

Territory, Politics, Governance - Annual Lecture 2020

06/04/2020, 4:40 PM - 5:55 PM, Sheraton Hotel, Plaza Ballroom D, Concourse Level, Denver, Colorado, USA



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Somatic States

Confident in the belief we had successfully deconstructed the nation-state and exposed its fictitious nature, academics have been taken by surprise by the resurgence of "old fashioned" forms of geopolitics expressed through corporeal imagery, and an attendant obsession with borders. Almost in spite of ourselves, the state continues to hold our collective political imagination.

This lecture, based on a forthcoming book, is a study in the conceptual link between the nation-state and the body. Taking in earnest the everyday organic framing of political events and crises, routinely described through turns of phrase such as "nervous breakdowns," "heart attacks" or "mutilation," *Somatic States* argues that this corporeal language is not simply poetic or allegorical but that it reflects a genuine association of the individual body with the national outline, and that this identification has been greatly facilitated by the emergence of the national map. Eminently subject to ideologization and state manipulation, organic narratives have been historically deployed in support of nationalist, chauvinistic, and totalitarian ideologies, and metaphors of mutilation and dismemberment that permeate issues of territorial loss have proven highly effective. Yet, while these narratives undeniably demonstrate the discursive potency of corporeality as vector of patriotic affect, it is perhaps hasty to dismiss them as purely state-driven. In the turbulent times we are currently living through, it has become crucial to recognize the depth and vigor of patriotic attachments as a force that is harnessed by, but also extends beyond, state narratives and ambitions.

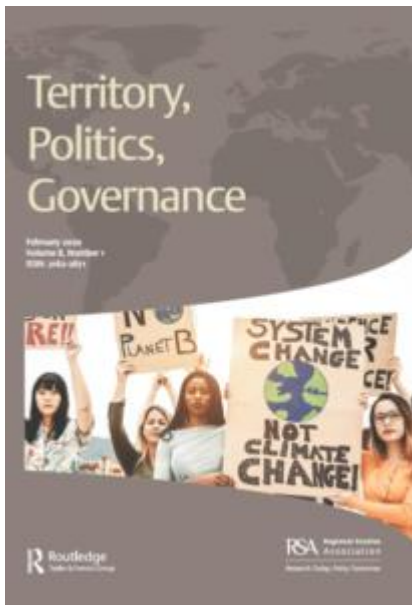
Chair: Dieter Kogler, *University College Dublin*

Introduction: Klaus Dodds, *Royal Holloway, University of London*

Discussant: Katherine Sammler, *California State University - Maritime Academy*

Organizers: Dieter Kogler, Klaus Dodds

Territory, Politics, Governance Journal



Territory, Politics, Governance is an interdisciplinary journal committed to the development of theory and research in territorial politics and the governance of space. This journal creates a platform on which to explore the interface between territory, politics, economy, identity and the organisation of political space. It confronts topical and emergent issues of world economic and political concern. The journal publishes original, high quality international scholarship from this growing, international and increasingly vibrant field directed at a worldwide academic audience and at policy makers, activists and other communities of practice. More on this journal [here](#).