

Report on the **“Globalizing border studies and Asian borders:-
Recognizing conceptual differentiation”** Panel

IPSA/AISP 24th World Congress of Political Science, Poznan, Poland

Chaired by KUBS’s Edward Boyle (Faculty of Law, Kyushu University);

with papers by Edward Boyle, Serghei Golunov (Faculty of Law, Kyushu University),
Kohei Imai (IDE-JETRO) & Hong Pyo Lee (Faculty of Law, Kyushu University);

Commentator: Machiko Hachiya (Faculty of Law, Kyushu University).

Thursday 28 July 2016



On July 28, three members of the KUBS team, Edward Boyle, Serghei Golunov, and Machiko Hachiya (as moderator) took part in the panel “Globalizing border studies and Asian borders: Recognizing conceptual differentiation” at the 24th World Congress of Political Science, organized by the International Political Science Association and held in Poznan (Poland) from July 23-28, 2016.

The panel was devoted to examining the distinguishing characteristics of Asian borders in a global context. Serving concurrently as chair, Edward Boyle opened proceedings by setting out what the panel was aiming to achieve, and pointed to the roles that would have been played in the panel by the papers of Nobuhiro Aizawa, Yasunori Hamamatsu and Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman. Sadly, together with the original panel chair, Kaoru Izumi, they were unable to be present in Poland to present their findings. The panel did gain an additional participant in the shape of Professor Hong Pyo Lee, a colleague from the Faculty of Law at Kyushu University whose own difficulties in crossing borders earlier in the week had meant he had not made it to Poznan in time for his original panel.

Edward Boyle’s presentation sought to replace some of the diversity lost through the absence of three of the original presenters with a wide-ranging examination into the state of borders in Asia and their study, while seeking to highlight the possible heuristic value inherent in developing the notion of an ‘Asian border’. Drawing on examples from Georgia, Northeast India and Japan, the empirical evidence pointed to the diversity of scales at which state borders are produced and through which their effects are felt. While acknowledging the recent trend towards diversifying border studies away from examinations of the borders of the state, the author followed O’Dowd (2010) in arguing that those linear representations on the global political map still have a greatly outsized importance, one reflected in their prominence within the fields of state and public policy, academia and the imagination. While demonstrating the

variety of means of studying borders and their diversity across Asia, however, the paper avoided the pressing task of explicating what was specifically Asian about such borders. It is to be hoped that this will be developed in the future.

Kohei Imai's presentation "Rethinking the insulator state: Turkey's border security and Syrian civil war" was devoted to Turkey's border policy towards Euro-Asian cross-border flows through the lens of Buzan's and Waever's "insulator state" concept. Turkey and other "insulator states" are situated "in-between" strong violent cross-border flows between various regions thus serving both bridges and barriers for these flows. In particular, Turkey has to deal with three major kinds of flows: Syrian refugees inflow, foreign fighters' inflow, and Syrian refugees outflow. The author argued that the ongoing civil war in Syria has made essential impact on Turkish insulation's character: both connective and shutoff ability of this state has declined.

Serghei Golunov's presentation "Impact of Border Barriers on Russian Tourism to Japan" stressed untypical character of Japanese border policy in the Asian context: unlike a "typical" Asian state that is authoritarian, relatively poor and corrupt and that has extensive land borders, Japan is a wealthy, low-corrupt, and democratic country that has no maritime borders and that conducts restrictive immigration policy towards visitors from poorer countries. While Russian tourists is a privileged category of visitors in the most of Asian countries, Japan disadvantages them by implementing a requirement of having a certified guarantor (travel agency) for being eligible. This requirement makes visa application expensive and delays the process. No wonder that some travellers try to employ various tactics to escape governmental strategies, trying to represent themselves as non-tourist visa applicants and, in particular, to use business visits and transit for tourist purposes.

Hong Pyo Lee's presentation, "East Asian Regionalism: Hegemonic Rivalry on the Rise", was focused on prospects of regional integration and multilateral institution building. The presenter concluded that while East Asian integration and institution building is commonly considered as less efficient as the European one, it could be explained by a set of specific problems such as lack of hegemonic powers that could serve as locomotives of integration as in Europe and, at the same time, growing destructive rivalry between regional and extra-regional hegemonic power.

Machiko Hachiya offered gracious comments to each of the papers, and the panel concluded with some questions from the audience.