Land, Terrain, Territory

Introduction

Political theory lacks a sense of territory; territory lacks a political theory.[1] Although a central term within political geography and international relations, the concept of territory has been under-examined. Jeffrey Anderson notes that "politics is rooted in territory... [but] the spatial dimension of the political economy is so prevalent that it is easily, if not frequently, overlooked" (1992: xiii). Bertrand Badie suggests that "the principle of territoriality often eludes critics because it seems so obviously universal. It is a decisive component in the actions of the state, but it is, nevertheless, linked to a historical development" (2000: 58). Claude Raffestin argues that "the problem of territoriality is one of the most neglected in geography", and that "the history of this notion remains to be done" (1980: 143).[2] It is worth noting that Badie and Raffestin talk of 'territoriality' rather than 'territory'; a point to which this paper will return.

While there are some excellent and important investigations of particular territorial configurations, disputes or issues (see, for example, Sahlins 1989; Winichakul 1994; Paasi 1996; Jönsson et. al. 2000), and some valuable textbooks on the topic (Storey 2001; Delaney 2005), there is little that investigates the term 'territory' conceptually or historically.[3] This is, in part, because territory is often assumed to be self-evident in meaning, allowing the study of its particular manifestations—territorial disputes, the territory of specific countries, etc.—without theoretical reflection on 'territory' itself. Where it is defined, territory is either assumed to be a relation that can be understood as an outcome of territoriality, or simply as a bounded space, in the way that Giddens described the state as a "bordered power container" (1981: 5-6, 11; see 1987).[4] In the first, the historical dimension is neglected, since it appears that territory exists in all times and places; in the second the conditions of possibility of such a configuration are assumed rather than examined. Both take the thing that needs explaining as the explanation; the *explanandum* as the *explanans*. Rather, territory requires the same kind of historical, philosophical analysis that has been undertaken by Edward Casey for another key geographical concept, that of place (1997).[5]

Linda Bishai suggests that territory "may be examined in a similar fashion as sovereignty—through conceptual history" (2004: 59). Yet conceptual history, *Begriffsgeschichte*, has, with partial exceptions, not been turned towards the question of territory explicitly. There is, for instance, no explicit discussion of territory in the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, the *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich*, or the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, which are the most comprehensive works of the *Begriffsgeschichte* approach

pioneered by Reinhart Koselleck (see Bruner et. al. 1972-97; Reichardt and Schmitt, 1985-; Ritter et. al. 1971-2007; Koselleck 2002, 2006). The work of the Cambridge School of contextualist approaches to the history of political thought, of which Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock are perhaps the most significant figures, offers substantive help in its methodological principles, but only tangentially in terms of its focus (Skinner 1978, 2002; Pocock 2009). Important though such methods are, the approach employed here is closer to a genealogical account, of the type Foucault developed from Nietzsche and Heidegger's work (see Elden 2001, 2003b). Genealogy, understood as a historical interrogation of the conditions of possibility of things being as they are, is helpful for a number of reasons. It makes use of the kinds of textual and contextual accounts offered by *Begriffsgeschichte* or the Cambridge school; but is critical of notions that the production of meaning is reliant on authorial intent. It makes use of the full range of techniques—including etymology, semantics, philology and hermeneutics—that should inform the history of ideas; but pairs them with an analysis of practices and the workings of power. And it is avowedly political; undertaking this work as part of a wider project that aspires to be a 'history of the present'.[6]

The best general study of territory remains Jean Gottmann's *The Significance of Territory* (1973; see Muscarà 2005). It trades on his earlier book *La politique des États et leur géographie*, where he claims that "one cannot conceive a State, a political institution, without its spatial definition, its territory" (1951: 71). Nonetheless, in both works he tends to use the term in an undifferentiated historical sense, as a concept used throughout history (see for example 1951: 72-3). Thus while he makes a detailed and valuable analysis, he is still perhaps too willing to see territory existing at a variety of spatial scales and in a variety of historical periods. This tends to create an ahistorical, and, potentially, ageographical analysis. One of the very few attempts that begins to offer a more properly historical account of territory is found in the work of the legal theorist Paul Alliès in his book *L'invention du territoire*, which was originally a thesis supervised by Nicos Poulantzas in 1977. Alliès suggests that "territory always seems linked to possible definitions of the state; it gives it a physical basis which seems to render it inevitable and eternal" (1980: 9). It is precisely in order to disrupt that inevitability and eternal nature that an interrogation of the state of territory is necessary.

This paper outlines some of the issues at stake in undertaking such a project. It proceeds through a number of stages. First, it asks why territory has been neglected as a topic of conceptual analysis, and critically interrogates work on territoriality. Second, it suggests that often territory is effectively taken as 'land' or 'terrain'; political-economic and political-strategic relations which are essential but ultimately insufficient. Third, it argues that territory needs to be interrogated in relation to state and space; and that its political aspects need to be

understood in an expanded sense of political-legal and political-technical issues. Finally it proposes that territory can be understood as a political technology; which is not intended to be an absolute definition, but to raise the questions that need to be asked to grasp how territory has been understood in different historical and geographical contexts.

The Neglect of Territory and the Problem with Territoriality

Why has territory been neglected? There are several reasons. First, the turn away from reflection on the state, especially by post-structuralist approaches, seems to have rendered suspect attention on these issues. As Joe Painter notes, "conventional definitions of territory emphasize boundedness, identity, integrity, sovereignty and spatial coherence—concepts that post-structuralism is often thought to have demolished" (2009: 3). Second, and not unrelated, the fear of what John Agnew identified as the 'territorial trap' (1994a; 2009). Agnew suggests that this is a threefold assumption of the conventional understanding of the geography of state power: that "modern state sovereignty requires clearly bounded territories"; that "there is a fundamental opposition between 'domestic' and 'foreign' affairs in the modern world" and that "the territorial state is seen as acting as the geographical 'container' of modern society" (1994a; see 2005: 41; 1994b). As Agnew notes the first assumption dates from the 15th-20th century; and the second two from last 100 years, although there are of course earlier precedents (2005: 41). Others have made similar claims. Gottmann, for instance, notes that it is all too easy to assume uncritically the modern, or legal sense of territory as a "portion of geographical space under the jurisdiction of certain people" (1973: 5). All-too-often though, interrogations have not led to a more careful examination of what territory is, and its intrinsic limits, but rather to an avoidance of the topic altogether. It is through a historical conceptual examination that moving beyond 'the territorial trap', rather than simply skirting around it, is possible. Third, a degree of conceptual imprecision regarding the terms of territory and territoriality. The slippage between these two distinct terms was noted above in the quotes from Ruggie and Raffestin, but they are hardly alone. (I have lost count of the number of times that I have said that I am working on *territory* only for the person to reply with a reference to, or discussion of, *territoriality*.) It is crucial to achieve clarity about the aim of the investigation.

What is the problem with territoriality? The first thing to note is that unlike, say, 'spatiality', which is generally understood as a property or condition of space, something pertaining to it; 'territoriality' has today a rather more active connotation. The other, older sense of 'territoriality', as the condition, or status of territory, rather than a mode of operating toward that territory, is generally lost. It would be good to retrieve it. Second, territoriality in that more recent sense itself needs to be distinguished, as there are at least two conflicting

traditions in the use of the term, the first biological; the second social. These may not actually be distinct, and care should be taken to suggest an implied nature/culture divide, but advocates of territoriality do present them in this way. There is therefore a logic to approaching these works under their own terminological division.

Writers such as Wagner (1960), Ardrey (1967) and Malmberg (1980) outlined ways where territory can be understood through a basis in a fundamental biological drive and as a form of animal association. Their work often covers a great deal of ground, within a broad historical sweep, but they continually blur territory and territoriality together, seeing territoriality as a constant human element, played out in different contexts. This is an important tradition of knowledge.[7] Some geographers, particularly in the late 1960s and early 1970s, utilised these behaviourist assumptions in the linkage between human and animal territoriality.[8] Edward Soja, for instance, declared in 1971 that "territoriality, as it is used here, is *a behavioural phenomenon associated with the organization of space into spheres of influence or clearly demarcated territories which are made distinctive and considered at least partially exclusive by their occupants or definers*" (1971: 19). The problem with this is that while it can tell us something about human behaviour in space, it is not at all clear that it can tell us something about 'territory'. In part this is due to the obvious point that human social organisation has changed more rapidly than biological drives. Indeed, Soja recognises precisely these issues (1971: 28), and as a later section of this paper will demonstrate, does offer a more useful approach to territory. Indeed as Soja notes almost two decades later, "much of this work had to be purely defensive, for the then prevailing view of territoriality was filled with bio-ethological imperatives which obscured any socio-political interpretation" (1989: 150 n. 9).

A rather different approach is offered by Robert Sack in *Human Territoriality* (1986; see 1983). Despite its title Sack does not suggest a purely biological, determinist approach. He suggests that territoriality is a geo-political strategy, and not a basic vital instinct. Sack claims that while he sees "territoriality as a basis of power, I do not see it as part of an instinct, nor do I see power as essentially aggressive" (1986: 1). Sack labels the area or place delimited and controlled through territoriality a *territory*, but the non-specific nature of his enquiry becomes clear here. A place can be a territory at times but not at others; "territories require constant effort to establish and maintain"; and as a corollary of the previous definition they are "the results of strategies to affect, influence, and control people, phenomena, and relationships" (1986: 19). Indeed, in his later *Homo Geographicus*, Sack conceives of the general "role of place as territory", suggesting that "the meaning of place in this current book is then very much like that of territory" (1997: 272 n. 1).

Sack effectively argues that territoriality is a social construct (not quite a product), forged through interaction and struggle, and thoroughly permeated with social relations. There are some excellent chapters—especially on the US rectangular land survey and the church (1986 chs. 4 and 5)—but none of this really gets to grips with the complexities in the term 'territory' itself. The problem with this mode of analysis—a problem it shares with the biological approach—is that it is both historically and geographically imprecise. These kinds of understandings seem to transcend historical periods and uneven geographical development, and also function beyond geographical scale (see also Dear and Wolch 1989). Perhaps this is only to be expected given that the focus is on 'territoriality' instead of territory. Sack is at his best when he approaches the question of territoriality historically, such as in the passages on Renaissance thought (1986: 83), or on the role of capitalism in shaping understandings of space and time (1986: 84-5).[9] Yet, as Soja notes, "neither my earlier work nor Sack's however, provide a satisfactory social ontology of territoriality" (Soja 1989: 150 n. 9).

A related analysis to Sack can be found in some of the writings of the Swiss geographer Claude Raffestin. Like Sack, Raffestin is cautious about assuming too straight-forward a relation between animal and human territoriality (1988: 264). Rather he develops a rich account grounded on a reading of Foucault and Lefebvre together. While this has become more common in recent years, Raffestin was pioneering in reading them together in his 1980 book *Pour une géographie du pouvoir*. Raffestin develops Foucault's theory of power, suggesting that "relational space-time is organised by a combination of energy and information" (1980: 46; see 2007). In a sense, energy can be read alongside power; and information with knowledge, the other two terms of the Foucauldian triad of space, knowledge and power. For Raffestin, "population, territory and authority" are the three elements of the state, and he suggests that "the entire geography of the state derives from this triad" (1980: 17; see Muir 1981).

Raffestin contends that 'space' and 'territory' are not equivalent, and that using them indiscriminately has led to a lot of confusion. Space is, for Raffestin, the anterior term, because territory is generated from space, through the actions of an actor, who 'territorialises' space (1980: 129). This is the potential danger, in that while Raffestin wishes to make an argument for the conception precision of territory, he invokes territoriality as the way into this term. The displacement of territory by territoriality blunts the potential of his analysis. Yet at times he offers some very valuable insights, particularly evident in his careful and historical examination of the notion of the frontier (1986). A similar criticism could be levelled against Rhys Jones, *Peoples/States/Territories*, who is similarly good on the particular practices of state territorial formation, but tends to collapse territory into territoriality, which loses the conceptual precision and analytic purchase of the former term (2007: especially 3, 34).

An Approach to Territory

In identifying some of the reasons why territory has been neglected as a topic of examination, Painter has suggested that "'territoriality' is often treated as complex and dynamic; 'territory' as more straightforward and not in need of sophisticated analysis" (2009: 6). While it is difficult to dispute the complexities surrounding territoriality, its dynamism appears not to be historical. Indeed, given that territoriality is so widespread in animal and human behaviour, it can only help us to understand territory if that is a term without a history. Rather it is territory that is logically prior to territoriality, even if existentially second. Strategies and processes toward territory—of which territoriality is but a fraction—conceptually presuppose the object that they practically produce. It may well therefore be more fruitful to approach territory as a concept in its own right.

While Soja was initially discussed alongside behaviourist accounts, as indicated this does not do justice to the richness of his analysis. One of the things that is most notable is his claim that while all societies have spatial dimensions, few operate in territorial ways, thus implying that territory is more historically and geographically limited than is often assumed to be the case. He similarly notes the tendency to assume that a Western model can be universalised to explain the world more generally (1971: 16). He looks at a number of other societies, suggesting that "in nearly all of these societies there was a *social definition of territory rather than a territorial definition of society*" (1971: 13, see 33). On this basis, he comes to his general claim regarding "the political organization of space":

> Its major purpose is to create and maintain solidarity within the society by shaping the processes of competition, conflict, and cooperation as they operate spatially (1971: 7).

To understand these three processes of *competition, conflict*, and *cooperation* Soja proposes a tripartite analysis of resource, power and social organisation, which repays careful thought.

1. "control over the distribution, allocation, and ownership of scarce resources (including land, money and power—the ability to make authoritative decisions)"
2. "the maintenance of order and the enforcement of authority"
3. "the legitimization of authority through societal integration" (1971: 7).

The claim here is that for the analysis of territory this is more useful than his trading on behavioural biological models; more helpful than Sack's social

approach through territoriality; and can be brought into fruitful combination with Raffestin. While Raffestin is too willing to approach territory through territoriality, and tends to see space as an ahistorical absolute, he is invaluable in thinking the way that territory needs to be understood through representation, appropriation and control, broadly understood as the workings of power.

In competition, conflict, and cooperation; and resource, power and social organisation Soja has identified two groups of three related terms. These terms begin to allow us to think through three inherently related, yet ultimately distinct concepts: land, terrain, territory. The suggestion being made is that land, terrain and territory need to be conceptually distinguished; even if in many instances they are practically intertwined.

- *Land* is a relation of property, a finite resource that is distributed, allocated and owned; a political-economic question. Land is a resource over which there is competition.

- *Terrain* is a relation of power, with a heritage in geology and the military; the control of which allows the establishment and maintenance of order. As a 'field', a site of work or battle, it is a political-strategic question.

- *Territory* is something that is both of these, and more than these. Territory must be approached in itself rather than through territoriality; and in relation to land and terrain.

Each can, of course, be read in what appears to be non-political ways: land as an aesthetic category; terrain in a scientific register; territory as the mere outcome of territoriality. Yet each of these is shot through with relations of power. There is a political economy to the environment; a political-strategy to the impact of technology; and an understated politics to territoriality.

Land

Some accounts see territory as a form of property. The modern English word territory—a word shared by the Romance languages and found in many Germanic ones—is traditionally derived from the Latin *terra*. This is a word translated as 'earth' or 'land'. Part of the reason for this is its etymology: *tir* is the dry, *terra* is dry land. There is a similar reference in the word 'terrace', or 'terracotta', baked earth. In Old Irish *tir* is land or earth and *ters* is dry. In Latin *torrere* is to dry, parch; in Greek *tersesthai* is to become dry; in Sanskrit *trsyati* is he thirsts. While the term 'land' is found in Old English (sometimes spelt as *lond*), and has a distinct lineage, it is not surprising that a number of writers have made the explicit link between land and territory. Those taking a perspective from territoriality often make that suggestion. Hoebel suggests that

land is the basis of human existence, "the most important single object of property. All societies are territorially based, and most sustenance is drawn from the soil, either directly or indirectly" (Hoebel 1949: 331; see Malmberg 1980: 84). For Ardrey "ownership of land is scarcely a human invention, as our territorial propensity is something less than a human distinction" (1967: 4); whereas Malmberg stresses how "closely related behavioural territory and property in land really are" (1980: 87).

Here though the interest is in those that take a political-economic approach to the question of territory, stressing the linkage between territory and land; seeing territory as a form of property. Soja makes this point clearly:

> Conventional Western perspectives on spatial organisation are powerfully shaped by the concept of *property*, in which pieces of territory are viewed as 'commodities' capable of being bought, sold, or exchanged at the market place (1971: 9).

Unsurprisingly, many of those offering such a view are often operating within a Marxist perspective. Whereas the question of land is sometimes underplayed in accounts of Marx, it is an important element of his analysis, trading on earlier political economists such as Ricardo. In Marx, Lefebvre insists, there is a notion of land alongside the labour and capital issues. Rather than look at capital-labour relations then, there is a three way relation of "land-capital-labour" (1974: 325; 1991: 282). One of the final chapters of Volume III of *Capital*, entitled "The Trinity Formula" relates the three terms to their economic aspect: "Capital-profit… land-ground-rent, labour-wages, this trinity form holds in itself all the mysteries of the social production process" (1981b: 955). But Marx's comments in this chapter—compiled by Engels from three fragments—are rather cursory. Scattered discussions in other parts of this volume on rent and mines give some extra details.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels recognise the geographical character of different systems of political rule (1970: 45). While feudalism operated with a category of land, it was capitalism and the emergence of the modern state that cemented the idea of land as a taxable asset. Equally the organic relation of people to land is fractured. In *Capital* Volume I, Marx suggests that "the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence and from the instruments of labour, this terrible and arduously accomplished expropriation of the mass of the people forms the pre-history of capital" (1981a: 928, see 876). There were a range of political-economic changes in the transition from the Medieval to the Early Modern world that impacted on land, including industrialisation, the concentration of people in towns and cities, the emergence of the middle classes, the shift to national

rather than local markets, and a gradual concentration of jurisdiction with the centralisation of state power.

It is clear that Marx intended this treatment to be much more extensive—indeed in his projected plan, after *Capital* the next volume was to be *On Landed Property* before a volume on labour, and ones on the state, international trade and the world market (1983: 270, 298; see 1975: 424). Yet apart from the workshop of the *Grundrisse* little of this is extant (1973: 275-9, 485-8; for a fruitful development see Harvey 1982). One of the comments in the *Grundrisse* is revealing. Marx claims that "the relation to the earth as property is always mediated through occupation of the land and soil, peacefully or violently" (1973: 485). Lefebvre similarly suggests that 'land'—*la terre*—must be understood in this potentially broad sense:

> *La terre*? This is not solely agriculture, but also the subsoil and its resources. It is also the nation-state linked to a territory. And hence also absolute politics and political strategy (1974: 374-5; 1991, 325).

Perry Anderson's *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* and *Lineages of the Absolutist State* provide a large-scale analysis of state development from within this broad perspective, concentrating on the material forces and economic conditions for different political formations (1974a; 1974b). This is not economically reductive, for while he sees land as crucial, his determination of political space is not wholly economically determined. In *Lineages*, for example, he looks at conflict within feudalism. Unsurprisingly this was often conflict over land:

> The typical medium of inter-feudal rivalry, by contrast, was military and its structure was always potentially the zero-sum conflict of the battlefield, by which fixed quantities of ground were won or lost. For land is a natural monopoly: it cannot be indefinitely extended, only redivided. The categorical object of noble rule was territory, regardless of the community inhabiting it. Land as such, not language, defined the natural perimeters of its power (1974b: 31).

In some respects this is unremarkable, but a number of important issues are indicated here. Possession of land is the determinant of power, and conflict over land a key indicator of power struggles. Land though is not something that can be created, but is a scarce resource, one whose distribution and redistribution is an important economic and political concern.

Thinking territory as land, as property, thus gives a political-economic relation. This is an essential part of any analysis of territory. Yet just as Lefebvre

recognises that analysis of social space must go beyond property relations of "earth and land", to look at the productive process that imposes "a form on that earth or land", this requires an emphasis that goes beyond the economic (1974: 102; 1991: 85).

Terrain

The conflict over land indicated by Anderson is significant. Property is important as an indicator, but conflict over land is twofold: both over its possession and conducted on its terrain. Land is both the site and stake of struggle. In this it differs from conflict over other resources. Strategic-military reasons thus become significant. As well as seeking to maximise the possession of land as a scarce resource, feudal lords and nascent states were also concerned with security, management and administration. Defensible borders, homogeneity and the promotion of territorial cohesion offer a range of examples—examples that straddle the strategic issues and link closely to the development of a range of techniques of state practice. France, for example, following the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, began a process of mapping and surveying its land, employing technical specialists both to map and reinforce its so-called 'natural frontiers'.

A related term to that of land is therefore 'terrain'. This is land that has a strategic, political, military sense. The English 'territory', the French *territoire* and related terms in other languages derive from quite a specific sense of the Latin *territorium*. *Territorium* is an extremely rare term in classical Latin that becomes common in the Middle Ages. The standard definition is the land belonging to a town or another entity such as a religious order. It is used, for instance by Cicero for the agricultural lands of a colony (1858: Vol IV, 522) and in phrases such as that describing the birthplace of the Venerable Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Bede is described as being born "*in territorio eiusdem monasterii*", "in lands belonging to the monastery" (1969: V, 24). This monastery was Jarrow in northeast England. In Alfred the Great's Anglo-Saxon translation, Bede was born "*on sundorlonde* of the monastery", outlying lands, lands sundered from the estate itself, but under its possession, and thus it has been claimed that this is basis for the name of the town Sunderland, although it is not clear this it was this *sundorlonde* (Brown 1855: 277, 280; Colgrove 1969: xix).

As a number of writers have discussed, the etymology of *territorium* is disputed, with the meaning of the place around a town supplemented by that of a place from which people are warned or frightened (see, for example, Connolly 1995; Neocleous 2003; Hindess 2006). The Latin *terrere* is to frighten, deriving from the Greek *trein* meaning to flee from fear, to be afraid, and the Sanskrit, *trasati*: he trembles, is afraid. This means that the term territory has an association with

fear and violence, an association that is more compelling in history than etymology. As argued elsewhere, "creating a bounded space is already a violent act of exclusion and inclusion; maintaining it as such requires constant vigilance and the mobilisation of threat; and challenging it necessarily entails a transgression" (Elden 2009: xxx).

Terrain is of course a term used by physical geographers and geologists. Yet all too often the term terrain is used in a very vague sense. Evans, for instance, notes that "to some of us, 'terrain analysis' means, especially, quantitative analysis of terrain", thus seeing a greater need to qualify the mode, rather than object, of analysis (1998: 119). Terrain is seen as land form, rather than process (Lane et. al. 1998; see Wilson and Gallant 2000; Lawrence et. al. 1993). It is also a term used by military strategists. Yet there is a relation as well as a separation, with knowledge of battlefield terrain essential to military success. There are a number of important studies of different military campaigns and the question of terrain, but little conceptual precision (see, for example, Parry 1984; Winters 1998; Rose and Nathanail 2000; Doyle and Bennett eds. 2002).[10] For Doyle and Bennett, terrain "encompasses both the physical aspects of earth's surface, as well as the human interaction with them" (2002: 1). At times terrain seems to be landscape devoid of life, as it is when targeting of cities is discussed without reference to those living within it, or it is reduced from a concrete materiality to a level of virtuality.

Max Weber's analysis of the historical development of the state, and Michael Mann's study of the changing dynamics of power (1986; 1993), where they do discuss territory, could be seen to be operating in a way that sees territory as terrain, a political-strategic relation. In his interview with the geographers of the *Hérodote* journal, Foucault deflects their inquiry about his use of spatial categories, suggesting that they are not primarily geographical, but instead shot through with power. As he declares, "*territory* is no doubt a geographical notion, but it's first of all a juridico-political one: the area controlled by a certain kind of power" (2007: 176). As his interviewers respond, "certain spatial metaphors are equally geographical and strategic, which is only natural since geography grew up in the shadow of the military" (2007: 177). They make the explicit linkage between the region of geographers and the commanded region, from *regere*; the conquered territory of a province, from *vincere*; and the field as battlefield. Foucault then notes how "the politico-strategic term is an indication of how the military and administration actually come to inscribe themselves both on a material soil and within forms of discourse" (2007: 177).

Lefebvre offers further concrete and compelling discussion of this relation:

> Sovereignty implies 'space', and what is more it implies a space
> against which violence, whether latent or overt, is directed – a

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space established and constituted by violence… Every state is born of violence, and state power endures only by virtue of violence directed towards a space… At the same time, too, violence enthroned a specific rationality, that of accumulation, that of the bureaucracy and the army – a unitary, logistical, operational and quantifying rationality which would make economic growth possible and draw strength from that growth for its own expansion to a point where it would take possession of the entire planet. A founding violence, and continuous creation by violence (by fire and blood, in Bismarck's phrase) – such are the hallmarks of the state (1974: 322-3; 1991: 280; see 133/122; 2009; see Brenner and Elden 2009).

What is central in Lefebvre's reading is the relation between accumulation, violence and the "unitary, logistical, operational and quantifying rationality". For Lefebvre this highlights the limitations of a political-economic reading of territory as land:

> Neither Marx and Engels nor Hegel clearly perceived the violence at the core of the accumulation process… and thus its role in the production of a politico-economic space. This space was of course the birthplace and cradle of the modern state (1974: 322; 1991: 279; see 413/358).

In a related analysis Achille Mbembe has looked at the kinds of violence upon which colonial sovereignty was founded. The first of this was founding violence, which "underpinned not only the right of conquest but all the prerogatives flowing from that right… it helped to create the space over which it was exercised". The second and third kinds of violence concern legitimation and authority, and in particular the "maintenance, spread, and permanence" of authority (2001: 25). But it is the first that is central here: the creation of the space through violence over which violence is then exercised. Heidegger's discussion of the transition from the Greek *polis* to the Latin *imperium* similarly links these two senses—land and terrain:

> For the Romans, on the contrary, the earth, *tellus*, *terra* is the dry, the land as distinct from the sea; this differentiates that upon which construction, settlement, and installation are possible from those places where they are impossible. *Terra* becomes *territorium*, land of settlement as realm of command [*das Sieglungsgebiet als Befehlsbereich*]. In the Roman *terra* can be heard an imperial account, completely foreign to the Greek *gaia* and *gē* (1982: 88-89; 1992: 60).

It is important to note that the German term *Gebiet*—with its sense of region—has a rather different set of associations than the Latin *territorium*. *Gebiet* is the term used in Weber's famous description of the state. It bears relation to the notion of a *Flächenstaat* or a 'territorial state', with *Gebiet* as a region over which violence reigned: a *Bereich-Gewalt*, a field of violence. It is in this context that Heidegger's description of a "land of settlement as a realm of command" bridges the land-terrain understandings.

Land and terrain are obviously important notions, and many theorists combine elements of both approaches. It is therefore clear that the political-economic and political-strategic understandings have considerable merit, and that especially their historical interrogation offers much towards a critical analysis. Yet, like the approach through territoriality, they tend to fail the historically specific test. As a political-economic relation the importance of property in land is clear from as far back as there is recorded human history. From Plato's *Laws* or Kleisthenes's urban reforms of Athens (Elden 2003a), to its importance in William the Conqueror's Domesday Book of 1086, property in land clearly predates the specificity of state territory.[11] Land as a commodity to be bought and sold was an important element of the construction of the United States of America with the Louisiana purchase and the sale of Alaska by Russia. A similar argument can be made concerning terrain, with a strategic importance that also extends throughout human history. From Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* through Julius Caesar's accounts of *The Gallic War* or *The Civil War*, land as terrain is of serious military significance. Equally when Machiavelli talks of territory in *The Prince* this too is closer to a sense of terrain. The translation of the Classical Greek *khora* or the Latin *terra*, *agrum* or *finibus* as 'territory' masks these distinctions.

Territory

The point being made here is to underline that 'territory' is certainly something that is closely related to 'land' or 'terrain' but is more than them. 'Territory' needs to be thought in its specificity. This approach being outlined thus differs from the account offered by Saskia Sassen in her recent book *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, which examines what she calls medieval, modern and global state assemblages through an interrogation of the interrelation of three key terms—'territory', 'authority' and 'rights', conjoined as 'TAR' (2006). Sassen suggests that the particular ways that they work in combination help us to understand the political configurations that arise at a particular point in time. In this sense 'territory' is assumed as a static, ahistorical concept in order to illuminate another problematic (see, for example, 2006: 18). Indeed, Sassen says that 'territory', 'authority' and 'rights' are her "building blocks" and are "navigators inside the two black boxes that are the national and the global. Each evinces the analytic capability for dissecting these

two master categories" (2006: 6). One particularly telling remark is when she suggests that "my concern is not historical evolution but developing an analytics of change using history" (2006: 27). While this can yield some potential insights, it does so at great violence to the history of thought.

In distinction, a more fruitful way forward is to analyse how territory is dependent on a number of techniques and on the law. In doing so this approach exceeds merely *conceptual* history, but begins to fold the analysis of practices into its genealogical account. The legal aspects of the relation between sovereignty, jurisdiction and authority with territory has been relatively well examined—the historical emergence of these terms less so—but in terms of techniques these include advances in geometry, such as the coordinate or analytic geometry pioneered by René Descartes (a form of geometry that uses algebra, coordinates and equations). There are also a series of related developments in cartography and land surveying, particularly including the use of the cross-staff and quadrant to find latitude; new tools and techniques of measurement; the rediscovery of Ptolemy's *Geography*; and changes in maritime navigation particularly through more accurate measurement of time and therefore longitude.[12]

The mapping and control of territory is, in large part, dependent on such techniques. Only with these kinds of abilities could modern boundaries be established as more than a simple line staked out on the ground. For mountainous regions, for deserts or tundra, or particularly for the abstract division of unknown places in the colonised world, such techniques were crucial. They are made possible through a calculative grasp of the material world, what Lefebvre calls abstract space but which actually characterises the emergence of a category of space in Western thought more generally. *Spatium* in classical Latin did not mean 'space', but rather an extent; similarly the Greeks had no word for space. One of Lefebvre's comments is relevant here: "as a product of violence and war, [abstract space] is political; instituted by a state, it is institutional" (1974: 325; 1991, 285). As a range of thinkers have noted, in this sense cartography does not just represent the territory, but is actively complicit in its production. It is no surprise that the key sponsors of advances in cartographic techniques were states (Corner 1999: 222; Pickles 2004: 31; King 1996: 16-17; Jacob 2006; Strandsbjerg 2008). In the quotation cited earlier, where Soja suggests that Western territory is related to property, he continues:

> Space is viewed as being subdivided into components whose
> boundaries are 'objectively' determined through the mathematical
> and astronomically based techniques of surveying and cartography
> (1971: 9; see Paasi 1996: 19).

Then, drawing on the anthropologist Paul Bohannan, he notes that "we are the only people in the world who use seafaring instruments to determine our position on the ground" (Bohanan 1966: 165). These 'seafaring instruments' have of course developed greatly even in the years since this observation, but the basic determination remains. How does the quantification of space and the role of calculative mechanisms enable the commanding of territory and the establishment of borders?[13]

There is, at least, a twofold relation between the strategic and the technical. On the one hand, for instance, the work undertaken by Vauban for the French crown was dependent on a range of newly discovered techniques; as was the surveying work of the Cassini family (Godlewska 1999; Mattelart 1999). As von Clausewitz recognised, such techniques were essential to modern military operations: "Bonaparte rightly said in this connection that many of the decisions faced by the commander-in-chief resemble mathematical problems worthy of the gifts of a *Newton* or an *Euler*" (1976: 112; see Alliès 1980: 57; Lacoste 1976: 16). On the other, there is an inherent violence to these techniques. In the famous title of Lacoste's 1976 book, "geography is, above all, making war" (see 1976: 7). At the same time as these calculative techniques, there are political-juridical developments in legal codes; in the understanding of the sovereignty-territory relation and the distinction between sovereignty and majesty, all of which determine the question of political rule over space.

Foucault's *Security, Territory, Population* lectures are invaluable here, because although Foucault moves away from a focus on territory, the shift he is concerned with demonstrates the development of a range of techniques that would indeed be brought to bear on territory as an object of governance, alongside that of population (2004). Foucault claims that there is a shift between territory as the focus of governance and the government of things, essentially people as a population. In distinction to his historical argument, but using his conceptual tools, Foucault is most valuable in seeing the parallel shift from people to population and from land/terrain to territory. Territory is no longer merely the economic object of land; nor a static terrain; but territory is a vibrant entity, "within its frontiers, with its specific qualities" (2004: 99-100). The strategies applied to territory—in terms of its mapping, ordering, measuring, and demarcation, and the way it is normalised, circulation allowed, and internally regulated—are calculative. Territory is more than merely land, and goes beyond terrain, but is a rendering of the emergent concept of 'space' as a political category: owned, distributed, mapped, calculated, bordered, and controlled (Elden 2007).[14]

Conclusion: Territory as a Political Technology

It would be unusual or reductive to see the political-economic, political-strategic, political-legal or political-technical in strict isolation. Political-economic accounts often indicate a strategic relation; strategic work recognises the importance of law and the dependence on measure and calculation. Yet it is only in seeing these elements together, and in privileging the legal and the technical, that an understanding of the complexities of territory can be attained. To concentrate on the political-economic risks reducing territory to land; to emphasise the political-strategic blurs it with a sense of terrain. Recognising both, and seeing the development made possible by emergent political techniques allows us to understand territory as a distinctive mode of social/spatial organisation, one which is historically and geographically limited and dependent, rather than a biological drive or social need. Indeed, recognising and interrogating this does not just allow us to see that the modern division and ordering of the world is peculiar and clearly not the only possible way, but it also allows us to begin to escape what Agnew described as 'the territorial trap'. As Agnew himself notes, social science has often been too geographical and insufficiently historical (1995: 379). It is through a historical conceptual examination that moving beyond 'the territorial trap' rather than simply avoiding it might be possible (Brenner and Elden 2009; for a related inquiry see Murphy 1996).

The overall suggestion here is thus that territory is not best understood through territoriality, but through an examination of the relation of the state to the emergence of a category of 'space'. Edward Casey describes his book *The Fate of Place* as an inquiry which "traces out the *idea* of place vis-à-vis space" (2002: xvii). What understanding of space was necessary for the *idea* of territory to be possible? If territory is seen as a 'bounded space' or as Giddens's 'bounded power container', the question that remains is what is this space and how are these boundaries possible? As Paul Alliès suggests, "to define territory, we are told, one delimits borders [*frontières*]. Or to think the border, must we not already have an idea of homogeneous territory?" (1980: 32). To put this more forcefully, boundaries only become possible in their modern sense through a notion of space; rather than the other way round. Focusing on the determination of space that makes boundaries possible, and in particular the role of calculation, opens up the idea of seeing boundaries not as a primary distinction that separates territory from other ways of understanding political control of land; but as a second-order problem founded upon a particular sense of calculation and concomitant grasp of space. How does that concept of space become a political-legal category and what kinds of techniques are at work?

Two qualifications to this analysis are necessary. The first is that this is an approach derived from, and directed toward, Western political thought. The problematic term 'West' is of course open to question, but it is intended here to

be read in relation to a chronology of thought that can be traced from Ancient Greece, to Roman appropriations and late medieval Latin rediscoveries, providing the conceptual frame within which the emergence of the modern state and its territory occurred.[15] Other traditions would have very different histories, geographies and conceptual lineages. The specificity of the analysis begun here militates against generalisation and pretensions to universalism. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this historical conceptual approach would be useful in other such analyses, even if it would need to be supplemented, developed, and critiqued. The second qualification is that while this work seeks to utilise an expanded understanding of territory that goes beyond narrowly economic or strategic accounts, but which is also attentive to the specificity of the notion, its approach is necessarily partial. As Valérie November notes, "the notion of territory is at the same time juridical, political, economic, social and cultural, and even affective" (2002: 17). Here, the social, cultural, and affective elements have been underplayed in order to emphasise the political in a broad sense. This is not to suggest that those other elements are unimportant, but rather that they have been discussed elsewhere in some detail. The literature on the nation, on attachment to homeland, and identity politics, for instance, can profitably be read from a territorial perspective (see Winichakul 1994; Paasi 1996; Yiftachel 2006). Folding the insights of those analyses into the outline offered here would be a necessary step for any account which aimed to be comprehensive.

Three interlinked propositions thus provide an agenda for future work; a project which seeks to grasp the history of the state of territory:

1. Territory must be approached as a topic in itself; rather than through territoriality. Indeed, it may well be the case that the notion of 'territoriality' with regard to humans can only be appropriately understood through a notion of territory. In other words, while particular strategies or practices produce territory, there is a need to understand territory to grasp what territoriality, as a condition of territory, is concerned with.
2. Territory can be understood as a 'bounded space' only if 'boundaries' and 'space' are taken as terms worthy of investigation in their own right as a preliminary step. These terms require conceptual and historical work themselves; rather than being sufficient for an explanation.
3. 'Land' and 'terrain'—as political-economic and political-strategic relations—are necessary but insufficient to grasp 'territory'.

Territory can be understood as a political technology: it comprises techniques for measuring land and controlling terrain. Measure and control—the technical and the legal—need to be thought alongside land and terrain. Understanding territory as a political technology is not to define territory once and for all; rather it is to indicate the issues at stake in grasping how it was understood in different historical and geographical contexts. Territory is a *historical* question: produced,

mutable and fluid. It is *geographical*, not simply because it is one of the ways of ordering the world, but also because it is profoundly uneven in its development. It is a word, concept and a practice; where the relation between these can only be grasped genealogically. It is a *political* question, but in a broad sense: economic, strategic, legal, and technical. Territory must be approached politically in its historical, geographical and conceptual specificity.

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Notes

[1] A recent book (Kolers 2009) makes the claim that territory is a 'blind spot' of political philosophy, and aims to address this. However it applies liberal justice theory to a relatively unproblematic notion of territory, rather than providing a properly political theory *of* territory.

[2] Similar claims are made, among others, by Gottman 1973: ix; Ruggie, 1993: 174; Kratochwil 1986: 27-8; and most recently by Antonisch 2009.

[3] This is despite periodic attempts to reassert the importance of the concept of territory to political geography. See, for example, Cox 1991, 2003; Driver 1991; Johnston 2001. More detailed work has generally come from those outside the discipline. See, for example, Mann 1986, 1993; Spruyt 1994; Teschke 2003.

4   One of the most productive developments of this in geography has been Taylor 1994; 1995. For a recent account, see Paasi 2009.

5   This is not to suggest, of course, that territory is the privileged object of social/spatial theory, but rather that compared to other dimensions (see Jessop et. al 2008; Macleod and Jones 2007) it has been underexamined. There is simply no study of territory comparable to Casey's for place; it is conceptually much less examined than network; and with the exceptional of some initial skirmishes (i.e. Cox 1991; Steinberg 1994) there has been no 'territory debate'. Other terms, such as landscape, have received much more careful historical analysis (see Cosgrove 1998; Olwig 2002).

6   An attempt to show how an understanding of territory can illuminate contemporary events is made in Elden 2009.

7   Key works in animal behaviour that influenced this work include Hachet-Souplet 1912; Howard 1948; and Hediger 1955.

8   From within political science Grosby (1995) has attempted to reassert this notion.

9   A related criticism might be offered of his *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought* (1980), which offers a conceptual but largely ahistorical account of different understandings of space, particularly in relation to the divide and relation between the human and physical sciences. For discussions which use Sack to think the more specific territory of the state see Johnston 1995, 2001; and within political science Vollard 2009.

10   A broader sense of the military impact on space and environment is found in Woodward 2004.

11   Though see Anderson 1996: 17, where he suggests that the record-keeping exercise of the Domesday book, and one a century later in France "was the basis of a new conception of territory in Western Europe, which gradually spread to central and eastern Europe".

12   This argument is made at greater length in Elden 2005. For a range of useful accounts see Dockés 1969; Swetz 1987; Hadden 1994; and Linklater 2003.

13   The philosophical aspects of this model of calculation were discussed in Elden 2001 and 2006; and the relation between the state and space was a key theme in Elden 2004, especially Chapters 5 and 6.

14   Related analyses of calculation deriving from Foucault can also be found in Rose-Redwood 2006; Hannah 2009; Steinberg 2009; Crampton, forthcoming.

15   For an initial survey, see Elden 2010.