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## BOOK REVIEW

**Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security and the Citizen after 9/11*, United States of America: Cambridge, 2018, 248 pages.**

This book is written by Matthew Longo who is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

The book is a comprehensive account on Politics of Borders. How borders have come to play an undeniable part in Active Politics. It follows in the first part historical approach to elucidate the subject and in the second connects the border historicity with how borders influence our lives. Needless to say, almost every aspect of border building, management, security, maintenance etc. are discussed in the book. Also, it very critically discusses the relationship of humans with borders.

The first chapter which is an insight into how older civilizations viewed borders. The Greek believed in borders for protection. They considered boundary to be the law. Where the boundary ends, law ceases to exist. He furthers says that the center and periphery are in a very complex relationship. To what extent the center exerts its control over periphery is a fundamental question. In defining borders, proximity is quintessential. Therefore, in olden times the delineation of an empire's boundary used to be very "thin" whereas today they happen to be very "thick". The emergence of state according to the author is negation to what he calls feudal Darwinism in the Middle Ages.

Hereafter, the book is divided into two parts; The Perimeter and The Ports of Entry. The author explains the former as a Wall that separates *us* from *them*. The wider the wall, the greater is the difference. Further, how new sophisticated ways have been used to secure borders such as radars, sensors and UAVs (Unidentified Arms Vehicles). Border security has changed radically after 9/11 which acted as a big bang theory emanating all possible measures which may be taken to secure borders. It further laments the overbuilding of walls after the same incident that results in a lot more resilience. The author emphasizes that managing borders are all the more

different due to its heterogeneous nature. They are zones where heterogeneity pervades. However, as Foucault says that it is the oldest dream of the oldest sovereign to secure its borderlands. As you tighten control over the borderlands, certain questions of value arise such as the allegiance of the citizens to measures taken and the rights of minority.

The third chapter is focused particularly about the border patrolling agreements and their execution between United States and its bordering neighbors. The idea behind these agreements is co-management of borders. United States and Canada are practicing several such methods to increase surveillance. For example, Shiprider was an initiative to address maritime security. One country allowing a certain number of border security personnel to take control of the other territory and vice-versa. Thus, borders may be dually-managed in times to come.

Chapter Four is Co-Bordering. Here the author gives primarily the example of Europe. How it came to realize the significance of Co-Bordering. Nonetheless, this requires states to be run under a federal system where each state pools its sovereignty. This is also reflective of what Kant dreamt of an expansive and peaceful federation. As John Rawls puts it that for global institutions to have the same kind of attachment and responsibility as states do, there first has to be deep levels of cross-border social cooperation. There are both potential benefits and harms of Co-Bordering which the author explains at length.

The fifth chapter deals predominantly with Big Data and Security concerns in the modern times. Michael Foucault is said to have understood the problem of boundaries when he delineates the picture of Middle Ages when walls would protect people from the outside. However, in the eighteenth century they began to disappear. This resulted in two things; freedom was embodied but banditry and violence worsened the local conditions. The chapter progresses further with a new term coined “dataveillance” – surveillance done using the data of individuals. Nowadays, data of individuals is stored both biometrically and biographically. We can describe Big Data as Three Vs – Volume, Velocity and Variety. The speed at which it is produced is unprecedented. This is all to control individuals. An individual without a record is not an individual at all. Therefore, the surveillance power of data is like a tiny constable always with you. Marx described French

revolution as a “giant broom” that swept away the past. On the contrary, Data is a vacuum that retains everything.

Derrida says that hospitality carries within it the concept of hostility. The guest upon entering the host’s space is all vulnerable. Chapter Six, extensively discusses the Politics of Trust. A state is entrusted with an individual’s data. The citizen is at the mercy of the state for his identity. Information sharing among states is a phenomenon fast rising in the first world which also jeopardizes the rights of citizens. Five Eyes is a community of 5 states including United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They extensively share data with each other to remain updated with threats and other information necessary to safeguard their borders.

The last chapter explores the occult nature of data. How important it is going to become in times to come. Data is the new gold. It will be the new currency that will dominate the world. Citizens are no longer free but trapped in a web that is inevitable. A person with no digital identity does not exist for others who are digitally identifiable. This said, privacy does not remain a social norm in as Mark Zuckerberg puts it. The author further presents his idea of pixilation which is a form of targeted data collection. Moreover, there is a global digital firewall with data sharing allies on the inside and other states outside.

Concluding the book, the author says that when democracy is perverted it is ruled by machines. He adds that the fundamental question that arises is whether states will control data or it is the other way round. It is quintessential for everyone to be awake to the fast changing yet demonizing data-centric world.

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