



Electronic Journal of Social and Strategic Studies

Special Issue: Examining Borders through History, Culture and Security

Preface

Globalization has changed the traditional concept of borders. Bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements between nations, international human rights regime and the geopolitical realities of a multi-polar world are creating environments in which national perceptions on borders are increasingly challenged by conflicting interests.

Though we are witnessing America's attempts at walling Mexico out in an open attempt to check immigration, such an attempt underlines an anxiety over protecting its borders in the globalized economic context. Elsewhere, China's vigorous pursuit of BRI reveals an ambitious attempt to expand its virtual border as a sphere of influence beyond its physical borders.

In Europe, despite continuing their dialogue to resolve border disputes through other mechanisms, member nations have come together as EU to facilitate a borderless interaction between peoples and economies for common progress. While BREXIT may impact EU in economic terms, connectivity through seamless communicative networks is predicted to stay owing to obvious advantages derived from it.

In SE Asia, ASEAN has hugely been successful in bringing common economic cooperation and exchange, despite simmering border disputes among members and in common with China over South China Sea.

South Asia stands in contrast with EU and ASEAN as the only region of the world where borders still remain attracted to traditional notions, resulting in overt and covert conflicts. Even though regional mechanisms like SAARC exist to amiably resolve issues, other than bilateral agreements, South Asia continues to witness conflicts inside the region as well as outside, between India and Pakistan & India and China, specifically. The sea frontiers between India and Sri Lanka, though has not led to open conflict, remains the fodder for jousts in both the countries internal politics.

In Americas and Africa, we witness a mix of both the Western and Eastern contexts with reference to borders. Apart from the Falklands War of 1989, no open conflict has erupted to contest over physical borders. Perhaps, internal political stability or the lack of it prevents disruptive conflicts.

In all these generalized assessments, the necessity for economic cooperation for national development appears to be driving the forces of international politics within and beyond their physical borders.

Apart from the physical connotation to borders as manifested in contestations through all means, socio-cultural borders within societies are also witnessing contests and change. Historically marginalized communities are attempting to straddle the barriers to integrate themselves into what we may say 'main stream' society. Their struggles hold important lessons for creating a world that holds equality and equitability in opportunity as fundamental to human society.

In erstwhile colonized world, the physical divisions created in the interest of the Empire continue to influence geopolitics in concerned regions. However, revisiting the historical compulsions for drawing physical divisions may yield lessons for addressing the very geopolitical challenges created by that history.

Keeping these perspectives in mind, to appreciate and enhance our understanding of borders in a multidimensional construct, EJSSS is happy to bring out a SPECIAL ISSUE focused on India that looks into Borders from strategic, maritime, social and cultural perspectives.

Scope

In this Issue, scholars from across academia and practitioners deal with the under mentioned dimensions:

- 1) *Geographical Borders* – how they evolved and the contests for them, security of physical borders, boundary disputes
- 2) *Maritime Borders* – disputes, vulnerability for internal security, historical connectivity, trade and geopolitical and geostrategic implications
- 3) *Social & Cultural Borders* – Societies, connectivity and contest
- 4) *Border Management and Threats to Internal Security* – Human trafficking, arms smuggling, cross-border terrorist networks, narcotics, illegal immigration, etc.

Geographical Borders

K Srinivasan, former Inspector General of Border Security Force (India), in his article titled *Border Management Framework -Dynamics and Challenges* discusses the concept of borders from theoretical and practitioner perspective, outlining the border management structure in India and the stakeholders in national security matrix. He lays down the concept of border area development program and bilateral institutional mechanisms for border management. He gives a detailed insight into the instruments of border management (agencies involved) along with their operational philosophies. Most importantly, drawing from his wealth of field experience, he discusses what ails border management system and the possible policy options for making border management efficacious.

Maritime Borders

Vice Admiral MP Muralidharan AVSM & Bar, NM (Retd), former Director General of Indian Coast Guard, in his paper titled *Indian Coastal Zone Management: Security Challenges and Policy Options*, discusses the geostrategic importance of India's coastal zones and conventional & non-conventional threats to coastal security. Drawing from his on-deck experience as DG Coast Guard, he outlines the emerging trends in coastal security management and the policy options for addressing emerging scenarios.

Article Link: <https://doi.org/10.47362/EJSSS.2021.2102>

Pages: 15-22

Commodore SL Deshmukh NM (Retd) and Dr R Srinivasan, in their paper titled *Concepts of Maritime Power and Boundaries: Re-Appraising India's Sir Creek Maritime Border Dispute* attempt to bring the focus on Indo-Pak maritime dispute over Sir Creek. In the backdrop of the provisions of UNCLOS and TALOS, they collate expert opinions that suggest various options for resolving the decades old dispute. More importantly, they also point to the potential geopolitical import that it entails in view of CPEC and China's increasing foot prints in IOR which lend a sense of urgency to bring the dispute to a close.

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Cultural and Social Borders

Dr. Mithlesh Jayas Mukherji, Assistant Professor, St Ann's College for Women, Hyderabad in her paper titled *Embracing Curzon's Political Vision to Secure India's Cultural and Political Borders* delves into colonial history to explore the concept of borders in an attempt to translate history's lessons to present day requirement. Examining Lord Curzon's (Viceroy of British India 1898-1905) concept of defense of India, the author draws up an important observation, that cultural and demographic encroachment of traditional Indian borderlands have created potential flashpoints. Extrapolating on her observation, she entails Indian policy makers to appreciate the necessity of having a stable and peaceful rim of buffer states to allow core areas to prosper and progress. In keeping with the realities of geopolitics in the modern world, the author emphasizes that this cannot be through conquest or occupation but economically, culturally and spatially by unifying the buffer states friendly to India in a common economic and cultural unit while remaining politically distinct.

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Shriya Patnaik, a Doctoral Candidate at Graduate Institute of International and Developmental Studies (IHEID), Geneva, presents a paper titled *Marginalizing the Matriarchal, Minority Subject: A Critical Analysis of Human Rights and Women's Reform Projects in Colonial and Postcolonial India through the Case-Study of the 'Mahari-Devadasi'*. The author analyses how legal statutes on Devadasi Abolition silenced minority voices by distorting the complex relationship between

bodily agency, informal economies of sexual commerce, and women's socio-economic autonomy. Examining disenfranchised actors, grassroots level social activist movement advocating for the inclusion of minority subjects into civil society, the paper elucidates how such grassroots level feminist movements epitomize important catalysts of social change, which challenge mainstream nationalist narratives on human rights. This research thereby posits the need to recuperate such subaltern voices from the marginalia in writing transnational historiographies on gender, sexuality, and human rights.

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Border Management and Threats to Internal Security

Dr. Pushpita Das, Research Fellow & Centre Coordinator (Internal Security), Manohar Parikkar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, in her paper titled *Border Management and Threats to Internal Security* explores the threats to borders in the form of cross border terrorism, gun running, trafficking in drugs and humans, and illegal migration. The author then looks at India's border management system, presenting a detailed appreciation of the factors that pose challenges. In conclusion, the author points to the manpower, technological and diplomatic options for holistic border management. Some of the most important pointers that merit contemplation in policy circles are synergizing the central and state agencies, providing smaller neighbors with technical and training wherewithal and bilateral, multilateral cooperation.

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Group Captain AV Chandrasekaran (Retd), an independent researcher, in his paper titled *Invisible Sword Arm: Unmanned Vehicles in Land Border Security*, examines the existing frameworks, their assumptions and challenges. Pointing to factors like defense without deterrence, structural oddities and the doctrine of men over weapons, he discusses the operational philosophy and its demerits. In order to overcome the challenges discussed, the author deals with the concept, advantages and disadvantages of utilizing unarmed vehicles (UAV/UGV). While discussing unmanned systems in use across the world, he also looks at the Indian advances in such systems. Keeping the complexities of the nature of India's borders and the changes in geopolitical situation in India's neighborhood, he highlights the importance of amalgamating India's border management agencies and supplementing their efforts through use of technologies like unmanned vehicles.

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Editor's Note

Electronic Journal of Social and Strategic Studies (EJSSS) aims to bring out similar special issues pertaining other regions of the world. Scholars and researchers interested in contributing to

regionally focused issues on political, social, cultural, economic borders are welcome to mail the Managing Editor at submission.ejss@gmail.com with their proposals.

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