

# **Borders and Borders Walls, A New Era? (In)security, Symbolism, Vulnerabilities**

**International conference organized by the Raoul Dandurand Chair at the University of  
Quebec in Montreal**

September 27-28, 2018  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada



The fall of the Berlin Wall and the following redefinition of international relations were meant to open an age of globalization in which states and sovereignty were to become obsolete and borders irrelevant. However, in the wake of 9/11, borders came back into focus and new ones were drawn. With this trend, border barriers, fences, and walls that were expected to be a historical symbol of a collapsed bipolar system were erected at a pace that defied all predictions. Many of them are armored, cemented, monitored, filmed, and patrolled. In this new environment, walls, razor wire, sensors, helicopters, barriers, (wo)men, border guards and drones have become the accessories of hard borders in an open world, complemented and reinforced by policies oriented towards the double movement of externalization and internalization of borders and the hardening of visa and asylum policies.

Border walls though trigger quasi automatically a circumvention reflex, from a form of resistance through art, border projects, civil disobedience to the digging of tunnels and smuggling stratagems. With their bodies, through their presence, migrants resist as well. Walls lead to redrawn migration routes; they don't deter crossings as shown by data from humanitarian and government agencies. Walls are not impermeable: there are no fortresses, solely control *points*, that owe much of their efficiency to their symbolic power, which does not hold much when migrants fear so much that nothing discourage them anymore, or when the economic disequilibrium between two neighboring countries works as a magnet for underground economy.

Often represented as way to gain security, border walls also impact daily life in the borderlands, redefining the surroundings and the lives of borderland communities, from the economic relations to the environment and wildlife. Through the process of internalized borders, individuals become sites of control and the experience of borders become individualized.

This redefinition of borderlands goes beyond the geographical border zone, impacting the regional system through the modification of political ties, economic relations and socio-cultural exchanges. Transborder flows, both commercial and human, are now front and center in international relations and interstates negotiation. Border walls shape interaction between states, organizations and individuals.

It is now clear that walls have become a normalized response to insecurity. Border walls redefine borderlines around the world, sealing and hardening what used to be porous soft borders. Thus, if globalization is blurring borders, walls emphasize them. These infrastructures need to be assessed in terms of efficiency, economic, environmental and humane costs. Why build border barriers if they do not solve the issues they have been erected for? What should be done instead? What is the role of academia and border scholars? And where does the civil society come in? Border walls tangible impact on local societies, economies, and ecosystems, on world migrations, on national policies will be assessed too.

**Fields:** Political Science, Geography, Anthropology, Sociology, Law, Economics, Art, Design, Biology, Environmental studies, Area Studies, Gender studies, Zoology, Medical studies (this list is intended to be suggestive rather than inclusive).

**Organizers/Scientific Committee:** Élisabeth Vallet (Raoul Dandurand Chair, UQAM – Canada), Anne-Laure Amilhat-Szary (Geography, Université Joseph Fourier – France), Andréanne Bissonnette (Raoul Dandurand Chair, UQAM – Canada), Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (Borders in Globalization, University of Victoria – Canada), Irasema Coronado (Political Science, University of Texas at El Paso – USA), Cristina Del Biaggio (Geography, Université Grenoble Alpes – France), Reece Jones (Geography, University of Hawaii – USA), Kenneth D. Madsen (Geography, The Ohio State University – USA), Said Saddiki (Law, Al-Ain University of Science and Technology – UAE).

**Students** are encouraged to submit a proposal.

**Theme 1. Why Border walls**

**Theme 2. Impacts of border walls**

**Theme 3. Legal aspects of border walls**

**Theme 4. Costs and economies of border walls**

**Theme 5. Violence of border walls**

**Theme 6. Alternatives to border walls**

**Theme 7. Border walls and borderlands**

**Theme 8. Border walls and international relations/regional systems**

**Deadline for abstract submission: March 31, 2018**

(for both panel sessions and poster sessions)

Please note that papers may be considered for both panel sessions AND poster sessions.

**Proposal: please include the following information (300 words)**

- Name of authors/contributors
- Institutional affiliations, titles
- Contact: telephone, fax, email, mailing address
- Title of the paper
- Abstract: Subject, empirical frame, analytical approach, theme (approx. 300 words)

**Languages:** Proposals can be submitted in French, English and Spanish. However the conference will be held in English and French.

**Conference Dates and Deadlines:**

- March 31, 2018 : deadline for submitting abstracts and proposals
- May 15, 2018 : proposals selection and notification sent to presenters
- August 15, 2018 : submission of papers to discussants
- September 27-28, 2018 : Conference to be held in Montreal.

Send your proposals via email in Word format to UQAM: [BordersandWalls@gmail.com](mailto:BordersandWalls@gmail.com)