

KØBENHAVNS UNIVERSITET

Asian Dynamics Initiative

Proposal for Cross-Faculty Research Cooperation on Asia

(Shortened version, June 2008)

Faculty of Humanities

Faculty of Social Sciences

List of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Asian Dynamics Initiative (ADI)	4
1. Why an Asian Dynamics Initiative	4
2. Vision	5
3. Background	6
4. The new Asia research profile	7
5. Context and networks	9
6. Educational activities	11
7. Library and information services	12
8. Asia in the local and global society	12
9. Structure	13
10. Schedule	13
Appendix 1: Research themes	15

Executive Summary

For Denmark and Europe, Asia has become increasingly important as a powerful player on the global scene and, today, it is of strategic importance to tackle what is often called the challenge of the “Asian Century”. To grasp the dynamics of Asia, we need to both understand and learn from Asia and to focus on intra-Asian relations that invariably influence decisions and developments in and out of Asia. The Asian Dynamics Initiative aims at creating a platform for developing new competencies at the University of Copenhagen based on research on social, economic, political, cultural, and religious complexities in Asia and their rich historical, philosophical, and intellectual underpinnings. The proposed cooperation between social sciences and humanities, combined with access to primary sources in Asian languages, will promote high quality research and teaching as well as helping researchers and graduate students to better act as disseminators, communicators, and experts.

The purpose of the Asian Dynamics Initiative is to strengthen the position of the University of Copenhagen as a major strategic source for knowledge about Asian societies and communities. Asian dynamics are often not well understood by applying narrow disciplinary approaches and, therefore, the approach underlying this proposal is to engage researchers and students at the University of Copenhagen in cross-disciplinary research and teaching on modern Asia. In this way, we hope to make the most of the existing resources on Asia as well as to develop new insights and resources on Asia.

The present proposal revolves around the following strategic research themes which aim to create common platform for social sciences and humanities research and for cross-disciplinary 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

These themes are seen as crucial for understanding Asia’s dynamics and the role of the continent in international development and globalization processes during the coming years. They are to be designed as platforms to gather research groups from the social sciences and the humanities in common endeavour while also opening up to researchers with an interest in Asia from other faculties, as well as to international partners in Asian studies, e.g. within the IARU.

It is proposed to invest 6.5 million DKK per year to employ internationally recognized academics to improve and complement existing strengths. The proposal outlines a tentative plan for such hiring. The investment will also cover expenses in connection with coordination, international workshops, guest researchers, and the development of new cross-faculty courses. All of these efforts will relate to the central themes identified. The programme will be lead by a steering group of six to eight persons (three-four from each faculty) and will be coordinated through a secretariat.

The initiative will from the start have a strong focus on communication and dissemination including a high-profiled and comprehensive web site. It will be active in disseminating research results and engaging in public debates concerning Asia.

Asian Dynamics Initiative (ADI)

A proposal for a cross-disciplinary initiative based in the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Copenhagen

1. Why Asian dynamics

For Denmark and Europe, Asia and its sub-regions and countries have become increasingly important as powerful players on the global scene and, today, it is of strategic importance to tackle what is often called the challenge of the “Asian Century”.

With its expanding economic markets, its complex and unique political systems, rich and diverse cultures and world religions, Asia has become important for our understanding of the world in the 21st century. Asian businesses and institutions have become global players that influence our daily lives as well as destinations for outsourcing of production and services from our part of the world. Further, they are increasingly important for us as sources of knowledge, new insights and inspiration in a variety of matters, such as culture, religion or social relations. The global economy has become integrated with the Asian growth economies that are also major contributors to climate change and global environmental deterioration and thus have immediate effects on all our lives. Major innovation hubs are spreading across Asia, Asian culture and products have gained global impact, and Asian universities and research environments are increasingly becoming our partners and competitors. Asia’s nations and governments at different levels are key players in tackling issues of global concern, while some of the world’s major security risks territorially, religiously, ethnically, environmentally or politically motivated - are still to be found in Asia. News from Asia hits the headlines of our media every day while Asian people migrate in large numbers within the region and increasingly to Europe. Finally, local responses in Asia to hundreds of millions of deprived and poor people are aspects of globalization that have little-understood implications for larger socio-cultural processes in the region and the world. Asia is dynamic, is on the move and we need to relate to it.

These dynamic processes challenge our approach to the study of Asia and the way we handle our relations with the continent. To grasp the dynamics, we need to both understand and learn from Asia. We must create a platform for developing new competencies that are based on research and understanding of the social, economic, political, cultural, and religious complexities and their rich historical, philosophical, and intellectual underpinnings. The proposed cooperation between social sciences and humanistic disciplines combined with access to primary sources via thorough knowledge of one or more Asian languages will enable participants in this initiative to produce new, high quality research on Asia, to improve teaching on Asia and it will help individual researchers to better act as disseminators, communicators, and experts.

The purpose of this proposal is to strengthen the position of the University of Copenhagen as a major source for knowledge about societies and communities in Asia and, in particular, to

understand Asia's increasing importance in the processes of economic, political, social and cultural globalization with a focus on their specific agencies and institutions. Equally important, globalization has a cultural agency where norms, values, and cultural trends, dimensions, and institutions, many of them new, shape the dynamics of globalizing forces in Asia, while other cultural forces, such as religious or political fundamentalism, is an obvious reactive response to these processes.

Asian dynamics are often not well understood by applying singular disciplinary approaches and, therefore, the approach underlying this initiative is to engage researchers at the University of Copenhagen in cross-disciplinary research and teaching on modern Asia.

Furthermore, the identification and understanding of the cultural dimensions in globalization is one of the important knowledge resources for our societies. Cultural understanding is also a major topic in "Globaliseringsplanen" as described in chapter 11 of the plan. Further, this initiative aims at fulfilling the need for a strategic resource on Asia for the society and is thus in accordance with the strategy plan for the university.

2. Vision

Over the years the study of Asia at the University of Copenhagen has been conducted in a multiplicity of disciplines and in a wealth of contexts. The purpose of this initiative is to refine and increase our knowledge of Asia and to create a platform for theorizing on the basis of Asian studies by coordinating and strengthening research and education on Asia at the University of Copenhagen.

There are two major trajectories that can lead to a successful programme:

- coordination of existing research across all faculties combined with broad spectrum courses on graduate level
- strengthening research in topics and regions which we today identify as becoming of major importance for future developments

Here it is the intention that all persons engaged in studies relating to Asia may find common ground, that each will contribute with their competences and specializations and gain access to the larger pool of knowledge created by the common work forum. By creating this forum we hope to:

- Develop theoretical tools and models with which to better analyse, understand and explain the past and present Asian phenomena and development trajectories.
- Better understand the dynamics of interactions with Asia and within Asia.
- Create synergies between empirical research in Asia and the established basic research of the involved disciplines
- Promote comparative interdisciplinary relations and educational activities.
- Establish The University of Copenhagen as a leading centre of Asian studies in Europe.

A crucial background for building up such knowledge facilities is the recognition of the importance of understanding, in a regional context and in an integrated manner, cultural identity and multi-culturalism on the one hand and specific political, economic and social institutions on the other.

Different cultures and their wider societal manifestations must be studied on their own premises through access to primary sources and insight into institutions, religions, and traditions of a region. A successful initiative should seek to engage the variety of relevant disciplines across the social sciences and the humanities while also establishing efficient language training programmes and possibilities for field work that can build up the required methodological and language skills for the researchers and students who need this. Furthermore, collaborations with international partners, the IARU network and in particular with Asian research institutions and universities are crucial. Finally, the initiative should reach out to other fields of study at the university that are engaged in or with Asia, for example health, geography, law, theology, and life sciences.

3. Background

Present status: research

Faculty of Humanities

At the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies (Institut for Tværkulturelle og Regionale Studier, hereafter ToRS) research is carried out focusing on contemporary societies, religions, cultures and languages spoken in Asia (Chinese¹, Japanese², Korean³, Indonesian⁴, Thai⁵, Tibetan⁶ and Sanskrit⁷). In addition ToRS includes Russian Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies, all crucial for the Asian and Central Asian area, and science of religion, an important underlying theme in all cultural understanding. Although the focus is on contemporary society, religion and culture, at ToRS there is a long tradition for adding a historical dimension to modernity.

Faculty of Social Sciences

At the Department of Political Science research is carried out focusing on international and regional security and on the development in China's foreign and security policy since the end of the Cold War. At the Department of Economics analyses relevant to Asian studies primarily focus on economics theory and empirical analyses related to growth and development. At the Department of Anthropology research on Asia builds primarily on in-depth ethnographic fieldwork with focus on the local social and cultural processes in the various parts of the region.

Individual research on Asia takes place at ToRS (22 persons), Saxo (6 persons), Dept. of Arts & Cultural Studies (1 person), Dept. of Media, Cognition and Communication (1 person), Dept. of Anthropology (7 persons), Department of Political Science (3 persons), Department of Economics (3 persons), Nordic Institute for Asian Studies (4 persons) (See appendix 2 for a full list of researchers involved in Asian Studies, their research topics and their affiliation)

Present status: education

¹ Staff: 1½ full time positions, 1½ positions in hiring procedure.

² Staff: 3 full time positions.

³ Staff: 1 full time position vacant, to be announced in 2008.

⁴ Staff: 1 full time position

⁵ Staff: 1 full time position

⁶ Staff: 1 full time position

⁷ Staff: 1 full time position

Full BA and MA programmes in Asian studies are offered at ToRS. A PhD-school for Regional Studies is located at ToRS as an educational collaboration between the University of Aarhus, Odense, Nuuk, Copenhagen and NIAS. NIAS conducts and coordinates open research education activities in the framework *Nordic Asian Century Research School Network (ACRSN)*.

The BA- and MA-programmes in Asian studies at ToRS are primarily area studies with a language requirement. In addition, single courses concerning Asian issues that are not part of Asian studies programmes as such are intermittently offered at ToRS sections (Religion, Comparative Cultural Studies). Single courses on issues relating to Asia are from time to time offered at the Saxo-Institute, the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, the Department of Scandinavian Studies and Linguistics, the Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

At the Faculty of Social Sciences, courses relating to all of Asia are regularly offered at the Department of Anthropology, the Department of Economics and the Department of Political Science. Courses cover such issues as macro- and micro-level economics; social change and development; the development in Chinese post-Cold War security policy; state, governance, conflict and democratization; religion; health and population. Field courses in India and Malaysia are regularly offered to MA students.

ToRS has initiated a project that offers courses in cultural understanding for private companies and public institutions that are going global. ToRS has joined Industrialiseringsfonden for Udviklingslandene and Nationalmuseet in order to develop this concept. The project has obtained support from VTU. Among the clients are Maersk and Nokia.

4. The new Asia research profile

The initiative will revolve around a number of topics or anchor points for research as well as course activities and educational initiatives (more elaborate descriptions of the anchor points may be found in Appendix 1). These anchor points have been identified as “common ground” for cutting edge research and education between the Social Sciences and the Humanities. The anchor points represent areas where we may already have sustainable environments and areas where we see growth potential based on present competences:

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

These anchor points should generate new ideas through the combination of topics, provide descriptions that invite cross-faculty cooperation and pave the way for synergies to arise, also with other research environments at KU. Cross-cutting themes such as nationalism, environment and

climate change, media, religion, minority groups (particularly in China and Central Asia) gender and migration will be integrated in all of the above anchor points.

A survey of existing research capacities at the university has revealed two Asian regions that require particular focus as both are considered of strategic importance for the future development regionally and globally, namely South Asia and Western China/Central Asia.

Presently, the University of Copenhagen holds no positions in Modern Indian Studies, nor does it offer courses on modern Indian language. In light of recent occurrences, not least in Denmark, the possibility of acquiring competence in a local language appears to become ever more important, as the ability to communicate and relate directly to a culture through its own language is central in our globalized world. The absence of a modern Indian language is particularly glaring considering the place of India in the world of today. In view of its sheer size and of the increasing weight India carries internationally, we should also consider strengthening this area, possibly with post-doc or PhD activity.

South Asia, including India and Pakistan, is one of the most important cultural, political, economic and religious agents of contemporary society. For South Asia the research and educational programmes at ToRS have so far been focusing on historical or religious perspectives. In collaboration with the Social Sciences a strong capacity on contemporary South Asian society and culture should be established. The recent strengthening of Islamic studies at the university should be coordinated with this novel focus on South Asia.

Central Asia - including Western China and Mongolia - is also becoming increasingly important in the political, economic and cultural landscape of the region. Major energy resources are located here and are already being exploited by Danish companies. The interest of China in this region, the region's history as strongly dominated by the former Soviet Union and the ethnic and religious complexities with Islam as a major identity, provides a stage for globally induced tension. At the University of Copenhagen, we have a long tradition for studying the languages and cultures of Central Asia which may support the establishment of both courses and research into contemporary society and culture in the region. The university has a unique potential for developing into a leading expert within this region, if we give it priority today.

Furthermore, South East Asia - including countries like Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia - continues to be a region of strong research interest both in relation to the specific socio-economic development of the region and in relation to the role culture, religion and languages play in this region.

It is suggested that the initiative holds one or two conferences or work shops every semester dealing with the anchor points or the cross-cutting themes followed by dissemination of the results either as publications, media events or through the internet. It will be up to the steering committee to suggest how cross faculty research groups can be organized as part of the initiative.

To reach out to "Asia in the World", it is an important principle that the initiative builds on partnerships between University of Copenhagen and Asian Universities and research institutions. Direct relations with domestic as well as foreign environments where studies on Asia are conducted, in and outside Asia will be established; we will make use of the diverse web of existing

networks among our scholars and international research communities, and work to strengthen and develop the position of the University of Copenhagen within them. Such efforts will be supported by the invitation of guest researchers and lecturers, work shops as well as conferences. Through participation in the ten university alliance, IARU, the University of Copenhagen is connected to four leading research universities in Asia. University of Copenhagen is actively involved in all four tracks of “Global Change”, the common research programme of IARU: “Movement of People”, “Security”, “Ageing, Longevity and Health” and “Energy Resources and Environment”.

5. Context and networks

The initiative is implemented by the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences with NIAS-Nordic Institute of Asian Studies as a collaborative partner⁸, while also seeking cooperation with other research environments at the university that in various ways work with Asia.

The researchers working on Asia at the University of Copenhagen are resource persons for this initiative. They are all part of personal or institutional international networks that span the relevant academic communities around the world. These networks will be mapped as part of the initiative and relevant information will be shared through the proposed web site.

In collaboration with Lund University, with which the Faculty of Humanities and NIAS have close collaboration in both humanities and social sciences, this initiative will explore the possibility of developing the Øresund region as a world class hub for Asian studies.

The present initiative will be based on a partnership between Danish/European and Asian research and higher education institutions. This will actively facilitate and support the exchange of researchers, for example by establishing a fund with possibilities of facilitating a programme for in- and outgoing visiting professorships.

Being part of international networks, all researchers have access to relevant regions in Asia. The initiative will cooperate with existing programmes and research that relates to the involved issues and will establish contacts with for example the growing area of Islamology at the University of Copenhagen.

ToRS is involved in a large research group funded by the innovation fund of the president of the Max Planck Society. The theme is “Globalization of Knowledge and its Consequences” and the projects involved cover the whole world. Our university is represented with a project on Chinese politico-intellectual authority in early republican China and a project on archaeology in the Near East.

⁸ NIAS is a Nordic research and service institute that is incorporated into the University of Copenhagen with a §31 status (under the University Law) at the Faculty of Social Sciences. NIAS has a portfolio of activities that can link to this programme, in particular research, research training, and library and information services. NIAS will have a five year contract with the Nordic Council of Ministers for the period 2008-2012. The Nordic Council of Ministers is NIAS’ main financial sponsor. Academically, NIAS is managed by a consortium of Nordic universities who are also partners and recipients of services. University of Copenhagen and Lund University are major partners with the University of Copenhagen as the second largest financial sponsor. NIAS thus offers integration into a wider Nordic network.

Summer schools and master classes are held in collaboration with University of Singapore, Yale University and University of Edinburgh (<http://seasiaincontext.tors.ku.dk/>).

Peking University, KU and a number of German universities collaborate on a language school – European Centre for Chinese Studies - and research program that may serve as a bridgehead into studies in and on China.

ToRS has a close cooperation with The Defence Academy on development of Central Asian studies.

The University of Copenhagen is a member of The Nordic Centre in India and the Nordic Centre Fudan in China, which both offer facilities for research collaboration, educational facilities, summer courses and for example access to language training in a number of Indian Universities (www.nci.uu.se/).

The Swedish South Asian Studies Network, SASNET is a national research network which undertakes Ph.D.-training, planning of conferences, and donates seed money for projects in the humanities, social sciences and science. It is jointly funded by SIDA and Lund University and is placed at Lund University and will be a major resource for this initiative.

The Department of Anthropology collaborates (education and research) with the Vietnam Commission for Population, Family and Children, Hanoi Medical University (ENRECA); and with the University of Malaysia in Sarawak, Kasetsart, and the Chian Mai University, Thailand (SLUSE), and with Cambridge University, the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit (MIASU) as well as with the Christian Medical College in Vellore, India.

NIAS is engaged in a considerable number of operational Nordic and international networks that focus on either regions in Asia or themes such as gender, innovation and urbanization, and security.

Programmes in Asian Studies are offered at the following Universities in the vicinity of Copenhagen:

- Copenhagen Business School has research and education in Chinese and Japanese studies and research capacities on Korea, Southeast Asia and India.
- The University of Aarhus has research and education in Chinese, Japanese and Indian studies.
- The University of Lund has research and education in Chinese and Japanese studies (See also SASNET).

6. Educational activities

At the University of Copenhagen the programmes in Asian studies are located at Faculty of Humanities where the disciplines besides language skills also introduce a package of historical, religious, cultural and social aspects of the region where the language is spoken. Most of them offer a comprehensive package of knowledge concentrated on the area where the language in question is spoken and with a mostly humanistic focus. Only South East Asian Studies (contact languages: Indonesian & Thai) have a broader focus for the content courses, as they cover all of South East

Asia. These programmes are successful producers of candidates with country-specific knowledge, and it is our experience that their language competence makes them particularly attractive to employers. Recent developments in Asia have secured candidates easy access into the Danish employment market.

Courses on Asia are already on offer through Open University and through commercial arrangements with private companies. The new initiative will open further avenues for adult education in a variety of settings.

In the future, it should be possible for any student at the University of Copenhagen to make a study plan with a strong profile in Asian studies. New courses in Asian Studies should distinguish themselves first of all by focussing on relations between Asian countries and regions, and on relations in Asia and relations between Asia and the rest of the world as well as on seeing smaller regions in context. Secondly, new courses should offer new competences with a combination of humanistic and social sciences approaches as a result of the cooperation between the two faculties. Thirdly, we find it important to give the students practical experiences in Asia, so The Asian Dynamics Initiative should strive to offer internships, field courses or other activities in Asia in order to enable the students to work and act in Asian contexts. The students should be able to combine regional and language competencies (if they so desire) with competencies from specific disciplines. The courses should also be developed in cooperation with the existing BA- and MA-programmes to optimize the use of man power and possibilities of synergies. The novel aspect of the courses will be that we bring together the humanities and social sciences, and that we provide a broad competence in analyzing Asian regions in a relational perspective along with the opportunity for language acquisition and finally the possibility of internships in Asia (“praktik”). The “praktikkontorerne” (internship units) at the involved department will be responsible for locating relevant internship possibilities at international or local organizations, private companies and Danish representations abroad.

The Asian Dynamics Initiative should put on a number of courses for students across faculties and for international students, international summer schools and master classes. We already offer courses in collaboration with the University of Singapore, Yale University and the University of Edinburgh. This model appears very successful and can easily be extended.

As part of the initiative, one interfaculty PhD course focusing on Asia specific topics should be offered annually to Danish as well as international doctoral students.

Students should be encouraged to obtain language skills, either through standard programmes at the university (at least “propaedeutical courses”) or through field schools. There already exists a good opportunity for students of Chinese to study language for half a year in Beijing, extension of such programmes should be considered e.g. in India through the Nordic Centre in India.

7. Library and information services

The University of Copenhagen and NIAS Library and Information Center (NIAS LINC) possess a comprehensive collection of material and resources in the libraries. Libraries are an important hub for the study of Asia and they provide qualified academic information solutions for researchers, teachers, and students. Our libraries offer course literature, semester shelves as well as a living

study environment for students. NIAS, KUBU, and the department library at ToRS' Asian section have enjoyed close collaboration for 40 years, incl. sharing of databases, journals, and joint training in use of library resources. The libraries have different specializations, thus material in Asian languages is mainly to be found in the library in ToRS. KUBU has extensive collections of material in primarily English, and NIAS integrates access to a collection of recent literature on Asia and electronic access to an extensive collection of journals, databases, encyclopedia, and handbooks via ELIN@NIAS (incl. databases in Asian languages). NIAS LINC and the libraries at the involved institutions offer advice and guidance on search and handling of academic information and library services and student facilities in the form of study places and facilities for group work. This proposal will offer more services to researchers and students in support of the new initiative. Finally, NIAS Press offers researchers the opportunity to publish their work in peer reviewed series on Asia.

8. Asia in the local and global society - website, Asia Portal and dissemination

It is important for this initiative to be visible both internally and externally. It must therefore have a strong focus on communication and dissemination.

The new initiative has to be communicated clearly within the university, nationally, and internationally through a comprehensive web site and regular electronic newsletters with news on publications, guests, seminars, public lectures, and symposia etc. The web site should provide relevant info on all Asian studies environments, research programmes/projects, and resource persons at the University of Copenhagen so that experts can be easily located for specific topics and functions as well as for media appearances. The web site should have common electronic course catalogues for Asian studies at the University of Copenhagen while also providing information on opportunities for studying abroad, e.g. at partner institutions, and internships. The web site could link to the NIAS Asia Portal which provides both open and privileged access to information resources and information on Asian studies globally.

In order to improve the relevance and visibility of the researchers in the public sphere, all attached researchers are asked to contribute actively to the public debate, e.g. through analyses in the media. It is also suggested that the initiative keep close contacts with relevant representations (embassies).

Contact to Danish industries and trade companies actively engaged in Asia is maintained through the established facility, "Kulturkurser for Erhvervslivet", in collaboration with "Industrialiseringsfonden for Udviklingslandene" and the National Museum (www.kulturkurser.dk). Currently courses on India are being developed for Nokia.

The initiative will further develop collaboration regarding research and "praktik" with relevant international and bilateral agencies and with non-governmental organizations not to mention with the Danish Foreign Ministry following the Ministry's newly adopted Asia-strategy to improve Denmark's position in Asia

9. Structure

The initiative is coordinated by a steering group consisting of six to eight persons appointed by the deans for humanities and social sciences (three-four each). A chairperson and a vice-chairperson should be appointed for the first period of 3 years by the deans for humanities and social sciences or elected by the steering group. Both the chairperson and the vice-chairperson are members of the steering group. A new steering group of six to eight persons (including chairpersons) appointed by the deans for humanities and social sciences (three to four each) will be set up for the next period. Chairperson and a vice-chairperson for the second period should also be appointed by the deans for humanities and social sciences or elected by the steering group.

The steering group writes up detailed plans for each year's activities, make budgets and report directly to rector and deans. Secretarial help (AC and some HK) is attached to the initiative.

The research and activities of the initiative take place all over the university. However, the initiative should have a coordination unit with secretarial help (AC and some HK) located in the department to which the chairperson is attached.

During the 3rd year the initiative shall be evaluated internally and in the 5th year externally according to international standards.

With the suggested allocation of resources, the initiative will require space for 4 researchers at the Faculty of Humanities, and 5 researchers at the Faculty of Social Sciences, as well as space for a secretariat.

10. Schedule

A rough schedule for the first five years:

Year 0: Hiring full professor for South Asian studies, assoc. prof. for Western China and Central Asia and a full professor for Asia and international and regional security, a full professor in economics with special reference to Asia and a full professor in anthropology with special reference to Asia and the local responses to the global challenges. Establishing the steering committee and appointing a chairperson and vice chairperson. Setting up a secretarial function.

Year 1: Appointing two post.doc.s for a two and three year period. One from the humanities and one from the social sciences. Call for PhD application for co-financed grants.

Semester 1: Establishing a homepage. Programme for public relation. Conference 1: "Asian Challenges". Defining and advertising MA-courses.

Semester 2: Conference/work shop 2 and 3. Courses.

Year 2: Continued course activity. Public relation activities

Semester 1: Conference/work shop 4 and 5

Semester 2: Conference/work shop 6 and 7

Year 3: Appointing a post.doc. for a three year period. Call for Ph.D. application for two co-financed grants. Public relation activities. Internal evaluation.

Semester 1: Conference/work shop 8 and 9
Semester 2: Conference/work shop 10 and 11

Year 4: Appointing a post.doc. for a two year period. Public relation activities.

Semester 1: Conference/work shop 12 and 13

Semester 2: Conference/work shop 14 and 15

Year 5: Public relation activities. External evaluation.

Semester 1: Conference/work shop 16 and 17

Semester 2: Conference/work shop 18 and 19

Appendix 1:

Research themes

1. Knowledge in Transit

Throughout history ideas have moved at different speeds and for enormously different reasons. The flow of ideas between East and West has been particularly intense since the 19th century. The flow within Asia has a far longer history. With each exchange, the original idea, concept or *imaginaire* changes those who espouse it and is changed by them. Thus traditional concepts are rarely ousted by the new. They are more likely to be enriched or modified and to accommodate the new or be accommodated to it. Reflections of these borrowings and reworkings can be found in both the concrete organisations and institutions within a society (for instance political, legal, educational systems), in the various genres of scholarly and creative writing and in cultural artefacts.

A broad interdisciplinary study of the processes and results of inclusion and rejection, of acceptance and resistance that developed as a result of intercultural exchanges and borrowings can provide an excellent basis for a new understanding of the complex mechanisms involved in the appropriation of the new in a broad variety of cultural contexts in Asia. By investigating the manner in which philosophical, religious, historiographical, political, social, literary or artistic concepts have travelled between East and West and within the East over time, we can develop a broad conceptual framework for understanding the dynamics of cultural contact both historically and in the present.

2. Security at global and local levels

The rise of Asia in general and China in particular constitutes a major challenge to international security. Change in the global distribution of power – militarily, economically and politically – has historically been among the primary reasons for instability, friction and major war. Accommodating change peacefully is notoriously difficult, because existing orders and institutions reflect old power distributions and change therefore affects privileges and principles. The Western security literature has so far mostly been pre-occupied with discussions of a possible “China threat” (and Chinese responses taken the form of the theory of “China’s Peaceful Rise”), but so far little work both outside and inside the region exists on the visions that are going to animate the usage of the newly emerging power in Asia. Understanding hereof has to draw on international history, culture and traditions as well as current political thinking in Asia. Particularly, it will be important to combine and mediate on the one hand general theories of international relations that are often Western-derived and presume Westphalian sovereignty based order and on the other hand the history and possibility of more centred or ‘imperial’ orders, where notions of hierarchy, harmony and responsibility play a different role. The emerging security order needs to be analysed not only in terms of power and polarity, balances and alliance, but also more broadly as a regional “international society” with distinct institutions and principles. Particular attention needs to be paid to the complex interaction of regional security with domestic, sub-regional, inter-regional and global security dynamics.

This largely top-down question about the effect on global power, the reactions of other powers, and the locally grown visions for international security, should be complemented with a second main form of security analysis of a more bottom-up nature. What constitutes conflict, security and risk, and the way they are handled and voiced, varies according to the relevant political culture or collective habitus in question. By looking at such perceptions and coping strategies in various parts of Asia, theories of conflict and security may be refined to adequately cover experienced realities and both the inter- and intra-regional interactions pertinent to Asia. Such inter- and multidisciplinary investigations of differences and similarities in perceptions of “security”, “conflict” “risk” or “danger” can provide us with a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms that prompt individual or collective actors in various parts of Asia to behave in specific ways. The scope of this theme should be conceived both at micro-level, where social perceptions and assessments of risk, danger and cravings for security come to the fore, and at macro-level, where governments, diplomats, civic institutions or the military establishment act, as exemplified by innovative efforts by both authoritarian and democratic Asia toward the securitization of threats to society often implying also a designation of specific developments or actors *in* society as security threats. The combination of social sciences and the humanities in this field would help foster a new form of “security and conflict studies”, where different disciplines will come together to cast light on the specific nature of security perceptions in Asia.

3. Borders, territorialisation and regionalisation

Asia, China and the Himalayas are not regions in their own right but are made to appear *as regions* to scholars, indigenous people and external actors alike through historical, economic, religious, political, and cultural processes. The imagination of regions and frontiers based on national identity, language, literature, religious affiliations or economic security is the ground from which more established cultural identities and political relations across regions materialise. It is thus vital to investigate the processes through which borders and territories within Asia emerge and are voiced in order both to re-envision Asia as a dynamic part of the world without fixed regions and clear-cut boundaries and as a region where the virtual (re)definition of territories, boundaries and relations have real effects on people’s lives. Processes internal to Asia interact with global level dynamics where inclusion/exclusion of external actors, notably the USA and occasionally Europe, are a central feature of the definition among Asian actors of regionality in areas like regional security, economics and culture.

Research into these questions will require dialogue on a number of levels. At the interdisciplinary level, social sciences will have to meet the humanities: Macro perspectives (e.g. political science) will have to be combined with on-the-ground fieldwork based perspectives (e.g. anthropology) as well as with historical analyses of how perceptions of regions and borders are reflected in cultural artefacts (literature, film, art, etc.). Moreover, emerging indigenous conceptualisations of borders and territories often do not respect the boundaries of nation states and scholarly discourse. This highlights the importance of thinking of regionalisation in terms of regions emerging through relations – and in contrast – to other regions, and it also points to the importance of rethinking the conventional version of ‘regional studies’.

4 Belonging, citizenship and identities

Individuals' membership of social groups and communities is a dynamic and contested field that is being vehemently negotiated in everyday social practice, in the interaction between citizen and state, in fierce and violent encounters between different groups or in the interface between local and global actors. Increased migration within and across borders for labour or safety; internal processes of economic, social and cultural differentiation and growing inequality, and political and environmental emergencies are all factors that contribute to heightened political, intellectual and popular discussions around the definition and negotiation of social identities – of belonging and recognition - in the Asian region.

To begin to understand the mechanisms inherent in the politics of identity, research must focus on 1) *cultural understandings* that rely on traditional cosmologies and historical experiences or draw on new images and values made accessible through the flows of globalisation, and which are all part of larger affective models; 2) *legal definitions and policies* that make notions of identity and belonging the basis of distributing rights and entitlements and an integral aspect of processes of inclusion and exclusion; and finally 3) *the practices, experiences and expressions* of identity in various socio-political environments, where individuals and groups claim and promote particular kinds of belonging and authorities either recognise these or reject them and impose alternative categories.

The consideration of citizenship in the context of regional and global change requires that attention be paid to *legal definitions* of citizenship in specific constitutions. But it is equally important that attention is given to different *cultural understandings* of belonging, which builds on for example ethnicity, religious intellectual traditions and historical political structures and are expressed and embodied in a variety of material and social activities. Finally, attention must be devoted to how citizenship and belonging is *practiced and experienced* by different social groups and individuals, possessing or aspiring to different degrees of citizenship; how it works in everyday social contexts and in encounters between political and social institutions and the individual.

Interdisciplinary and comparative study of the three above-mentioned areas can lead to a much deeper understanding of the dynamics of political, social and cultural belonging in Asian contexts. As a result of such study, it will not only be able to develop broader theoretical tools for discussing both legal and emotional states of belonging (and their changes) in an increasingly global arena, but it will also be possible to provide a much better foundation for a basic understanding of parameters of belonging and recognition that differ greatly from those in the European/American regions. Not least, such research can prove an essential tool for the prediction of emerging social conflicts as well as for the identification of development opportunities.

5 Local responses to global challenges

Asia looms large in the new globalised world and in current Euro-American economic imaginations (of miracle, or of apocalypse). But how exactly is the booming 'Asian economy' understood and negotiated by the different social actors participating in it, and how can the local economic cultures,

identified across Asia be characterized? By focusing on the intimate relations between cultural ideas and economic practices on the one hand, and on different local responses to accelerating social changes on the other hand, it will be possible to shed new light on the little-understood socio-cultural specificities of the Asian economic miracle. How do local populations and organizations respond to the global challenges and how does it affect the everyday life in urban and rural communities of Asia. As such, the idea is to establish methodological, theoretical and analytical bridges between the predominantly macro-level and quantitative research and the micro-level more qualitative oriented research.

Investigating the different local cultural economies in Asia will involve four interrelated themes: 1) *Production* is always embedded in local socio-cultural forms (e.g. households) and in work ethics propagandized by cultural and religious traditions (e.g. Confucianism and Buddhism). How does this affect local economies in Asia, and what are the effects of globalisation on the moralities of production across this region? 2) Socio-cultural practices of *exchange* are hardly ever simply economic. Recognising this entails paying close attention to how social networks control the flow of money, goods and gifts within and between different regions and countries. How are economic exchanges moulded by cultural ideas and social relationships? And how does the introduction of market exchanges in formerly socialist economies affect social relations and categories? 3) In a similar vein, to understand how the peoples of Asia are becoming global *consumers* entails exploring how new consumption patterns are embedded in cultural values, and how new forms of consumption transform different identities and subjectivities. Finally, the question of *power* will need to be attended to in detail. What is the relation between (liberal or authoritarian) political cultures and economy? As the Asian economic boom has led to a growing social and cultural stratification, a focal point is also the growing social tensions arising from wealth differences between centres and peripheries.

The focus on local economic and social transformations is aimed at shedding light on how "Asian Dynamics" affect concrete social structures and relations (e.g. class, caste, ethnicity, community, family, generation, gender) and contribute to new processes and patterns of differentiation (e.g. rich/poor; rural/urban; adults/youths; majority groups/minority groups; citizens/non-citizens; migrants/non-migrants; believers/non-believers); and not least how these processes of social change are experienced and acted upon by local collective and individual actors (through e.g. coping and response strategies; political and economic resistance in the form of for instance new social movements; religious and political fundamentalism; and new forms of production, exchange and consumption).

6. The economics of the Asian challenge

The rapid economic growth of Asia has changed the world economy and will continue to influence the international division of labour, trade patterns and capital flows. It will increase economic wealth but also require economic adjustments in the wider world. Furthermore, it will have an impact on income distribution both in Asia and in the rest of the world and thereby create economic situations, which might be difficult to handle politically. The contours of these trends and changes are – to a certain degree known - but a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the Asian economies will require a concerted research effort across a range of sub-disciplines.

Standard tools of economics and the lessons from economic history can be applied to the analysis of the Asian economic transformation. Growth theory suggests that the astonishing high growth rates are transitory phenomena and at some point growth rates will stabilise at a level similar to that of more mature economies. However, a precondition for this conclusion would be that Asian economies develop an appropriate set of political, economic and financial institutions that cannot be taken for granted. Also environmental and social policies may play a significant role in framing the conditions for sustainable growth in the region.

In the 1980s, the “Asian Miracle” was at the core of intense debates about appropriate development strategies and policies. The devastating “Asian financial crisis” followed in the late 1990s. The crisis revealed a range of short run macroeconomic/ financial weaknesses as well as deeper longer-term structural challenges. More recently, exactly a decade after the financial crisis, it is Asia’s revival and phenomenal growth performance that is catching attention. The Asian region is after the turn of the millennium also undergoing dramatic economic, political, technological, social and environmental changes, which remain under-researched in a comparative economic perspective.

Economic history provides us with the insight that emerging economies tends to experience skills shortages, which will lead to increasing income inequality. Again history suggests that these inequalities need not be persistent if the educational system responds in an appropriate way. However, economic inequality is a potential growth inhibiting, factor because it fosters social instability. Income distribution and the social ramifications is therefore an important research topic related to Asia.

New trade patterns developing as a consequence of the rise of Asian economies have led to a free trade backlash, in some parts of Europe and in the United States. This has revealed that the victims of globalisation in mature economies are mainly unskilled labour. This illustrates an insight from trade theory to the effect that although there are net gains from trade there are losers and winners within trading nations. To identify the net gains, as well as adjustment costs from the inclusion of the Asian economies in world economy is also an important research mission..

7 Political Institutions and Cultures

Political institutions are not only interesting objects of study from the point of view of legislation, decision-making processes, power struggles, economic redistribution, or international diplomacy. They are also, *eo ipso*, inherent carriers and producers of cultural histories, “local knowledge”, civilisational assumptions, and identitarian trajectories at both national and regional levels - manifestations, in other words, of often very different political cultures. They embody specific visions of what constitutes the good life, the right kind of morality, and the most appropriate forms of education and socialization in any given social order. Whether we think of governments, judicial or electoral systems, public bureaucracies, social welfare institutions, environmental policies, or educational organizations, they all act as "path-dependent" caretakers of socially desirable identities, rights and duties, worldviews, and interactions between citizens and state.

Differences of this nature are highly pertinent to the analysis of Asia in its complex relations with other regions of the world. For example, Asia and Europe have distinctly different political cultures with regard to defining such concepts as power and authority, leadership and loyalty, rights and duties. Furthermore, political institutions and governmental practises depend on local settings, on the institutionalization of civil society, as well as on civil law, the political regulation of business activities, and the constitutional legal framework. One obvious area that merits thorough scholarly attention is related to perceptions of democracy and human rights, which have globally achieved a status as recognized developmental goals with regard to the organization of society and its civic culture, but are very differently interpreted and practiced in Asia and Europe - both in an inter-regional and intra-regional perspective. Thus this research theme, being explicitly comparative, invites timely projects of an inter-disciplinary nature, where researchers from the social sciences, the humanities, and law can contribute different insights, theoretical templates, and empirical data.