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**Mark Maguire, Ursula Rao, Nils Zurawski (EDs.). Bodies as Evidence: Security, Knowledge, and Power. Duke University Press, 2018.**

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**Mark Maguire, Ursula Rao, Nils Zurawski (EDs.). *Bodies as Evidence: Security, Knowledge, and Power*. Duke University Press, 2018.**

*Bodies as Evidence* presents an effective and reflexive analysis of the “contemporary drive to secure individual identities, bodies, borders, and all sorts of boundaries as emergent in the mimetic impulses at the heart of modernity” (Maguire & Rao, p. 7). While some chapters explicitly tackle questions regarding the body and others simply incorporate aspects of them, all employ dynamic and interwoven understandings of seemingly disparate concepts. Indeed, evidence here is not “a thing in and of itself,” editors Maguire and Rao explain, “but, rather, an expression of broader configurations of power and knowledge” (p. 7). This interplay between overarching influences is echoed throughout the volume, concepts that—as Goldstein and Alonso-Bejarano describe—work in concert to produce the environs in which the need to secure and categorize is emboldened and glorified. These include the nature of positive and negative space archives in Jacobsen and Rao, the contradictory function of paramedics in Jusionyte, the merge of geo- and bio-politics in Goldstein and Alonso-Bejarano, the relationship between national security and state sovereignty that inhabits the ‘gray zone’ in Feldman, the increasing governmental surveillance and increasing governmental secrecy in Masco, and the “murky semantic space” between terrorism and counterterrorism in Zulaika. In every context, these distinct (and sometimes opposing) ideas run together and illuminate the nuance of contemporary reliance on evidence, bodily and otherwise.

A guiding thread through many chapters is the delineation of tangible and intangible spaces, which naturally emerges from attempts to categorize the physical and social body. The increasing reliance on biometric data as evidence of the legality, deservedness, threat, or legitimacy of an individual necessitates the formation of alternative physical and social boundaries. Those who can be categorized, and those who cannot, modify their behaviors to fit within these new standards, in turn creating an often harmful climate of inclusivity and exclusivity. Those without categorization (or with the wrong categorization) are forced into smaller, insecure spaces and are actively cut off from basic resources such as food, medical care, or asylum. For example, as the definition of the ‘vulnerable border’ shifts from a tangible place to an intangible concept, the uncategorized are forced into considerable danger by the policies that seek to secure the vulnerable border. This may be through seeking unregulated work, by climbing higher border fences, or by braving treacherous waters. Here we are shown the other side of the evidentiary coin, evidence of these hostile social spaces is reflected in the physical—through the broken bodies of migrants on the shores of Europe and the U.S./Mexico border, or in the remains of victims targeted in political violence. Thus, a cyclical dynamic emerges. The efforts to secure and categorize leads to the damage of bodies which cannot conform. This damage done to the body through the efforts to secure and categorize may then act as evidence of those very efforts.

Each chapter of *Bodies* seeks to elucidate some facet of this dual understanding, and succeeds. Its primary victory, however, is the continued emphasis on reflexivity in a topic that so often shrouds itself in declarations of objectivity. As Maguire writes in his chapter on predictive policing: “It quickly became apparent that...Big Data often means medium data at best, and algorithms depend entirely on the cultural coding that give them their rules” (p. 147). This idea that data or evidence stands entirely apart from enculturated bias or agenda—and can therefore be used without regard to those social influences—is expertly eviscerated in *Bodies* through ethnographic and reflexive analysis. This reflexivity is even directed at the academic analysis of bodily evidence, as M’charek and Robben and Ferrándiz underpin the enormous complexity of collecting adequate forensic evidence in the wake of

political violence. Herein lies the volume's next achievement; its analysis highlights the incredible urgency of these emerging problems.

This urgency will not come as a surprise to many readers, as several of the hot-button topics covered in *Bodies* have made their way into the public consciousness—particularly the migrant crises in the United States and Europe, for example. Yet, the depth in which these topics are addressed in this volume lends them a newfound sense of gravity. More importantly, perhaps, the analysis offers a way forward. Understanding the social and physical dynamics of policies that seek to secure and categorize, the problems that arise from these policies, and the complexity of resolving these problems enables us to appropriately rethink these systems. And this applies across the board, from policing, border control, and national security to forensics, medical care, and welfare. The accounts set forward in this volume reveal the functionality of such systems, stressing the practicality of decisions in evidence collection (and avoidance) scenarios. Once scrutinized in this way, and contextualized within that broader interplay of overarching concepts, it becomes possible to untangle cause and effect and to improve the chronic and urgent problems witnessed in these areas.

*Bodies as Evidence* poses a bold premise. It argues that not only is evidence beholden to social and political influences but that the glorification of evidence has demonstrable, and often dangerous, side effects on already marginalized communities. Its exemplary use of ethnographic and reflexive methodologies illustrates the vast complexity of seemingly objective data, and the practical limitations of collecting and employing it. By examining an array of case studies from across the world, *Bodies* emphasizes holistic understandings of the systems that emerge around the collection of evidence. It successfully brings diverse scenarios under its thematic umbrella and utilizes them to represent the far-reaching implications of uncircumspect use of this evidence. Considering the flexibility of the thematic parameters, the cohesion of the volume is impressive, and any deviations from the theme of bodily evidence are justified and effective. *Bodies* is an invaluable text in the face of perfunctory reliance on bodily evidence to justify political policy, and encourages readers to consider both the systematic outcomes of this reliance and the specific details of each example that offer clarity and nuance. And these skills are paramount, for if we do not employ them, "...[T]he truth will be produced by others, elsewhere, uncritically" (Maguire & Rao, p. 234).

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