

International Conference

Borders and Border Studies: The South Asian Perspective

6-7th March 2017 – South Asian University, New Delhi, India

Borders in literal terms denote limits: limits of a territory, of a sovereign government or of an individual. Still this prevalent concept of border lacks universal acceptability. In integrated Europe, borders are rarely visualised as dividing lines between states and citizens. The European integration and Schengen region eradicated territorial divisions although other forms of borders and boundaries continue to exist in Europe. Contrarily, we in South Asia are still living in times where national borders are sacrosanct and define our identities. Fixed, securitized and rigid borders in South Asia are apparent and manifested in terms of controlling the movement of people, nominal intra-regional trade and fewer cross-border activities. As a result, conventional and non-conventional security issues largely dominate studies related to borders in South Asia. This constricts the development of border studies in South Asia, albeit it is one of the interdisciplinary subjects and can potentially attract scholars from diverse academic backgrounds. The everyday border practices, notional and psychological borders, living experience of borderland communities, border aesthetics, trade and economic activities related to borders are some of the prominent themes that are now being considered as part of border studies.

While the border studies is emerging as a new academic subject in other parts of the world, in South Asia presently it has limited scope. This necessitates that we should think beyond the conventional domain of state and security that are largely affiliated with border studies in South Asia. In fact history, tradition, geography, politics and society of this region open ample opportunities for the advancement of the South Asian scholarship in border studies. Although less integrated, South Asia is a distinct region in terms of its shared culture, history and its shared socio-economic challenges. The dialectics between commonalities and political divides in South Asia makes it a unique region for understanding various socio-political dimensions pertaining to borders.

The seminar intended to cross the borders of conventional border studies in South Asia. This call is open to scholars interested in borders, limits, spaces, and boundaries in South Asia and willing to work towards the development of a South Asian perspective. Participants from South Asia will be given priority, but anyone interested in South Asian borders or in comparative border studies can participate in this international conference.

Some suggested themes are as follows.

- 1) Colonial and post-colonial borders and boundaries in South Asia
- 2) Psychological and notional borders in South Asia
- 3) Life and experiences of borderlands communities in South Asia
- 4) Borders, economics and trade in South Asia
- 5) Borders and South Asian integration
- 6) Comparative borders & boundaries
- 7) Cross-border cultural flows
- 8) Relations between social and territorial borders.

- Selected papers will be published in a special issue of *Journal of Borderlands Studies*
- Limited travel grants are available for early career South Asian participants. Please indicate if you require travel grant to attend this conference.
- Please send your abstract by 15th November 2016. Please include your institutional affiliation and contact details.
- Abstract should be emailed: borderconf@sau.ac.in

Conference Dates: 6-7th March 2017 (Monday-Tuesday)

Last date for abstract submission: 15th November 2016

Final Announcement of acceptance 30th November 2016

Submission of full paper: 24th February 2017.

Organised by: Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences, South Asian University.

Conference partners: Association for Borderlands Studies – ABS absborderlands.org

Borders in Globalization – BIG www.biglobalization.org