



Animated lands: studies in territoriality

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BOOK REVIEW

Animated lands: studies in territorialology, by Andrea Brighenti and Mattias Kährholm, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2020, 232 pp., \$99.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781496213396

At some point in time, you might visit the Colosseum. Andrea Brighenti and Mattias Kährholm discourage use from thinking of the Colosseum as one decaying architectural form related to successive change of functions. To do is to render place inert and fixed. Instead, Brighenti and Kährholm encourage us to think of the Colosseum, and indeed any other place, as a vibrant assemblage of multiple life forms and imaginations that are fleeting territories. Specifically, they use to think about the qualitative moments when territories become animated and convey meaning. Why is this important? For Brighenti and Kährholm, their neovitalist approach to the concept of territory offers an entry point to augment understanding of the uneven power geometries of social life.

Animated Lands: Studies in territorialology begins by introducing 'territoriology'. Why 'territoriology'? For Brighenti and Kährholm, the aim of writing this book is to offer a science of territories with a vitalist sensitivity. This is an ambitious interdisciplinary project to advance territorial research as more unified field. They argue that this demands drawing insights for the study of territorial phenomena from four research threads: (1.) biology, zooethology and human ethology; (2.) human ecology, anthropology, environmental psychology, social psychology and interactionism; (3.) human, political and legal geography and planning; and (4.) social and natural philosophy. Brighenti and Kährholm (2020, p. 22) underscore that their neovitalist concept of territory 'is not an object and should not be confused with the space where it takes place'. Instead, they conceive of a relational understanding of territory that emerges at the nexus of patterns of relations, imagination that enables classifications and recognition, alongside both expressive and functional components. Importantly, Brighenti and Kährholm invite us to consider how rhythms are at the core of territorialisation practices by how past embodied knowledge informs present circumstances. They offer the example of how public spaces become territorialised through the stratification of rhythms that privilege certain modes of people moving together and displace others. Finally, Brighenti and Kährholm outline their defence of vitalism to resist reductionism of earlier conceptualisation of territories as derived from human behaviour. Instead, embracing the concept of vitalism is a reminder that to advance a more-than-human agenda for territorial research.

From reviewing sources of inspiration for advancing a science of territorialology, Brighenti and Kährholm turn to offering a possible conceptual tool. To do so, Brighenti and Kährholm structure the remainder of the book to introduce a range of sociospatial concepts from different disciplines and approaches. To start, in Chapter 2, Brighenti and Kährholm single out three key concepts that have sparked current scholarly interest and theoretical debate in territorial phenomenon: (1) environment, (2.) atmosphere and (3.) networks. In the following four chapters supplementary concepts are introduced using empirical examples including time, form, rhythm, melody, scale and affordance. For those familiar with the work of Brighenti and Kährholm the argument contained in these chapters may be familiar. Each chapter is previously published elsewhere as journal articles. Although for the book, they appear in a revised and extended form.

If territorialology is to become a science, or not, there is much to gain from the readers of *Social & Cultural Geography* engaging with the conceptual arguments in *Animated Lands: Studies in territorialology*. Brighenti and Kärholm offer unique insight into the concept of territory from their writing positions as professors of social and architectural theory, respectively. Each chapter introduces concepts that enrich our understanding of territory. Brighenti and Kärholm not only trace out the intellectual legacy of different concepts and approaches that inspired their writing but provide empirical examples that illustrate and ground often abstract ideas.

Social and cultural geographers engaging with this text will find applied examples of theoretical concepts that will enrich their thinking and work. For example, in their work on children's playground they encourage the reader to reflect upon the concept of affordances through the lens of rhythm and the relation between territories and experimentation. As such, Brighenti and Kärholm argue that while the playground is configured by formal and informal rules, there is always the potential in territorialising rhythms for experimentation that allow new meaning, affordances and increase bodily capacity. Another example is how the concept of territory may be enriched through engaging with the affective intensities of rhythms. This is illustrated by how Brighenti and Kärholm conceive of gates and walls as mediators of rhythms that synchronise flows. They argue that, if gates and walls are conceived as rhythm markers then they exert a territorialising force that operates to segregate urban space through the affective force of the pace of differently mobile bodies. These are just two examples from chapters overflowing with applied concepts. Consequently, theoretical debates on territory in social and cultural geography can only be enriched by engagement with this text.

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