

a degree that’s true because some right wing popular politicians, for instance in Hungary, are anti-European Union and pro-China.” But, this concern that China’s influence is growing in the region is often inflated, although very interesting country level nuances can be found.

So China is targeting Eastern European countries in which there are anti-EU sentiments? “Well, in a way. While one of the aims might be to divide the European Union, China is clearly not there yet. The level of economic investments remains relatively low, but the question of China’s overall media influence is more open to interpretation”. “We want to contribute towards a holistic but nuanced understanding of the situation and to avoid easy generalizations”. The project is a cooperation between political and information sciences at the University of Turku.

In Shanghai, Jukka is looking into collaboration with geo-coding scientists, that is, experts on visual representation of geography based data. I asked him to elaborate on what exactly this concept is. “It is something that we are developing, [the project is] a case study that looks into Chinese investments in Eastern Europe and media attention. What we actually do is develop new methods to investigate large scale data and combine that with geographic level results presentation. To put it very simply, what we want to do is, when we are measuring Chinese media attention in Eastern Europe, we want to visualize the results on a map.”

Given the huge size of the data, presenting results poses challenges. I asked him if this is an issue he faces regularly, finding a way to easily and clearly present data. Jukka explained that for this case the whole point is to find ways to analyze the data, make it meaningful, and present it in a meaningful way.

“It’s first and foremost an exercise in methodology”.



Gender equality in Sweden

A conversation with program officer Linus Ling

Words Julia Powanda

The new Nordic Centre program officer, Linus Ling (凌子萱), is currently finishing up his degree in Swedish language and literature, and recently submitted his Bachelor's thesis focusing on the Swedish model of gender equality. I was intrigued to know why he initially chose to study Swedish and what his perspective on Swedish and Chinese culture is.

Originally he planned to study foreign languages, and Swedish just "came into [his] sight." Also, because the universities only enroll students in the Swedish language program every four years, and at the time that he began his studies only two universities offered the Swedish language in China, so he thought it would be a competitive skill to have for the future job market and further studies.

As of now Linus has no plans of moving to Sweden long term, but he has had experiences living in Sweden throughout his studies. He spent a summer in Axevalla, a small town near Gothenburg with only "one supermarket, one traffic light, one lake, and one high school," quite a culture shock in comparison to the large city life that he is used to as a native of Shanghai. He also studied in Stockholm for two semesters doing an intensive Swedish program.

Now that Linus is in his final year of his studies his focus is on his thesis and researching gender equality in Sweden. There are three aspects of the Swedish model that he chose to focus on: taxation policies (before 1970, families were taxed as a unit, but after that they began taxing the individual rather than the family as a unit), parental leave, and discrimination in the job market. In fact, Sweden is trying to implement gender equality as early as possible. As Linus explained, starting in kindergarten, teachers try to implement "a neutral teaching method that won't illustrate the differ-

ence between boys and girls." Linus added that China is also beginning work to combat gender discrimination in the job market, and has recently released a notice that employers will not be allowed to ask women for their marital status or their plans for children. Gender equality and sexuality have historically been controversial topics in China, but Linus feels that this is beginning to change, "the generation that I'm in is quite accepting of these new ideas."

Regardless of how Chinese people are beginning to think about gender equality, the reality is that maternity leave is quite expensive, and from a business perspective Chinese companies are still likely to prefer men to women. And while China does have a large economy, its massive population prevents it from implementing the exact same model that Sweden is able to.

This seems to be a recurring way of thinking in China, the idea being that the Nordic region has somehow perfected the system. As Linus explains, the main thing that the general Chinese population believes about the Nordic region is that "they are rich and have a perfect welfare system." But Linus himself feels a bit differently, "although the Swedish model is good, if you [look closer at] the model it actually is that they have money. They have enough money per capita to build up a social welfare system. China also has money, but the population is too big." Therefore, China is more limited in its ability to implement gender equality programs than Sweden. So China should develop the gender equality policies as well as social welfare system in a way that is suitable for Chinese national conditions.

Globalized studies

Q&A with Julia Powanda, our current intern

Words Linus Ling



This semester we have the pleasure of having Julia Powanda as our intern to help us in our daily responsibilities. Having reinforcements on our team always creates new energy. Julia is a master's student at The University of Gothenburg where she studies Global Studies.

What do you major in?

I major in global studies, which is very similar to my bachelor's (International Affairs and Hispanic Studies), in which I focused on South America and Spain. I graduated and moved to Chile for two years. After Chile, I decided to continue my studies, but I was not sure which field to focus on, so I picked a broader field, global studies. The program focuses more on global connectively, with an emphasis on political, legal, ecological and cultural topics, themes I did not study in depth in my undergrad.

Why did you choose Sweden to do your master's program?

I had studied abroad in Spain and I really enjoyed living in Europe. I'm from the US and I had been living in South America for two years, and I decided that I wanted a change. When I was looking through masters programs it was the University of Gothenburg that had the program I most liked.

Do you think that the fact that you cannot speak Swedish is a barrier during your time in Sweden?

It is not a barrier when you're studying, but it is a barrier for working in certain fields. I did take a Swedish course, but it is difficult to stay motivated because my master's is in English and everyone speaks English so well in the Nordic region. In Spain I learned the language quickly because I had to, but in the Nordic region this is not always the case. But, I am quite impressed with the effort the university and government have made in teaching Swedish, free courses are offered by the university and government. I do want to continue learning Swedish.

The last question: how is your experience here in Shanghai?

Shanghai is a metropolis, but sometimes I feel like I am in Europe when I see the restaurants on the street, especially those near the campus that don't give you the sense that you're actually in China. And it is not a culture I've experienced so I'm quite looking forward to learning more about it. Chinese food is really good, Fudan's Campus is beautiful, and I plan to visit other cities in China to get a more complete image of China.

We wish Julia all the best during her stay with us.

Quiz Night!

Quiz Yourself!

Here are some of the questions that appeared in our Nordic Centre quizzes this semester.

1. What is the oldest restaurant in Stockholm, known for having the Swedish Academy, which decide the Nobel Literature Prize, eat dinner there every Thursday?
2. The Nobel Prize, established by scientist Alfred Nobel, consists of six categories: chemistry, literature, peace, economics, physics, and medicine. Which of these categories is considered unofficial and not established in Nobel's original will?
3. Most consider there to be four main ancient Chinese inventions. They include papermaking, type-printing, _____, and _____.
4. Which famous poet is to be commemorated at the Dragon Boat Festival?
5. What is the name of the noodle dish with a character that contains 58 strokes? The dish is known as one of the "eight strange wonders" of Shaanxi Province.
6. What does the length of noodles symbolize in Chinese culture, especially on birthdays?
7. What is the name of the enormous hall ruled by Odin, where warriors go when they die?
8. Thor was the Norse god of thunder. What was the name of his hammer?
9. Inventor Momfuku Ando invented instant noodles 方便面 – in what decade were they first produced?
10. Who said "Political power emerges from the barrel of a gun?"

How did you do?

Answers: 1. Den Gyldene Freden / The Golden Peace 2. Economics 3. Gunpowder and the compass 4. Qu Yuan / Qyuan 5. Bianbiansiangmian 6. Longevity/length of life 7. Valhalla 8. Mjolner 9. 1950s. (1958) 10. Mao Zedong, Chairman of the CCP