

A Staff/Student Special Lecture
co-hosted by the Centre for Urban Research and
Sustainability and Urban Planning

The Birth of Territory

Stuart Elden



Date: Thursday 27th February 2014
Time: 5.30-7.00pm.
Venue: Building 80 Level 3 Room 15
Swanston Academic Building (SAB)

Abstract

This talk will provide an overview of Stuart Elden's 2013 book *The Birth of Territory*, which traces the emergence of this crucial concept in Western political thought.

In the first part he suggests that territory needs to be related to, yet not reduced to, 'land' and 'terrain', which are political-economic and political-strategic relations. Territory needs to be additionally understood in terms of its relation to space, a calculative category that is dependent on the existence of a range of techniques, and political-legal questions. Territory then can be understood as a political technology: it comprises techniques for measuring land and controlling terrain, and we must therefore think measure and control—the technical and the legal—alongside the economic and strategic.

The second part offers an account of a few moments in the emergence of this concept – looking briefly at temporal power theorists, the rediscovery of Roman law, German debates in the seventeenth century, and some political techniques.

The talk will close with a few comments on where Stuart Elden's work on territory and related questions is currently going.

Reference: Elden S. (2013) *The Birth of Territory*, University Of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

See <http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/B/bo15506915.html>

About Stuart Elden:

Stuart Elden is Professor of Political Theory and Geography at University of Warwick and one of the editors of the journal *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. His books include studies of Heidegger, Foucault and Lefebvre, *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009), and *The Birth of Territory* (University of Chicago Press, 2013). He is currently writing a book entitled *Foucault's Last Decade*; thinking about Shakespeare and territory; and working on questions around the earth, world and geopolitics. He runs the progressivegeographies.com blog.