

Dear readers,

*When was the last time you encountered a border?*

Most commonly, we experience borders as a physical boundary between spaces. They are easily disregarded until we attempt to travel across, and suddenly our belonging is questioned, affirmed, or rejected. In the news, we encounter borders as sites of geopolitical conflict. Wars are waged over land disputes, indicating that in defining what is or is not a legitimate border, there is more at stake than the material ground itself.

With this, we are delighted to introduce you to the theme of the next issue of History Collective, *borders*.

From a historical perspective, the emergence of state borders is linked to the notion of a sovereign nation-state. Borders provide the framework for the organization of territories and the establishment of political authority. They also distinguish between citizens and non-citizens. In *The Invention of the Passport* (2018) John Tropey argues that the nation-state has monopolized the legitimate 'means' of movement, depriving people of the freedom to move freely (across borders) without state authorization. The passport, used to effectively track and identify each person, demarcates those who do and do not belong. On a smaller scale, segregation and redlining maintain similar borders within a city.

Beyond their tangible manifestations, borders also assume conceptual and symbolic dimensions as frontiers of knowledge and belief systems, meaning that borders are not only geographically located, but encompass social and cultural dimensions. In the seminal *Imagined Communities* (1983) Benedict Anderson argues that nations are collective imaginings of community and products of historical processes, rather than fixed entities. The rise of print capitalism, specifically the dissemination of newspapers, novels, and other printed materials in vernacular languages, played a central role in fostering a sense of community and shared identity, creating a new form of belonging based on the nation-state.

Historiography itself is central to the process of nation-building, binding individuals together in a common understanding of their past. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari further argue that history is written from a sedentary perspective and in the name of a unitary State apparatus, or at least a possible one. Scholars have thus attempted to overturn this methodological bias through transnational or global histories.

Whether investigating the role of borders in the formation of nation-states and the legacies of colonial borders, examining the experiences of borderland communities, or analyzing the implications of border-crossing in the context of diasporas and migration, *borders* thus present an opportunity to explore a range of historical topics. With this theme, we embark on a journey through time and space, unraveling the intricate relationships between power, territory, and human interactions. We invite our authors to challenge preconceptions surrounding borders, embrace nuance, and explore the histories of conflict, triumph, travel, exchange, trade, heritage, community, and culture that are intrinsically linked to the concept of borders.

We are looking forward to your submissions.

*Janset Nil Genç, Rachnaa van Hunen, Sophie Marijn, Yukiko Sonntag, Janne Heymeijer, and Yueming Wang*

Editors and Co-Founders of *History Collective*