Team 8

OF BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES

The notion of borders has multiple meanings as it is both a material reality and an ideological construction with a strong symbolic meaning. Its heuristic value does not need to be justified given the large number of publications that have been published on this topic over the past few years. It opens up a tremendous field of research which includes many issues such as migration, circulation, identity, emotions, representations of the Other and so on. As a conceptual framework, an epistemological category and an observable reality, borders and boundaries arouse the interest of all the disciplines in social sciences.

Yet, this question has been largely under-studied in South Asia even though this region represents a real laboratory as borders have played an important role, albeit often a tragic one, throughout its history (several Partitions, many transnational communities, irredentist movements and so on).

While the Nation-State is defined through its borders which embody its limits, their drawing can have an artificial and arbitrary character. Like elsewhere, borders in South Asia are constantly redefined, negotiated, called into question. But it is also in places where they are not contested anymore that borders can be transgressed.

This research team will focus first on physical borders as we will uncover how spaces of separation generate conflicts, interactions, reappropriations; how borders reflect antagonistic, complementary or hybrid identities in fluid and evolutive temporalities, and so on. The issue of symbolic borders (between communities) will also be dealt with.

Borders are studied through three themes: on borders; around borders and across borders.