

# The Future of Border Studies in the Asia Pacific

Center for Asia-Pacific Future Studies 1st Symposium

(March 7–8, 2015, Fukuoka, Japan)

“Reshaping Border Studies in Asia and the Pacific”

## Introduction:

In early 2015, the newly-established Center for Asia-Pacific Future Studies of Kyushu University hosted its first international symposium at the Solaria Nishitetsu Hotel in Fukuoka, Japan. Bringing together over 30 researchers from 10 countries, it offered a reflection of the ambitious research program that the Center will seek to develop over the coming years.

While half of the symposium discussed the Future of Asian Studies, the other half was concerned with border studies and included extensive reflections on a number of topics vital to not just border studies in Japan, but for thinking about borders on a wider Asian, or even global, scale. On the first day, the key intervention was provided by Sergei Golunov and Yasunori Hanamatsu, both now of Kyushu University and associated with the Center, who reflected on the concept of Border Tourism, how to categorize it and how it could be developed as a resource by both states and borderland communities. On the second day, the importance of borders for the state was again examined by Professor Sergei Sevastianov, of the Far Eastern Federal University, and Paul Richardson, of the University of Manchester, whose papers looked at the continuing yet changing role of borders in International Relations. The final panel, consisting of Yoshihiro Masuda of Nippon Bunri University and Edward Boyle, now of Kyushu University, examined the formation and situation of Japan’s borders to the south and the north of the archipelago, grounding universally applicable border studies concepts in the realities of Japan’s borders.

The last session of the second day consisted of a roundtable symposium to discuss the future of border studies in the Asia-Pacific. Building upon the discussions heard over the course of the previous two days, the session, led by Akihiro Iwashita, sought to draw upon the experiences of each of these scholars in order to provide a roadmap for how we all should think of doing border studies in the future. While based upon each scholars personal experiences, the result was a series of reflections that offered something of a manifesto to the Center for Asia-Pacific Future Studies.

The roundtable is reproduced below, having been slightly edited for clarity. Its formal participants were as follows:

**Moderator:**

Akihiro Iwashita (Hokkaido University)

**Discussants:**

Zhigang Da (Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences)  
So Yamane (Osaka University)  
Keiko Tamura (University of Kitakyushu)  
Naomi Chi (Hokkaido University)  
Jussi Laine (University of Eastern Finland)

*Da:*

I am from Heilongjiang Province, from Dashu, and since 1984 I have always been working on the exchange of the two countries. And first of all, I'd like to say to the Center for Asia Pacific Future Studies, I would like to congratulate you on this symposium and also show my appreciation for the opportunity to participate here.

For the Asia-Pacific region, especially in its north-eastern section, the geopolitical risks are becoming ever more acute but there are some proactive forward-looking movements, and in this environment I think it is very significant that the Center for Asia Pacific Future Studies has been established. This is an encouraging sign and the Center will provide a splendid contribution to the further development of relationships in this region. I have high expectations regarding this Center's future, and so I would like to extend once again my congratulations to the Center.

I have a connection to the exchange occurring between the two countries and from my experience, looking back from the 1980s up until the present, I have made numerous short visits, making over 60 trips to Japan in total, and from 2001 to 2002 I was fortunate enough to be here thanks to a grant from the Japan Foundation, through which I was privileged to reside in Kyoto for one year on a Fellowship Program. Subsequently from 2006 to 2007 I was here again for another year sponsored by the ERINA organization (the Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia) as a visiting researcher. My connection with the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center and Hokkaido University began in 1996, when I became acquainted with Professor Akihiro Iwashita and through his introduction came to know of Hokkaido University. This provided a platform for us and right now, for Slavic-Eurasian studies and for the organization that I work for, there are a lot of exchanges, regional exchanges, personnel exchanges, and also tourist information. We developed an academic collaboration project which is now known as the Asia Urban Research Center, although it used to be called the Asia Pacific Research Center, here in Fukuoka. And since 2012 there has been an academic collaboration agreement between us and the Asia Urban Research Center in Fukuoka. So thanks to Professor Iwashita we have been able to build ties with many people around Japan and I hope that we shall also be able to offer our gratitude for this by contributing in a reciprocal fashion.

Actually, in the morning I was reflecting on the fact that each of the 60-odd times I have travelled to Japan, I have been troubled by visa issues. The Japan government has now made the

visa application easier and thanks to the invitation issued by the Center for Asia Pacific Future Studies I was able to acquire a 3-year multi-entry visa, so for me I shall be able to go back and forth to China freely, as if a visa was not required. For my personal purposes I will be able to utilize this visa, so I would like to make sure that I can take advantage of this to contribute to the project in order to pay the Center back for their gracious efforts on my behalf.

Also related to the visa issue there is the issue of tourism, as already touched on earlier in the symposium. In China, there is a tremendous boom, of both group tours to Japan, which are really popular now, and also shopping in Japan. Using some data, last year, non-Japanese tourists coming to Japan numbered about 13 million, of whom 2.4 million were from Mainland China, with more than 2.7 million from Taiwan, so in total more than 5 million Chinese came, and if other Chinese areas such as Hong Kong are included then Chinese accounted for about half of the tourists coming to Japan last year. Now over the past year tourists from the Chinese mainland have altogether spent 560 billion yen in Japan on shopping, so when compared with the national budget of about 2 trillion yen, perhaps one-fourth. And this year there has been something of an explosion in Chinese tourists coming to Japan. As you well know, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February there was the Chinese New Year, so in the ten days centering around this day about 450,000 Chinese travelled to Japan and about 6 billion in yuan, which is over 120 billion worth of yen, was spent on shopping in just those ten days. This is more than 1/5<sup>th</sup> of last year's total shopping value by Chinese. Also, there are people applying to come to Japan to study, there are about 9000 foreign students seeking to come to Fukuoka to study, and approximately 1/3 of that total is made up of students from China.

So during this era, between the governments of China and Japan there is some confrontation, and there are contradictions and discussions that still exist, but on the more general level, public level and from an academic perspective, the educational exchange, the people exchange that is between industry and academia, we hope that that develops further so that it can contribute positively to the governments' relationships. That I strongly believe. So as a researcher, I will make my best efforts so that there will be a more favorable relationship between the two countries.

And since I have this opportunity, because of the exchanges we have with Hokkaido University, what kind of relationship can be established with Kyushu University? I'd like to explain a little bit about what researchers can do. In the social science field at my institution there are 11 centers internationally-related, with Russia, North East Asia and Jewish Studies. So the direction of our studies is to look at Heilongjiang and north-east Asian countries, to establish exchanges to develop the local economy and society and look at local governance and trade in the area. We hope to act as a think tank that will promote that, but also to examine the contemporary realities in north-east Asia and the prospects for the region's future. Since 2009 we have research on north-east Asian countries being compiled annually, we do hope to have your cooperation on this in the future, and as well as international exchange, joint research is something we hope to actively promote. There are a lot of things I would like to talk about and obviously there isn't enough time to mention everything, especially, Hokkaido and Heilongjiang are sister prefectures,

also we have good relationships with the six Tohoku prefectures. We want to shift our perspective and also build collaboration with CAFS, so that we can look at border issues, and other issues, raise awareness and have warm-spirited debate. And the final, ultimate goal is to have our voices from academia, and also that of the residents, heard, so that people in the central government will hear these voices.

So as for CAFS at Kyushu University, I do hope that it develops further and that it will achieve a lot of wonderful results of research, and with that wish, I would like to end my brief remarks, thank you very much.

*Iwashita:*

Thank you Professor Da. So our final session targets the future of borders, of border studies, in the Asian Pacific. This session's particular focus is on the Asian part, the Pacific part we don't really have a chance to engage with today, and we are particularly interested in Asian borders, their future, the differences between them, and what kind of studies will be necessary.

First of all, I will introduce Professor Yamane, from Osaka University, he's the, I believe, number one researcher of South Asia in Japan. He speaks fluent Hindi, Urdu and related languages. Professor Yamane?

*Yamane:*

Thank you. I am from Osaka and I have been studying Urdu literature in South Asia as well as the current situation in Pakistan, such as the social transformation in the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan or religious movements through the study of fieldwork or literature. So that's why I have been a member of Iwashita-san's border studies project. I have just said that I have been studying Pakistan, and whenever I introduce so, most of the Japanese people begin to watch me, as if I am a member of the Taliban. Or when I introduce myself as being from Osaka, some people say to me that "Oh, you came here from the very dangerous or noisy city of Osaka". Some of our students coming to Osaka from Kyushu, say that before coming to Osaka, they had an awful image of Osaka City. I don't know why? It may be that Osakan people may speak in a little bit of a loud voice, even in trains, and in a thick Osakan dialect, but please understand that we are not quarreling at all and if you feel as dangerous or noisy, the image of Osaka becomes worse, but if you find us cheerful or joyful, the image of Osaka becomes totally different.

You might not understand why I am telling you. I am not a member of the Taliban at all, and Osaka is a very peaceful and beautiful city. I'm trying to emphasize that these kind of negative images of others is a product of a sense of self-defense, and this does make a border in our own minds, and this sense of self-defense brings out the necessity of a border to protect oneself. So this sense of self-defense can be one of the key products of the big border studies. That means that why, and how, and by whom such a sense of self-defense is raised, or even invented.

I'd like to give some of my impressions regarding the role of border studies gained from this conference. Border studies, which focuses on such phenomenon as conflict, disputes or even discussion of the possibility of how to put the borderline to practical use, such border issues

emerged after the nation-state emerged and border lines were demarcated. And since those nation states have to protect their own territory, maybe for the fear of self-defense or something, the necessity for border studies emerged. When we usually use the word of protection, we usually think of the meaning of fortress. But in this symposium it has already been demonstrated, through the positive case of border tourism, that merely closing doors has never meant protection. While the government has to protect the territory legally, of course, the borderline can be economically open to others, which can protect the life of people in the borderlands. Economically, it creates an attractive economic sphere. And in the symposium border studies can provide a platform for the exchange of ideas on border related issues. And it can encourage debates between scholars and people within society.

We felt the importance of listening to the people living in the borderland through such presentations. Most of us live in the center or near the central area of the country, used to regarding the borderlands as indeed marginal, but for the people living in the borderlands, the so-called borderland has been their residential center, and the capital of their nation-state seems to be located so far from their own land. So this kind of psychological gap between the center and marginal borderlands must be narrowed. We have to keep in our minds who the actors are for border issues. Of course, it is the government to protect their national territory legally, and maybe scholars who give suggestions within a discipline are also the actors, but besides, the people living in the borderland are the important actors. So I totally agree with what Jussi Laine mentioned earlier, that border studies must be a platform for all the actors involved.

And I'd like to give some examples from Pakistan. Pakistan is neighboring countries like India, Afghanistan, China or Iran, and with India, Pakistan has fought wars three times in the past. Nowadays both governments have been trying to solve the confrontation but still now there have been tensions between the countries, because of militant terrorism, political disputes or territorial issues such as Kashmir. So such tensions are based on political or military reasons, but if we see current recent cultural formations, such as Indian Bollywood films or Indian popular songs, it seems to me that people of both countries seem to try to get closer. Nowadays many Indian films are showing mutual friendship beyond the border, and I think this is a very positive phenomenon which encourages a friendly atmosphere in spite of the political confrontation. Just as our Chinese colleague told us that in spite of the government and the confrontation, peoples should keep their own contacts with each other. This might produce a kind of atmosphere that we do hope that the government cannot ignore.

Another case is at the real border between India and Pakistan, we can enjoy the wonderful ceremony of the national flags being taken down, as ceremonial as the changing of the guards at Buckingham Palace, for example, by the border guards of both countries. This sensitive border, where severe fighting happened three times in the past, has becoming a famous sightseeing spot, and thousands of people from both countries, including foreign tourists, come to see the ceremony daily. I do not know when this ceremony started, but as far as I know, when I was a student, and I went to see the ceremony for the first time in 1983, the ceremony was so simple and took only 15 minutes at most, and the number of the audience was only 100 or 200 at most, with limited seats.

But after the nuclear test by both countries in 1999, and the diplomatic relations grew strained, both governments tried to avoid the military clash. Both governments had a meeting in the city of Lahore, and declared a resolution for peace, called the Lahore Resolution. By this resolution, both countries could establish ties, at least at that moment. And because of this the ceremony at the border was refined, and now the ceremony takes forty minutes in a very beautifully arranged manner, and the seats for the audience were renovated and added for more than 2000 people, and every sunset, the seats of both sides, India and Pakistan, are filled by the audience.

We must understand one thing about this wonderful ceremony, that it cannot be practiced without mutual exercise by the border guards of both countries. So there must have been meetings between the two countries about how to have the ceremony. These border guards must have practiced the forty minute long action together, in the daytime before the audience of these confrontation countries arrive there at sunset. Around ten years ago, there was only one small shop which was selling water bottles, but now we can purchase toys and national flags, caps or mugs with pictures of border guards on them, we can purchase them from many shops. Sorry to say this was attacked by the Pakistani Taliban some months ago, so it is currently a little bit difficult to get there, after strict investigation we can visit. But for the borderland, to become borderless has no benefit, while becoming a fortress also has no benefit, so border studies can give many suggestions or hints for the development of the borderlands, and maybe these suggestions might be practical, not academic, but I think that these studies must be a challenge, as an integration of practical activity and academics of the human sciences between disciplines. Thank you very much.

*Iwashita:*

Professor Yamane, thank you very much. Professor Tamura, would you go next?

*Tamura:*

Yes certainly. My name is Keiko Tsuji-Tamura, I teach International Relations and Southeast Asian studies at the University of Kitakyushu. I have researched and written widely on politics and social issues in Southeast Asia, mainly on Singapore and Malaysia.

Now I will talk about border studies in Southeast Asia. I think the concept of borderland studies is still new to Southeast Asian researchers, including me, because after World War II, Southeast Asian countries fell into wars for independence, civil wars, regional conflicts, with their national borders demarcated by colonial powers untouched. Since independence, Southeast Asian countries have pushed forward with constructing their own national states and promoting economic development while keeping their national borders closed for a long time. The central government tries to oppress minority groups, ethnic groups, who used to undertake economic undertakings across the border area, in the name of border safety. So the concept of border area, or borderlands, therefore, has by and large been associated with periphery, backwardness and lawlessness. This is in sharp contrast to center, civilization, progress, and law and order. And almost all the central governments in Southeast Asia refused when researchers like me applied for a permit to conduct research on the borderlands. Let me tell you some characteristics of the

borders in Southeast Asia.

One is, they become sometimes loose or rough, if you compare them with borders in Europe or other areas. For many ethnic groups in Southeast Asia, economic undertakings across the border have been a significant part of their lives for a long time, while the authorities, as I told you, tried to oppress them. But they have turned a blind eye to the economic undertakings of minority groups sometimes, in exchange for bribes or sometimes to make use of the groups for territorial disputes against neighboring states. Another notable characteristic of borders in Southeast Asia is that this area has got invisible or religious borders. As you may know, there are twenty million ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. China tried to make use of them as fifth column of communist revolution from the 1950s to the early 1970s. This strategy made many Southeast Asian countries waver in their judgement to establish diplomatic relations with China for a long time. The majority of the population in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are ethnic Malay. These three countries established a regional association called Maphilindo, a plan of uniting Malay people. This plan, this idea, soon became defunct, but the idea of uniting Malay peoples sometimes reemerges.

Strong religious networks may also be an invisible border. The national religion of Malaysia is Islam, and 90% of the population of Indonesia are Muslim. Many Muslims in these countries have been sympathetic towards the anti-government Muslim groups in the southern Philippines, called Mindano, who are oppressed by the Philippine central government dominated by Christians. These Muslim networks sometimes make the official government relations complex and complicated.

And a third characteristic is that sea borders have been neglected for a long time by colonial masters and the newly independent governments. That is why maritime issues like the Paracel and Spratley Islands have been very complicated. The Center for Asia Pacific Future Studies of Kyudai will pay attention to these maritime issues, I hope.

With democratization of authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia, more and more peripheral groups, who have been oppressed by authority, have recently raised alternative voices through wider social recognition of their agency. Since then, some ethnic groups, or subaltern communities, have challenged the traditional demarcation between the center and the periphery. It must be Border Studies specialists or area studies specialists who can listen to subaltern communities. In order to make their voices be heard widely, collaboration networks with various research communities are necessary. I also hope the Center for Asia Pacific Studies of Kyushu University will be a platform for such networks and collaborations, and again I am very happy to be involved, thank you so much.

*Iwashita:*

Thank you Professor Tamura. Next is Naomi Chi, my Hokkaido University colleague. Her presence itself is very transnational. She is a foreign Japanese but her citizenship is Canada. So I call her sometimes the walking border.

*Chi:*

Thanks. Talking about East Asia here in Fukuoka has a whole new meaning, because as mentioned by many of our colleagues here today, Fukuoka is truly the gateway to East Asia. As Yasunori Hanamatsu noted, the geographical proximity to Korea, and to the Asian continent, you can actually see the mix of culture, the achievements of the joint efforts between Japan and Korea, for example, the border tourism project we heard about yesterday, as well as the economic cooperation, namely the Busan-Fukuoka economic zone. Incidentally, I'm based in Sapporo, Hokkaido, the northernmost island. People outside of Hokkaido think our most serious border is with the big brown bears and the sea otter, of course that's not true, but it's a really different atmosphere here in Fukuoka from Sapporo. I will try to keep my comments regarding three points. I'll talk a little about myself, this is the easy part, and sort of connect my story to border studies. A few observations of the second sessions that I chaired, and finish up with a few words regarding borders in East Asia and the Asia Pacific. And I hope to do all that in five minutes.

OK, so just a few words about myself. As Akihiro mentioned, I am Canadian by citizenship, but my parents are second generation *zainichi* Koreans, ethnic Koreans here in Japan. I started out my career on contemporary Korean politics, specifically on the democratization movement and transition to democracy, of course this is nothing to do with border studies. The reason why I ventured into border studies was my opportunity to work at the Global COE program at the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center at Hokkaido University, and that's when I was invited by Akihiro into the border studies family. A very friendly family that is growing evermore, as we see the expansion of the border studies community with the establishment of projects such as this center, CAFS. I wouldn't call myself a hardcore border scholar but after joining the border studies community I began to expand my research into migration and into immigration policy in Japan and Korea. In some sense it was inevitable for me to venture into research on migration, and this is because of my background. I am myself the product of people transcending borders and I have overlapping borders within myself. So in this sense perhaps it was my destiny to engage in border studies.

So some thoughts on the second session. In the last two days many people have mentioned the concept of familiarity and unfamiliarity. Professor Yamane also mentioned self-defense and the border. This is very true for migration, and we have the same concept. I would just like to word it a little differently, we use the word 'othering'. By othering we mean an action by which individuals or groups become mentally classified in somebody's mind as not one of us. So rather than remembering that people, every person, is a complex bundle of emotions, motivations, and priorities, it is sometimes easier to dismiss them as being in some way less worthy of respect and dignity than we are. In the past, and of course even in the present, group cohesion is crucially important for human civilization, because civilization requires strong demarcation between our friends and our foes. So in that sense, Russia's directional change towards Asia is, in some sense, seen as a form of othering. Of course it is far from being as simple as I have put it, but there is no doubt that grouping people into certain stereotyped groups, who we then treat differently, based on which group we have sorted them into, is a deeply rooted aspect of human nature. So in the second

session we had a great insight into Russia's national strategy, policy towards the Asia-Pacific and the Eurasian Union, and I would be stretching maybe a little bit too much if I say that studying International Relations is like studying human nature, but it is important to understand, important *why* a person groups themselves with a certain group and excludes others. By the same token, it is important to understand why the Russian state thinks and acts a certain way, and who Russians think of as us and who they think of as others.

When we discuss migration, security is also an important aspect. This is not difficult to imagine as we witness various security issues vis-à-vis migration and Europe, North America and Asia as well. As mentioned in the first session yesterday, visa programs are a crucial part of migration. In Korea there is a visa program available for the Korean diaspora, the overseas Korean visa, which allows overseas ethnic Koreans to live and work in Korea for five years, so long as you prove that you have previously possessed Korean nationality. This itself is very exclusionary, but I won't elaborate on it here. So it becomes much easier for overseas Koreans, such as ethnic Koreans in China, *chosenzoku* or *chosunjok*, Koreans in Sakhalin, *kanjin* or *hannin*, and Central Asia, also referred to as *koryoin* or *koraijin* (in Japanese and in Korean, respectively). Of course, having a visa doesn't solve the various problems these migrants face in Korean society today, and this is where my research lies, as a scholar studying about these people, it is important to record their history, their experiences and their life stories. Their experiences tell a completely different story, a story different from the grand narrative – one moving away from the nationalistic understanding of Korean-ness to challenge conventional wisdom and to consider the possibilities of approaching the in-between spaces of nation-states and ideologies.

Just to mention a few words on East Asia, as I mentioned at the end of the second session, this year is and will be a memorable year for not only East Asia but for the world. Seventy years since the end of the Second World War, fifty years since Japan and Korea normalized diplomatic relations. However when you look at East Asia today, I wish I could be a little more optimistic, but we do face several challenges, as Professor Sevastianov mentioned in his presentation. There are various territorial issues still being disputed, not only the Northern Territories, but Dokdo/Takeshima, but also in the Pacific, as well as the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the Spratley Islands, as Tamura-sensei mentioned. I will not elaborate any more on this but when we look at the Asia-Pacific, these challenges must be overcome for peaceful coexistence in this region. Also, as mentioned by our Chinese colleague, Professor Da, aside from territorial issues, there still remain historical issues. These include of course the textbook issue, the comfort woman issue and so on. As I mentioned earlier on, there are many projects on various levels, from the private level to the national level, being initiated this year to overcome such challenges in this memorable year.

One such example is something that I have been involved in, which is hosting a joint Japan-Korea international symposium to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of normalization of the relation between the two countries. One of the panels I am coordinating is a panel of students. Of course these students, in essence, are the future of East Asia, so I coordinated this panel to search for alternative ways to improve relations in East Asia. I do admit I can be a bit of a hopeless optimist, but as Professor Sevastianov said, anything and everything is possible. Let me share with

you a quotation from Nelson Mandela in his book *A Long Walk to Freedom*, where he said if you want to make peace with your enemy then you have to work with your enemy...and then he becomes your partner. Thank you.

*Iwashita:*

Thank you Naomi. Jussi?

*Laine:*

I think the presentations in the last two days have really proven that despite the rhetoric on globalization, and a borderless world, then political borders still continue to persist. While in principle, especially in the Western world, and very much so in the European Union especially, we seem to trivialize, if not despise, borders, we still seem to be unable to live without borders. Borders continue to exist, but they are transformed by different networks that penetrate right through them. Borders can be open to other kinds of networks and flows while closed at the same time to others. Traditional border studies have very much focused on this territorial fixation. John Agnew famously talked about the territorial trap, I believe it was 1994, twenty years ago now. I think now we can start to talk about the trap of the territorial trap, because we have been talking about the same discourse for the last twenty years. Professor Agnew's thesis is great but I think the time has come to move beyond that. Certainly, nation-states continue to form the highest form of effective social organization today, but as we can see there are a number of forces in play that seek to challenge this very Westphalian order. This has also brought state sovereignty into crisis, and forced us to finally move beyond a state-centric view in border studies as well as beyond, in seeing borders as static lines.

In the real world, whatever real is, there are very few fixed lines, neither in nature or society, but borders both in nature and society are often zones of transition, transformation, where one set of attributes and features gradually gets replaced by another one. I think this kind of understanding would help us also in border studies. An understanding that the world is actually about networks, nodes, hubs and flows instead of boxes, allows us to think about, to arrive at a changing geographical imagination that incorporates a more polyvalent perspective, and acknowledges the relational nature of space. If we don't think about space in terms of boxes, but in terms of flows, nodes and hubs, then also the classic binary division between what is inside and what is outside, who is self and who is other, becomes obsolete, because those who may be geographically outside of the box may be very much inside if you think about space in terms of a network.

Having said all this, borders are still very much about power, and power relations. The power to determine the criteria through which borders are demarcated, constructed, and deconstructed is also a major actor in ordering society. Generally this has been possessed by the elites in society, but in the bordering logic I tried to refer to very briefly in my notes yesterday, the power to determine borders, shift borders, even erase borders, is becoming broadened to a wider society, different actors of civil society.

Borders in the political sense, in the elitist sense, are also very much related to discrimination, and social justice. Borders are unevenly transparent to different people. The ability to cross a political border depends upon one's origin, citizenship, material condition, professional status, and belonging. The same border can be very much open to one, and closed to somebody else.

Lastly, there's one minute left, I want to refer to two things that Professor Izumi referred to in his response today.<sup>1</sup> Ken'ichi Ohmae, in his 1994 or 1995 book entitled *The Borderless World*, actually stated in his conclusion, in a very important sentence which most people choose to ignore, that globalization will never lead to a borderless world. What he means by that is that globalization actually depends upon the partition of space between nations, and increasingly between regions and cities. Capital can circulate only between competing legal spaces, and the world system as it is now, needs inequality *and* the political borders which perpetuate this.

One final note, Professor Izumi also talked about the perception and imagination of borders, how we can all create our own borders, and not accept the top-down perspective on borders. In traditional border studies, we have made a binary division between borders as imagined *or* real, but I would like to emphasize for example the work of Professor Henk van Houtum in which he emphasizes that borders are very much real *because* they are imagined. And I will stop right there.

### **Concluding the Session:**

Two of the things that clearly emerged from the discussion reproduced above are the rich resources available to the study of borders within the Asia-Pacific region, both in terms of the geography of the region, and also with regards to approaches taken in analyzing borders. While the Center's remit is for the Asia-Pacific, the discussion suggests how hard it is to define this region other than geographically, as the region's borders remain both varied and open to a wide spectrum of analysis. Additionally, of course, they are not limited to those of the state, but run a full gamut of social, ethnic, cultural and religious boundaries between various groups of peoples. The sheer variety of borders able to be examined through even a cursory glance at the region would suggest that the possibility for a coherent notion of an Asian or Asia-Pacific border studies emerging is a far-fetched one. Yet the diversity of approaches, of border studies' inherent interdisciplinarity, remains the greatest strength of the field. While border studies scholars have emerged, as the participants in the conference demonstrated, from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds, it is border studies itself that brings geographers, anthropologists, international relations experts and area studies people together and provides them with a framework to engage in discussion with one another.

While there are legitimate questions about the extent to which border studies itself is, or can

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Kaoru Izumi, Deputy Director of CAFS, served as a discussant on Masuda and Boyle's session on Japan's borders.

become, a discipline, there is no doubt that it itself serves as a focus for researchers from diverse backgrounds, breaking down the disciplinary borders that exist within academia. It is this ability of border studies to cross borders, to exist in a space in which they fade into insignificance, which appears to offer the greatest hope of overcoming or alleviating the problems with which they are associated. It is impossible to imagine a world without borders, but what is vital is that such borders are not associated with exclusivism; without the practices associated with this idea, borders would not be a critical issue. In that sense, borders studies serves as something of a model, providing a forum within which disciplinary exclusiveness can be overcome through engagement in a shared enterprise.

It is also this idea of a shared enterprise that will enable the development of a border studies here in the Asia-Pacific, one that emerges in dialogue with, but not beholden to, the field as it has developed in North America and Europe. Border comparisons with other regions are conceivable in many registers, including security and religion. Post-colonialism also offers an important resource, especially in studies done from Japan where that nation's ambivalent relationship with the West problematizes uni-directional stories of Western impact elsewhere in the world. Once again, this offers promise for the field being able to work across borders, rather than unquestioningly accepting the binaries that they provide. Once we move beyond our fixation of borders in the Asia-Pacific and elsewhere as "lines in the sand", we become able to broaden our understanding of borders as a process, allowing us to engage with practices of bordering that remain mobile rather than fixed. This promises to provide us with fresh insights in regard to new patterns of bordering that have emerged in the region in recent years, such as the emergence of maritime borders and questions of their delimitation and maintenance. It is in relation to both newly-emerging issues such as this, as well as for more traditional understandings of state borders, that empirical contributions and theoretical developments based upon the Asia-Pacific will be able to contribute to what is becoming a genuinely global field of border studies.

(Adapted and edited by Edward Boyle)