Strategy for NIAS
2011 - 2012

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WHY A TWO YEAR STRATEGY 4

VISION 5

1. ACTIVITIES 5

Research 5

Research Support and Nordic outreach through AsiaPortal 5

SUPRA Support Programme for Asian Studies 6

NIAS Press electronic production, dissemination, and marketing project 6

2. RESEARCH STRATEGY 6

2.1 Considerations behind the Research Strategy 6

2.2 Mapping the Mental Landscapes of EurAsia: A new Research Program 7

2.3 Quality of research 7

3. RESEARCH SUPPORT 7

3.1 NIAS LINC 7

3.1.1 AsiaPortal 8

3.1.2 Library Collections 8

3.2 NIAS Press 8

3.3 SUPRA, student workplaces and ACERS 9

3.3.4 Asian Century Research School Network (ACERS) 10

3.4 Conferences and Networks 11

3.4.1 Barha – a Nordic platform for networking 11

3.4.2 NIAS Conference System. 11

4. COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND NORDIC OUTREACH 11

4.1 Research Communication 12

4.2 Communication and media 12
4.2 NIAS Web Platforms 12
4.3 NIAS Yearbook 12
4.4 Newsletters 12
4.5 Internal communication 13

5. ORGANIZATION, RESOURCES AND FUNDING 13

5.1 Staff 13
5.2 NIAS Funding and NNC 13
5.3 Collaboration with Copenhagen University 14

APPENDIX 1 15

1. Asian politics, ideology and governance 15
2. Gender Politics in Asia 15
3. Moral Horizons in Asia 16
4. Violence, security needs and regional cooperation in Asia 17
Why a two year strategy

We are entering the last two years of the original five years contract with the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) and Copenhagen University (CU). We expect that a new contract will be agreed on and signed in 2012. Our present strategy takes the above as its point of departure, as we will do our best to prove the worth of our work and by this strive to secure our future existence.

With NIAS’ legal incorporation into Copenhagen University in 2005, there is an interest from both sides to pursue closer collaboration. Copenhagen University launched an Asian Dynamics Initiative in 2008 which has a strong focus on building additional research capacity at the university. Our collaboration with this initiative helps promoting our Nordic mandate as it incorporates NIAS into a comprehensive research environment.

The present year has been difficult for NIAS. A main issue has been our economy, and the board as well as the Faculty of Social Science where we administratively belong, have stressed that NIAS had to downsize some activities to meet the requirement of producing a balanced budget. This has been one reason why vacant positions have not been filled. Another reason is that as a part of Copenhagen University we have been subject to a qualified stop in appointing new staff, which has meant that appointments have to pass the deans table. The dean has required that NIAS documented available funds to cover the appointment period before he could accept any appointments.

The task of reaching a balanced budget has had first priority. From having an imbalance of about one million, a so called structural deficit meaning that our yearly expenditure has been one million more than our income, we are now down to a deficit of below half a million, or possible even less than that. The 2011 budget will be further improved. For the coming two years we will nevertheless increase our activities and expand the expenditure. The reason is that as our contract expire in two years time, and due to our independent status at the university as a paragraph 31 institution, we are allowed to use funds from our saving. Thus, the final note in this background introduction to the strategy can be positive: we are in a position to upgrade, expand and consolidate our operations for the coming two years.
Vision

NIAS generates and communicates Asia insights. In a consortium with Nordic universities and research institutions, we enhance and promote the position of Norden as a leading European region for the study of modern Asia.

Our vision is to generate innovative research, research support and research training on the transformation of modern Asia as well as to give policy advice and disseminate research results to the wider public.

1. Activities

NIAS will through a combination of partnering with relevant National, Nordic and International institutions and networks ensure the relevant research and research support capacity needed to fulfill our strategic priorities.

NIAS' challenge is to contribute in developing and maintaining a Nordic research base in Asian studies in close collaboration with our Nordic partners. Our common aim is to enhance a better mutual understanding and through this contribute in bringing the Nordic countries and Asia closer together. As a research and service institute working to meet the needs and promote the interests of the Nordic Asia research and other relevant Nordic communities, the research strategy outlined below relates both to the work of NIAS' current researchers and to the vision and mandate of the institute as a whole.

Research

The research focus remains on the role and impact of Asia in a globalizing world, in particular in relation to the increasing role of Asia for the Nordic region. With NordForsk support, Nordic Networks are being created and new comparative research projects on Asia and the Nordic regions are underway.

Research Support and Nordic outreach through AsiaPortal

NIAS Library and Information Center NIAS LINC will continue the running of the library, the Nordic AsiaPortal and the social network Barha. Emphasizing on bringing new services to users in their own information environment and enhancing NIAS' outreach to user communities, including special services like access to fee based academic resources to the members of the Nordic NIAS Council. Support to Nordic networks will we sustained through Barha.
SUPRA Support Programme for Asian Studies

Through the integration of NIAS SUPRA with the Asian Century Research School Network (ACERS), the activities and services to students will be combined. This will ensure a clear focus on Master and PhD students as the primary target group. Under the research school network, a regular course on problems relating to theory and methods in combining disciplinary and Asian studies will be offered to students from relevant disciplines.

NIAS Press electronic production, dissemination, and marketing project

This is a major effort of marketing and selling NIAS publications in electronic form. The project is aimed to ensure that NIAS Press keeps up with modern trends in scholarly dissemination and enhances the impact of Nordic Asia research in the international environment.

2. Research strategy

2.1 Considerations behind the Research Strategy

The focus of NIAS Research is on societal developments in modern Asia, seen in their cultural and historical context. NIAS works with all of Asia and undertakes basic and applied research to understand and explain continuity as well as change. We focus on aspects and dimensions that characterize particular Asian ways while maintaining a comparative approach.

NIAS favours empirical research with clear theoretical ambitions. The development of new or the contributions to existing theory based on empirical research is important to advance our understanding not only of Asia, but also of the rest of the world, no matter which discipline or theory is at work.

Culture is seen as an important development parameter, as it is linked with tradition and encompasses values, norms, ideas, emotions and practices that characterize groups of people in particular places. Awareness of culture and of the modern challenges to Asian cultures is thus necessarily an essential aspect of our overall cross-cultural research approach. Country- or region-specific knowledge in all fields is essential to interpret and understand change in Asia.

Whenever possible, NIAS research projects should contribute to other Nordic and international projects in the field. It is being done by joining networks and projects with Nordic collaborators or associates. NIAS also contributes to the development of a new generation of researchers through training of MA students and PhD candidates, by participating in research education, and joint supervision with national supervisors of thesis projects.

NIAS’ in-house research capacity includes researchers on NIAS’ payroll, externally funded researchers, affiliated researchers preparing or involved in external projects and visiting scholars. Senior researchers are assigned responsibility for developing research themes of NIAS and take charge of their implementation.
In the present world, research collaboration with other research institutes and scholars is imperative and it is perceived to have a high intrinsic value. Hence, cooperation, primarily with Nordic, Asian, and European partners, but also with partners elsewhere, has priority over more solitary endeavors. NIAS maintain a program for association of senior researchers and experts in Asian affairs who can make special contributions to our output and promote our networks and reputation around the world.

2.2 Mapping the Mental Landscapes of EurAsia: A new Research Program

A research program launched in 2010 strives to integrate the different activities at the institute under a common frame so as to utilize and promote synergy between research, information and knowledge dissemination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The program “Mapping the Mental Landscapes of EurAsia” includes the following key research themes at the institute:</th>
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<td>• Asian politics, ideology and governance</td>
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<td>• Gender Politics in Asia</td>
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<td>• Moral Horizons in Asia</td>
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<td>• Violence, security needs and regional cooperation in Asia</td>
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A description of the four key research themes is included as Appendix 1

2.3 Quality of research

NIAS will encourage its researchers to publish internationally in recognized journals and publishing houses.

3. Research support

3.1 NIAS LINC

NIAS LINC will continue to strengthen its status as a virtual and physical focal point for information and knowledge on Asian studies.

NIAS LINC will continue its efforts to create access to Asian and English language electronic resources i.e. databases and electronic books and journals at the www.AsiaPortal.info.

Furthermore, NIAS LINC will continue the development of the WEB 2.0 based social networking tool Barha and strengthen the networking efforts with Nordic Centres in Asian countries.

NIAS LINC works in a rapidly changing information environment:
• User demand context: There is a growing demand for putting search results in a wider context by linking to other relevant resources
• New forms of publication and communication are constantly developed; open source resources and use of Internet tools are common
• Users demand tools for co-operation and communication
• Advances in science are increasingly cross-disciplinary and users demand cross-disciplinary search facilities
• Networks become more and more important
• There is an increase in self-service needs
• Open Access is increasingly becoming an important part of research publication and dissemination.

NIAS LINC will address these issues by providing value adding activities and services integrating supply of literature and information with reference, guidance and instructions, thereby becoming an integrated part of NIAS’ and NNC’s learning and research systems.

3.1.1 AsiaPortal

NIAS LINC will continue the development of the AsiaPortal.info in order to facilitate access to all relevant resources on Asia for NNC members as well as companies, journalists, governmental officials, and the public. The Portal continues to facilitate access to news, events, researchers, institutions, and publications from all Nordic NIAS Council members. Furthermore, the Portal will give prioritized access to fee-based academic resources for NNC member institutions. The AsiaPortal continues to be a valuable outlet for Nordic research and scholarly communication.

3.1.2 Library Collections

NIAS LINC will maintain and develop the virtual and printed collection of journals and documents in Asian studies. E-book subscriptions will be included in the collection and acquisition of electronic material will be increased. The electronic journal collection is together with Asian newspapers accessible through the AsiaPortal.info’s academic resource part. E-book subscriptions will be included in the collection and acquisition of electronic material will be increased. NIAS LINC faces major challenges if/when we move to smaller premises; in order to protect and keep the collections accessible we need to develop new search facilities integrating RFID marking of printed material with advanced searching technology.

3.2 NIAS Press

NIAS Press was launched to handle the NIAS publications programme in 2002 and it is now a fully-fledged academic publisher with a reputation for publishing innovative, high-quality research by authors from all parts of the world (though with a focus on the Nordic countries). It is a leading European publisher on Southeast Asia, publishing also on East and South Asia. Its international sales and distribution network means that NIAS Press books are found all over the world, also in Asia.

NIAS Press has responded to the worldwide decline of the academic library market by expanding into new markets in Asia and by publishing a broader mix of titles, including textbooks and reference works. This direction is beginning to show positive
results. Our current strategy aims to build on these achievements while responding to the triple challenge of rapid technological change, global economic turbulence and chronic funding shortfalls common to academic presses. The thrust of this strategy is to:

- Work to bring quality Nordic scholarship on Asia to a global readership.
- Ensure that we maintain our reputation for quality and innovative publications.
- Focus on new titles that are not only academically sound but also financially viable.
- Broaden the scope of our offering with electronic content but add greater focus by putting more emphasis on books commissioned within specific book series.
- Maximize our limited resources by streamlining work processes, outsourcing work to freelancers and collaborating with other publishers to achieve common goals.
- Respond to the decline of the Western academic library market by expanding into new markets, especially in Asia, and by strengthening our marketing activities.
- Harness the opportunities of the printing revolution by globally distributed printing to cut distribution costs and print on demand to reduce stock investments.
- Respond cautiously to developments in e-publishing with the steady digitization of our list so that if/when the e-book revolution takes off, we will be able to respond quickly and effectively.
- Utilize new Web 2.0 technologies that encourage authors and readers to interact with the Press and with each other, not least by increased collaboration with NIAS LINC regarding the Nordic Asia portal, Barha, etc.

3.3 SUPRA, student workplaces and ACERS

The scholarships are a central part of the SUPRA programme. They are offered to PhD and Master Students at NNC member institutions, and allow the students to visit and work at NIAS for a period of two weeks. All costs relating to the visit are covered by NIAS included travel, accommodation and meals at the Nordisk Kollegium (www.noko.dk).

At NIAS all SUPRA students and scholars are offered:

- Comprehensive introduction to NIAS and the NIAS library (NIAS LINC)
- Suitably equipped work place
- Interaction with and advice from NIAS researchers
- Opportunities to participate in seminars, workshops and lunch talks at NIAS
- Book discounts with NIAS Press

3.3.1 Registration of students and supervisors

The Barha is an on-line community where students and scholars can meet others involved in Nordic Asia Research and discuss and blog around issues that are important for them. It is offering the newest internet technologies within social networking and these will be used to develop an online community for students with
information available on potential supervisors. All SUPRA students and scholars will be asked to register in and use Barha during their stay at NIAS.

3.3.2 Promoting the SUPRA programme

Visibility in the Nordic region and at the NNC institutions is extremely important in order for SUPRA to be able to sustain and develop the quality of its services. The following initiatives aim at helping to increase the visibility and awareness of the SUPRA programme generally in the Nordic region and primarily at the NNC member institutions:

- NIAS SUPRA ‘go-cards’ and posters
- Welcome package to all visiting students containing information about NIAS, the benefits of the programme, NIAS poster and ‘go-cards’, etc.
- Student reports in NIAS Update
- Ones a year (+ ad hoc): Supplying NNC supervisors with up-to-date information and promotion material about the NIAS SUPRA programme

3.3.3 Student work place

MA-students, who are presently carrying out thesis work in research fields that fall within the research framework of NIAS, and who are interested in joining the NIAS researcher community for a period of time, can apply for a workplace ("studieplads") at NIAS. The student will be given workspace at NIAS and access to the Institute's research facilities. In return the student is required to work five hours a week for a NIAS researcher.

3.3.4 Asian Century Research School Network (ACERS)

Vision: The goal of ACERS is to ensure the highest quality of research training on Asia in the Nordic region. The tool to do this is a model based on Nordic and cross-disciplinary collaboration between universities and research institutions as well as networks in Asia.

ACRSN focus on:

1. Organizing the annual NNC conference and PhD course in collaboration with existing conferences within the Nordic Asian Studies environment
2. Establish closer contact to Nordic research schools and cooperate with them to organize Asia courses open to Nordic students and/or to include Asia dimensions in their regular courses
3. Approach existing Asia networks to enquire if they would be interested in including research training in their activities
4. Engage in more thorough mapping of Nordic PhD students and supervisors working on Asia at the NNC institutions
5. Set up a new website at www.asiaportal.info including a blog for PhD students – use finances to buy assistance from NIAS LINC
6. Funding: Continue to rely on NIAS’ allocation to ACRSN, however, complementary funds have to be located
7. ‘Call for proposals’: supply financial support (seed money) for PhD courses on Asia at NNC institutions and/or new cluster activities
8. Clusters: Only the active clusters should be continued for the time being.

In the future, ACERS will have a working group with core members and with the possibility of adding ad hoc members involved in ongoing activities. There will be one face-to-face meeting a year (September), and one telephone meeting during each semester.

### 3.4 Conferences and Networks

Through many years, NIAS has been involved with and/or supported a number of Nordic conferences, including conferences and workshops by Nordic networks.

NIAS will continue to do so, but will focus its financial support on events that are closely related to our on-going activities and include a PhD training/supervision component and to a lesser extent master classes.

In addition, NIAS will support other relevant Nordic events materially and institutionally to the extent possible, e.g. through participation in planning, advertising and provision of our conference service program.

#### 3.4.1 Barha – a Nordic platform for networking

Barha was created as an extension to AsiaPortal and is building on existing social networking and authentication web tools (WAYF). Barha provides an interactive forum for NIAS’ Networks to network, share, publish and communicate with colleagues.

#### 3.4.2 NIAS Conference System.

NIAS’ existing conference system will continue to be used for all NIAS hosted conferences; however it will be migrated to an open source platform allowing for more flexibility. NIAS is using Copenhagen University’s Web based video streaming systems for broadcasting of meetings and conferences.

### 4. Communication, dissemination and Nordic outreach

Communication and dissemination of research outcome is of vital importance in the effort to make NIAS visible in the best possible way and to ensure “Nordisk Nytte”. NIAS communicates Nordic Asia Research in a reliable, relevant and targeted fashion. NIAS fulfills its communication obligations by developing and using a huge range of communication tools aimed at finding the best media for different target groups and areas.

Communication must be offensive, proactive and timely focusing on both NIAS’ and its partner’s activities and research.
Through AsiaPortal and Barha, research-communication contributes and qualifies the public debate with research-based knowledge concerning issues that are relevant for Nordic Asia Research.

**4.1 Research Communication**

Research communication with peers via academic conferences, workshops, networks and partners is of utmost important and NIAS will encourage its staff members to participate actively in such activities.

NIAS will investigate possibilities for introducing Open Access for Nordic Asia researcher’s publications using AsiaPortal as repository in LINC’s electronic system for harvesting and dissemination Nordic Asia research.

**4.2 Communication and media**

NIAS researchers are still highly sought after especially by the news media from their countries of origin as well as Danish news media. Therefore, there will be no specially coordinated effort to increase the number of media interventions. However, NIAS will continue to make ad hoc press releases and roundtable discussions with invited journalists when activities and events justify it. AsiaPortal, NIAS Press and Barha will continue to be important outlets for NIAS and its Nordic Partners.

**4.2 NIAS Web Platforms**

The development of NIAS’ websites according to NIAS’ communication strategy and design programme continues with extensive use of new internet tools such as researcher blogs, pod casting of meetings, lunch talks and round table discussions, and RSS feed possibilities for NIAS’s different electronic newsletters. Communication through the websites is still considered an important part of NIAS’ Communication Strategy. A migration to a new open source platform is in progress allowing for a more flexible updating to match user demands.

**4.3 NIAS Yearbook**

The current format of the NIAS Yearbook continues. However, a change is considered where the content will focus more on different results of the activities at the institute, both research findings and ongoing projects as well as interesting achievements in the information, dissemination and publication areas.

**4.4 Newsletters**

NIAS many different newsletters will be coordinated into two different ones:

- NIASUpdate with information from the different web platforms and
- NIAS Newsletter: a monthly published window for Nordic Asia Research and NIAS.
4.5 Internal communication

The Intranet shall function as an comprehensive archive, which in addition to minutes of meetings also contains important documents, staff relevant information and How to and what if lists. Common files will increasingly be established for projects/information relevant to more than one person. Web 2.0 tools like blogs, Wikis / open notebooks and tagging will be presented and available for collaborative use. NIAS staff will be encouraged to use Skype for overseas and conference calls.

5. Organization, Resources and Funding

5.1 Staff

In order to maintain a strategic and innovative approach to NIAS’ strategic priorities, NIAS is organized in flexible structure based on research units, research support, library and Press.

5.2 NIAS Funding and NNC

The core financing comes from the following sources:

- Nordic Council of Ministers
- University of Copenhagen
- Member institutions of the Nordic NIAS Council
- External financing

The Nordic Council of Ministers and the partners in The NIAS Consortium contribute financially to NIAS and will have priority access to NIAS’ resources, activities, and services.

NIAS works with a Nordic Consortium (The NIAS Consortium) comprising Copenhagen University and the Nordic NIAS Council with Nordic universities, research institutes, and networks representing all five Nordic countries as members.

The Consortium will continue to strive for synergy and coordination of activities and is conceived as a ‘win-win’ partnership that will enhance the quality as well as the quantity of resources and outputs.

NIAS works closely with Asian partners in its activities.

In its work, NIAS and The NIAS Consortium will maintain a focus on the potential benefits of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which can avail of NIAS and the consortium as a resource base on Asia.

The contracts with the Nordic Council of Ministers and between the Nordic partners respectively cover the period 2008-2012.
5.3 Collaboration with Copenhagen University

With NIAS’ legal incorporation into Copenhagen University in 2005, there is an expressed interest from both sides to pursue more collaboration. Copenhagen University launched an Asian Dynamics Initiative in 2008 which has a strong focus on building additional research and educational capacity at the university, especially at the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Humanities. The Secretariat of this initiative has been placed at NIAS and the Director is a member of the Steering Committee. The initiative has proved to be an opportunity for NIAS to create an even stronger platform with a broader basis of researchers to draw on for the benefit of our Nordic partner community. There is no doubt that the closer collaboration with the Asia focused research at Copenhagen University is strengthening our capacity also from a broader Nordic perspective.

NIAS is incorporated into the Faculty of Social Sciences at Copenhagen University and has asked to be moved to its campus. This has not materialized as planned due to factors outside the control of the Faculty and NIAS. However, the request stands, and NIAS expects to move if not sooner then in 2013, when the address in Leifsgade has to be vacated.
Appendix 1

1 Asian politics, ideology and governance

Aim: Research in Asian politics, ideology and governance aims at understanding political continuity and change in Asia in a historical and comparative perspective, seeing politics as a broad concept comprising most human interaction where power-relations are included. This approach invites interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research, and thus presumes international collaboration and networking.

Background: The increasing global acceptance of democracy and human rights as guiding principles for the governance of nations implies that the monopoly of the West as their chief interpreter and propagator may be challenged. In the early phase democratization meant efforts of copying – if not implementing – Western models. This tendency has been strongly supported by important international institutions such as IMF and the World Bank, in their assisting and guiding transitional systems towards a particular form of development and modernization, where a free market was, and is, a fundamental prerequisite. On the other hand there are forces in Asia as elsewhere seeking to indigenize democratization and democratic practices, which may be leading to new patterns and processes of government and governed relations.

Focus: While political developments obviously depend on the existing socio-economic level, there are particular forces that constitute the dynamics of political development, forces that are shaping both form and content of the political process. Currently the conflicting relationship between global and local approaches and needs are dominant. The global forces, manifest through the above mentioned international institutions, as well as through mass-media and electronic communication channels, promote an agenda where politics and economy becomes disconnected, and a free economy is prioritized. The local forces on the other side tend to emphasize local needs, to maintain that politics should be in command, and, their ideologies are often rooted in local cultures, spelled out as religion, tradition and basic values and norms, which remains strong in this part of the world. When the past, the present and the future are constructed as an inter-dependent ideology and becomes the basis of a world-outlook, it may make up a force of tremendous strength, whether it is invested in nationalistic or democratic projects. In the contemporary world this obviously clashes with global forces based on free market logic.

With a focus on these contemporary conflicts in an Asian context the theme Asian politics, ideology and governance attempts, through practical fieldwork combined with theoretical and empirical studies, to contribute in producing insights as well as relevant studies and reports of more practical use in the political and business fields.

2 Gender Politics in Asia

Aims: Research and other activities under this theme focus on multiple, fluid and complex constructions of gender in Asian societies. The aims are to explore, analyze and understand:

- the gendered effects of social, political and economic changes


- change, continuity and contestations of gender relations and gender discourses
- the gendered processes involved in the construction of societies and cultures

**Focus:** Gender concerns everyday life ideas and practices of masculinities and femininities and gender shapes understandings of sex and sexuality. Moreover, there are links between broad economic and political trends and notions of gender.

**Gender politics:** People are constructed as gendered beings and gender is a key dimension of personal life, social relations and culture. Gender is political in the sense that societies are ordered according to certain patterns of appropriate gendered behavior and gendered power relations. Gender politics comprises the ongoing construction of the social gender relations within which individuals and groups act in all spheres of societies. Many actors are engaged in gender politics. Among these are social movements that challenge the dominant gender order, and also the routine functioning of established institutions in which male dominance is embedded in many societies.

**Effects of gendered Asian societies:** Social change influences gender relations and the lives of men and women in various ways according to the way in which their gendered positions intersect with a range of other factors, such as ethnicity, age, education, class, and urban/rural location. Research and other activities in the theme document and explore the processes and impact of social change, including gendered inequalities, in Asian societies.

**Gendered processes constructing Asian societies:** Increasingly studies of gender in Asia are looking beyond the effects and impacts of various developments on women and men and gender relations. Focus is now shifting towards the questions of the nature of gendered processes within Asian societies and the reasons and ways in which these are incorporated into a globalizing world.

### 3 Moral Horizons in Asia

**Aims:** This research theme aims to explore the way in which moral order — conceptual schemes concerning the limits of what is right/good or wrong/evil — is conceived and contested in various Asian settings. The theoretical ambition of this research theme is to abstract from different empirical examples the moral bases upon which relations – between people as well as between society and the environment – are established.

**Background:** Perceptions of the moral underpinnings of relations may be put under great strain by rapid political, economic or cultural change. Responses to major shifts in politico-economic relations include, for instance, religious revitalization, indigenous activism and nationalism. Understanding the way in which morality is differentially conceived and wielded by various stake-holders and in various Asian settings during times of stability as well as instability is crucial for analyzing the genesis as well as resolution of tensions and conflicts.

**Focus:** Focus will be upon the way in which support of and resistance to politico-economic dynamics are formulated in moral terms by variously positioned actors. Of major interest are the cosmological schemes of ideal order and integrity propagated particularly by those who feel their security and wellbeing are under threat.
Religious intensification: Moral horizons and cosmological order envisioned from a religious viewpoint may nourish notions of moral community and shape its relations with other communities. In the shadow of the ‘war on terror’ and religious ‘fundamentalism’, this is a highly relevant area of research interest.

Cultural reorientation: The research theme explores expressions of cultural awareness and identity and alternative visions of a secure and moral world promoted by minorities, indigenous peoples and movements in East, Southeast and South Asia.

A current research project, Visible and Invisible Realities combines an analysis of a unique set of historical data on cosmologies, rituals and sexuality from an indigenous people, the Punan Bah of Central Borneo with data from an ongoing study of perceptions of religion and sexuality among Punan Bah youth to enhance our understanding of cultural construction of self, body, gender, time and identity in a globalizing world.

The project ‘Sexuality and embodiment among the Punan Bah’ examines ways in which indigenous youth redefine gender and sexuality in the wake of rapid social and cultural transformation in Central Borneo. The project is a derivative of the three year research project ‘Visible and Invisible Realities.

Non-governmental organizing: Non-governmental organizations focus attention on the specific interests of certain groups of people or on broad and general issues, such as gender equality or environmental sustainability, that affect all citizens in a given society. Their aim is often to maintain, rectify or challenge longstanding or newly emerging moral orders. NGOs in Asia are often supported by foreign governmental and non-governmental organizations and they have links to and interact trans-nationally with NGOs in other parts of the world to promote their causes. Both types of interaction involve encounters between differing understandings and interpretations of the issues that are being addressed.

A current research project on gender and development NGOs in China analyzes how three entities – Chinese activists, foreign NGOs and party-state institutions – interact to construct the core knowledges and practices for organizing. Focus is on both the overlaps and clashes between the experiences and interests of all three parties, their power relations and the organizing that evolves from the encounter.

4 Violence, security needs and regional cooperation in Asia

Aims: The aim is both to contribute to general conflict theory and empirical conflict-related generalizations by offering analysis on Asian experiences and to contribute to Asia-specific scholarship by offering conflict-related generalizations and theories from comparative scholarship. On the one hand, this requires a focus on Asian specificities, at the same time as it implies a focus that systematically compares Asian conflicts and security with security and conflict globally and in other regions.

Background: The theme is institutionally tied to international research platforms, some of which are based at NIAS or in other Nordic institutions and some which are just supported by the NIAS theme. One of the main platforms is the ASEM Education Hub, and its network on Peace and Conflict Studies (http://www.tnpcs.niasnetworks.net and http://www.aeh.asef.org/initiatives/index.asp?st=487), which is lead from NIAS.
Another platform is the Sigtuna Network on East Asia, which is jointly lead by the Swedish School of Advanced Asia Studies (SSAAPS) and NIAS. Finally, the theme supports a major Nordic Research program on East Asian Peace, whose institutional base in 2010 was transferred from NIAS to the Institute of Political Science at Uppsala University.

**Focus:** The research theme focuses on Asian violence on various levels (inter-state relations, intra-state relations intra family relations, etc.). It aims at analyzing Asian security and violence and answering questions related to Asia-specific as well as global dynamics of security and conflict in Asia. of whether there is an Asian pattern of security and violence.

Furthermore, the scholarship in this theme focuses on Asia-specific security and conflict issues by looking at the regional development of peace on its own merit. One of the main tendencies in the region, especially in East Asia is the sudden decline in battle deaths since 1979. The averages of annual battle deaths in East Asian countries have dropped after 1979 to less than one tenth of their level before 1979. The explanation of this is an important focus on this research theme.

Finally, the theme has a focus on the trends in peace-making in East Asia and in the possible cooperation Europe can give in the reduction of conflict in Asia. This part of the theme is tightly connected to and serve the more policy oriented efforts of many Nordic governments, the EU and such conflict prevention organizations as the CMI—Crisis Management Initiatives, and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.