



DEPARTMENT OF
HISTORY AT THE FACULTY
OF ARTS OF PAVOL JOZEF
ŠAFÁRIK UNIVERSITY IN KOŠICE

INVITES YOU TO ATTEND CONFERENCE

MEETING OF YOUNG HISTORIANS X.

BORDERS IN SPACE AND TIME

KOŠICE, 18 - 19 NOVEMBER 2020



According to Friedrich Ratzel, the founder of political geography, land is one of the three fundamental components necessary for the existence of every state. He defined land as a living space (Lebensraum), a living organism with internal organs, external protective boundaries, and an inherent drive towards expansion (Ratzel, 1903). At the same time, its neighbouring countries possess the same drive, and thus the foundation of every new state is determined by a battle for territory, a decisive factor for its survival.

The concept of borders has undergone a slow evolution throughout history, from the early “no man’s land” to today’s multidimensional understanding of borders. In general, borders are connected to the effort of rulers or governments to control the free movement of people. The first efforts to restrict movement on a greater scale can be dated back to the Roman Empire, where the internal borders determined the hierarchy of space and the external borders of the empire were perceived as the dividing line between civilisation and barbarism. In medieval times, most of the European population lived within ambiguous borders, which came into existence based on the adherence of individuals to the church, specific property, or estate.

The Peace of Westphalia is considered a milestone for the establishment of modern geo-political borders of sovereign and internationally recognised states. With the progress in geodesy arose the astronomical concept of borders based on meridians and parallels. Many countries adopted this concept in marking the borders of newly discovered and conquered territories. The American and French Revolution marked the rise of democracy where the legitimacy of a state was determined and maintained by the will of its people. At the beginning of the previous century, borders were considered temporary lines undergoing constant change due to military expansionism and territorial conquering. In the 20th century, the two biggest military conflicts in history took place resulting in border changes of many states. The Treaty of Trianon, whose 100th anniversary we are celebrating this year, had a significant impact on the Central European Area.

At the end of the 20th century, the sociologist Francis Fukuyama introduced the idea that simultaneously with the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the emergence of liberal democracies comes the conclusion of human history. Within the postmodern thought we witnessed ideas of border dissolution in the future. Emphasis has shifted from geographic and political to socio-spatial borders which seek differences in the perception of individual subjects in the society and thanks to which a border can be defined as an imaginary line in space. It is, however, questionable to what extent can such prognosis of borderless future be accepted. Despite the current trends of globalisation, the tendency towards the reinforcement of state borders as a reaction to the current wave of migration grows across the world, the question of borders in cyberspace emerges, and human thinking changes hand in hand with modernisation and technological development. Thus, the issue of the past, present, and future of borders is more than valid.

The organisers of the conference will welcome all abstract submissions in the following areas:

1. Classification and typology of borders across history

- how did borders emerge and disappear? (colonisation, Fall of the Roman Empire, peace treaties...)
- national, regional, and local borders
- geometric, astronomical, and phantom borders
- borders with different levels of legitimacy

2. Border functions in the past

- borders as a means of defence and as a symbol of power
- borders as barriers, filters, or contact
- church borders
- internal borders of multinational states
- cultural borders, differentiation of cultures
- living space theory, nationalism, and national states

3. Historical-geographic/cartographic approach to border studies

- borders and their morphological features
- peripheries across history: socio-geographic research of border zones
- natural border theory
- border changes after military conflicts
- expansionism, imperialism, and colonialism
- rise and fall of states

4. Borders of human thinking

- the evolution of public thinking across history
- change in borders of historical periods
- borders – a social construct?
- at a crossroads between past and future – globalism and the dissolution of borders

Organizing committee

Mgr. Mikuláš Jančura, PhD.
Mgr. Zuzana Tokárová, PhD.
Mgr. Katarína Hromuláková
Mgr. Dana Kušnírová
Mgr. Peter Pavonič
Mgr. Miriam Filčáková

Application deadline

15 June 2020

Paper submission deadline

30 September 2020

Length of contribution

15 normpages, more information will be sent to invited participants

Conference fee

20€

Venue

Rectorate building UPJŠ
Šrobárova 2, Košice

Application available at

<https://www.upjs.sk/en/faculty-of-arts/departament-of-history/9569/>

Contact

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Conference languages

Slovak, Czech, English

*The conference is intended for PhD students. A recommendation from the supervisor must be provided.

**Organisers reserve the right to select contributions. The texts will be evaluated by professional guarantors. Conference presentations which will pass through peer-review procedure shall be published in a conference proceeding.