



# Tabula **RASA**

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## **TABULA RASA ISSUE 33 (DECEMBER 2019)**

### *The Rise of the Border Industrial Complex: Biopolitics, Economics, Rights, Culture*

A Special Issue of *Tabula Rasa*, a multilingual interdisciplinary open access academic journal (<http://www.revistatabularasa.org/>) based at the Universidad Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca in Bogotá.

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The Border Industrial Complex refers to the various state and for-profit institutions developed around the containment and flows of migration across national boundaries. This deeply entangled web of organizations oversee and realize a range of practices, including the increasingly visible deployment of militarized personnel to borders, regimes of immigrant detention and deportation, rigid bureaucracies and processes of identification, the use of military and police surveillance equipment, blurring of boundaries between national border enforcement and local law enforcement, and the rise of industries whose services and technologies are dedicated to restraining, pursuing, and banishing migrants, as well as increasingly institutionalized contexts of human smuggling and criminal networks dedicated to kidnapping, extortion and other forms of exploitation of migrants. So too does the term aim to highlight contemporary borders' under theorized internal ethics, economic dynamics, and physical and psychological brutalities. Theorizing of the Border Industrial Complex builds on the critical work done on the Military and Prison Industrial Complexes to account not just for the tremendous corporate profits to be made from building some of these institutions through public-private partnerships, but also the power to violently (im)mobilize and control border crossers in the name of national security and defense.

The state, corporate and organized criminal violence promoted in nationalistic and xenophobic discourse, racial profiling, criminalization of historical migratory labor flows, forced displacement, familial separation, and human rights abuses at national borders has grown to alarming levels in recent years, both as wealthy nations (US, Canada, Australia, "Fortress Europe") clash with migrants traveling from the global south, but also as borders between

less wealthy nations in Latin America, Asia and Africa become violent conflict zones. In this global context, the Border Industrial Complex is never a national or regional phenomenon, but rather a global system of exchange and collusion in techniques, technologies, and militarized campaigns of border policing.

This special issue welcomes critical approaches to the biopolitics of national borders. Articles focusing on any aspect of contemporary migration; border policing and enforcement; human displacement, smuggling and containment; from perspectives of humanities and/or qualitative social sciences are welcome. We are especially interested in work that emerges from decolonial, feminist, queer/cuir, and other social justice oriented theory, especially those that focus significantly on the local and embodied knowledge of migrants themselves.

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