



ABSTRACTS AND NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Introduction

An introduction to this special issue of *RIAS* on walls, in light of President Trump's proposal to build a tall and beautiful wall along the US-Mexico border and the multiple concerns it raises, this essay, like this issue of *RIAS* as a whole, provides comparative background on walls built at different times in the past and in different locations around the world, exploring their intended efficacy and questionable results, their transformation over time into sites of tourism, uncertain peace, and unstable truces. Raising questions about both rhetoric and materiality, it suggests that the matter does not just concern Trump's views and policies but, rather, much more general views in the US toward Mexico and Mexicans. The essay raises the specters of both racism and imperialism in the rhetoric and proposals coming from the White House, and it seeks to use contributions from scholars in Italy, Israel, Mexico, the U.S., Hungary, South Korea, Denmark, and Canada to put it all in broader perspective.

Keywords: Trump's proposed wall, Introduction, Rhetoric, Polls, Comparisons.

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Anthropological Association from 2009 to 2011, editor of *American Ethnologist* from 2002 to 2007, and president of the AAA's Society for Cultural Anthropology from 1999 to 2001.

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Photo Essay: Re-Mapping the US-Mexico Border/lands

The United States-Mexico international border has been unilaterally remapped by the US government for almost three decades. A series of US congressional acts have intensified efforts to secure the border, including by building fences and walls. This photo essay presents images of the border barriers as well as borderland images. The fence or wall images are then intended, on my part, to be juxtaposed with borderland images that capture the social and political relations that manifest the complex ways the borderlands are being remapped through walls and their consequences—all in the context of the still so-called 'American Dream.' The goal of the photo essay is to help identify the different ways the remapping of the U.S.-Mexico border itself is being carried out, with or without the "great, beautiful wall" Donald Trump and his supporters are currently imagining and proposing.

Keywords: photography, US-Mexico border, imperialism, the everyday, photoessay

Alejandro Lugo is a former Professor and Director of the School of Transborder Studies at Arizona State University. Lugo is a cultural anthropologist and photographer of the US-Mexico borderlands and beyond. Some of his photographs on border violence belong to the permanent collection of the Mexican Museum of Art in Chicago and his photographic essays on the border wall and on border life have been exhibited in museums and galleries. His award-winning book about the border, *Fragmented Lives, Assembled Parts: Culture, Capitalism, and Conquest at the US-Mexico Border* (U of Texas Press), was published in 2008. He previously taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, and at the University of Texas at El Paso.

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The Many Forms and Meanings of (Peace) Walls in Contemporary Northern Ireland

Peace walls are a longstanding materialization of the conflict in Northern Ireland, known as the Troubles c.1968–c.1998. The walls have been one of the only security infrastructural forms associated with the violence to have continued and grown into the post-conflict context. They have often been a forgotten materialization of conflict due to their 'temporary'

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nature and their restriction to working-class, urban areas. While there are increasing moves to have these walls removed, or at least to put policies in place to allow them to be taken down in consultation with the communities beside them, there has been little consideration of the long-term impacts on public memory of material segregation. This article uses peace walls in Belfast as a case-study of the unforeseen repercussions of long-term segregation of divided communities. It offers a warning to the current generation of politicians regarding not only the role of what ideological walls are intended to do, but also the impacts they can have that were not intended.

Keywords: Belfast; segregation; peace walls; memorials; gender; victimhood

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Walls that Bridge; or, What We Can Learn from the Roman Walls

When, during the latest US electoral campaign, Pope Francis criticized Trump's idea of building a wall between Mexico and the US, reiterating his favorite point that "we do not need to build walls, but bridges," the Trump camp retorted that the Pope lives in a city state surrounded by walls, in a city itself surrounded by other walls dating back to ancient Roman times. Why wasn't he concerned with those walls? As one can see, even though Roman walls have completely lost their original function and survive mainly as tourist sites, they also remain powerful political and cultural symbols. The scope of this essay is to offer, from the perspective of an Americanist who was born and raised in Rome, some comparative reflections on what we can learn today from the history of Roman walls, as well as from their symbolic afterlives.

Keywords: Roman walls, walls as rhetoric, US literature, walls as bridges, walls as dividers

Giorgio Mariani teaches American literature at the Sapienza University of Rome, where he directs the doctoral program in Sciences of the Text. The immediate past president of IASA, his research interests have focused on nineteenth century American literature, on contemporary American Indian literature, on the literary representation of war and peace. He is a co-editor of the Italian journal of American studies, *Ácoma*, and was recently appointed editor-in-chief of *RIAS, The Review of International American Studies*. He is the author, editor, and co-editor of several volumes. His most recent book is *Waging War on War. Peacefighting in American Literature* (U of Illinois Press, 2015).

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**Fence Walls:
From the Iron Curtain to the US and Hungarian Border Barriers
and the Emergence of Global Walls**

This paper considers the resurgence of the Iron Curtain metaphor and its appropriateness in relation to the current border barriers in the US and the EU. It addresses the impact of the Iron Curtain both on Eastern Europe and on Western Europe, and it explores the legacy of this nearly hermetically sealed off borderland in the different border security and migration control approaches within the EU in the current era of emerging global walls. In my view, while the Iron Curtain metaphor is mistakenly applied to the current border barriers in the US and the EU alike, its legacy does contribute to the marked difference between Eastern and Western European attitudes and policies to the massive influx of migrants. From the Iron Curtain to the Hungarian border fence, the fence walls of the spatially identical border sections reflect not only the changing concepts of walls, but also the distinct historical experiences with migration. The current border barriers in Hungary and the EU, however, draw on the US–Mexican border barrier that aims to stop unauthorized entry while keeping the gates open in both directions for legal cross-border movement in contrast with the prison walls of the Iron Curtain.

Keywords: US–Mexican border barrier; Hungarian border fence; unauthorized migration; Eastern Europe; Cold War; Iron Curtain; border walls

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AMALIA SA'AR, SARAI B. AHARONI, ALISA C. LEWIN

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**Fencing In and Out:
Israel's Separation Wall and the Whitewashing of State Violence**

This essay uses the case of Israel's Separation Wall to address the role of walls in the articulation of security, violence, vulnerability, and danger. In Israel, "security" refers exclusively to the Jewish citizens, whether they are fenced in (residing within the Green Line) or outside it (such as West

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Bank settlers). For the Palestinians, by contrast, the wall is yet another instrument of structural and symbolic violence. While Israeli Jews are vaguely aware of “the occupation,” they largely remain blissfully unaware of the violent under-side of everyday civil security, which the wall represents. Tracing the ways in which Jewish citizens living inside the Green Line experience and accommodate the wall, this essay analyzes its role in whitewashing state violence and in the ongoing construction of subject positions with respect to the security-violence complex.

Keywords: security, state violence, gated communities, misrecognition, the political, Israel-Palestine, separation wall

Amalia Sa’ar is a Senior Lecturer and Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Haifa. Amalia’s topics of interest include gender and feminist theory including feminist security theory, urban anthropology, women, work, and citizenship, generational relations in the feminist movement, and action research. She has done extensive fieldwork with Palestinian citizens of Israel, as well as with low-income women of diverse backgrounds. Her recent book, *Economic Citizenship: Neoliberal Paradoxes of Empowerment*, was published by Berghahn Books in 2016.

Alisa C. Lewin is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Sociology at the University of Haifa and is affiliated with the Center for the Study of Poverty and Social Exclusion. She joined the University of Haifa after completing her PhD at UCLA. Her primary research interests are in demography of the family, poverty, and inequality. Much of her research focuses on the link between gender, family and poverty. Alisa Lewin has recently published papers in the *European Journal of Population*, *the Journal of Family Issues*, and *Social Indicators Research*.

Sarai B. Aharoni is a lecturer in the Gender Studies Program, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, and one of the founding members of the Haifa Feminist Institute (HFI). Previously, she was a researcher at the Center for Research on Peace Education (CERPE) at the University of Haifa, the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations at the Hebrew University and the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. Her recent work on gender, peace and conflict in Israel has been published in *Social Politics*, *Security Dialogue* and the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*.

GABRIELA VARGAS-CETINA, STEFFAN IGOR AYORA-DÍAZ

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To Build a Wall: Imaginaries of Identity in Yucatan, Mexico

Here we consider ideas related to walls, roads, bridges, doors and tunnels and the materialities they name as a general frame of reference, to reflect on the manifold relations between imagined *insides* and *outsides* generally implied when discussing the wall already splitting Mexico and the US, but also regarding Yucatecan identity. We explain the ways in which Yucatecans have often seen themselves as different from “Mexicans” and why. Yucatecans have sometimes expressed the wish to build a wall around the Yucatan peninsula. We propose that such a wish is based

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on an erroneous perception of Yucatecans as intrinsically better people than non-Yucatecans, upholding ideals of “peacefulness” and “goodness,” and on the rhetorical inclusion of all inhabitants of the Yucatan peninsula within an imagined single “Yucatan.” Yet the wished-for Yucatecan unity is impeded by the current political and identity divisions within the Yucatan peninsula, which comprises three different states, each with its own economy, specific regional identities, and its own internal problems. We believe that to make Yucatan more inclusive, Yucatecans ought to start imagining more and better roads and bridges.

Keywords: Yucatan-Mexico relations, history, space, Yucatan, the border

Gabriela Vargas-Cetina (PhD McGill 1994) is a Researcher and Professor of Anthropology at the Autonomous University of Yucatan. Her recent book *Beautiful Politics of Music: Trova in Yucatan, Mexico* (U of Alabama Press, 2017) is an ethnography of Yucatecan trova music, through the lens of regional and local politics. Her current work deals with music, technology and performance.

Steffan Igor Ayora-Diaz (PhD McGill 1993) is a Researcher and Professor of Anthropology at the Autonomous University of Yucatan. His book *Foodscapes, Foodfields, and Identities in Yucatan* (Bherghan 2012) looks at the food, identity, history and politics in Yucatan, Mexico. He currently studies the importance of technology, taste and emotions as they relate to food.

SANGJUN JEONG

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Mending Wall? The War over History in South Korea

Until Korea was divided into North and South in 1945, it had maintained its territorial unity on the Korean peninsula for well over 1,000 years. Then, two young US officers drew an arbitrary line along the 38th parallel. Developing into a heavily militarized zone only several years later, ironically called the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ), that division has lasted for decades and into the present. Recently, several symbolic acts were performed in the zone and innovative plans were suggested to make the land strip into a peace park as a symbol of ideological reconciliation and ecological paradise. Yet to many Koreans, the zone is still inscribed as a wall permanently bisecting the peninsula not only physically but also culturally. Through an analysis of Robert Frost’s poem “Mending Wall,” this article contemplates the divisions within South Korean society over the North-South divide as a war over the telling of history. This history, however told, must be understood alongside the sentiment of *han*, a Korean word loosely defined as frustration, anger, and sadness, something that has

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been shaped by centuries of suffering from wars, invasions, colonization, injustice, and exploitation.

Keywords: Korean Peninsula; Political Divisions; History; War; Demilitarized Zone

Sangjun Jeong teaches American literature and cultural history at Seoul National University in South Korea. His current research interests lie in New England Puritanism, American democracy, and the tradition of political novels in the United States. Jeong was recently a visiting scholar at Duke University and at Harvard University's Harvard-Yenching Institute, and a Fellow at the International Forum for US Studies at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. He has served as the Director of the American Studies Institute at SNU, Executive Director of the Language Education Institute at SNU, and President of the American Studies Association of Korea. His book, *Representing the Rosenberg Case: Coover, Doctorow, and the Consequences of Postmodernism*, was published by Seoul National University Press (1994).

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Wall Art and the Presence of Absence

This photoessay takes the reader on a walking tour through Wadi Nisnas, Haifa, Israel, where art appears on walls and where walls become art. Using de Certeau, Jasmin Habib reflects on the way that these pieces represent the political and cultural histories of Palestinian displacement, a politics of belonging as well as their return. The artists' imaginary of coexistence is set in stark contrast to the nativism that marks the world outside of these walls.

Keywords: Palestinians; wall art; photoessay; coexistence, de Certeau; Haifa

Jasmin Habib, Director of the Global Engagement Program, is a cultural anthropologist teaching in the Political Science Department and Global Governance program at the University of Waterloo. She completed her MA in International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, USA, and her PhD in Cultural Anthropology at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada. She recently co-edited, *America Observed: on the International Anthropology of the United States* with Virginia Dominguez. She is also the Editor-in-Chief and Anglophone Editor of *Anthropologica*, the journal of the Canadian Anthropology Society (CASCAS), and author of *Israel, Diaspora, and the National Routes of Belonging*. She frequently writes about the politics of displacement and dissident practices in the US, Canada, and Israel.

GYÖRGY TÓTH

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**Epilogue: Turning to the Wall
Concepts across Space and Time**

The epilogue to this journal issue interrogates a variety of aspects of walls as mental structures and tropes of historical memory. Engaging with the issue's contributing authors, Tóth argues that the idea of the wall functions as metonymy, activating a siege mentality and mobilizing its target audience—hence its rhetorical power and attraction as policy. Discussing the wall's symbology as a border of the nation state but also pointing out its increasing privatization, the piece concludes with an exploration of the potential that walls may have for the creative subversion of their original function to seal off, categorize and divide humans. .

Keywords: commentary, Trump, historical memory, metonymy, art

György Tóth holds degrees from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary (MAs in English Language & Lit and American Studies) and the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA (PhD in American Studies). In his academic specializations, György combines US cultural and social history with Transnational American Studies, Performance Studies and Memory Studies to yield interdisciplinary insights into the politics of US social and cultural movements in post-1945 Europe. Since December 2014 György has been serving as Lecturer in post-1945 US History and Transatlantic Relations at the Division of History and Politics of the University of Stirling, Scotland, UK. His book *From Wounded Knee to Checkpoint Charlie* was published by SUNY Press in 2016. <http://www.sunypress.edu/p-6245-from-wounded-knee-to-checkpoint.aspx>.

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