



Asia in the Nordic Mirror

Norden and Asia

Halldór Ásgrímsson • Peter Honeth • Krista Varantola • Tone Helene Aarvik • Mirja Juntunen, • Jussi Kauhanen

The Asian challenge

Bruce Henry Lambert • Jørgen Ørstrøm Møller • Linda Jakobson • David Hansen • Kenneth Nielsen • Maria Jaschok • Torbjörn Lodén • Stein Tønnesson • Jørgen Delman • Katri Kyllönen

Business lessons from Asia

Thorkil Kastberg Christensen

NIAS – Nordic window on Asia

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Asia in the Nordic Mirror

– a special issue to celebrate the 40th anniversary
of NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies

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**norden**

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40 more years for NIAS

NIAS turns 40 on 16 September 2008. For a human being, this is a mid-life point, and maybe for NIAS as well!? At least, we think that we have done well until now and would like to continue doing so for the next forty years. Hence, we talk about a NIAS “Vision 40:40”: we look in the rear-view mirror to remember where we come from while maintaining our focus on dealing with the challenges of the future.

We have decided to celebrate our anniversary through three main events:

1. The publication of this anniversary issue of NIAS Nytt
2. A joint conference with Copenhagen University on 16 September: “Asia in the 21st century – New perspectives”
3. A Conference and PhD course titled: “Asian Creativity in Culture and Technology, 12–16 November 2008, Trondheim. The conference is jointly organized by NIAS, Nordic NIAS Council, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and the Norwegian Asia Network.

NIAS has published and continues to publish a considerable amount of scientific publications. Therefore, we decided that our anniversary publication should be a *Festschrift* of a different kind. What was more natural than to use NIASNytt as a platform? For many years it has reflected what NIAS is supposed to do: generate and communicate Asia insights; act as a window for and contribute to the development of Asian studies in Norden; work for the reputation of the Nordic countries as a leading European region for the study of modern Asia; and – in general – promote the work that we do on the basis of our international recognition, our Nordic values and mandate, and in Consortium with Nordic universities and research institutions.

We have asked a number of people from the Nordic countries who have been or are close to NIAS to each write a piece for this issue. They have been grouped under different headings since they reflect different interests and different relations to NIAS. Essentially, the authors are a representative sample of all of those people from the Nordic countries who have worked at or with, visited, or used NIAS over the last forty years. The authors look at the history of the institute and our future, they discuss Asian studies, and they discuss experiences with working in or with Asia.

Having been able to thrive and survive for so many years is largely due to all the people who have worked at or with NIAS and their common aspirations to create a dynamic and internationally respected centre and hub for Asian studies in Norden. However, it would not have been possible without our sponsors either. There have been many of them over the years, and we would like to thank them all for their contributions and for having made all of this possible. Throughout, the Nordic Council of Ministers has been the main sponsor. We are grateful for their continued support and happy that Nordic collaboration is now looking towards Asia in new areas.

NIAS was restructured in 2005 and we are now under new ownership and management through a partnership between Copenhagen University and the Nordic NIAS Council with 25 Nordic universities and research institutes as members. We are convinced that the new partnership will provide a solid foundation for the future of NIAS as a Nordic research and service institute.

Therefore, we are keen to move into our second 40-years period and look forward to working with old and new partners in old and new networks, in new projects, with new services, and on new platforms, while maintaining the spirit and values that NIAS has developed over so many years.

*On behalf of NIAS and the staff
Jørgen Delman, Director*

The Nordic Region and Asia

Halldór Ásgrímsson, Secretary-General of the Nordic Council of Minister

It is no secret that China and India are becoming vital, strong and important players in global economy and political affairs. Some analysts predict that these Asian countries will become, respectively, the world's number one and number three economic superpowers over the next thirty years.

The competition in the globalised world economy is fierce and there are no signs that it will not continue to be so. Asia, particularly China and India, has of course attractive and important markets for our competitive Nordic businesses, but also for other European and North American businesses. China and India are part of the many opportunities and challenges that countries and businesses are facing in this age of fast-moving globalisation. An important strategic question is therefore: how do the Nordic countries maintain their competitiveness in the changing global economy?

A Nordic Globalisation Process

It is clear that all Nordic countries see globalisation as an extremely influential phenomenon creating both opportunities and challenges. All the Nordic countries have therefore in recent years set up their own 'Globalisation Councils' giving input to the development of national globalisation strategies. In this process, the conclusion has often been that the new globalisation challenges cannot be solved by a single country. Instead the nature of these challenges requires synchronised, coordinated multinational action. The Nordic countries have also come to the conclusion that Nordic partnership can play a key role supporting their quest for success in the globalised world economy. This is seen clearly when looking at the 'Nordic globalisation process,' kicked off by the Nordic prime ministers in the summer of 2007. In this initiative the prime ministers point to concrete joint Nordic solutions for meeting the challenges of globalisation.

The general objective of this Nordic globalisation process is to promote a more skilled, visi-

ble and thriving Nordic region that continues to develop welfare and growth. Key policy areas in this process are energy, climate, environment, research, innovation, welfare and health. Presently the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) is working on a number of concrete projects supporting the prime ministers' overall globalisation policy objectives. Innovation offices in Asia, a joint Nordic energy expo, Nordic input into climate negotiations, joint promotions during the World Exhibition in Shanghai in 2010, promotion of higher education in the Nordic Region, greater mobility and freedom of movement, and joint investments in Nordic top-level research are some of the important 'globalisation projects.'

One of the projects, a Nordic Globalisation Forum, has already taken place in Swedish Riksgården in April 2008 and the next forum will be held in Iceland in spring 2009. At the forum in Riksgården, the Nordic prime ministers confirmed the globalisation process set out in a declaration in Punkaharju (Finland) in 2007. An interesting Nordic Globalisation Barometer focusing on how the Nordic region is doing in the world was also presented at the forum.

A Strong and Visible Nordic Region

A very important and strategic task in the Nordic globalisation process involving Asia is making Nordic strengths more visible abroad. The Nordic countries are to be more profiled as a region, especially in fast growing markets, as this will provide added value compared with national investments. The Nordic countries are therefore via the NCM and other partners, including NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian

Studies, planning joint Nordic marketing activities in Asia. Two of the above mentioned globalisation projects 'Innovation offices in Asia' and 'World Exhibition in Shanghai in 2010' are direct results of the Nordic prime ministers' globalisation initiative and they are currently being investigated.

A Joint Nordic Profile in Asia

Asia is and will be an important arena where the success rate of a country's globalisation policy is measured. The possibilities for the Nordic countries to be successful in the Asian markets are very good. But, they will probably be even better if the Nordic countries strive for a joint Nordic profile. With a joint profile, 'Norden' gets bigger and so does the chance of getting a bigger market share. Our countries and companies differ in some fields

as they have different specialities. However by marketing the region as one, we get easier access to the market. The Nordic businesses have great opportunities in Asia, not at least in China and India where massive investments are being made or will be made in infrastructure, telecommunications, renewable energy sources and in the social and health sectors. These are sectors and areas where the Nordic countries have very strong positions and where a promotion of these Nordic strengths can have synergy effects. Nordic governmental cooperation is one important tool that can be helpful in Asia. We do, however, also need close cooperation between other Nordic players with experience in Asia such as businesses, research institutions and think-tanks. This is very important if the Nordic globalisation strategy is to be successful.

The Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) is the forum for cooperation among the five Nordic countries and the three autonomous areas of Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the Åland Islands. The NCM focuses first and foremost on giving added value for the members through cooperation. A lot of this work is about acting jointly in different areas and learning from experiences of different policy approaches between comparable countries. The NCM has traditionally focused its activities on education, research, culture, social health affairs, the labour market, matters to do with economic, environmental, foodstuff, forestry, marine resources, industrial and energy policies – in other words a continuation of typical domestic affairs within a Nordic framework.

Today the NCM is refining its sphere of activity and priorities within the new international and regional context. Mainly as a result of the globalisation, the NCM has in some respect changed and is no longer the same organisation it was 30 or even five years ago. The above-mentioned policy areas are still on the NCM's agenda, but the perspective is broadening and the actions are more focused. It is fair to say that Nordic cooperation today has four major perspectives: the Nordic region in its own traditional identity, the Nordic region as a part of the Baltic Sea region, the Nordic region as a participant in a larger European cooperation, primarily within the European Union, and the Nordic region in a global context.

Sweden in Asia – challenges and opportunities for higher education and research

Peter Honeth, State Secretary for Higher Education and Research, Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden

I have been visiting China and Chinese universities since the beginning of the 1990s, and have watched its exceptionally rapid transformation and development from close quarters. Today, seven Chinese companies are among the twenty-five largest in the world. And many more close behind them, both state-owned and private, are redrawing the world economic map.

But rapid development does not only apply to China and the other new major economic power India, but also to a range of countries in South and East Asia. Nor does the transformation only involve trade and industry; it applies equally to academic research and higher education.

The new academic world map

In recent years, global university league tables show that the top universities in Pacific Asia are rapidly closing the gap to Western universities. The intensity of Pacific Asia countries' R&D investments (as a percentage of GDP) presents a similar picture. Here, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore are now at the top of the international league, together with the Nordic countries, far ahead of most EU countries. China aims to exceed the EU average, even with regard to R&D intensity as a percentage of GDP, in the next few years.

Parallel to this, global student mobility has increased by 50 per cent over the past five years. In 2005, over 2.7 million students were studying in a country other than their country of origin. In 2007, 170,000 Chinese students were at universities in Europe (75,000 of these in the UK) compared with 60,000 in the United States, which has fallen behind dramatically since September 11. But regional student mobility between the Asian countries is even greater.

For Sweden, the rate of increase with regard to foreign students studying in Sweden has also been rapid at an average of 13 per cent per year. The academic year of 2006/07 was the first year in which the number of international students arriving in Sweden was greater than the number of Swedish students travelling abroad to study. The number of students coming to Sweden has tripled over the last ten years, and they currently represent more than seven per cent of the total student population. Over 60 per cent of all foreign students studying in Sweden come from Asia.

The challenges

In the field of higher education and research, the ongoing shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific is part of a larger globalisation process.

A global research and education market is being created. This no longer includes only US and British universities, but also Asian elite universities, and in the longer term, academic institutions in other parts of the world. This means that competition is becoming stiffer for our own universities and other higher education institutions, for students, cutting edge qualifications, financial resources and technological development. At the same time, however, opportunities for exchange and cooperation are enhanced. Alongside this, qualified research has more clearly become a strategic resource, and is acquiring a similar role to the

one that trade routes and raw materials have had for a long time.

This poses crucial challenges to our Nordic universities and other higher education institutions, and also to our industrial R&D sector. To meet these, it will be necessary to reform our university and research financing systems – and equally to change our view of the world and the forces that affect our future.

In connection with this, it can be mentioned that in December 2006, the Swedish Government appointed a Globalisation Council, aimed at achieving a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation and the best initiatives to be taken. One priority area for the Council is to explore how Sweden can survive and develop as a knowledge-based nation.

The Swedish reforms

For the past two years, extensive efforts have been under way at the Ministry of Education and Research to lay the foundations for a research and higher education system that is better equipped in the era of globalisation. Important inquiries are looking into greater independence for universities and other higher education institutions, quality-based resource allocation systems for higher education and academic research, and the organisation of research funding. Two major bills are to be presented in the autumn, one on research policy and the other on the internationalisation of higher education.

Internationalisation

A central component of the reforms is to stimulate and facilitate the internationalisation of Swedish research and education. Alongside the EU circle and our well-developed cooperation with the United States, it is a matter of meeting the challenges from Asia's new, large and very well-financed elite universities that capture larger shares of the global student market every year. And it is essential to make the most of the new opportunities opening up through broad scientific research initiatives

being taken in the region.

For some time now, the Government has been considering introducing student fees for students from outside the EU/EEA studying in Sweden. If this happens, new types and forms of grants will be introduced at the same time. These grants may, for example, be country-specific or aimed at especially gifted students. The grants are not intended to be restricted to master or doctorate level, but may be available to students who want to do part or all of their studies in Sweden. The Government is also looking into the possibility of joint degrees, that is of two higher education institutions being allowed to issue a joint degree. Measures to make obtaining a work permit easier after graduation are also being discussed.

Strategic alliances with new countries

The Government intends to build a number of long-term strategic alliances for Swedish academic and industrial research with new key countries. These alliances will be allocated substantial resources from the central government budget. The need for sustainability means that priorities must be set. A small country cannot spread its resources too thinly.

Sweden already has national research cooperation agreements with Japan, China and India. These are a starting point. South Korea and Singapore are also high up on the priority list.

China: the first step

Sweden already has relatively extensive academic and industrial cooperation with China. Over the last few years, our universities and other higher education institutions have signed more than 100 partnership agreements with Chinese sister institutions. The number of student exchanges is growing, more and more joint research projects are being set up and Swedish enterprises are establishing their own R&D centres in different parts of the country. This provides a basis for our joint efforts.

The first step in this initiative was the Sino-

Swedish Science Week held in Beijing in September 2007. This is the largest investment Sweden has made in Asia so far. The event brought around 160 Swedish researchers, politicians, research funders and business representatives and their Chinese colleagues together. Some ten workshops were held in joint priority areas: research and innovation policy, materials science, mobile telecom networks, energy and climate change, bio refineries and biofuel, public health and health care systems, communicable diseases and disease control, and Western and traditional Chinese medicine. Many meetings resulted in concrete proposals for joint projects.

At the political level, Minister for Higher Education and Research Lars Leijonborg and his Chinese colleague, Mr Wan Gang, agreed to set up a joint Swedish-Chinese Task Force to examine the possibility of establishing a number of broad-based Sino-Swedish science centres.

The Swedish Government regards cooperation with China as the start of a massive Swedish investment in building greater cooperation with the new research countries in Asia. Our assessment is that this investment is neces-

sary for Sweden to enable it to maintain its position as a leading R&D country even in a 10–15 year perspective. A prerequisite for investing in joint research centres, on a scale that makes Sweden a key and long-term actor in the Chinese scientific research initiative, is strong funding. But also, and not least, good national coordination. Although we have inspiring Nobel prizes, the world's second highest R&D intensity and four universities ranked among the world's top one hundred, according to the accepted Chinese league table, Sweden is a comparatively minor actor. In this context we regard national coordination as a greater challenge than finding the financial resources that a small country can mobilise. Both the Government and our major research funders have an important role to play here.

I would like to conclude by saying that Sweden is looking forward to more extensive cooperation with Asia and considers this region as fundamental for Sweden's future development as a research and education nation. And at the same time, Sweden can make important contributions to the development of countries in the region.

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Nordic Centre as a platform for Nordic universities in China

Krista Varantola, Rector, Tampere University, Finland, and Chairman of the Board, Nordic Centre, Fudan University

Tone Helene Aarvik, Programme Director, Nordic Centre, Fudan University, China

The Nordic Centre is a Nordic platform for cooperation within research and higher education between Nordic and Chinese universities and institutions. The Centre is located at Fudan University, ranked as the 3rd best university in China. Today, the Nordic Centre consists of 26 top universities, representing all the 5 Nordic countries and China. When the Centre was established in 1995, it was the first Nordic university collaboration in Asia and is still the only joint Nordic academic institution in China today. The centre hosts an increasing number of international academic activities, and is a unique platform which has become a model for other academic platforms.



Background

The idea behind the Nordic Centre came from Nordic and Chinese professors who had ongoing projects and cooperation. They realized that a stable and general platform could lead to more collaboration and at the same time ensure a long-term commitment to ongoing projects. Support from the leadership at Fudan University was vital in the start-up phase and has been important and essential for the growth of the Nordic Centre ever since.

The Nordic Centre has been located at Fudan University since its opening and Fudan University has been the main Chinese part-

ner in most projects, courses or other activities. The number of member universities in the Nordic countries has increased from 14 initial members to 26 members in 2008 and

"The Nordic Centre is an amazing platform for creating and keeping the contacts you need in order to find relevant professors and create new research projects. Connections and meetings that would normally take me months to prepare have been organized in a couple of days." – Representative from a Nordic member university 2008

today the members have collaboration and exchange agreements within most fields. Fudan University is one of the most comprehensive and most internationally focused universities in the country. Shanghai is also the location for many other top universities and several of these have been involved in activities at the Centre or have collaboration with member universities.

Main focus and structure

The three main focus areas for the Nordic Centre have been:

- To be a platform for initiating and developing activities and collaboration within research and higher education of mutual interest to Nordic and Chinese scholars.

- To be a teaching institution for Chinese students who show interest for the Nordic countries and for Nordic students with interest in China.
- To be an organizer of programmes and activities for the Nordic business communities in the Shanghai region.



Nordic students enjoying their time in Fudan University campus

Ever since the start of the Centre a Chinese speaking Nordic coordinator has been based at Fudan University, and office facilities have been available for visiting researchers and students. The Nordic Centre has become an important meeting place for students and researchers doing research in China, and also for students attending courses either at the Centre



Jostein Gaarder, the Norwegian author, signing copies of his book for eager Chinese students

itself or at Fudan University. Books and magazines about the current situation in China and Asia are available together with literature and information about the Nordic countries and Nordic member universities. Donations from the Nordic consulate generals and other Nordic institutions have been important for the growth of the reading room of the Nordic Centre.

The Centre has a Board, a Council and a secretariat/chairmanship. The council consists of representatives from all member universities and is the highest decision-making body of the Centre. The Board represents one member from each member country and the Chairman of the Board is from the University where the secretariat/chairmanship is situated. Currently the University of Tampere holds the Secretariat/Chairmanship after 7 years with Lund University as the chair. During the first few years, the Norwegian School of Management, BI, held the secretariat/chairmanship.

Activities

Today the Nordic Centre provides courses at BA, MA and PhD level, both for Chinese and Nordic students. The Centre regularly arranges workshops and seminars which are of interest for both Chinese and Nordic scholars and also tries to have regular activities where the Nordic business communities are involved either as participants or as contributors. The Centre also has strong cooperation with the Nordic consulates based in Shanghai and often arranges cultural or official activities in collaboration with them.

"The course as a whole has been a tremendous experience. It is an enormous privilege to get to opportunity to attend this course."

– Nordic student attending the summer course: 'Introduction to Modern China' in 2007.

One of the most popular courses for Nordic students is the 3 week summer course "Introduction to Modern China". The course attracts students from all disciplines and has been arranged continuously for 10 years. In accord-

"It's the first time for me to cooperate with foreign students and I learned a lot; from academic knowledge to negotiating tactics. Students from different backgrounds help me to open my eyes. They all provided me with new ideas from different perspectives. A very interesting course!" – Chinese student attending the course: 'Planning for Sustainable Urban Development' in 2008.

ance with the long term planning of the Centre, a number of research related activities as well as PhD courses have been arranged during the previous few years. The course 'Planning for Sustainable Urban Development' is a one-week course for both Nordic and Chinese students which has been highly valued by its participants. The course has, in addition to Nordic member universities and relevant departments at Fudan, involved close collaboration with local governmental planners and private investors in Shanghai.

As a platform for all cooperation between member universities and Fudan the Nordic Centre has also been involved in developing long-term teachers' exchange and research projects. To encourage more research collaboration, a Nordic Centre Research Platform was established in 2007. The Nordic Centre Research Platform aims to encourage and support research collaboration between Nordic and Chinese scholars which is of mutual interest for their home institutions.

In addition to engagement by professors, administrators and leaders on both sides, the Nordic Centre Research Fellows have been essential for the development of the Centre. This title is given to Fudan University professors who have a special link to the Nordic countries and universities and/or have had long-term engagement in activities at the Nordic Centre. The Nordic Centre Research Fellows have been valuable and essential for the academic development of the Centre's activities and projects.



President of Iceland H.E. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson together with Professor Chen Yinzhang in Nordic Centre library

The New Nordic Centre Building

The increasing number and the expanded scope of activities have created a need for larger premises, and the Nordic Centre has been given the unique opportunity to build a Nordic Centre building within Fudan University's main Handan campus. The new building will be named The Nordic Centre and will include offices for the Nordic Centre, our member universities liaison offices, offices for researchers, and Fudan Foreign Affairs Offices. We will also have classrooms, a lecture hall, meeting rooms and a reception area as well as a study/library for students and researchers affiliated with the centre. The project has started and the new building is scheduled to be finished by the end of 2009. The new building will further strengthen this unique platform and enable the Centre's activities continued growth in accordance with the increased demands, interest and collaborations.

Nordic Centre in India as a platform for Nordic universities in India

An increasingly stronger Nordic consortium

Mirja Juntunen, Director of the Nordic Centre in India, and Jussi Kauhanen, Chairman of Board, Nordic Centre in India

The Consortium Nordic Centre in India (NCI) was established in 2001 in order to facilitate collaboration between higher educational and research institutions in the Nordic countries and India. The intention of the Consortium, which initially consisted of eight member institutions in the Nordic countries, was to strengthen and enhance South Asian studies in the Nordic countries, and to support activities in India and with Indian counterparts, undertaken by faculties at the Nordic member institutions.

The first five years were mainly devoted to the recruitment of new members to the Consortium, to setting up the offices in India and in the Nordic region, identifying collaboration partners in India and tailoring shorter training

The first Nordic NCI office was hosted by the University of Copenhagen led by the two Danish scholars of South Asia: Stig Toft Madsen (Director, sociologist) and Peter B Andersen (Chairman of the Board, historian of religion). Thereafter the University of Oslo agreed to provide facilities for managing the office under the next NCI Director, Arild Engelsen Ruud (anthropologist). In 2005, Uppsala University (Sweden) offered office space and financial support for the NCI administration. Bengt G. Karlsson (anthropologist), who headed the office for a full year, left for other work and the position of Director was taken over by Mirja Juntunen (scholar of South Asian languages and cultures). In 2007, Neelambar Hatti, a historian of economics from Lund University (Sweden) and the Chairman of the Board since 2003, retired, and the current Chairman, Jussi Kauhanen, Professor of Public Health from the University of Kuopio was elected to lead the Consortium.

programmes and summer courses in India for the Nordic students.

By the end of 2007 the NCI Consortium had 22 members from all the five Nordic countries including most of the leading Nordic universities, a few business schools, a technical university and a university of life sciences. Thus the General Assembly of the NCI decided at its annual meeting in October 2007 to step into the next phase – the phase of consolidation of the organisation and its activities. It was agreed to focus on the following main areas: 1) the promotion of South Asian studies in the Nordic countries; 2) the establishment of Nordic studies in India; 3) the identification of the issues of common interest for Nordic and Indian researchers in the field of environmental studies; 4) the initiation of a Nordic-Indian/South Asian public health dialogue.

Expanding the network in india

The NCI has signed MoUs and cooperation agreements with the University of Hyderabad (UoH), Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi (JNU), Institute for Social and Economic Change in Bangalore (ISEC) and the International Institute of Population Sciences in Mumbai (IIPS). The choice of the cooperation partners reflects both the initial and current

intentions of the NCI and provides a solid ground for pursuing collaboration within our four main focus areas.

Courses in India

One of the aims of the NCI is to equip the next generation of Nordic scholars and professionals with knowledge and skills acquired on the spot under the conditions and guidance of Indian and South Asian faculty and professionals. For this purpose NCI runs a month-long intensive training programme (worth 10 ECTS points) for advanced students (mostly Master's and PhD students). The programme is run jointly with our Indian collaboration partners.

ISEC, and especially its Centre for Ecological Economics and Natural Resources (CEENR) in Bangalore, has hosted the tailor-made programme for NCI students 'Approaching the Environment in India: New Theories and Methods in the Study of the Nature-Society Interface' since 2007.

IIPS in Mumbai has similarly hosted the course 'Demography, Gender and Reproductive Health: An Introduction to Population Studies in India' since 2006/2007. Both of these multidisciplinary courses have attracted a large number of Nordic students from diverse backgrounds. Both of the courses strongly emphasize the field experience and the students are exposed to realities spanning all the levels of Indian society.

A third training programme reflecting on an urgent need has sprung out of the two above-mentioned programmes, i.e. a multidisciplinary training programme on 'Methods and Applications in Social Science Research' focusing on the economic, social and political aspects of social science research, and its nature and development. Due to the changes and shifts in the economies and the markets in the world, changes are taking place in society, polity and economy, which effect both the environment and public health. In order to generate the future scenario and, at the same time, to study the process, new methods and

applications are required. NCI believes that the interaction between the Nordic and Indian students and scholars will contribute to an alternative understanding of the future needs and mechanisms based both on the Nordic and Indian theories and experience.

Language and literature

Language and literature are the gateway to society and culture, and to the market. India, and South Asia, is a storehouse of languages, literatures, philosophies of life, religions and ways of living. In order to understand, benefit from and to contribute to the Nordic-Indian interaction, NCI actively promotes South Asia Studies in the Nordic countries and supports the efforts to set up South Asia Study Programmes. A number of courses related to South Asian issues are already offered at the Nordic universities.

However, surprisingly and imprudently, well-established study programmes dealing with Indian languages, literatures and cultures are being closed down in some of the Nordic countries. Knowledge of relevant Indian languages is a matter of course for anyone who intends to procure a comprehensive understanding of contemporary Indian rural and urban society. NCI will offer, through a cooperation agreement with the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), short and long term language training courses in Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam and Santali.

Nordic studies

Some of the NCI partner institutions in India have recently expressed interest in establishing Nordic Studies in India. From an Indian perspective, the Nordic experience would provide a starting point for future projects with mutual benefit, in the areas of regional cooperation, public health and environmental issues, to name a few. The NCI and its partners in India believe that joint training programmes for Nordic and Indian Master's and PhD students (in India and/or in the Nordic countries)

would result in fruitful cooperation and alternative solutions to old and new problems. Similarly, bringing together Nordic and Indian scholars and faculties for dialogues on issues of mutual interest, and sharing experiences, would be another opening of a more close and long-lasting Nordic–Indian relationship. The Nordic epics (the Finnish Kalevala and the Icelandic Sagas) are frequently mentioned by our Indian colleagues as sources of indigenous knowledge which should be studied and referred to by Indian scholars as well. The Nordic languages and literatures would be an essential part of the Nordic Studies.

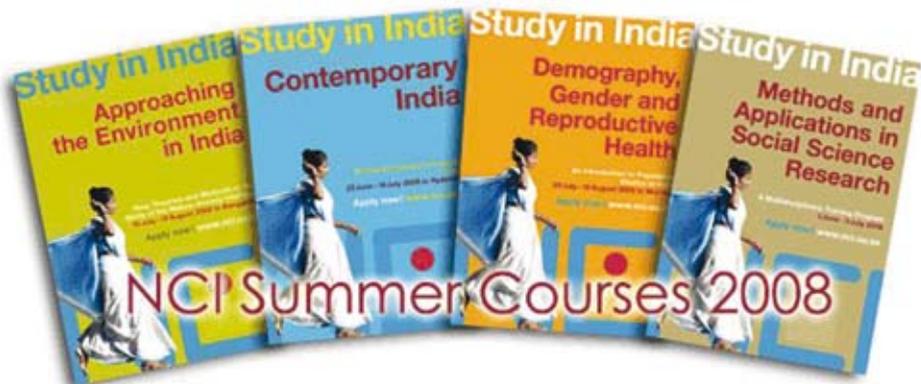
A promising future

During the few years of its existence the Nordic Centre in India has developed from a network to a platform for the cooperation between its member institutions in the Nordic countries and the Indian partner institutions. The rapid increase of members, as well as the large number of students and scholars taking part in the activities and making use of the facilities, indeed demonstrates the need for such a platform. Now, the joint intention of NCI and its Indian partners is to identify challenges that could lead to new multidisciplinary approaches in higher education and research in the Nordic countries and India.



The image shows the NCI logo on the left, which consists of the letters 'NCI' in a stylized blue font with a red dot, and the text 'NORDIC CENTRE IN INDIA' below it. To the right is a photograph of a man in a white tank top and blue jeans riding a bicycle, with a passenger seated in a rickshaw behind him. Below the photograph is a blue navigation bar with the following text: 'About NCI', 'Members', 'Organisation', 'Study in India', 'Research support', 'Residence in Delhi', 'Co-operation partners', and 'Contact'.

Our Courses



The image displays four book covers for 'Study in India' courses. The covers are arranged in a slightly overlapping, fanned-out manner. Each cover features the title 'Study in India' at the top and a photograph of a woman in a white sari walking. The specific course titles are: 'Approaching the Environment in India', 'Contemporary India', 'Demography, Gender and Reproductive Health', and 'Methods and Applications in Social Science Research'. Below the book covers, the text 'NCI Summer Courses 2008' is written in a large, red, serif font.

Cutting edge global communities & provincial backwaters in higher education

Bruce Henry Lambert, Senior Research Fellow, NIAS Associate; Professor, Sookmyung University

Academic globalization is of growing importance. Universities, in extensive contact with each other, build on each others findings and increasingly share and combine resources. But while mainstream convergence is coming to be common and normal, there is growing emphasis as well on special traditions and unique local dimensions. This is the 'glocalization' phenomenon; in coming decades it promises to enliven university affairs (and other service industries) by differentiating local characteristics and regional strengths. There will likely be a positive impact on higher education in the Nordic region, and perhaps more so in Asia; as both seek innovative people and programs; we can expect interaction and trade to develop in tandem. We can look forward to an expanded exchange of students, researchers and educators as well as flows of capital and goods. Fortunately, we in the Nordic region have still something special to teach.

The Nordic region has been a pioneer in allowing free movement (the Nordic Passport Union agreement dates back to 1954), and has been a model for the Schengen Agreement, which now comprises 31 European nations. Such relaxation of internal border control has in turn been adopted for the ASEAN Free Trade Area due to become operational by 2015, but as yet there are no parallel moves with Japan, South Korea, Russia or China. Those nations are just beginning to calculate the potentially huge economic benefits of incoming experts and entrepreneurs on their domestic human capital base, while their own creative class and *avant-garde* become more transnationally-mobile and able to settle (and contribute) elsewhere. Excepting Singapore and Hong Kong, universities in Asia are still comparatively provincial in that non-national scholars have been largely unwelcome as permanent faculty. Integration of expatriates is a struggle everywhere, but the major Asian economies still forbid dual citizenship, thereby imposing a rigidity on both incoming and outgoing scholars and workers that many other OECD nations have taken substantive steps to overcome. Most na-

tions of the world now have active destination marketing programs; one component is to attract tourists and outside talent, but the quicker-growing dimension is internal marketing in reaction to their own 'best and brightest' migrating away.

There are no comparable initiatives to intra-Nordic (and EU) cooperation in Northeast Asia, where nations remain stubbornly insular, with comparatively more cultural misunderstanding and substantial added transaction costs. Where we have something to share with them, universities and research centers are the likely venue for our interaction. Though East Asia seems very distant from the Nordic region, we have Russia as a common neighbor. Nordic experience with Russia is more extensive than that of its Asian neighbors (we are substantially nearer to Moscow and St. Petersburg), and perhaps we can give each other valuable help and improve relations for us all.

Among the general population of Asia and elsewhere, some reflected prestige and glory of the Nobel Prizes provides reputational benefits for Nordic region academia. Ambitious researchers and statesmen from around the

world envision one day traveling to Stockholm or Oslo to receive such prizes; some begin visiting far in advance to present their findings, communicate with colleagues, and perhaps improve their chances. Such visits benefit the intellectual life of Nordic universities.

Universities as development hubs

Universities (and research institutes such as NIAS) have an important role in promoting international and cultural understanding, as well as being environments for both basic and advanced training. Specialized research institutes and language departments in local universities can be important centers for developing goodwill as well as cultural and language fluency. University-level exchange and studies often effectively forge sustained institutional interaction and lasting personal relationships. Business opportunities and government initiatives in turn often stem from such university-linked goodwill.

Universities are magnets that attract wide-ranging resources, as well as being major employers and local and national economic players whose full impact is typically poorly-charted. University neighborhoods contribute greatly to regional energy, vibrancy and attractiveness. Identifying and quantifying university parameters can further generate highly useful external leverage with policymakers, industry, and the wider community. These measurement sets are important policy tools, and comprise a newly-developing theme for consultants (contact the author for further details). Some university systems have been very effective in using such data in budget negotiations, and it has become critical for universities elsewhere to learn from the experiences of such peers.

Higher Learning in Asia

Asia's long tradition of higher education is not widely recognized. The ascendance of Western civilization, ethnocentrism, Christian religious authoritarianism and individualism all contributed to today's meager understanding of historic 'pagan' antecedents. There has been

surprisingly little interest to date in charting the history of higher education in Asia and elsewhere, but a few major early institutions were certainly important: Nalanda and Valabhi Universities in India, and Takshashila in what is now Pakistan; Al-Azhar in Cairo; Piyong and Yuelu Academies in China; Enryaku-ji / Tendai of Mt. Hiei, Japan; Gukjagam and Baegundong Seowon in Korea; the Samye, Kadam and Sakya monastic academies of Tibet; the Academy of Gondeshapur in Persia; and Bayt al-Hikma in Baghdad. Perhaps these ancient educational systems are now largely ignored simply because we lack operational details, while modern universities have largely taken over their functions. Scholarship was often developed around sacred texts, and these places were to some extent sanctuaries. As with modern education, no doubt some residents enjoyed whatever perks and protections were available while paying minimal attention to scholarship. It is known that such centers of learning attracted visitors from distant lands, and perhaps partly because of this they were also centers for political troubles. Many were forcibly closed (or destroyed) by invaders, or by antagonistic public administrators.

Asia has lost much of the institutional continuity of its traditional higher educational systems, and there is as yet little effective wide-scale marketing of older institutions. Exceptions exist, however. Korea's Gukjagam (Kukjagam), established in 992 in Kaesong, was refounded in Seoul as Sungkyunkwan in 1398. Modern Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul was refounded in 1946, but claims lineage from 1398; they use that date on their university seal and have recently constructed a huge 600th Anniversary Building which physically solidifies such claims. Meanwhile in Kaesong (North Korea), Koryo Songgyungwan University claims lineage back to 992. We might expect in coming years that more Asian nations will rediscover their historic higher education institutions.

NIAS research and personnel exchanges have contributed to better recognition of non-



Sungkyunkwan University, 600th Anniversary Building, Seoul (public domain photo by Visviva http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Sungkyunkwan_600.jpg)

Western higher education, both modern and ancient. An especially notable NIAS Press publication in this regard was Tarab Tulku's monograph (2000) *A Brief History of Tibetan Academic Degrees in Buddhist Philosophy* (NIAS Reports, Vol. 43). It is high time that more attention be paid to such older traditions in terms of both educational method and content.

Those who work as university-level educators and researchers have opportunities as never before. We have immediate access to online information, and can quickly contribute to answering questions and satisfying curiosity. We can network with colleagues and contacts around the world at low cost. We have chances for mobility and can migrate to institutions almost anywhere, or we can found our own organization. In terms of function, many of us wear multiple hats: but as academics, intellectuals, scientists or simply professionals, we are gatekeepers to rights, responsibilities and traditions from past millennia, and are well-placed to bring about a brighter future.

Asia is growing and greatly developing – and impossible to ignore simply due to its vast scale. Yet we who work closely with Asia each find treasures. Such lore is accumulated in our universities. As people gain more prosperity

and leisure time, many become curious about their own heritage, their cultural strengths, and how others see them. Our university collections are thus worth examining.

Nordic Attractions

Seen from Asia, the magnetism of Nordic university programs might first relate to cost: when compared with higher education costs in the USA, Australia or the UK, for students we are comparatively inexpensive, sometimes tuition-free. This is because the Nordic nations invest comparatively strongly in education. We are leaders in modern growth industries such as information technology, and similarly are among the world's top investors in research (total R&D as percent of Gross Domestic Product). And while perhaps few look at developmental aid as an investment, Sweden, Norway and Denmark are among the leaders in Official Development Assistance (ODA as percentage of Gross National Income). The Nordic nations are thus investing in the future. Certainly Asia has something to learn from us, and we from them; our universities are the primary portals for such vital and detailed contacts, and are worth a closer look.

The thunder from Asia

Jørgen Ørstrøm Møller, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, Adjunct Professor, Singapore Management University, Adjunct Professor, Copenhagen Business School

The economic development in Asia over the last 25 years has simply been overwhelming. Many recall Gunnar Myrdal's classic Asian Drama that basically states that obstacles to growth were so strong in Asia that an economic take off was unlikely. Despite its erroneous prediction, Myrdal's book offered brilliant observations and valuable insights into not only economic patterns, but also the sociological and cultural fabric of this vast continent.

Currently very few dispute the economic power of Asia, but three questions emerge as the fundamental ones to gauge Asia's and indeed the world's future: Has Asia decoupled from the US? What elements will hand Asia the role of global economic pacesetter thereby replacing the US? How do the next 25 years look like for Asia?

There can be little doubt that Asia, and in particular China, have decoupled from the US in the sense that obviously they are still dependent on US growth, but not to the extent that a slow down or outright recession will wipe out growth in Asia. Goldman Sachs has calculated that China's growth due to net export to the US was 2.7 percentage points in 2005, 2.2 in 2006 and 1.6 in 2007. In 2000, the share of China's export going to the US was 31%, while in 2007 it was only 23%. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) speaks of a worst-case scenario for the Chinese economy in 2008 of 7% growth. At the beginning of April 2008, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published its quarterly update predicting US growth in 2008 to be 0.5% and for 2009 a figure of 0.6%. The corresponding figures for China were 9.3% and 9.5%, and for India 7.9% and 8.0%. Even a downgrading of US growth of 1.0 and 1.2 percentage points respectively only led to downgrading for Chinese growth prospects of 0.5 and 0.2 percentage points respectively, and for India of 0.2 percentage points for both 2008 and 2009.

These figures reveal not only a strong Chinese and Asian economy, but also two fundamental shifts not often disclosed in the Western analysis of the Asian and Chinese economies.

Intra-Asian trade is 55% of total trade. This is a remarkable achievement. The corresponding figure for the EU, is 66% and for NAFTA 45%. This reveals a self-sustaining growth pattern that has changed from being a supply chain geared to trading semi-manufactured products to each other to becoming able to turn them into finished products for the US market, and progressing to producing goods marketed in Asia.

Even more interesting is the long-term perspective of growing trade between Asia and Africa plus to a certain extent Latin America. The figures may still be small compared to trade with North America and Europe, but growth rates are high. Few observers give notice to the most exciting figure in global predictions for 2008. Africa is the only continent with a higher growth rate in 2008 than for 2007. The reason is not so much economic development on the continent even if reforms are progressing much faster than what used to be the case, but exports of raw materials, oil and gradually also manufactured goods to China and the rest of Asia.

Asia's strongest asset is quite simply that it sits on the world's savings. Disregard this at your own peril! Economic history cannot show any example of a country or a continent in command of global savings without it moving into the role as an economic superpower at first and then a political superpower. And this is what we see.

Citigroup, UBS, Morgan Stanley, Merrill Lynch, Bear Stearns, Barclays, Standard Chartered and HSBC used to be household names in

global finance with the finest reputation. Now they have one more thing in common. They all needed new capital after having burnt their fingers in the sub prime scandal, and they got this capital from Asia.

The implication of this is not only that Asia has put money into these venerable institutions, but that Asia has come to the conclusion that the policy of confiding in these institutions' ability to place Asia's savings has proved to be wrong. The mess brought about by whom we all thought to be the bright boys on Wall Street has let Asia know that these people are not going to be allowed to shuffle around with Asia's savings any more. Now Asia wants to control the global investment policies originally laid down by these institutions. That will automatically mean that investment decisions slowly but surely will be turned away from reflecting Western interests to accommodate Asia.

For those doubting this, suffice to recall how the Chinese stepped in when the mining giant BHP wanted to buy its rival Rio Tinto in Janu-

ary 2008. The Chinese message was: we don't want that. They had the money to prevent it if they wanted to. In early April rumours were afloat that China wanted to acquire 10% of BHP. At the beginning April 2008 the deputy director-general of the powerful China Iron and Steel Association, Chen Xianwen, said in the Australian media: 'Buyers and sellers should not be hostile – they should be interdependent. [But] if you have been aggressive, you can experience revenge in the future ...' The comments came as Anglo-Australian mining giants BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto reportedly dismissed a 65% increase in annual contract prices agreed to by Brazil's Vale as too low. Just think to 5 or 10 years ago. Such language would have been unthinkable. Now it is not only thinkable. It actually happens. A new player is flexing its muscles.

We will see Asian multinational companies not only competing against, but overtaking Western multinationals. 18 of the 25 biggest multinationals in 1998 were from the US and





none from China. In 2008 the corresponding figures are 9 and 4. For those who do not know it, an eye opener is that the biggest multinational company in the world is PetroChina. Chinese companies are expanding abroad with phenomenal speed. The biggest bank, ICBC, has bought a 20% share in South Africa's biggest bank, Standard. Not only is it the biggest in that country, it also operates in 18 other African countries. The computer giant Lenovo bought IBM's computer division a couple of years ago and despite a lot of skepticism it is now expanding fast.

India is on the same track. The world's biggest steel producer is Indian: Arcelor-Mittal; the second biggest is Tata steel, also from India. Tata produces the world's cheapest car, Nano, for a selling price of US\$ 2,500 and has now bought the British automobile icons Jaguar and Land Rover. Software companies like Wipro, Infosys and Tata are spreading their wings over the globe. India's biggest bank, ICI-CI, is now operating in 18 other countries.

The challenge for Asia is the change of economic model. From 1980 to 2000, Asia grew in a world of plenty. There was high growth in the US, and to a certain extent also in Europe and Japan. Labour supply increased rapidly keeping wages down; savings were sky-high, keeping costs of capital down. Combined with low prices for raw materials and oil the environment could not have been more propitious. Now it is turning. There is low growth in the US, Europe and Japan. From 2015, labour supply will fall in China. Raw material prices and oil will rise. In addition to this, there will be problems such as environment, social inequality, urbanization and many others.

Put together this means that Asia needs to shift from managing growth to creating the conditions for growth. It does not necessarily turn into a drama to use Myrdal's vocabulary, but it definitely places a new agenda on the table of policy makers. If Asia manages this, and my prediction is that it will, the 21st century will unquestionably be Asia's. This is where the thunder comes from.

How realistic are China's high-tech ambitions?

Linda Jakobson, Senior Researcher, Finnish Institute of International Affairs

The goal set by the Beijing government to transform China into an innovative society of technological excellence has implications for everyone, the Nordic countries included. But before one can assess the effects of China's technological prowess it is pertinent to ask, are China's goals realistic?

China's mid-to long term science and technology (S&T) plan, made public in 2006, did not contain any surprises.¹ The plan sets ambitious goals, as could be expected for a country aspiring to become an economic, political, and military superpower. According to the plan, China should become "an innovation-orientated country" by 2020 and the "world's leading science power" by 2050. In a nutshell, the Chinese government expects that within 15 years Chinese researchers should carry out indigenous research in order to decrease the reliance of Chinese companies on foreign technology to 30 per cent or below (from its present reliance of 60 per cent); China should be among the top five countries in the world in terms of the number of patents filed for 'indigenous' inventions and the frequency of citations in international science papers; and lastly, China should build several world-class research institutions and universities.

The government's call for 'indigenous innovation' (*zizhu chuangxin*) has a subtle political message: it highlights the government's disappointment over China's poor record of domestic technological innovation and overwhelming reliance on foreign technology.² As stated in January 2006 by the People's Daily, 'the technological level of China's industries and their capabilities to innovate independently is low'.³

To support its ambitious goals, the Chinese government has committed to increase expenditure in research and development (R&D) substantially. By 2010, investment in R&D will account for 2 per cent of the GDP, compared to 1.34 per cent in 2005. By 2020, the figure

should be 2.5 per cent of the GDP. If reached, this investment level would put China on par with several OECD countries (based on the assumption that China's GDP will continue to grow). Moreover, the government has promised benefits to innovative companies regardless of their size, or form of ownership.

China has several of the drivers in place to fulfill its technological ambitions. The political elite and scientific community are committed, the government is willing to provide substantial funding to S&T, and the general public approves of placing a high priority on S&T. The speed with which China has acquired the ability to build high quality research and knowledge centers has been phenomenal. A handful of Chinese companies such as Hai'er, Huawei, and Suntech (Shangde) are internationally recognized. Moreover, the numbers of Western-educated Chinese heading to the People's Republic of China (PRC) to work is increasing (though not nearly as much as the Beijing government would wish).

However, for a strong national innovation system to emerge in China and for China to fulfill the government's ambitious goal of transforming the country into a technological superpower, four main obstacles need to be overcome. These are:

- raising the quality of Chinese education;
- reducing the bureaucratic control of S&T policy-makers to facilitate an environment conducive to creativity and cooperation;

- improving law enforcement to protect IPR; and
- implementing a system of checks-and-balances to introduce accountability for grant applications, job promotions and thesis approvals.

China has dramatically expanded university education over the last decade. Today five times as many people attend Chinese universities than ten years ago. But, an assessment in 2005 by the McKinsey Global Institute evaluated that only 10 per cent of science and engineering undergraduates in China are globally competitive. China desperately needs more specialists who are well-educated, talented, and able to maneuver within the unique PRC research system.

The quality of education provided in Chinese schools is one of the biggest obstacles for China to overcome if it wishes to achieve its goal of building an innovation oriented society. First, the number of teachers has not increased to correspond with the huge increase in students. One professor can be responsible for supervising 75 PhD students. Second, most of the higher education enrolment growth of recent years is a result of private education. The quality of education in private colleges varies greatly. Third, academic corruption in universities negatively impacts the quality of education. In the last two years, numerous articles and books published in China have described corruption linked to postgraduate recruitment, Masters and PhD thesis evaluation, thesis publishing and so on. Also, plagiarism is commonplace. This is a result of the enormous pressure on everyone to publish academic papers in order to graduate, be promoted or receive research grants.

Above all, in spite of several educational reforms since the 1980s, teaching methodology, from primary school all the way to university, is still largely based on rote learning. Mainland Chinese students tend to be excellent test takers, but rather poor problem solvers. The Confucian tradition of deferring to author-

ity is not conducive to creativity. Even at elite universities, graduate students and young lecturers complain that the general atmosphere discourages anyone from questioning professors' views.

Despite the massive amount of state funding to some forty key universities, it will take more than 15 years before even a quarter of these universities genuinely fulfill the government's goal of being evaluated as world-class.

In addition to the education system, the so-called 'stovepipe syndrome' that has its roots in the centrally planned economy still plagues China's S&T landscape. In China, each research entity tends to be an isolated unit. Collaboration among research institutes or universities has traditionally been weak, and the same applies to ministries, other government organizations, and state-owned enterprises. Effectively, this problem affects modernization processes within Chinese society more broadly.

In part, this is a legacy of the past. In part, it derives from the present, top-down political system as well as from strong competition for government funding, talented people, and ultimately, power within the system. In numerous policy outlines, the government encourages cooperation, especially between research institutes and enterprises. In reality however, weak linkages remain a major structural challenge.

An obvious consequence of weak collaboration between different entities is that China's limited scientific resources are scattered, repetitive, and not used efficiently. Lack of communication between research entities is often accompanied by mistrust, which does not promote a free exchange of ideas. Of course, rivalry related to funding opportunities is common within academia worldwide. The problems are accentuated in China because of the unclear way in which funding decisions are made. When decision-making processes are not transparent and decision-makers are not accountable on the basis of public rules that can be challenged by anyone, cultivation of

personal relations – *guanxi* – with decision-makers is essential. My Co-author on a recent book on S&T in China⁴, Dr Yu Jun of the Beijing Genomics Institute, has summed it up: In China, a scientist must be political. Otherwise he cannot survive. He needs *guanxi* to secure research funding.

Weak implementation of laws reflects systemic problems too. Several prominent Chinese researchers argue that before IPR is credibly protected in China, genuinely world-class innovative research will not be forthcoming. At the end of the day, whether or not China achieves its ambitious goals in the realm of S&T depends on how societal reform in China progresses. The S&T landscape faces the same problems as society at large.

Notes

1 This article draws from Jakobson's chapter in *Innovation with Chinese Characteristics*, see insert.

2 For a discussion of the controversy surrounding *zizhu chuangxin* and the Chinese academic community's reactions to the new policy emphasis, see L. Jakobson, 'China's new R&D focus: The meaning and intent of "indigenous innovation"', paper presented at conference 'New Asian Dynamics in Science, Technology and Innovation', Gilleleje, Denmark, 26 September 2006.

3 提高自主创新能力是结构调整的中心环节 ‘ [Improving the strength of indigenous innovation is the central link to structural adjustment], People's Daily, 18 January 2006. http://chinaneast.xinhuanet.com/2005-01/18/content_3584551.htm

4 *Innovation with Chinese Characteristics. High-Tech Research in China* (see below)

Innovation with Chinese Characteristics

High-Tech Research in China

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Edited by Linda Jakobson
Finnish Institute of International Affairs

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Innovation with Chinese Characteristics. High-tech Research in China, edited by Linda Jakobson and published in Britain by Palgrave Macmillan in 2007, examines the breadth and depth of high-tech research in China.

In the first chapter Jakobson provides an overview of the science and technology landscape in China and the Chinese government's high tech ambitions.

In the following chapters four specific fields are examined by leading Beijing-based specialists: IT by Arthur Kroeber, nano by Bai Chunli and Wang Chen, biotech by Yu Jun and energy by Jiang Kejun.

In the field

David Hansen and Kenneth Nielsen

While NIAS was being conceived 40 years ago, field based studies in rural South Asia had already matured into a recognised and accepted social science sub-discipline. This field-based approach to the study of South Asia had already been emerging from the time when the countries of the Subcontinent had gained their independence. Since then an increasing number of social scientists had been venturing into India's interior to critically examine conventional representations – often based on armchair reflections, or on hit and run raids into the countryside – of South Asia's many villages. Unsurprisingly, many such studies had only perpetuated the view that the Subcontinent's villages were small and largely isolated repositories of unchanging traditions and customs. The gradual shift from a book view to a field view of Indian society and culture was to radically challenge such representations, along with a host of other book-view assumptions.

More recently empirical field studies have moved away from the detailed descriptions of nearly each and every aspect of village life, and have become more thematic and issue-oriented. An increasing focus on reflexivity on the practice of doing fieldwork has also emerged. A case in point is the study undertaken by the anthropologist Burghart, who travelled to Nepal in the 1980s. Rather than writing a monograph on "Village Life", Burghart limited himself to examining local attitudes to drinking water and hygiene. As NIAS turned 25 Burghart published a classical paper narrating how he, through the praxis of fieldwork, had ended up in a very awkward situation. Unwittingly, and through no choice of his own, Burghart had found himself caught up in local lordly political culture and had been assigned the role of "His Lordship". In this capacity Burghart

had been entrusted with the responsibility of cleaning the well of the village's cobblers, with whom he had worked for quite some time. Burghart, needless to say, spectacularly failed to discharge his lordly duties.

While not everyone doing field-based research in South Asia is unfortunate enough to end up in Lordly positions, most field researchers will be quite familiar with the uncomfortable feeling of being caught up in unfamiliar roles and awkward situations. Field positions invariably influence the kinds of social relations researchers build in the field, and the forms of data and knowledge she can produce.

The following two accounts from our recent fieldworks aim to bring this out.



In Lal Masjid's backyard

Doing fieldwork in Pakistan

David Hansen, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo

I decided to do my main bulk of fieldwork, lasting from April-December, in the dynamic epicentre of many controversial issues during the last year – Islamabad and its twin city of Rawalpindi. The twin cities offered difficulties and opportunities, as well as numerous surprises to a novice researcher researching the field of Islam in Pakistan.

I arrived at the height of the controversial Red Mosque (*Lal Masjid*) issue, where two radical clerics had taken siege of one of Islamabad's oldest mosques and were seemingly holding Pakistan's capital city hostage. They were calling for sharia – a call raised on several occasions in Pakistan's short history. The difference this time around was that the voices came from Islamabad. Small-scale riots followed their calls, there was burning of CD-shops, and threats to go physically against anyone not obeying their will. My meeting with one of the lead clerics, the late vice-prayer leader Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, in early April was an eye-opener. Not only were their young followers armed with harsh rhetoric; they had a number of weapons and the will to use them against their own government – which ended with the deaths of hundreds as the government finally cracked down and took offensive military action against them on 8 July 2007.

As tragic as the outcome may be, the Lal Masjid issue came to be the staging point from which my further fieldwork and subsequent analysis elapsed, and as I would experience, rather than easing off after the operation, the situation escalated. In addition to a lawless situation plagued by daily skirmishes between militants and government forces in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and parts of North Western Frontier Province (NWFP), following the government's actions against Lal Masjid, numerous suicide bombings occurred in the twin cities – militant Is-

lam had been brought to the doorstep of the government. This situation had a huge impact on the working climate for the remainder of the fieldwork period. For a nation plagued with conspiracy theories since its inception, the rumours were not much different this time, and of course the government was blamed for having struck a deal with the USA, and putting the militant jihadis inside Lal Masjid – only to kill them off later on. This also had some impact when I carried out my interviews and observations later on.

Radical Rhetoric-Moderate Behavior

My main research interest focused on how ordinary people perceived the seemingly growing radicalism in Pakistani society and its tragic practical outcome – extremism / terrorism. By just looking at the media picture throughout 2007, it would seem that Pakistan was on an ill-fetched road to an abyss, where the so-called Islamic radicals were at the steering wheel, an impression often supported by media's portrayal of the situation. Here, the recurring message was that the so-called radicals were in the majority. In fact, the main surprising discovery I made during the fieldwork period was concerning the expressions of emotions towards 'the other'. Although most people took to radical rhetoric when explaining 'the other', when it came to action they usually turned to the hospitable approach, being the nice Pakistani hosts one read about in the works of Fredrik Barth etc. Moreover,

most people felt embarrassed by the association with religious extremism, explaining it as unjust and non-permissible.

One major reason, I found, for the widespread use of the radical rhetoric in everyday discourse, was that in the political culture of the country it is quite acceptable to condemn people publicly, even if one is serving as an MP or a minister. Furthermore, the praxis of saying one thing and then doing the opposite was and still is exactly what the state apparatus has been doing for a long time. This was also the case with the Lal Masjid situation, where the government in a press briefing, only days ahead of the operation, said that they would never do anything to compromise the lives of the occupants – such institutionalized dualism catches on to the public.

Post-9/11, there has been relatively little research on the above-mentioned themes in Pakistan; hence, our perceptions here in the West are mostly what little one picks up in the

daily news headlines. My argument is that this perception might be terribly wrong: although a lot of people express resentment, the majority condemn violent acts of any kind. There is however a need to look more deeply into why people use radical rhetoric. As I see it, the reasons for this have more to do with internal than external factors and terms.

Besides arguing the need for a greater academic emphasis on Pakistan, the main purpose of this short article is to remind ourselves that things are not always what they seem, and that the majority of Pakistanis are, still, a peaceful people, but that they are plagued with internal problems. Moreover, they sometimes feel threatened and polarized by the constant allegations about radicalism and the perceived violations against them and their fellow Muslim brothers. Because indeed, most Pakistanis still adhere to a moderate form of Islam and crave for the same things as people in the West – peace and prosperity.

The unsuccessful broker

A tale from fieldwork in a West Bengal village

Kenneth Nielsen, Research fellow, Centre for Development and the Environment at the University of Oslo

In 2007, I travelled to West Bengal to work in villages where farmers had recently had their land expropriated by the government. In response several outraged farmers had organised a movement to 'Save the Farmland' and to have the expropriation reversed.

Among other things I was interested in the interaction between farmers and those intellectuals-cum-activists from Kolkata who had almost immediately come out in support of the farmers' movement. I conceived of this interaction as a potential clash between subaltern and elite forms of politics; my hypothesis was that this encounter would be in need of considerable brokerage, and that it might not transpire in an altogether straightforward manner.

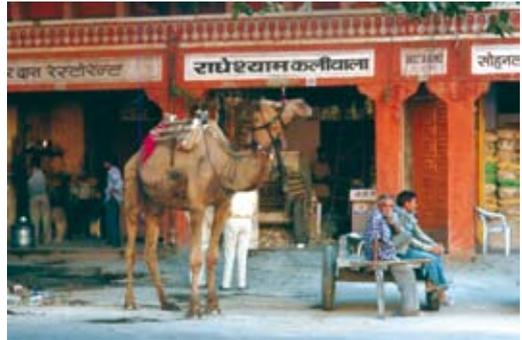
The literature on South Asia contains many references to the character of the broker, variously known as the mediator, the middleman, and the fixer. A broker is a person who by virtue of connections, specialist knowledge or resources can get things done. Because of this ability the broker will usually occupy a position of some authority in local affairs. On the other hand, because most villagers come to *depend* on the broker to get things done – particularly in times of acute crisis – and the fact

that brokers are often believed to skim off a fair share of any transaction, the broker is not always particularly well liked. Sometimes he is even viewed with distaste.

The village where I lived had several people who qualified as brokers. Without exception these brokers were political people in the sense that they were affiliated with the village's dominant political party, the Trinamul Congress. As political people they had travelled and campaigned widely for Trinamul in neighbouring blocs and thus knew well what the world of modern organisation and politics was all about. As figures of authority in the village they had in time also honed their skills in negotiation and compromise. When the local farmers' movement opposing the expropriation was still in its nascent state these local brokers more or less automatically moved into positions of leadership in the movement.

When urban activists started coming into the villages in a show of support, local brokers quickly emerged as organisers of sorts. They organised meetings and set up daises complete with chairs and microphones so that the distinguished guests could talk under appropriate conditions. They sent for tea and snacks. They presented the visiting dignitaries with impromptu yet detailed overviews of the area, its proud agricultural history, its stout people, and its now very bleak future prospects. Whenever activists brought items such as food, clothes or medicine for farmers now rendered landless, the brokers took it upon themselves to distribute this in the locality.

One day I received a call from an activist in Kolkata. She and some of her peers had organised a citizens' forum dedicated to helping the victims of forced land acquisition in Bengal. For some time they had collected clothes, food, and cash from well-wishers, and now they wanted to make the trip to 'my' village to distribute it all to the needy. To this end they had got hold of the telephone number of a local movement leader-cum-broker, but upon learning that he was a 'political person' they wanted no truck with him. Anyway, as citizens



enjoying the freedom of speech and movement they felt entitled to bypass such presumably corrupt figures of authority and engage directly with the common villager. However, she wondered if I – as a presumably non-political outsider – would help them make the necessary arrangements instead? I accepted.

Over the next weeks I informed the local brokers that friends of mine would be coming from Kolkata with relief material for the poor. I also hinted that I would be more than happy to assist in the matter so that the brokers could focus their energies on more pressing concerns. What I could not tell them, but what they had surely already guessed, was that the urban activists did not trust the local brokers, and thus had contacted me instead. The village brokers raised no objections, but emphasised that they did not want the activists going around distributing relief on their own, as this might upset an ostensibly delicate system of ensuring that everybody got their fair share: 'If there is enough for everybody there won't be any problem,' one broker told me, 'but if there isn't, then you have a difficult situation. Then you have to make the villagers understand that somebody has to be bypassed this time. That usually upsets people.'

As it turned out, the Trinamul brokers had no intentions of letting the distribution of relief take place entirely under their radar screen. On the day of the activists' visit a local Trinamul panchayat member and his friends turned up to greet them. Their presence displeased the activists who wondered why I had not, in spite of their specific request, been capable of keeping people like him at arms length. I feebly explained that in the villages of Bengal it is well nigh impossible to do anything without one or the other political party becoming involved, and that in my view this particular Trinamul-broker was not too bad. The activists were not convinced. Citing the need for transparency and accountability they demanded that a complete list of intended beneficiaries be drawn up by the broker. List in hand the activists now proceeded to make

a sample door-to-door check to see if anybody has been wrongfully left out. To their dismay the activists found the list woefully flawed: in several cases individuals or entire families did not figure on the broker's list. Sensing the dirty hand of partisan 'brokesmanship' at work the activists decided to confront the broker.

This was more than the broker would stand for. For him, making the list had seemed cumbersome and pointless, and all the ensuing talk of transparency and accountability had sounded not just patronizing, but also very distrustful. The broker now in no uncertain terms let the visiting activists know that they were welcome to leave the village this instant, and that they could take their relief with them – after all, many people less troublesome were bringing in relief without meddling in local affairs. Besides, the people who did not figure in the list had either received relief from other sources recently, or had in one way or the other betrayed the farmers' movement; such renegades naturally should not be entitled to any relief, the broker felt.

Sensing that their modern discourse of civil rights, accountability and transparency was getting them nowhere when confronted with local patterns of authority and brokerage, the activists grudgingly relinquished control of the relief material to the broker. As one activist subsequently confessed, the whole business of bringing in relief had been 'a public relations disaster'.

Like Burghart at the cobblers' well I too failed miserably in living up to the expectation attached to my assigned role. Not only did I fail to properly mediate between two different styles of politics; I had also disappointed my friends in the village by bringing in such meddling outsiders and even been unable to ensure the smooth and non-political distribution of relief I had promised the activists. Personally, however, I had gained a newfound appreciation for the predicament of the broker in South Asia.

NIAS in the feminist imagination

Situating an 'unconventional' scholarly life

Maria Jaschok, Director, International Gender Studies Centre (Dept of International Development, University of Oxford) and Lead Researcher in the 'Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts' Research Programme Consortium (DFID, UK)

Celebrations of the living and of the dead, the anniversary of a research institution, NIAS, and the commemoration of the life and work of a recently deceased sinologist and mentor, Elisabeth Croll, linked to NIAS in her capacity as member of the Advisory Board of the Gendering Asia NIAS book series – these rites de passage have presented me with an opportunity to reflect on the interdependence of institutions and people in the process of 'making a difference.'



Elisabeth Croll

An anniversary is as good as any excuse to ask how NIAS sees its role in the on-going dialogue between 'China' and 'Scandinavia.' Gender has been vital in this dialogue, raising issues of significance extending far beyond the purdah commonly assigned to gender studies. And, after all, 'the Scandinavian strain' has its historical place in Chinese gender discourse which embodied, during the New Culture movement of the early 20th century, an influential template of modernized 'motherhood.' The new sexual morality extolled by the Swedish feminist and writer Ellen Key was adapted to great effect by Chinese (male) intellectuals and reformers as a welcome (western) challenge to the 'other' (western) ideological strain, the more liberal representations of Anglo-American suffragism and feminism. The perceptual legacy of this early history plays itself out into current relations with China where Nordic gender research and morality are still favourably contrasted with, and distinguished from, 'western feminism.' Greater receptivity by Chinese academics, and officials, to an active Nordic donor policy as much as to collaborative projects and exchange visits have been helped by strong political and institutional support granted to Nordic researchers and activists

in the field of gender and women's studies as a result of which a context of legitimacy has emerged for socially applied research, far less in evidence elsewhere in Europe (and in the States).

'Lisa', as Professor Elisabeth Croll was known to many of us, embodied the feminist academic for whom the personal intersects with the academic and the academic must reflect this in a deep personal commitment to social change. In an early review written for *Race & Class* about Claudie Broyelle's *Women's Liberation in China*, she comments approvingly on Broyelle's account of her visit to China. It was a successful book to her because 'China' was experienced through the traveller's 'own levels of consciousness and activities' back home.

She took what was to her the logical step of research in the service of social policy and gender change; but this step was to complicate her career and reputation. Harriet Evans says of her in an obituary published in the British Association of Chinese Studies, in October 2007, 'She was never a conventional anthropologist and she had to fight for recognition of her work in the field of anthropology and development.' It was her personal exposure to the lives of rural women and vulnerable children,

in particular girl children, in China's marginalized and remote areas that infused her work with the passion beyond 'conventional' observation-participation. In these days of ever more perplexing relationships between Chinese feminisms (as part of Asian feminisms), and western-derived feminisms around gender justice and women's empowerment, Elisabeth Croll harboured no doubt over the uses to which she must put her scholarship.

Lisa Croll came to define a trend which has made her stand out from other sinologists in Europe, advocating, as did feminist anthropologists that 'the impurities of experience' have to shape the theoretical task. Did she thus become interventionist? I recently described feminist anthropology as travelling in existential and geographical cross-border journeys in which collaborating partners on both side meet in the 'borderland' of the familiar and alien. Only if they are prepared to engage with the Other through their own history, their convictions and aspirations, can researchers begin to grasp the shifting contexts within which the Other negotiates the complexities of daily living.

Lisa Croll was certain that any discovery of inequalities, injustices and cruelties demanded, not excused, her intervention as an ethical researcher, wherever she encountered it: whether in the area of missing children, forced abortions, inadequate or neglected schooling for girls in remote areas of China. That she could bring about policy changes in *conjunction with* leaderships in government and NGO circles was a matter of pride to her.

Lisa would have agreed with the views of Nancy Scheper-Hughes who asserted 'seeing, listening, recording can be, if done with care and sensitivity, acts of fraternity and sisterhood, acts of solidarity. Above all, they are the act of recognition. Not to look, not to touch, not to record, can be the hostile act of indifference.'

But Lisa's refusal to be bound by the discipline of academic specialization and by what feminists have referred to as cult of 'scientism'

(the ivory tower as metaphor and measure of scientific objectivity) took her through many years of professional marginality in institutions that employed her on contract and temporary fellowships. Only relatively late in life, in the early 1990s, did her intellectual and social concerns find an academic host institution (namely SOAS, London).

Lisa's years of 'exile' made me ponder the nature of 'home' on which even the most ardent idealist depends (the other point in my reflections). Whilst nowadays most academic institutions profess support for 'gender mainstreaming' in all spheres of academic life, for many feminist observers the neutralization and de-politicisation of early gender theory have in fact contributed to the weakening of its intellectual and political impact, inside and outside academe.

For many years, NIAS has been pursuing gender studies in so many different ways, for which it must be congratulated. Whether through linkage programmes (as with Fudan University in Shanghai), academic collaborations, publishing ventures and scholarly exchange visits, the thriving relationship with China testifies to a Nordic tradition of engagement which, I would maintain, makes NIAS stand out among comparable research institutions in Europe. Important new initiatives, such as the book series *Gendering Asia* testify to the continued support for gender studies that we cannot take for granted elsewhere.

In certain ways, it grants a home to a tradition which I have come to identify as following the spirit exemplified by Lisa Croll, that of an ethical commitment to making a difference wherever the researcher finds her/himself.

The feminist geographer Doreen Massey says that places, like people, have multiple identities. Not all people in a given place benefit or suffer in the same way from the changes taking place through global flows of capital and ideas. The earlier Scandinavian 'strain' has undergone a change beyond essentialist paradigms of femininity. But it could be argued that a distinct 'Nordic' contribution to Chi-

nese Studies lives as strongly as ever, and that this is nurtured importantly by the NIAS community. That gender has continued to occupy a place of prominence suggests to me that even in these times of economic pressure it is a recognized and integral part of the core identity of NIAS. Now, to my mind, that is also worthy of celebration!

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Gendering Asia

a series on gender intersections



Gendering Asia addresses the ways in which power and the constructions of gender, sex, sexuality and the body intersect with one another and pervade contemporary Asian societies. The series invites discussion of how people shape their identities as females or males and, at the same time, become shaped by the very societies in which they live.

The series is concerned with the region as a whole in order to capture the wide range of understandings and practices that are found in East, Southeast and South Asian societies with respect to gendered roles and relations in various social, political, religious, and economic contexts.

Gendering Asia is, then, a multidisciplinary series that explores theoretical, empirical, and methodological issues in the social sciences.

Changing China: a Swedish perspective

Torbjörn Lodén, Professor, Director of the Nordic Confucius Institute, Stockholm University

When I began to study Chinese and Chinese culture forty years ago, I wanted to broaden my understanding of the world to extend beyond the European or Western cultural sphere. This urge to break the confines of Western tradition was typical of many people of my generation in Sweden.

As a teenager I had two intellectual heroes. One was the political scientist and newspaper publisher Herbert Tingsten, who explained that democracy is the most advanced system of government conceivable. He emphasized that democracy is based on a set of common values and predicted that it would eventually lead to the disappearance of ideological differences. The democratic process would be used only to resolve practical matters. Reason would triumph and ideological consensus would prevail. The other hero was the philosopher Ingemar Hedenius, who offered me the arguments of why God was an illusion and why religion had no place in a modern society. Both of them argued that not only religion, but nationalism, the monarchy, metaphysics etc belonged to the past. Their views seemed to represent the essence of a modern, secular state and culture.

Yet, when I read books about the third world and, not least, when I talked to people from Africa and Asia, I began to feel that no matter how enlightened my heroes were, there was still something parochial about their ideas, since they did not seem to be based on any interest in the world outside the Western cultural sphere. This perception was important for my decision to take up Chinese and Chinese culture as my field of study

I wanted to find out how people in China looked at China and the world. There was something patriarchal about the way many people in Europe discussed China. Ideas and conclusions about “the essentially different Chinese” seemed to be based on fantasy and speculation rather than on observation and study.

During my years as a student, the effort to look at China on its own merits permeated the atmosphere of Chinese studies in Sweden. This led to a changing of focus away from classical studies towards the study of modern culture and society.

Throughout these past forty years I have tried to understand Chinese culture from the inside, so to speak, even if this is not really possible. But rather soon I discovered that the effort to do so could degenerate into praise of anything Chinese. When I worked in the Swedish Embassy in Beijing from 1973 to 1976, I began to see the dark side below the surface of Chinese reality. In those years Swedes often admired China to the extent that they rejected any criticism of China as an oppressive society. Criticism was said to reflect a Western bias. In conversations with Swedish visitors, I was told that if I tried to consider China from “a Chinese point of view”, I would discover that my idea that people in China suffered from oppression and lack of freedom was mistaken. I found these ideas extremely disturbing, especially because they seemed to take the propaganda of the Chinese Communist Party to represent *the* Chinese point of view.

Encountering uncritical acceptance of political propaganda from China as expressions of a Chinese as opposed to a Western point of view, it was natural for me to emphasize that there are universal values. Ever since I began thinking about these questions, I have seen ethics as by nature universal. As Kant explained, ethical conduct is to act in accordance with a principle that one would like to become a universal law.

Nevertheless, the question of universality versus particularity has stayed with me as a challenging *problematique*. On the one hand, I have been convinced that there are universal values. Comparing Chinese and European cultures I have seen the differences as variations on common themes rather than expressions of essential differences. On the other hand, it has seemed obvious that the universal values are interpreted differently in different cultures and in different historical contexts. In other words, in cultural comparisons there is both universality and particularity. The difficulty is to identify the level of abstraction above which universality prevails and below which particularity reigns.

I have often found it important to emphasize universality. I have always refused to believe that individual freedom, human rights and democracy are not important to Chinese people. However, at times it has also seemed important to focus on particularity. While democracy is rooted in values that I believe are universal, we should not expect that a democratic political system in China will be modeled on any existing system of government. What form democracy will take in China is for people in China to decide, not a recipe to be prescribed by westerners. Rather than engaging in cross-cultural dialogue, to the benefit of both sides, we westerners have too often chosen to preach. This is arrogance and must be seen in the context of the unjust distribution of power and influence in the world.



While I have been trying to develop a reasonable perspective of China, the reality of China has undergone dramatic changes. When I first visited Beijing in August 1970, China was still a closed society, largely shut off from contacts with the outside world, but also closed in Karl Popper's sense that it was the opposite of an open society. China was ruled by a totalitarian dictatorship denying its inhabitants not only the right to protest, but even the freedom to keep silent: unless you praised Chairman Mao and his policies you were a reactionary.

The peasants were tied to the land that they tilled but did not own and were denied even the right to leave their home villages. The economy was stagnating and the vast majority of people were living in poverty. Since the early nineteenth century, China's share of the world economy had shrunk from around thirty-three to less than five percent. China was as much an underdeveloped as a developing country.

Today, China has opened up and become one of the most important economies in the world, with a share of more than thirteen percent of the world economy, measured in terms of purchasing power parity. Hundreds of millions of people have come out of poverty. Although still under authoritarian one-party rule, Chinese society is today much more pluralistic than it was forty years ago. In spite of pathetic attempts at censorship, which live on as remnants of the totalitarian past, people today have access to knowledge about the world and may engage in serious intellectual discussions. Millions of Chinese people travel abroad and the number of visitors to China increases all the time.

China is in the process of regaining a position in the world commensurate with her size: this is as much a return to normality as a miracle. While the leaders of China forty years ago were unwilling to engage in close cooperation with other countries, overemphasizing the virtues of self-reliance and fearing cultural contamination, China is now following a course which attaches central importance to international contacts and cooperation. This is very positive. Contacts and cooperation are decisive for maintaining world peace, resolving the environmental threats and improving the quality of life of people around the globe.

Asia in a Nordic nutshell

Stein Tønnesson, Professor, Director, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo

The work of Professor Niels Steensgaard (b. 1932) is probably the best Nordic contribution to the history of Asia, although his work is not widely known. His name has no more than two hits in the Library of Congress online catalogue, and he has published in strange places. You will search in vain for his CV or biography on the World Wide Web. Steensgaard's work is for the connoisseur. Where to look? If you read Danish, go first to Den store danske encyclopædi and open your mind to Steensgaard's four-page history of 'Asia'. It is a model of how to condense a wide-ranging account of a long time span.

Agricultural societies

Steensgaard begins by explaining that Asia is not a social or economic unit, but a category invented by the Greeks. Only from the outside, or as a reflection of an outside view, can Asia be imagined as a unit. He then presents Asia's three core areas: Mesopotamia/Iran, China, and India, and how they developed script cultures and administrative traditions up until 500 AD. This is the first of three periods in the history of Asia, which Steensgaard names the 'age of agricultural societies'. The three core areas were all densely populated peasant societies. Contact between them was slow, depending either on seafaring or crossing the Central Asian steppe lands.

Nomadic conquests

The next period 500–1500 AD was characterised by nomadic invasions from the steppe lands. Steensgaard calls it the 'age of the nomads'. The key to the success of nomadic societies was the invention of the stirrup, allowing full exploitation of horsepower in both peace and war. Out of symbiotic trade between peasants and cattle-breeding nomads grew conflicts where the latter sometimes gained the upper hand. While the peasants depended on peace and stability, the nomads used force and mobility. Of the three core areas, China was initially the most vulnerable, since Persia could defend itself and bar the way to India. Each new nomadic invasion led to the estab-

lishment of an empire that went through periods of expansion, stabilisation and decline.

The periods of stabilisation provided the safety needed for the expansion of caravan trade on a system of paths called the Silk Road. In West Asia, the Arabic conquests in the 7th century played a similar role, putting an end to the cultural diversity of the Middle East, and establishing an empire stretching from Spain to the outposts of China. Later conquests were made by Turks and Mongols, whose armies invaded all three core areas. In the 13th century, Genghis Khan and his sons built the largest empire the world has ever seen. Although short lived, it opened up for trade and cultural exchange on a previously unprecedented scale. Tamerlane's attempt to recreate the Mongol empire in the 14th century led to the establishment of the Mogul state in India in 1526.

European ships

Steensgaard's third period, 1500–1945 is the 'age of the ships'. Ships took over from caravans and sea lanes from the Silk Road, but curiously the Asian states did not take as much interest in sea power as the European kingdoms did. Sea trade was left to Arabs and peoples on the continent's periphery. This left the sea open for European trading companies in the period of Arab decline, when the continent was dominated by three relatively stable 'gun powder empires': the Ottoman, Safavid and Mogul. By the 18th century, for unknown reasons, these

empires all declined, and this made Asia vulnerable to seaborne invaders from the West, reinforced by new industrial technology. The Western empires, however, did not last much longer than the Mongol one. Steensgaard ends by taking note of the large scale industrialisation of Asia since the 1970s and the region's expanding role in a global system of trade.

Analysis with both hands

Once having digested Steensgaard's 'Asia in a nutshell' article, you may want to read his early criticism of one failed and one Eurocentric multi-volume 'universal history' (*Journal of Modern History* 1/1973). The failed project dealt with the whole world, but not the whole man, while the Eurocentric one dealt with the whole man, but not the whole world. Steensgaard thought the task would be to carry out research 'within a global frame of reference together with comparative research'.

You next want to see how this idea had developed into a programme ten years later. Find *Tradition og kritik. Festskrift til Svend Ellehøj den 8. september 1984* [Tradition and critic. Festschrift to Svend Ellehøj on 8 September 1984], published by *Den Danske historiske Forening*. Its last chapter is a programmatic article spelling out Steensgaard's innovative approach to global history, a combination of linkage and comparison. *He set as a task for himself to grasp the entire pre-modern world with his two hands, one linking societies together, the other comparing each society with a model. Steensgaard is convinced that it is impossible to compare societies directly with each other. Societies are much too complex for this but they can be set up against a model.*

Steensgaard's first hand was eminently equipped for linking societies together, since he had made extensive studies of pre-modern flows of silver, discovering the parallel fluctuation of its value all over the world. With his other hand Steensgaard set up a simple model of exploitation, allowing him to describe how the relationship between exploitative and exploited classes was organized in different so-

cieties. Using this two-hand approach, *Steensgaard became one of the pioneers in a thriving field of global world history* which includes Fernand Braudel, William H. McNeill, André Gunder Frank, Alfred W. Crosby, Philip Curtin, Kenneth Pomeranz, Steven Topik, C.A. Bayly, John Darwin, and others.

However, Steensgaard's later work has been well hidden from readers of the English language as well as from his Danish compatriots. He used his innovative method in two masterly volumes of the Aschehoug and 'Bra Böcker' world history, first published in Swedish and Norwegian (but not Danish) in 1984–85 and since revised and translated into multiple languages, including French, but not English. Steensgaard's two volumes provide a comprehensive and nicely ordered view of world history from 1350 to 1750 – and it is not a Euro-centric view. It puts Europe in parentheses while analyzing linkages and modes of exploitation in the rest of the world – and Europe's growing role in it. Find time to read his two volumes along with John Darwin's *After Tamerlane* (Bloomsbury Press 2008).

Finding his way

Niels Steensgaard started teaching at the University of Copenhagen in 1962 and became professor there in 1977. According to the *International Who's Who* his favorite pastime is "losing my way in large books or towns." In reality his work testifies to an impressive talent for finding ways to the hilltops with the widest, most far-reaching views. Steensgaard has found his way through archives, scholarship, trade routes and societies. When finishing your reading of his popular works, you may turn to his classic study *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: the East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974). There is no better way of seeking to understand Asia's current rise than to explore what the Asian world looked like before the invasions from the West.

Ambassador and *Zhongguotong* at large

A book review: Börje Ljunggren, 'Kina – vår tids drama', Stockholm: Hjalmarsson & Högberg, 2008



Jørgen Delman, Director, NIAS

Börje Ljunggren's Swedish Embassy in Beijing at the beginning of the 21st century is a far cry from Lord Macartney's failed British Embassy to China's Imperial Court in 1793.



Macartney's Embassy. Illustration from Wikipedia – name of illustrator unknown

Indeed, Ljunggren is not any ambassador. He was an ambassador with an intent beyond diplomacy. Apart from serving his country well (we presume, but his book is not about that!), he came to China with a strong scholarly background and an ambition to analyze and understand what happens in modern China and convey those insights to his countrymen. Ljunggren differs from Lord MacCartney who came – unwittingly – to be made a fool of, while also making fool of what proved to be a moribund Chinese imperial bureaucracy.

Ljunggren takes the reader on a *tour de force* around the China he has been working in and knows well, the China we read about in the papers and hear about on radio and TV every day. Effectively, the Nordic media are so filled with material on China these days that – at times – one feels overexposed to anything Chinese.

Therefore, Ljunggren puts a daunting task on himself. His ambition is to take his reader through all the topics that the media spills over with every day. If one wants to succeed in that, one has to offer something that the rest of the pack does not offer.

In my opinion, Ljunggren succeeds in doing exactly that. He is able to move way beyond what the informed reporter manages to grasp and explain in his or her daily article, op-ed, or in a book reporting on his or her stint of 3–4 years in China.

Ljunggren's scholarly background serves him well. He does not satisfy himself with conveying personal experiences and he does not wish to impress his *persona* on the reader. His aim is to provide thoughtful and critical analysis of what happens in China today, as well as to describe the historical roots of current developments in the Middle Kingdom.

Ljunggren's *tour* of China takes us through topics as diverse as: Pre-reform history, China's rise, China as the manufacturing workshop of the world, uneven and inequitable development, climate change and environmental issues, the authoritarian Chinese political system, the legal system and (the lack of) human rights, China as a superpower, China's shifting generations of leaders, China–Sweden relations, and – finally – China's road forward.

All of the chapters deal with what are basically mainstream topics, but Ljunggren suc-

ceeds in combining thoughtful observations and personal experience with solid empirical evidence and insightful analysis. I am certain that most readers will feel much wiser after having read the book, and – really – any of the chapters. Apart from one chapter on China–Sweden relations (I assume that this is a must for a Swedish Ambassador!), which is somehow superfluous in relation to understanding China, Ljunggren manages to create a narrative that flows easily while being empirically sound and in-depth, and where the personal observations serve to exemplify the points that he wants to make. Clearly, Ljunggren has not been satisfied with sitting in his office in his embassy in San Li Tun in Beijing; he has been around – a lot!

Ljunggren's analysis is also culturally insightful and empathic. Many authors are trapped by such empathy; not so Ljunggren. He reserves his right to critical observations and analysis in many different contexts. However, his criticism often appears somewhat 'friendly'; once in a while Ljunggren's views seem to be made to order by his diplomatic background and status. In fact, this is the only criticism that I have. It does not taint the book, but more frank observations would have balanced an otherwise excellent narrative.

At the same time, the boon of the book is that Ljunggren explains complex subject matter in a manner that will allow even not-so-well-informed readers to clearly understand the patterns, the challenges, and the paradoxes of current developments in China. Indeed, as a reviewer one is always alert to mistakes and incorrect data or information. I have not been able to find anything of substance.

It is a pity that Ljunggren was not a British ambassador, since he would then have written in English. He writes in Swedish and therefore, it is mainly his countrymen that will be able to benefit from his insights. Other Nordic people like myself, who are able to read Swedish, will also be able to enjoy the book. The English speaking community must bear with us, but once in a while it really seems important to write in our own obscure languages, even though – as academics – we are being whipped to publish in English.

Macartney has been depicted as an 'elephant in a China store'. In my opinion, Ljunggren has proven himself to be what the Chinese call a "zhongguo tong" – somebody who really understands China! This is meant as a top assessment – in Denmark it would equal six out six possible stars in a book review.



Imperial Summer Villa, the site of the Macartney mission, where Lord Macartney met the emperor Qian Long in September of 1793.
Photo mby Eric Langager

Why did I choose Asia?

Katri Kyllönen, Junior Researcher, University of Helsinki, Department of Comparative Religion, NIAS SUPRA student

Religion has a multiform role in today's conflicts. In most cases people think that religion acts as a negative force in conflicts causing them, acting as a definer of identity for conflict parties, or legitimising violence used in conflicts. The purpose of my dissertation study called "Religion as a Tool of Peace building. Comparative Religious Peace Study of Conflict Mediation Methods Based on Islam and Christianity" is to turn this predominant viewpoint upside down, and study the positive role of religion in conflict resolution. In my dissertation I study how the methods used by religious actors can promote, and ease conflict mediation. The study examines how conflict mediation based on two of the largest religions, Christianity and Islam works, what kind of similarities and differences these religions have in the methods they use, and how it would be possible to combine the conflict mediation methods of these religions.

The empirical part of my study is to be done in an Indonesian province, West Kalimantan. The role of religion in Indonesia is very interesting and very different compared to other countries in Asia, or around the globe. Indonesia has five official religions: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Every Indonesian has to profess one of these religions; other religions or atheism are not professed. At the same time Indonesia is also a country with the largest Muslim majority in the world. Throughout history religions have mixed with each other and lived side by side in relatively good harmony. Like in other countries around the world, also in Indonesia, religion has increasingly become a major political force during last couple of decades. The Indonesian government has emphasized tolerance between religions since 1965, but especially during the last couple of years religious riots have highlighted the question about religion's role in politics, and life of local people.

Use of religion in conflict mediation in West Kalimantan

As mentioned earlier, the empirical part of my research focuses on the local situation in West Kalimantan. In order to see and study religious conflict resolution practices in a real life situation I contacted Dr. Timo Kivimäki, Senior Researcher at NIAS, for inputs and assistance. He is a specialist in conflict resolution in Asia, and

especially in Indonesia, and he offered me his co-operation on this project. West Kalimantan is an Indonesian province that has suffered from communal conflict between migrant ethnic communities (Madurese and Chinese), and the local population. For example Sambas and Bengkayang districts of the province have experienced probably the world's most recent large cannibalistic riots (1997 and 1999), and the migrant communities have been driven away. The areas are still mortally dangerous for the migrant communities. In addition to the conflict between migrant and local communities, there is a danger that international tensions between Muslims and Christians affect the relationship between the two main local ethnic groups, the Christian Dayaks and Muslim Malays. These groups have not yet had religious conflict, but political clashes relating to competition for political office.

One purpose of my project, which is also a part of my empirical research, is to support the build-up of an inter-religious forum in the province as requested by the central Indonesian administration. The forum should help resolve the remaining conflict issues by utilizing religious institutions and creating structures of communication and conflict resolution that can help improve relations between Christian and Muslim communities in the province. The project complements the general conflict resolution expertise and local competence of the al-

ready established capacity building programme, 'ASEM Education Hub – Thematic Network on Peace and Conflict Studies' (<http://www.aeh.asef.org/initiatives/index.asp?st=197>) with specific expertise on the strategies available for religious communities and institutions in conflict prevention and resolution.

One of the main goals is to train staff of the newly established Centre for Acceleration of the Religious and Ethnic Understanding of West Kalimantan, CAIERU, to show how religious communities can participate in facilitating conflict resolution and peace building. Lectures on religious conflict resolution will teach the participants how religion can be used as a tool in conflict resolution and how to foster the relationships between different religious communities. Teaching different kinds of methodologies that can be used in religious conflict resolution, showing examples about on-going religious conflict resolution projects, and applying these to the current situation and local traditions in West Kalimantan, will provide keys for the communities to successfully use religious tools in conflict resolution.

The project also aims to develop cultural understanding between different ethnic and religious groups. This is done by bringing religious leaders from different faith communities together to learn about conflict resolution. When religious leaders explore and practice, for example, common values such as justice and compassion in public life, they can be an inspiration for others. Religious leaders should be urged to utilize their skills as empathizers and conflict mediators. They should not reinforce boundaries but reach out to other religious communities. Former interfaith conflict resolution projects have shown that religious leaders who are well trained in interfaith relations can have an enormous impact on the level of intercommunity understanding. (Lederach et al. 2007)

While the project aims at promoting non-violent approaches to conflict resolution, reducing intolerance, and encouraging reconciliation and relationship building, the main goal is to build trust, because without it little can

be accomplished in conflict resolution. Promotion of a spiritual dimension in the peacemaking process can offer opportunities for working with more deep-seated reasons for the behaviour of the conflicting parties, thus enabling them to critically examine their own attitudes and actions. People's conflict behaviour is often based on emotional considerations and thus may not be changed simply by rational negotiation processes and subsequent agreements. (Smock 2006).

Co-operation between different actors is vital

Examples of religious conflict resolution are needed from different religious traditions. Conflict resolution models based on Western Christianity can at best bring short-term results, but durable, long-term results require methods that are rooted in the local community. This may be better achieved when the methods used are based on the local culture and its values.

Overall, it must be kept in mind that the main purpose of religious conflict resolution is to complement on-going secular peacemaking processes. At the same time, it should be realised that inability to see, understand, and use religious actors in conflict resolution will lead to significant costs in terms of loss of human life and economic loss. It is a fact that the number of conflicts in which religion has a major role is growing all the time, either as part of the problem or as part of the resolution of the problem, or as part of both of these.

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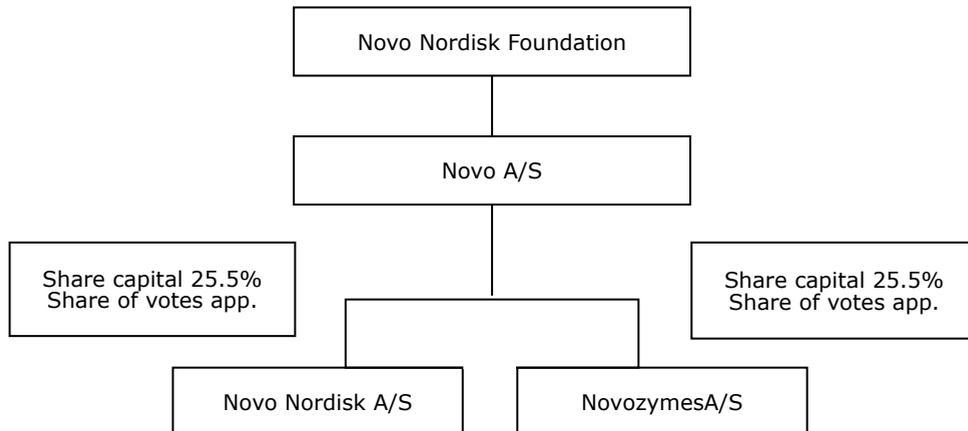
Novo in Asia

NOVO

What has the Novo Group done in Asia and learnt from Asia and Asian business culture?

Thorkil Kastberg Christensen, Chief Financial Officer, Novo A/S, Member of NIAS Board

From 1987 to 1989, Thorkil Kastberg Christensen was technical and general manager of the Novo enzyme division's South East Asia regional office in Malaysia. After that, he moved to Singapore in 1989 to head the start-up and development of Novo Nordisk's affiliates in Asia. Having spent a total of 13 years in Asia, most recently as CEO of Novo Nordisk China, he returned to Denmark in 2003 and became CFO in Novo A/S. As a member of the NIAS Board, Thorkil Kastberg Christensen brings his experience from working with Novo companies in Asia into play in the academic environment at NIAS.



The name Novo is well known – at least in Denmark, but also by some people in many countries across the continents. The name is often used as a nickname for one of the companies in the group – usually Novo Nordisk – so, to start with the correct nomenclature the names and relationships in the Novo Group are as illustrated above.

The business adventures of the Novo Group in Asia are concentrated in the two major operating companies, Novo Nordisk and Novozymes. It is one or both of these two companies that almost anybody outside Denmark means when referring to "Novo". And the

story that follows is also about them.

The history of Novo Nordisk in Asia goes back to the 1960's, and possibly even further back, when contacts and friendships were created between researchers in Denmark and several countries in Asia. Sporadic commercial aspects were also seen in the early days in the form of export of insulin, although nothing compared to today's level.

In the 1970s subsidiary companies were started in Japan and Australia alongside with systematic export activities to many other Asian countries. From the late 1980s onward, subsidiaries were established in almost

all Asian countries, in all cases to ensure improving local knowledge about diabetes and to make medicine, mostly insulin, available to people with diabetes. In some cases local production and/or research units were created, and today most of these are concentrated in China.

The history of Novozymes is similar (and before 2000 Novozymes and Novo Nordisk were two divisions of one and the same company). The first establishment was in Japan as well, and – in roughly the same sequence – affiliates and export were created in the industrial enzyme business in Asia.

Today, both Novo Nordisk and Novozymes are the leaders in their respective fields in Asia as they are in the rest of the world. From an insignificant part at the outset the Asian region today constitutes a large part of the global business of both companies. This part is increasing and expected to do so until in the future, Asia will represent the single largest contribution to the businesses of Novo Nordisk and Novozymes due to the continued urbanization and growing financial power of the region.

The China adventure in its present form began in the early 1990s for both Novo Nordisk and Novozymes. After some initial scouting and analysis, it was decided that the contacts to research communities as well as to many government institutions were actually more valuable than having a joint venture partner. Consequently, it was decided that establishment should be in the form of a WOFE (Wholly Foreign Owned Entity). Support to the project by the Chinese authorities was facilitated by the fact that the establishment would include large investments as well as and transfer of high level technology, both of which were crucial for China to attract. After a couple of years' combined homework and work in the field, the project plan was ready. It featured Beijing as the preferred place to have the China head office and Tianjin (the 'TEDA Zone') as the preferred place to build production facilities. Beijing was chosen because of

its closeness to the central government would be vital, and Tianjin because the local authorities were very professional and helpful. At the same time it was felt that being a large fish in a small pond would be better than the opposite.

Approval of the feasibility study was obtained swiftly, only a couple of months after submission in 1994. Investments and building of infrastructure and organisation started immediately thereafter.

Today, 13 years later, Novo Nordisk and Novozymes have between them >2000 employees in China, with people on the ground in all 31 provinces, dominant market shares, and sales of about USD 500 million. With the present ongoing expansion, the world's largest enzyme plant is in China with the Novozymes' logo on it.

Global supply of NovoPen®3 comes out of China and large scale production of insulin is being planned.

The Triple Bottom Line plays an important role in positioning the Novo Group, also in China:

- Financial viability is a bottom line which is well understood, also in China
- Environmental responsibility is less understood, at least in some parts of China. In the Novo Group, all contribute but it is especially Novozymes who has a huge potential for providing environmentally sound solutions to industrial problems
- Social responsibility is also an area where all contribute, but here Novo Nordisk has the largest potential by improving the lives of ultimately hundreds of millions of people with diabetes

Working with the triple bottom line as a commitment, together with the six basic values of the Novo Group has been surprisingly easy in China and Asia, just as it has all over the world. The six basic values are:

Accountable – Ambitious – Responsible
 – Engaged with stakeholders – Open and honest – Ready for change

Not a single word in the values, vision or commitment needed to be changed, only translated and repeated as often as possible and with a clear integration into the context of the daily duties of every employee. This has taught the Novo Group that business in Asia does not have to be done in other ways than in other parts of the world. Asian and European business cultures do differ in some respects, one being the importance of *guanxi* or personal relationships, which requires a bit more respect in Asia than in Europe, but overall the business cultures can work well together and mutually prosper.

Challenges for tomorrow are, to mention a few:

- For Novozymes to succeed with second generation biofuel processes and become

the preferred partner for production of bio-energy in China. For

- For Novo Nordisk to keep spreading the gospel about how to prevent diabetes and how to prevent complications for those who do get diabetes, so that diagnosis and treatment levels can reach those of USA and Europe.

Those two challenges alone contain a high multiple of business potential yet to be realized.

There is little doubt that new competitors, including Asian ones, will emerge and compete for these great potentials, not only 'locally' in Asia, but globally. An additional major challenge for Novo will also be navigating in the emerging sea of new competition.



The thoughts behind the establishment of NIAS

Kristof Glamann, Professor Emeritus and the first director of CINA/NIAS

The Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies or CINA (Centralinstitut for Nordisk Asienforskning) was created in 1966 to meet a need, widely felt in the Nordic countries, for a strengthening both of academic scholarship and of public awareness concerning the cultures and peoples of Asia.

Bearing in mind the limited resources available in terms of both trained personnel and funds, it was felt that the Nordic universities would need to cooperate and coordinate their efforts so as not to lag behind the larger western countries with their access to more lavish resources.

CINA was intended to serve these coordinating and stimulating functions while providing support for the expansion of teaching and research in the various universities, institutions and departments. CINA's statutes and statements of purpose expressed their role in coordinating and strengthening research, facilitating scholarly cooperation and providing information and documentation.

I had personally felt the need at first when I was working on the history of European expansion, then again later on when the earliest tentative steps were being taken towards establishing courses in the history of Asian countries or regions *as independent subjects* within the history department of Copenhagen University. There was a ready response among students. The next step along the road was contact with foreign researchers into Asian affairs, starting in London with SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies, and then after that with American universities. The old European seats of oriental learning were philologically focused for the most part. Their historical studies were particularly concerned with publishing and interpreting sources – important enough, certainly, but not what I was looking for.

The old European colonial powers – apart from Russia – had been or were in the proc-

ess of being liquidated. At the universities the result was a trauma from which it took decades to recover. Keeping a low profile was the watchword – as in Holland for example.

In the United States the situation was different. There was an old anti-colonial tradition to build on, but that did not make everything in the garden lovely – quite the reverse. America was being ravaged by a syndrome which threatened to paralyse research; at any rate it drove many researchers away, especially China experts of whom I will mention only one – Owen Lattimore, who settled in Britain. The name of the syndrome was “McCarthyism”. John King Fairbank, in his memoirs entitled *Chinabound* (1982), has described the cure launched against the disease by private foundations and universities: the establishment of research centres from which information based on research was slowly but surely disseminated to opinion-formers, educationists and others.

These early American research centres were reorganised around 1960 and incorporated into the language departments in recognition of the fundamental importance of language, but also in order that orientalism – which in Europe lived a very isolated life compared with other disciplines – came into dialogue with a long array of faculties: history, art history, sociology, medicine, geography, technology and so on. The centres were given new names: Area Studies Program or Regional Studies Program. I was myself engaged in such a program in 1960/61, when I was invited to participate in the South Asia Regional Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania (under the indolo-

gist Norman Brown and the historian Holden Furber). These programs were examinable and were pitched at PhD level. Such a high level was not achieved in the Nordic countries.

The picture in the Nordic region was different. Here there was a special interest in the Third World, which imparted impetus to the efforts of politicians and others with grants to give. The 1960s were the great decade of growth theory. And along with growth went its opposites: stagnation, failure to develop, economic backwardness. For example, the First International Congress of Economic History in Stockholm in 1960 had economic growth as one of its main themes. Here were gathered together economists and historians who were also engaged in the study of economic backwardness, which the Russian-born American Alexander Gerschenkron had put under the spotlight in his studies. In Sweden, Gunnar Myrdal was the exponent of such studies, and his works were internationally known. In 1968 he had published his 3-volume work *Asian Drama* with its sub-title 'An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations' (alluding to Adam Smith's classical title).

It was the other Myrdal, minister of state Alva, who lent us an ear in December 1963, when Søren Egerod, Jørgen Læssøe, Halfdan Siiger and I were in Stockholm and urged upon the influential minister the possibility of establishing an interdisciplinary environment in the form of a Nordic institute of Asian studies located in Copenhagen by reason of the resources available there. An Institute for Africa existed already in Uppsala, Sweden.

I shall not weary the reader with the many twists and turns of these preliminaries before we were able to inaugurate the institute. Copenhagen University had to be mobilised as well, and in this we received solid support from the then registrar, Olaf Waage. The Royal Library too (in the person of the national librarian, Palle Birkelund) helped us by seconding one of its staff and transferring part of its Asian collection to the Institute.

With the establishment of CINA on 10 February 1967, Søren Egerod, professor of Chinese and the driving force of the project, was appointed in charge of the Institute. I myself became chairman of the board and remained in post until being appointed chairman of Carlsberg in 1976. Professor Göran Malmquist of Stockholm then took over from me.

Three events during the first ten years may be counted as successes:

1. establishment of the documentary department and the commencement of a series of published scholarly papers
2. establishment of a field station at Lampang in Thailand
3. appointment of a representative of the social sciences to the board.

The Lampang project was nearly torpedoed by the Vietnam war. In Sweden especially, voices were raised to the effect that the existence of American bases in Thailand tainted that country as host to an independent field station, but the special cooperative body established between the Nordic countries was favourably inclined.

Point 3 was not achieved without some clashes, but in 1976 the economist Anders Ølgaard was appointed, followed by his colleague Mogens Boserup, so that the interdisciplinary profile of the institute, to which importance had been attached from the beginning, was reinforced.

The institute was young and enthusiastic. The ceremonial inauguration took place in September 1968 in the form of an international symposium.



40 years of NIAS – a personal view

Thommy Svensson, Co-ordinator of the Swedish School for Advanced Asia-Pacific Studies (SSAAPS); Director of NIAS in 1990–1997, and currently Chairman of the Nordic NIAS Council and Deputy Chairman of NIAS's Board

NIAS has been the only multinational Asia studies institute in the world for 40 years. During the entire period, it has been a research institute without teaching obligations, which has made it a different entity than the area studies centres at the universities with educational commitments.

NIAS was officially opened in 1968 by farsighted academics who had the politicians' attention. The Institute was set up under the Nordic Council of Ministers and with the governments of the five Nordic countries jointly contributing to the funding. Despite major changes and occasional threats over the years, the Nordic anchorage has provided the stability that has enabled its long life. It has also given NIAS a service and umbrella function (and, at least theoretically, a co-ordinating task) above the universities.

Since the start, NIAS has gone through three distinct periods, framed by academic and political developments in the Nordic countries and Asia's changing role and position in the world. I have had the fortune to know and interact with the institute during all three.

CINA in the 1970s and 1980s – exotic Asia

The original institute – Centralinstitut for Nordisk Asienforskning (or Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies in its English version) – was inspired by American area studies in the 1960s. As Kristof Glaman writes, the aim was to bring scholars in Asian languages together with Asia-interested pioneers in other disciplines: history, art, sociology, medicine, geography, technology. But it was the well-established university institutes for (so-called) Oriental languages that steered the ship – Sino-logy, Japanology, Indology. During the first twenty years, CINA was led by the charismatic professor of Chinese in Copenhagen,

Søren Egerod, supported by, among others, the equally strong professor of Chinese in Stockholm, Göran Malmqvist, who became the Chairman of Board in 1976.

A few other disciplines of the humanities and social sciences were represented on CINA's staff. After some struggling, the social sciences also got a representative on the board. But the Oriental languages ruled the roost. In other disciplines, Asia was not yet part of mainstream research and engaged comparatively few individuals at the universities.

Knowledge of one or more Asian language was required to understand Asian cultures and societies and was the key to academic success. Asia was still unknown to most people in our part of the world who largely regarded the region as undeveloped, alien and exotic. Scholars who had invested time and effort to thoroughly learn an Asian language were expected to be experts on all aspects of the society in which that language was spoken.

I came to CINA for the first time 1975 as a young post-graduate student interested in modern Southeast Asian history. CINA opened up a new world. People were friendly and enormously knowledgeable. Eric Grinstead, who was a true genius in Asian languages, donated to me a small *Kamus Katong Inggeris* (published in Djakarta 1953) from his private collection, which I still keep on my bookshelf. The library collections were fantastic. The reading room smelled of *cerut* cigars and wine and cheese bought around the corner. I got help from colourful people who

later came to personify NIAS – Karl-Reinhold Hællquist, Leena Höskuldsson, Anne Schlanbusch, Erik Skaaning – all of whom I later had the privilege to work closely with during the 1990s. When writing this, Erik has just retired. Leena is still on the staff.

CINA was crucial for my continued interest in Asia. Its support brought me back several times to the wonderful atmosphere at Kejsergade in the historical centre of Copenhagen, where the institute was then located. CINA's travel grants brought me to Indonesia and to archives and libraries in the Netherlands. Søren Egerod and the institute's Southeast Asia-archaeologist Per Sørensen helped my PhD-student friends and I to organise the first Nordic conference on Indonesia and Malaysia in Kungälv in 1977, which contributed to making Gothenburg one of the centres for Indonesian studies during the following decades.

This is a small example of the role CINA played for developing Asian studies in Scandinavia. There are many more. One of the major investments was its field station in Lampang, Thailand, which laid the foundation for the first generation of Southeast Asianists in Scandinavia in disciplines such as anthropology, linguistics, history, archaeology and sociology.

Bringing in the social sciences

The volume of Asia studies in the Nordic countries increased during the 1980s, reflecting East and Southeast Asia's growing importance in the world and a growing interest in (so-called) Third World studies. The bulk of the new research was carried out in the social sciences. It was based on the methodologies and theories of disciplines that made students economists, anthropologists, political scientists, modern historians, geographers, and sociologists. The focus was not on grand cultural traditions, but everyday life and contemporary developments. Asia-language ability remained a precondition for really qualified research, but no longer defined academic professionalism.

CINA had difficulties in adopting the new

Asian world in the making and the new brands of scholarship. The battle that followed ended with the Nordic Council of Minister's decision to create a brand new institute. The long-serving Søren Egerod left and the whole research staff was dismissed. To mark the new times, CINA was renamed the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies and moved to new premises at Njalsgade on the Amager campus of the University of Copenhagen. This was in 1987–1988, when Dr Kauko Laitinen from Helsinki took over as Director.

NIAS in the 1990s – rising Asia

Serving as Director of NIAS between 1990 and 1997, I had not been involved in the struggles of the previous years and came to the institute when the debris had been cleared. During my eight years at NIAS, the Board was chaired until 1993 by the late John Martinussen, Professor of Political Science of the Roskilde University Centre, and 1994–1997 by Kirsti Koch Christensen, Professor of Linguistics and later Rector of the University of Bergen.

Those were the years of rising Pacific Asia – with tiger economies, flying-geese ideas, the effects of the opening-up of China and expectations of a coming Asian century. There was a steadily growing interest in the region in non-academic and political circles, which provided an enlarged platform for the reform of the institute.

The research academy

Our main task was to build a strong research base that could serve as a leverage for the institute as a co-operative partner inside and outside academia. The research posts were upgraded to post-doc and senior levels and focused only on contemporary East and Southeast Asia. In contrast to the previous CINA, all research assignments had a time limit, from one to six years depending on the kind of position; the director's service was limited to a maximum of 4+4 years. All researchers were required to have a strong disciplinary base combined with area-expertise and necessary language competence.

NIAS was transformed into a research academy that was a breeding house for the future career of promising scholars in different disciplines. After their time at NIAS, everyone was expected to return to the university environment or take up other assignments. The core research staff was complemented by researchers with external funding.

In 1995, when NIAS moved to the current premises at Leifsgade, the research staff consisted of close to 20 people, half with positions paid from the institute's budget and half by external grants. In addition, there were some 10 people in library, publication and support functions. To the staff were added short-term guest fellows, particularly from Asia, and visiting PhD and MA students in the SUPRA programme. It was a small group by international standards, but enough to create critical mass in a few fields, notably Southeast Asian studies.

International competition

The core positions were filled in open international competition. The decision to take in scholars from outside the Nordic region was controversial in some quarters. Many argued that the posts at NIAS were paid by the Nordic governments and should therefore be held by residents in the Nordic countries. Our belief was that to become sustainable in the long run, Nordic Asia-research must make the international scholarly community its centre of gravity and participate in international competition for grants, assignments and publication channels.

After they moved on from NIAS, a large number of staff took up senior positions and contributed to the development of other academic environments in the Nordic countries and beyond – e.g. Anne Haila in Helsinki, Arne Kalland and Stein Tønnesson in Oslo, Sven Cederroth in Gothenburg, Mario Rutten in Amsterdam, Ian Reader in Lancaster, Robert Cribb and Li Nara Narangoa in Canberra, Nicola Piper in Singapore, Børge Bakken in Hongkong and Oslo, and Hans Antlöv in Gothenburg and Jakarta. There are also

scholars who continue to contribute to the Copenhagen environment: Ole Bruun, Geir Helgesen, Timo Kivimäki, Cecilia Milwertz, Ida Nicolaisen and Irene Nørlund to mention some.

NIAS's international ambitions were supported by a commercially-aimed, high-quality publication programme designed not only for Nordic scholars but for authors from across the globe. Gerald Jackson, with roots in New Zealand, was recruited to set up the programme in 1992. He has, together with his colleagues on the NIAS publication staff, made NIAS Press one of the world's major academic publishers on Southeast Asia. Today NIAS Press is the institute's foremost face abroad.

My own view is that our internationalisation policy was successful. It nourished an intellectual milieu that was continuously refreshed by new ideas from incoming people and which was supported by a growing group of alumni. The institute's Research Seminar, workshops and conferences improved in quality and vigour, and attracted over the years more and more foreign guests from around the world. This contributed to a stronger and internationally recognised publication record.

Europeisation

A part of the internationalisation strategy was to strengthen European co-operation in Asian studies. NIAS played a key role in the Asia Programme of the European Science Foundation, launched in 1994, and promoted new European networks for regional studies such as EUROSEAS, EASAS, ESCAS, EuroViet and the European Social Science Java Network.

The flagship project was the 'IIAS-NIAS Strategic Alliance'. The International Institute of Asian Studies had been set up in Leiden in 1993. Organised as an international research academy, it had similar objectives to NIAS. The dynamic Director of IIAS, Prof. Wim Stokhof, and I managed to convince our respective Ministers of Research and Education, and other members of Government, in the Netherlands and the Nordic countries to give the two institutes fresh funding for joint

projects and research posts based on close co-operation between our institutes.

I must admit that I put a lot of effort in setting up the Alliance, which was launched in 1997. I was happy to hand it over to my successors when I left NIAS in the autumn of 1997 – first Research Prof. Robert Cribb, on an interim basis, and then Dr Per Ronnås. But it turned out that the project could not be extended beyond an initial 3-year period. And it proved to be difficult to tap resources for Asian studies from Brussels, which had been one of the objectives.

A remnant of the IAS–NIAS Alliance is the ‘European Alliance for Asian Studies’ which today is a network of eight European institutions. But this is only a shadow of the original vision of European co-operation we had ten years ago.

The EU and the decline of long-term Nordic co-operation

Located in Denmark – a member of the European Community since 1973 – the European perspective of NIAS was rather self-evident. When Finland and Sweden joined the EU in 1995, many of us expected it would boost Nordic co-operation. Making use of the experience from 50 years of organised regional partnership must be a way to strengthen the Nordic region’s influence in the larger context.

This analysis proved to be wrong. Instead, Sweden’s and Finland’s membership in the EU moved Nordic politics away from organised Nordic co-operation. In the academic field, the governments had for a long time in solidarity funded a large number of permanent institutions. Since 1968, NIAS had been one of the largest. Over the years, there had been attempts by new politicians to remove permanent institutions from the Nordic budget to give room for new initiatives (one such offensive had started when I took office in 1990).

In the new European context, a new structure for Nordic co-operation was finally developed, which could no longer include permanent Nordic institutions.

NIAS in the 2000s – the return of Asia

Dr Jørgen Delman took office as Director of NIAS in 2002 and has been responsible for handling the new political context in a clever way. The reorganisation of the institute was prepared in 2003–04, and the new NIAS was formally established in 2005.

The new NIAS

The new NIAS is no longer a Nordic institution in legal terms, but a part of the University of Copenhagen. A Nordic dimension is maintained by a consortium of universities and independent research institutions in the five Nordic countries connected with the institute. The consortium is called the Nordic NIAS Council (NNC), which at the time of writing consists of 25 members, including all the major Nordic universities. The consortium members pay a yearly financial contribution in exchange for access to NIAS’s services. Half of the board, including the Chair, is appointed by Copenhagen University, the other half by the consortium members.

The Nordic Council of Ministers was the core funder of NIAS for 37 years. From 2005 onwards, its contribution has partly and gradually been reduced, to be replaced by funding from the new Danish owner, fees from the members of the Nordic consortium, and other partners.

The reduction of Nordic funding does not mean that NIAS’s academic quality has been questioned – the institute got a very positive evaluation by an international review committee as late as 2006. But it means that NIAS – at its 40th birthday – is in a transitional phase until the new funding channels have been established and the institute has found its new form. In addition to its research undertakings, NIAS has a new agenda to provide enhanced services to its members. These are discussed in other articles in this issue.

Asia’s return

What happens in Asia today has become a part of our everyday lives, figures daily in the

news and public debate, and is of crucial importance for the long-term well-being of our own societies.

Some might find it ironic that the reorganisation of NIAS – with its inevitable turbulence – is taking place when Asia is no longer rising but has *returned* to the place in the world predetermined by its size and historical position 200 years ago. My conclusion is that a new NIAS is probably needed to be able handle this change.

The growth of extra-academic Asia expertise

The first challenge is the rapid growth of extra-academic expertise on Asia. Still during my time at NIAS, Asia scholars had scarce and unique knowledge (but had difficulties in disseminating their expertise outside the academies). Since then, tens of thousands of people in government, trade and industry, international organisations, media and R&D ventures have acquired first-hand experience from the region, have acquired knowledge on-the-spot by living and working there, and now possess a strategic area-expertise that is directly related to their own profession.

In the long run, this will be the death of the old-type of academic area-expertise. To be competitive, the next generation of Asia-experts must have practical professional training in new disciplines – not least including science, technology, engineering, medicine or environmental sciences. In addition, fluency in an Asian language will be a prerequisite to also make a career in the harder social sciences like economics, political science and security studies. Only researchers who produce new and important knowledge for the international scholarly community will be able to make a career within our research academies.

Domestic research in Asia

The second challenge is the rapid build-up of original research in Asia. Following Japan, many countries in the region – such as China, India, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan – are investing heavily in new academic institutions. According to the latest THES University Ranking, Asia's top universities have already surpassed their sister institutions in the EU (outside the UK) in the global university league.

Peter Honeth writes in his article that a global research and education market has developed – where Asian academic institutions play a much more important role – which requires substantial reforms of our own universities and major investments in the build-up of partnerships with the new science countries.

For NIAS, the consequence is a strong need to try to systematically intensify collaboration with strategically placed institutions of the humanities and social sciences in the academically leading Asian countries during the coming years. It is an effort that has to be made either in competition or collaboration with sister institutions in our part of the world, which need to do the same thing.



These challenges are, explicitly and implicitly, dealt with in many of the contributions to this anniversary issue of *NIASnytt*. My conviction is that, in the end, the Asian challenge is not primarily economic and industrial, but mental and intellectual. It means that our academies have a major role to play in building up our countries' future relations with the region. But to be able to play this role, a major reorganisation of our thinking, institutions and activities is needed.



The Nordic dimension, and international: a personal account

Leena Höskuldsson, Senior editor, NIAS Press



Nordic cooperation has always been close to my heart – literally. In 1970, I – a Finn – married an Icelandic man whom I had met in Sweden; we settled down in Denmark. But (and this is almost too embarrassing to confess) I have never been to Norway – as yet.

I came to CINA* in November 1973 hardly knowing what the institute's primary areas of focus were. After a short introduction to the premises and a hearty "Welcome to CINA!" from my new colleagues I was taken to the then director Professor Søren Egerod's office. The usual pleasantries well over and done with Egerod looked at me long and hard in the eye and said: "Mrs Höskuldsson, are you especially interested in Asia?" I replied truthfully: "Not at all. But I am very interested in Nordic cooperation."

As it turned out, I had been hired because of my Finnish background and language abilities, definitely not for my expertise in Asia. It suited me perfectly: there were researchers to worry about Asia; I considered it my task to help improve and develop contacts to the five Nordic countries, especially to Finland – seemingly a slow user of the Institute's facilities.

The cooperation channels were a lot different back in the 1970s. The institute had one computer-sort-of-thing with a system called flex-o-writer; only one researcher knew how to use it. A red IBM Selectric typewriter with interchangeable "golfballs" was the tops in modern office equipment. Contacts were made by postal services or by telephone. Slow? Maybe, but quite adequate considering that the situation was the same in all five countries.

In the middle of the 1970s we were lucky to start a scholarship programme with a healthy contribution of around a quarter of a million

DKK from the Nordic Council of Ministers. Dr Bo Utas who, besides being a full-time researcher at the institute, was keen on promoting the Nordic dimension, developed the two different types of travel grants: *Contact* and *Asia*. Contact scholarships enabled Nordic scholars to visit libraries and archives in other Nordic countries than the applicant's. They became very popular because they enabled students and researchers from remote places like Reykjavik or Umeå or Oulu to get a first-hand access to special libraries instead of making do with the often quite costly inter-urban loans. By far the largest group were non-Copenhagensers visiting the Institute for a period of a fortnight. The travel grants to Asia helped some 15 scholars per year to travel to their special areas of research. In order to catch as many candidates as possible the announcements were always made in Swedish, Finnish and English. – Today we still award grants for students/researchers to visit the NIAS library, or NIASLinc as it is known today, but travel grants programme to Asia was discontinued several years ago.



The staff has always reflected the background of the Institute. In the early years, Nordic cooperation brought us colleagues from Sweden and Norway, and some Finnish, and even Icelandic scholars worked at the Institute for shorter or longer periods.

The 1990s became the decade of a serious expansion towards Europe. The Strategic Alliance between NIAS and the International

*For the different versions of the Institute's name, please consult Kristof Glamann's article on pp. 43–44.



One of the many functions of The (Round) Table: serving as a work station for a triannual sending out of *NIASnytt* – a task undertaken by the whole staff

Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) – a post-doctoral research centre based in Leiden and Amsterdam – introduced research cooperation between Dutch and Nordic scholars and offered working facilities in new surroundings: Dutch scholars came to Copenhagen and their Nordic counterparts spent time in Leiden.

The last decade of the 20th century opened the doors to the rest of the world, too. We got a director from Australia, and along with the Nordic and European staff members we had visiting research fellows from the US, Australia and Asia as well. Today, NIAS Press as a unit within NIAS is a perfect example of well-functioning international cooperation: we have one New Zealander, one Canadian, two Danes and one Finn to take care of our growing book production, distribution and marketing.

The many visitors from all around the world have always given a truly international stroke to the general profile of the institute. It was not seldom that there were up to ten different nationalities seated at the old, round table (which, in fact, was oval, but always referred to as the “Round Table”). Today’s table is long and narrow and can seat up to 24 people – not a rare sight during the busiest periods. We still refer to it as The Table: it has fully deserved the upper-case Ts! It is – to be sentimental – a symbol of this institute and its staff. Its most

important function is “connecting people”; to quote another Finn! This is what it is all about: being part of an organization based on open and fruitful cooperation, be it North or South or East or West.

During my 35 years here I have worked for eight very different directors: two Danes, two Finns, three Swedes and one Australian. They have all brought diversity and personal features and priorities with them and gradually changed the profile of the Institute: from the philologically oriented 1970s and 1980s over to the modern humanities and social sciences of today.



On the domestic front of Nordic cooperation, I still live in Denmark. My husband has still, almost 40 years later, an Icelandic passport, I have a Finnish one, and of our two children one has an Icelandic and the other a Danish passport. The European dimension has been introduced by new, non-Nordic family members.

The cooperation – our private as well as the institute’s – is (as it should be) based on the motto: It is exactly equally long from Helsinki/Oslo/Reykjavik/Stockholm to Copenhagen as it is from Copenhagen to Helsinki/Oslo/Reykjavik/Stockholm!

NIAS and Asian studies: in the midst of a global shift?

Lars Bille, Chairman of the Board of NIAS, and Head of Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen
Jørgen Delman, Director, NIAS

In his recent book, 'The New Asian Hemisphere – The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East', Kishore Mahbubani challenges the reader, particularly readers in the West, to take a fresh look at Asia and its role in the world of today and tomorrow.

His basic question is whether the 21st century will be a moment of historical triumph for the West or whether the West will suffer a historical defeat? In his mind, it all depends on how the West reacts to the rise of Asia.

He argues that, while the West is attempting to universalize the Western dream, Asia is rising. He quotes Samuel Huntington for the reminder that the peoples and governments of non-Western civilizations no longer remain objects of history as targets of Western colonization. Rather they have joined the peoples of the West as makers of history (p. 7). This may sound trivial today, but it must be kept in mind nonetheless.

In Mahbubani's perspective, the West has to respond constructively to the rise of Asia since we are in the middle of a process where global power constellations are shifting. While the West is blindly pursuing its crusade to promote global democracy, Western competence in building our societies and government may not necessarily imply that the West is as good in addressing global challenges (p. 176). He exemplifies his point by analysing a number of cases that demonstrate – what he calls – 'Western mismanagement', specifically, the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran, global negotiations regarding the global free trade and climate change regimes, and the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. These cases demonstrate how Western mismanagement has led to disastrous consequences for the world and it may be time – argues Mahbubani – for the West to acknowledge its failures and learn from Asian competence.

For example, the Chinese leadership has carefully analysed the development experiences of the Western superpowers and learned from their failures and incompetence in dealing with key global challenges. Based on that, China has decided to maneuver globally with a low profile and without projecting hard power on others. The result is that China has become a global power without having had to pay a serious political price (pp. 223–225).

Mahbubani also refers to an event where – when asked at a conference in New York in 2006 which country had the most environmentally conscious government – Fatih Birol, Chief Economist of the International Energy Agency responded: 'China' (p. 191). As could be expected, the audience expressed surprise, but his argument was that China's new officials are acutely aware of the challenges faced by China and the world and that they are prepared to act as responsible stakeholders in the management of these global challenges. However, they demand that the West does the same.

The West, concludes Mahbubani, must recognize that its dwindling global standing and influence challenges it to play equal partners with rising Asia and that Asia has already proven to be capable of delivering a more stable world order than the West.

Mahbubani is Asian. He is an influential and recognized academic and public opinion maker. He represents a strong trend in Eastern academia towards reassessing developments in Asia as well as globally. He argues that the Western victory in the Cold War may

have blinded Western politicians against understanding the dynamics of post-Cold War developments, in particular in Asia.

Even if he is wrong here, we would argue that academics working with Asia should avoid being blinded. On the contrary, Mahbubani's analysis convinces us that the study of Asia is as important as ever. We may agree or not to his unmistakable views on the status and future role of Asia, but this is not the point here. Rather, we must accept that the new Asian dynamics, i.e. the shift of – at least – substantial global power towards the East, challenge us to take a fresh look at what happens in Asia while we should caution ourselves against applying – implicitly or explicitly – specific ethnocentric approaches to our enquiries, no matter whether they are Euro-centric or Asia-centric.

The processes of economic, political, social, and cultural globalization are behind the new dynamics, and Asia's rise has clearly contributed to making the world more global, dynamic, and vibrant. Likewise, the study of Asia has become increasingly versatile, in many ways both easier and more difficult. Access to data and to the field has become simpler, whereas Asia's complexities have become more difficult to grasp.

Being situated in the West, NIAS has a responsibility to deliver research and analysis that will promote the understanding of the dynamics that Mahbubani studies in his book. We are not obliged by his opinions, but we are obliged to produce research that validates, confronts or advances his analysis.

In the past, Asia seemed to be so 'special' that the perception that the study of Asia must be undertaken through special 'Asianist' lenses made perfect sense. One may ask if this is still the case. Throughout the most recent decade or more we have witnessed a proliferation of Asian studies and, most significantly, the study of Asia has become largely anchored in the disciplines. Asian studies also exist in Asia and have developed fast over the years, but the studies there are quite naturally mostly done

within the disciplines. Effectively, the language based area and cross disciplinary studies have lost their position as leaders in the field, even though our politicians demand for more language based expertise and our research funding agencies demand for more cross-disciplinary research!

So what is left to 'Asian studies'? Does the field have a meaningful future?

Our opinion is affirmative. There is still a need for language based studies outside the areas where the languages are spoken. There is a need for broad-based research that asks whether there are certain Asian development patterns with specific 'Asian' characteristics. The question is not an easy one to answer, but we would argue that our research themes at NIAS could be seen as examples of how Asian studies of this age could be framed. They look at Asian patterns of development in relation to security issues, to gender politics, to state and nation building, to the interaction between state and business in development, and to the role of Asia's political and economic institutions.

We would also argue that there is an increasing need for cross-disciplinary studies to understand specific patterns of development, dynamics, and interaction in Asia. Moreover, and as far as it is not already done, Asian studies can help the disciplines re-orienting themselves to incorporate knowledge and insights from the Asian studies field to analyse and explain the patterns and phenomena underlying Asia's new dynamics.

Although we may well be witnessing a global power shift these years, it is not our point to argue that we are in the midst of an Asian century – as Mahbubani tends to do – since we are uncertain as to what would be the benchmark for such a conclusion. But we would argue that – to some extent – the study of Asia has suffered from almost criminal neglect in our part of the world by the core disciplines for many years. Only in recent years have we seen a real and healthy boom in the study of Asia across the board.

We must now take a fresh look at Asia and pursue our studies with the aim of refining current theories or building new ones based on solid empirical research in Asia or through comparative research between the East and the West and the rest. We also see that as a key task for NIAS in the future.

It is also our aspiration that we can demonstrate – in collaboration with our Nordic partners – that Nordic research and education on Asia is both vibrant and capable of contributing new knowledge and insights on the global shifts that we experience these years from the micro as well as from the macro perspective. Asian scholars challenge us to reframe our mindsets, to sharpen our tools, and – not least – to do it in partnership with our Asian colleagues. Otherwise, we would probably miss important points.

NIAS has a Nordic mission. Our goal is to support the development of Asian studies in the Nordic countries. We have done so for 40 years. We have just been evaluated by a group of international peers and received top marks. We have been reorganized by and maintain strong support from our Nordic sponsor, the Nordic Council of Ministers. We have been incorporated into Copenhagen University, which is now itself initiating a major effort to create a new platform for the study of Asia. It has also been gratifying that we have received the support of 25 Nordic universities and research institutes for our future work. We see this as a recognition of the value of the work done by NIAS over the years. We hope and expect that NIAS will continue in this vein for the next many years, hopefully for *40 more years!*

NIAS Vision

- NIAS generates and communicates Asia insights
- NIAS acts as a window for and contributes to the development of Asian studies in Norden, understood as research and education
- NIAS works for the reputation of the Nordic countries as a leading European region for the study of modern Asia
- NIAS works on the basis of international recognition, Nordic values and mandate, and in Consortium with Nordic universities and research

NIAS Mission

- NIAS is an academically independent Nordic institute
- NIAS' core activities are research and services
- NIAS focuses on societal transformations in modern Asia in their historical context
- NIAS contributes to coordination, consolidation and expansion of Asian studies in the Nordic Region

NIAS finances

In 2007, NIAS's revenues amounted to 10.8 mill. DKK. The Nordic Council of Ministers contributed 45 %, 21% came from Copenhagen University and the members of the Nordic NIAS Council. Finally, 34 % came from other sources.



Ownership and management

NIAS is managed by a consortium with representatives from Copenhagen University, the core partner, and the Nordic NIAS Council with the following members:

Denmark

- Copenhagen Business School
- University of Aarhus
- University of Aalborg

Finland

- Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration
- Helsinki School of Economics
- University of Turku
- University of Tampere
- University of Jyväskylä

Iceland

- University of Iceland
- University of Akureyri

Norway

- University of Oslo
- University of Bergen
- Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
- Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NNH)
- Christian Michelsen Institute – (CMI)
- Fritjof Nansen Institute (FNI)

- International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO)
- Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Sweden

- University of Göteborg
- University of Lund
- University of Stockholm
- University of Uppsala
- Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)
- Swedish School of Advanced Asian and Pacific Studies (SSAAPS)

The aims of the Nordic NIAS Council are:

- To promote synergy between the activities of the members and NIAS
- To support NIAS in being a window for Nordic activities within the field of Asian studies
- To ensure that NIAS fulfills its Nordic responsibility

NIAS activities/services:

- NIAS Research
- NIASLinc (library and information service)
- NIAS Press (international academic publisher)
- NIAS SUPRA – support program for Nordic master and PhD students
- Asian Century Research School Network (ACRSN)
- NIAS Seminars
- NIAS Conferences
- NIAS and NNC Updates
- NIAS Web sites
- NIAS Nytt
- Support to Nordic networks within Asian studies

Information and publishing on Asia – a need for 40:40 vision

Gerald Jackson, NIAS Press, and Anja Møller Rasmussen, NIASLinc

Throughout its 40-year history, NIAS has had a publication programme and a library to anchor its research activities. Today, however, the global information revolution is creating new challenges, and new opportunities.

Forty years ago, the Institute's publication programme and library were quite distinct entities, and, until recently, this difference was largely maintained as each area evolved in its own way. But the Internet has changed all that. Today, NIAS Press and NIASLinc are moving closer together in what they want and what they do.

This should not be surprising if one looks at the logic of their development. NIASLinc began as a small library mainly catering to the needs and interests of a few scholars, most of them in Copenhagen. Over the years it grew in size, becoming one of the largest Asian Studies libraries in northern Europe, and expanded its effective reach to all parts of the Nordic research community, and beyond. Then, in recent years, the focus shifted from being a physical repository of publications to one of being a supplier of timely and relevant information. Vastly more visitors come today via cyberspace than through the door at Leifsgade 33.

At the same time, the publication programme evolved from being a part-time researcher activity – whose results were disseminated elsewhere by 'real' publishers – into a full-time academic press, a *real* publisher that is recognized and respected at the global level. Reports and working papers evolved into 'proper' books; now e-books and other 'e-content' are on their way.

One can see that these paths of development have started to converge, and the near future promises increased interaction between the two areas. Already they are working to ensure that the Asia portal and NIAS Press' upcoming iScholar.Asia project become integrated

services on offer to our customers and users.

Will the two areas *merge* in the long term? No one knows. Today, there are still clear distinctions between creators, disseminators and repositories of knowledge. But, as the social networking and collaborative creativity potential of 'Web 2.0' evolve and broaden their impact, we may well witness the evolution of the traditional library and publishing house – and indeed of bookshops – into hybrid forms of knowledge creation and sharing.

This should not be a surprise. Libraries, bookshops, and publishers have a long common history with each holding distinct but undisputed positions of power in the pre-computerized scholarly world. However, since the advent of the Web, electronic forms of publication and distribution have begun to question and challenge the old order. This transformation has accelerated in recent years not only with the arrival of wikis, blogs and other aspects of 'Web 2.0' (see box) but also with the shift of journals to electronic formats, the slow but certain take-off of e-books, and the entry of the iPod and podcasting into the lecture hall.

Parallel to this, a revolution in printing technologies is on the verge of bringing cheap and immediate delivery of printed works to impatient readers; this has the potential to destroy the traditional bookstore or transform it into a download kiosk. Indeed, only in recent weeks, a leading U.K. academic bookseller announced it would be installing such an 'ATM for books' later this year.

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Web 2.0

Web 2.0 is a perceived second generation of the Web with new functionalities that enhance and emphasize online collaboration and sharing among users. These functionalities include:

Social networking, based on websites that are used everyday by millions of people who share interests and activities. These communities interact by chatting, messaging, file sharing, blogging, etc.

Tagging/reviewing tools that allow people to index and share knowledge about something of common interest.

Collaborative publishing, a once rare but increasingly fashionable form of group authorship often combined with self-publishing, Wikipedia being the most well-known example. Often this is then made freely available for others to access *and use*, subject to certain licensing restrictions.

Blogging, serial postings on a type of website by one or more 'bloggers', often with a facility for readers to post comments. Dealing with any subject under the sun, blogs range from simple personal journals through to sophisticated serial treatments of specific subjects. Web 2.0 offers powerful new ways for scholars to interact and evaluate each other's work. Although these have only been adopted by a small minority so far, a change is discernable. For instance, recent experiments with 'open peer review' by the journal *Nature* used such a social networking approach. That these were abandoned after widespread criticism, however, is a reminder that the path of change is not a clear or simple one. Rather, the adoption of Web 2.0 services confronts us with important technological, managerial, and human barriers. In this situation, NIAS and the Nordic NIAS Council need to develop an adaptive strategy based on an open approach to access and use of content, and building on an open platform for knowledge creation and sharing, but also taking in consideration the needs and imperatives of the wider institutional and business environment.

Future needs and challenges for scholars

The new opportunities discussed in this article threaten the traditional basis of not only the library and publishing but also scholarship, too. Open Access is the name of the game and self-archiving of research literature by academics and academic institutions becomes increasingly popular. More than 90 per cent of journals are willing to allow authors to separately archive their paper in an institutional repository and it is now common that universities demand self-archiving. Research councils are discussing that it should be mandatory for papers arising from council-funded research to be deposited in openly-available repositories (either institutional or subject-based) at the earliest opportunity. Nonetheless, some other challenges are also clear.

Today, scholars are forced to secure more and more funding for their work from external sources. At the same time, the financial barriers to getting published are increasing, in part because the adoption of Open Access for publicly funded research requires a move from a reader-pays to an author-pays system.

There is an increased demand for visibility and often 'value for money' from donors and institutions. With publishers accepting proportionately less and less of the burgeoning output, some scholars are turning to new forms of online and often unmediated dissemination of their research results.

The resulting information overload has created an urgent need for new ways to filter content. Web 2.0 tools (see box) are useful here, and likewise impact assessment for some journals, but to date nothing has replaced the traditional peer review system as a commonly agreed-upon means to ensure and measure quality and maintain standards.

Despite the academic establishment being the instigator of much of this increased scholarly output, it recognizes only a small fraction of the results due to its concerns about falling standards and its non-acceptance of new forms of dissemination.

Certain big publishers are now gaining control of huge aggregations of peer-reviewed digital content, which they are selling at premium prices. Libraries have responded by banding together to buy group licences at more affordable prices. This phenomenon may explain in part the accelerating disappearance of small independent journals and to some extent publishers. At the same time, the journals conglomerates are busy launching many new journals.

Many of the above shifts present a challenge to scholars' ownership of their research results and indeed to the whole concept of author copyright that has underpinned Western scholarship in the last few centuries.

All of these developments promise to completely change the ways in which authors reach their readers as well as the models that have traditionally supported publishers and libraries.

Certainly, we can expect that there will be open and “24/7 access” to information plus the development of open standards and far greater collaboration and aggregation of information via blogs, tagging tools, wikis and social services like NIASLinc’s community system, Barha (see box). These changes pose significant challenges not only to libraries and publishers but also indeed to all scholars, both as authors and readers. Some of the challenges and responses are sketched in the boxes below.

NIASLinc and NIAS Press are responding not only to these seismic shifts but also to the needs and desires of the Nordic Asia community which we serve, i.e. the very air that we breathe. That said we recognize the danger of solely focusing on current imperatives and future possibilities. To maintain a sense of direction and proportion, we must also remember where we come from and here, the contributions found elsewhere in this anniversary edition are an object lesson.

With this in mind, we are proceeding with eyes open, fully aware that the wisest way to move forward is with an occasional glance at the rear-view mirror.

Responses from NIAS Press

NIAS Press is not one of the above-mentioned publishing conglomerates; our biggest assets are our historical reputation, publishing networks, our staff, and not money. We have commitments beyond profit, moreover, not least serving the needs and interests of the Nordic Asia research community. As such, we are responding to the information revolution with a mixture of caution and intelligence; we do not have the resources to make ill-informed mistakes. With this in mind: We have not abandoned print publishing. For now, this is where our ‘bread and butter’ come from.

But we have largely abandoned the ‘Routledge model’ of selling a few high-priced hardbacks in favour of selling many more, cheaper paperbacks.

This has only been possible by moving into the booming Asian academic market which is still, incredibly, ignored or not taken seriously by many Western publishers. Up to half of the sales for some of our books are made here.

This has not improved our income a lot because there is much less profit in paperbacks but it has heightened NIAS’ profile in Asia; this is also a consideration.

At the same time, we have taken our first steps to digitize all that has been published by NIAS in the last 40 years. By year-end, we aim to have the first e-publications available and a range of new digital titles on offer in 2009. Some of these will be made available without charge.

Simultaneously, we shall be offering these titles in physical form, printed and shipped immediately as they are ordered.

In the meantime, we are busy creating a new Press website. When launched later this year, visitors will see much more information, like news, reviews and author pages. All of it should be timely, relevant and easily found by visitors.

And, soon after, authors will have the chance to combine the website with the Asia Portal to interact and collaborate with their peers via blogs, wikis, pod casts, videos, etc.

In essence, the Press is determined not to squander its 40-year heritage but at the same time aware that we have to survive the next 40 years by adapting to quite different circumstances. This is our 40:40 vision.

Responses from NIASLinc

Throughout its 40-year history NIAS has had a library to support and anchor its research activities. Today NIASLinc still hosts a highly valued collection of print material. However, demands for “24/7 access” to information in an Asian context and access to fee-based databases to ensure quality research have grown over the last 5 years.

By integration the new Web 2.0 tools NIASLinc has addressed these issues by providing value adding activities that integrate the supply of literature and information with reference, guidance and instructions. These have become an integrated part of the learning and research systems of NIAS and the Nordic NIAS Council.

The suite of services NIASLinc has created includes:

www.AsiaPortal.info, which is a communication channel for a consortium of 25 Nordic universities and research institutions working on Asia. The portal gives access to a wide range of journals, news services and information sources. At the same time it is a platform for internal cooperation between the involved institutions and their researchers. Finally, the portal functions externally by promoting the research and resources of the member institutions so that other users can also access the desired knowledge and competences.

“*Academic resources*”, which is a Nordic NIAS Council access only site providing information resources based on common Nordic licence agreements. The site gives NNC members access to 57 fee-based databases and 434 Asia area-studies journals linked together in a federated search system.

Nordic visibility. One of the primary functions of the AsiaPortal is to promote and market the Nordic NIAS Council member institutions. For this purpose, the AsiaPortal features a section called “Nordic Perspectives”. This is an initiative based on a collaborative network that aims to build a common and freely accessible information system for Nordic Asian studies. The material is directly harvested through institutional repositories and archives. The AsiaPortal thus promotes the availability of online content, such as that of grey literature, open access journals, pre-prints, and working papers which are not available through commercial distribution channels but significantly contributes to Nordic Asian research.

Barha is a community for networking and information sharing among people involved in Asian studies. It is integrated with the AsiaPortal.info and based on Web 2.0 tools to help researchers to source and share more pertinent information by connecting with others. *Barha* allows users interact with other people involved in Asian studies, to collect, and to save bookmarks of resources on the internet from ELIN@nias or from their own online collections. The bookmarks can then be shared and discussed with colleagues and/or friends by using social tagging. Groups can also be created around common areas of interest. Users can comment in blogs or start their own academic blog, they can create opinions polls for their networks, and they can use Wikis for collaborative writing and self-publishing. Finally, they can upload publications for use in an Asian context at the AsiaPortal and expose themselves to comments and criticisms from other members of the community.

AsiaPortal.info

The Asia Intelligence Service

10-day free evaluation opportunity

AsiaInt's 'Asia Intelligence Service' is a comprehensive information resource for everyone with professional or business interests in Asia. It comprises two 'monthly reviews', a weekly briefing service, special reports, and 24/7 access to the AsiaInt on-line intelligence database.

You may register for a 10-day free evaluation by visiting <http://www.asiaint.com> and selecting the free-registration link.

Asian Dynamics Initiative – a new Asia focus at the University of Copenhagen

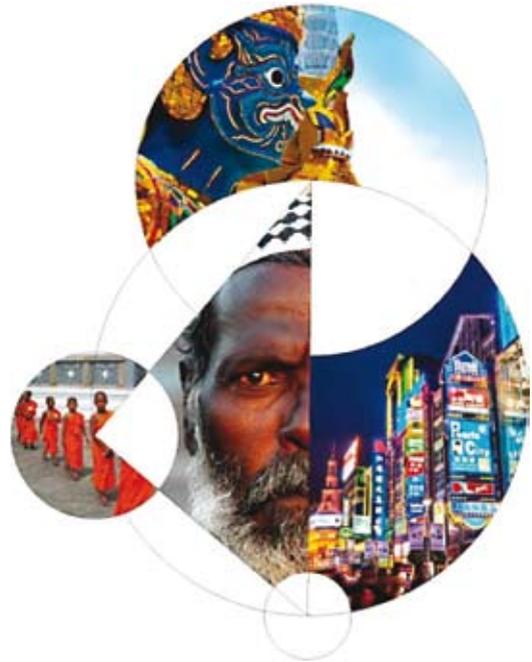
There is no denying that Asia with its expanding economic markets, growing centres for science and technology, complex political systems, and rich religious and cultural diversity has become an increasingly important player on the global scene. After decades of dividing the world into the rich and powerful West and the developing (or emerging) 'rest', Asia's rapid growth and dynamism has led to talk of a new 'Pacific Century'. While the spectacular progress has improved standards of living for much of Asia's population, the challenges in the region are also considerable: environmental deterioration, extremely uneven distribution of wealth, violation of human rights, internal tensions and conflicts, terrorism and corruption.

It is thus of strategic importance to relate to Asia and to gain new insights on this potential shaper of the 21st century in order to grasp its dynamics and its impact on international development and globalization processes.

The University of Copenhagen has recognized the need for an improved and renewed approach on Asia-related research and teaching. With the launch of the *Asian Dynamics Initiative* (ADI), a new interdisciplinary Asia focus based in the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences, the University of Copenhagen aims at creating a platform for developing new competencies based on research on social, economic, political, cultural, and religious complexities in Asia. Besides generating cutting edge research and education ADI will have a strong focus on disseminating research results and engaging in public debates concerning Asia.

ADI seeks to establish direct relations with domestic and foreign environments and to collaborate with international partners, universities, and research institutions in Asian Studies in order to facilitate joint research, support exchange of researchers and students and arrange cross-national, interdisciplinary workshops and conferences.

The initiative revolves around seven anchor points that have been identified as common platforms for cross-faculty research and teaching.



1. Knowledge in transit
2. Security at global and local levels
3. Borders, territorialisation and regionalization
4. Belonging, citizenship and identities
5. Local responses to global challenges
6. The economics of the Asian challenge
7. Political institutions and cultures

Cross-cutting topics such as nationalism, environment and climate change, media, religion, minority groups, gender and migration could very well be integrated in the points mentioned above, so that the anchor points expand and the research evolves and takes shape according to the knowledge and interests of those involved.

The ADI covers a number of new positions in Asian studies at Copenhagen University as well as regular common activities focusing on Asia.

The launch of ADI will be celebrated with an open, high-profile conference, which

also marks the 40th anniversary of NIAS, at Festsalen, University of Copenhagen, on 16 September 2008.

The ADI covers a number of new positions in Asian studies at Copenhagen University as well as regular common activities focusing on Asia.



www.asiandynamics.ku.dk will keep you updated on news, activities and events. I hope to see many of you engaged – in one way or another – in future ADI activities! Contact: Marie Yoshida, ADI Coordinator <Marie.Yoshida@nias.ku.dk>.



Publishing revolutions

The Internet revolution has changed scholarship and how research results are disseminated. In these snippets from their forthcoming book (see back cover), Gerald Jackson and Marie Lenstrup consider the future.

Electronic formats

[A]cademics were among the first people to adopt the Internet as an integrated part of everyday life, and much new technology has offered immediate and obvious benefits for scholars and their research ... The advantages have been less obvious for publishers [due to many different issues]. Once these various issues have been successfully resolved, and we expect that they soon will be, electronic formats could come to play a much bigger role than at present.

E-book readers

Handheld devices for reading electronic book formats were once trumpeted as real alternatives to printed books since ... e-books are truly portable and versatile, just like printed books. However, these ... have so far failed to engage a public otherwise hot for any new electronic gadget.

While one key barrier to adoption (in addition to cost and availability) has been the inferior reading experience compared to a book, the central problem has been the lack of uniform software and hardware platforms. ... However, if a killer device were to come on the market it would probably revolutionize trade publishing as quickly as the iPod revolutionized the music industry.

POD and the bookshop as content kiosk

Print-on-demand (POD) technology has developed to the point where proponents now talk of placing POD printing equipment in every bookshop so that, instead of carrying stock in the form of books, shops can become 'content kiosks' where customers browse through files before placing print orders for immediate execution.

The content revolution

While global digitization for free consumption enjoys far from global support, the vast majority of publishers are very keen on digitization [for two reasons]. The first is that digitized books (and journals) ... can be chopped up into smaller pieces ... to be sold as they are or to be re-combined with other chunks of material to create new products. ... The second idea is that older material which publishers would

previously have allowed to go out of print can continue to find new readers ...

Quite possibly the ultimate result will be [as in the music industry], where downloads have made the album an archaic concept in a world where the relevant commercial (and, increasingly, artistic) entity is the individual song. ... one can easily imagine that there would be a ready market for individual chapters from edited volumes of academic texts, perhaps even enough to revive the fortunes of the edited volume in general academic publishing.

Bite-sized scholarship

One aspect of making everything available electronically ... is that cutting and pasting from search results to new text becomes very easy. In effect, 'new' text can be built using little other than blocks of material garnered from earlier works. One might worry that this will raise questions about what exactly constitutes fair use and what is plagiarism. ... And yet another concern could be that the facilities for bite-sized scholarship will threaten the tradition for long, sustained argument and reasoning that is a mainstay of scholarly publishing, particularly in the humanities and social sciences.

The book is dead, long live the book

Beset as it may be on many sides, we firmly believe that rumours of the death of the book have been greatly exaggerated. Sure, there are things that electronic media can do better than books: they are much faster and easier to search, they can integrate sound and moving images seamlessly, they take up hardly any space at all, and their storage capacity approaches infinity. But the book has its own unique advantages:

Imagine if we had been getting our information delivered digitally to our screens for the past 499 years. Then some modern Gutenberg had come up with a technology that was able to transfer these words and pictures on to pages that could be delivered to our doorstep, and we could take them to the backyard, the bath, or the bus. We would be thrilled with this technological leap forward, and we would predict that someday it might replace the Internet. – Walter Isaacson, former CEO of CNN

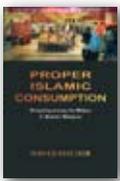
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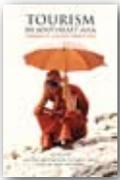
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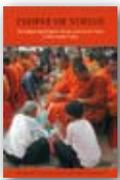
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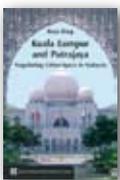
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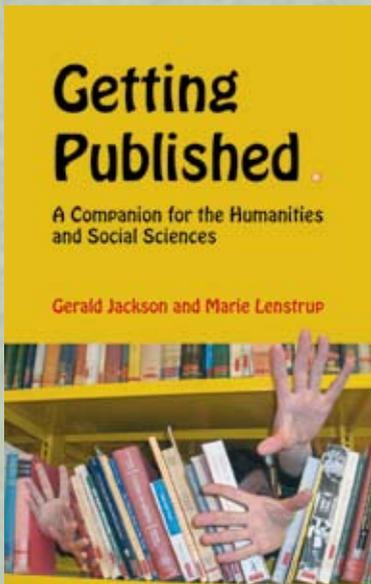
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