



THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY CONFERENCE

PANEL 2: PEOPLE AND BOUNDARIES

The conceptual prisms through which the social sciences view boundaries change over time. For instance, in geography, there is a discernible contemporary preoccupation with social processes and identity constructions. Yet scholars have been writing about territorial questions for a very long time, and, whatever the adopted approach, a number of old, established boundary wisdoms often tend to resurface in academic research or policy analysis. Two of the presentations here engage with such concerns – examining boundaries and borderlands.

People are the main casualty in many boundary and territorial disputes. States, with their policy-makers, have had to deal with the local, regional and international ramifications of disputes since time immemorial. But the locals affected by a dispute have a voice that needs and deserves to be heard – one that is not always predictable or consonant with State interests. Two presentations deal with such practical experience of disputes.

Dr James Clad MNZM

Dr James Clad is chairing this session. He will also say a few words on how boundaries and border issues surface intermittently in a senior policymaker's day.

Dr Robert Bradnock

Challenging assumptions: Public opinion and the Kashmir Line of Control

64 years since the 1949 cease fire between India and Pakistan defined the line dividing Jammu and Kashmir, now referred to as the Line of Control, the Kashmir dispute remains unresolved. The nature and causes of the dispute remain fiercely contested by both India and Pakistan, and over the last 20 years Kashmiri opinion has been increasingly vocal. This paper, based on the Chatham House 2010 report of a large opinion poll conducted by Ipsos-Mori in both Indian and Pakistani controlled Kashmir, explores ways in which public opinion offers insights as to the importance of territoriality and the Line of Control *per se* as factors in the dispute's ultimate resolution.

Professor David Newman



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Boundaries and borders in the global world

The past two decades has witnessed a resurgence of research into borders. This is partly a counter discourse to the idea of a borderless world which was strongly advanced by globalization theorists in the 1980s and 1990s, and which was reflected in the erasure of borders within the expanding European Union on the one hand and the fall of borders between Western and Eastern Europe on the other. In this discourse, the use of the term “boundary” to define the physical lines separating States within the international system has largely been subsumed under the broader definition of the “border”, encompassing much more than the international lines which demarcate the sovereign territory of the States. This presentation will overview the main themes which have emerged in the study of borders during the past two decades, with a focus on the importance of power relations in the bordering process. The paper will also overview the status of international boundaries in the contemporary world, contrasting those places in which boundaries have been removed with those where new boundaries are being constructed, largely because of the renewed securitisation discourse following the events of 9/11.

Dr Carl Grundy-Warr

Ethno-Political Geography and Borderlands Research: Re-thinking Geo-Bodies, Sovereignties and Border Landscapes in Mainland Southeast Asia

Sometimes the cracks and crevices of history and geography are more interesting than the dominant bodies of knowledge. Historically informed ethno-political geographies enable research directions that provide inside-out and sideways perspectives of state territory, sovereignty and boundaries. Focusing on the complex ethno-political mosaic of the so-called “Golden Triangle” (extending across the borders of China, Burma, Laos and Thailand), I shall argue that geo-bodies, sovereignties and places are always in the process of being undermined, remade, reified and defied. Geopolitical eras and codes have greatly influenced whole sets of interrelationships within and across political space. Historically there are many processes that unite and divide current borderlands and pre-existing frontier political landscapes. Cross-border mobility, differentiated concepts of homeland, gradations of belonging, inter-“national” ethnic relations and issues of cultural, religious and ethnic loyalty provide rich conceptual and empirical grounds for critical political geography. An obsession with long-term research agendas in relation to specific people, borders and places is allied with a strong emphasis on grounded theorization in border research.