

The 34th ASEN
Conference

Nationalism & Borders

23-25 April 2025
CEU Budapest

Call for Papers

#asen2025

Welcome

The thirty-fourth annual ASEN conference takes place on the banks of the Danube at Central European University's Budapest campus. There can be few venues more fitting than the former heart of the Habsburg Empire for a conference on nationalism and borders.

2025 also marks the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of the great theorist of nationalism and founder of the department of nationalism studies at CEU, Ernest Gellner. We are proud to be holding the biennial Gellner Lecture with the department he founded.

At the time of writing, we are still confirming prices, but we expect a conference pass to be around €120. We will have a limited number of fee waivers available.

We very much hope that you will join us.

Submitting your abstract

Abstracts of up to 250 words should be submitted at asen.ac.uk/conference by 2359UTC on 16th November.

Schedule

Results will be communicated to everyone who submits a paper on 13th December, when registration will open as well.

Registration will close at 2359UTC on 28th February; please note that we will not be able to accept any registrations after this. The programme will be published on 12th March.

The conference will take place from 23rd to 25th April, with the Gellner Lecture on the evening of the 23rd and the conference dinner on the evening of the 24th. There will be an informal social event on the evening of the 22nd.

We will be announcing the Gellner Lecturer and plenary speakers in the next few weeks.

Stay in touch

If you have any queries, please email conference@asen.ac.uk or telephone/WhatsApp +44 (0) 7885 991 633.

We will post any updates to our social media at facebook.com/asenevents, twitter.com/asenevents, and threads.net/asenevents, as well as on the conference updates page at asen.ac.uk/conference/updates.

The hashtag for the conference is #asen2025.

Call for Papers

Borders are central to understanding nationalism, playing a crucial role in defining the spatial and symbolic limits of national identity. In a world shaped by globalization, migration, and transnational flows, the significance of borders – both physical and ideological – has become increasingly contested. Borders serve as tools of inclusion and exclusion, defining the parameters of nationhood and often becoming sites of conflict and negotiation. The intersection of nationalism and borders is not only a contemporary concern but also deeply rooted in historical events, treaties, and the legacies of war and violence.

This conference aims to explore the multifaceted relationship between nationalism and borders, examining how national borders have been constructed, maintained, and challenged in the past and in the present. It will investigate the ways in which nations create borders and borders create nations. It will further investigate the significance of borderlands, of in-between territories, in shaping national identities, influencing state policies, and impacting the lives of those who live along or across these dividing lines. By addressing the dynamic and often contentious nature of borders, the conference seeks to offer new insights into the evolving manifestations of nationalism in a world where the boundaries of the nation-state are both blurred and re-affirmed.

2025 also marks the centenary of Ernest Gellner, whose works on nationalism and the misalignment of political and ethnographic boundaries continues to influence contemporary scholarship. We invite papers that engage with Gellner's legacy, as well as those that explore related themes in the work of other prominent theorists such as Rogers Brubaker, Charles Tilly, Fredrik Barth, and Brendan O'Leary.

In this context, we are particularly interested in contributions that engage with the following questions: Why do nations need borders and what kinds of borders have nations sought to create? How do borders function as tools of national identity construction? What roles do borders play in the politics of exclusion and inclusion? How are borders negotiated and contested by different actors, including states, communities, and individuals? How do global phenomena such as migration, climate change, and digitalization reshape our understanding of national borders? How do borders intersect with issues of religion, race, gender, and class? How do all these factors interact with boundaries internal to the nation and the state?

We welcome papers from a wide range of disciplines and methodological approaches, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of nationalism and border studies. We encourage submissions from scholars in fields such as sociology, anthropology, political science, geography, history, international relations, cultural studies, law, and media studies.

This conference is intended to cover cases worldwide, and we encourage submissions that offer comparative perspectives or innovative theoretical frameworks. We particularly welcome contributions that challenge traditional notions of borders, nationalism, and the nation-state, offering new ways to understand the complexities of these intertwined concepts, both in the 21st century and in history.

Themes

Possible themes for submissions include, but are not limited to:

- Theories of nationalism & borders
- Ernest Gellner the nation-state
- Homelands
- Sovereignty, territoriality, & national identity
- Borders & the politics of exclusion
- Digital borders & virtual nationalisms
- Border conflicts & security
- Borders, the environment, & climate change
- Historical & contemporary border disputes
- Borders & human rights
- Imperial shatterzones & national conflicts
- Nationalism & borders in postcolonial contexts
- Homeland states, nationalising states, & ethnic minorities
- Postwar treaties, border changes, & their consequences
- 'Solutions' to border conflicts (partitions, power-sharing, genocide)
- Ethnic groups & boundaries
- Border-making & nation-building
- Politico-legal conceptions of territorial sovereignty
- Migration, refugees, & the nation-state
- Cross-border communities & transnationalism
- Borders, religion, gender, & race
- Border walls & borderlands
- The role of borders in cultural & heritage politics
- Borders in the age of globalization
- War, nationhood, & borders
- Border & nation in media & literature