

## **Theory-Practice Gap in Contemporary Border Studies**

(paper proposal by Serghei Golunov, Professor of Kyushu University)

The problem of theory-practice gap is persistent in many social disciplines. Many researchers are reluctant to generate policy-relevant findings not so much because of divergences between academic and practical knowledge but rather because of potential ideological controversies: these researchers do not want to contribute to legitimizing and reinforcing current political orders (with their agendas and frames) that are seen intrinsically unjust. Some argue that critical theorizing should be equated to practice, as such ideas could shape or destroy existing social and political order. This approach, however, entails some potential dangers, such as ending with an “armchair revolution”, confining oneself with destructive criticism without offering something viable, and concentrating just on “grand issues” while disregarding pressing mundane problems.

The problem of theory-practice gap is quite characteristic for contemporary Border Studies, in which essentialist (but not praxeologic), deconstructionist, and emansipationalist trends are prominent. While there is a lot of works analyzing and deconstructing the phenomenon of national borders, works offering realistic practical solutions are relatively scarce.

What kinds of practically relevant findings can be found in recent visible research in the field of Border Studies? Do existing Border Studies theories have practical potentials? What kinds of alternative practically relevant theories can be offered? These questions to be highlighted in the proposed presentation.