

Rethinking the Relationships between Society and Space: A Review of Claude Raffestin's Conceptualisation of Human Territoriality

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"C'est la relation qui fait le monde"

J.-P. Sartre, *l'Être et le néant*, 1943

Summary

Described as a "fundamental theoretical contribution to non-Anglophone social geography in the 1970s and 1980s" (Söderström and Philo, 2004), the theoretical work on human territoriality by Claude Raffestin has yet to be systematically reviewed in the English language. This paper provides an entrance point to the much needed discussion of Raffestin's theorisation of human territoriality as a "complex system of relationships linking individuals or/and social groups with territory (exteriority) and with others (alterity) by means of mediators (instruments, techniques, representations etc), in order to guarantee a maximum of autonomy within the limits of the system" (Raffestin, 1980). Through the discussion of some specific issues of Raffestin's theoretical thinking and through the examination of similarities and differences to other work on human territoriality, this paper also opens an enlightening terrain for developing new ways to conceptualise the relationships between society and space.

1. Introduction

Academic exchanges across language borders between different theoretical approaches and intellectual currents strongly differ in their intensity and speed. Contrarily to some *maîtres de pensée*, whose writings are regularly translated into various other languages, numerous alternative ways of conceptual thinking remain embedded within their original context, waiting to be discovered and renewed in other language areas only much later. In this regard, looking at the English-language context in particular, the almost completely ignored, theoretical project by Claude Raffestin to rethink the relationships between society and space

through the concept of human territoriality constitutes a dramatic example¹.

Of course, the missing review of Raffestin's theoretical approach of human territoriality for nearly three decades is due to the absence of any translation of his oeuvre. *Pour une géographie du pouvoir* (1980) for example, Raffestin's most influential book within francophone social and political geography, has never been translated into the English language, whereas it has been published in Italian and Portuguese shortly after his French edition. Containing most of the theoretical concepts which Raffestin was concerned to develop in more depth in the following 25 years, during his professorship in Human Geography at Geneva University, it is in this work that Raffestin first systematically elaborates his theoretical thinking through the concept of human territoriality.

By Raffestin, human territoriality is defined as a "complex system of relationships linking individuals or/and social groups with territory (exteriority) and with others (alterity) by means of mediators (instruments, techniques, representations etc), in order to guarantee a maximum of autonomy within the limits of the system"² (Raffestin, 1980). Through this deliberately wide definition Raffestin, pursues two main objectives. First, following his deep concern to question the role and functioning of power in the contemporary world, the ultimate goal of his conceptualization of human territoriality is to challenge current conflicts and to investigate pressing questions of political, social, cultural and economic nature. It is thus above all from a very pragmatic optic that Raffestin's understanding of human territoriality must be understood and evaluated. "Impetuses for scientific knowledge originate from our knowledge of the world. Geography, as any other discipline within human sciences, must constantly return to the "being" [être] and the "thing" [chose]. In this optic, geography must know how to be "immediate", how to study "news in brief" as one would say in journalist jargon. [...] This type of an "immediate" political geography has to follow what seems trivial in order to reveal the relationships of power which are established within our society and which are gradually changing the very society they have been produced from. It is in this sense that geographers may constitute a real authority of appeal,

¹ Although recent mentions to Raffestin have been made by Söderström and Philo (2004) and by Fall (2005), no systematic review of Raffestin's theoretical thinking in English has been made so far.

² In later essays Raffestin not only includes the relationships to alterity and to exteriority within his definition of human territoriality, but also refers to social actors' relationships to themselves (interiority).

and that the discipline itself might know – looking at its theoretical instruments of analysis – whether it produces anything different than just ordinary statements"³ (Raffestin, 1980: 245).

Second, in Raffestin's conceptualization of human territoriality also lays a deep, epistemological critique of human geography as a scientific field of research. As Raffestin insists in numerous essays, expressing his despair about his felt lack of any unitary theory (and thus identity) of an excessively quantitativist and descriptive geography, his basic ambition also is to contribute to the general renewal of the conceptual thinking in geography. "The current absence of a comprehensive theory makes it impossible to reconcile the widely developed practices of geographical research (largely expressed in international bibliographies) with the ever extended methodological knowledge. [...] The basis for any general theory of human (and social) geography can be found nowhere else than in the conceptualization of the practices and knowledge [connaissances] of social groups and – consequently – its subjects. These practices and knowledge are expressed as relationships to exteriority and alterity by means of mediators"⁴ (Raffestin, 1986b: 91-92).

Drawing on from these two objectives of Raffestin's theoretical thinking, my paper seeks to provide an entrance point to the much needed discussion of Raffestin's conceptualisation of human territoriality. In order to unfold the key aspects of his definition, my paper refers to a short literary extract of Franz Kafka's *The castle*. It is on this basis that I intend to reveal the most important dimensions of Raffestin's theoretical understanding of human territoriality and to confront his thinking with other approaches of the concept.

"Memories of his home kept recurring and filled his mind. There, too, a church

3 Les impulsions de la connaissance scientifique proviennent de la connaissance du monde. C'est pourquoi la géographie, comme n'importe quelle autre science de l'homme, doit sans cesse retourner vers les êtres et les choses. A cet égard, la géographie doit savoir être "immédiate", elle doit savoir se pencher sur les "faits divers" comme on dit en langage journalistique. [...] Une géographie politique immédiate se doit de traquer ces faits pour dénoncer les relations de pouvoir qui s'instaurent et modifient à la longue la société dans laquelle ils se produisent. C'est en ce sens que le géographe est une instance de recours et que sa discipline, en fournissant des moyens théoriques d'analyse, saura si elle est autre chose qu'un procès-verbal (Raffestin, 1980: 245).

4 Cette absence de théorie d'ensemble empêche, actuellement, de faire le pont entre une pratique géographique largement développée, attestée par les bibliographies internationales, et une connaissance méthodologique qui ne cesse de s'enrichir, voire de s'alourdir. [...] Les racines de toute théorie générale de la géographie humaine et partant sociale ne peuvent être recherchées que dans la pratique et la connaissance du groupe et par conséquent des sujets qui le composent. Ces pratiques et connaissances se traduisent par des relations à l'extériorité et à l'altérité et sont modulées par les médiateurs employés (Raffestin, 1986b: 91-92).

stood in the marketplace, partly surrounded by an old graveyard which was again surrounded by a high wall. Very few boys had managed to climb that wall, and for some time K., too, had failed. It was not curiosity which had urged them on. The graveyard had been no mystery to them. They had often entered it through a small wicket-gate, it was only the smooth high wall that they had wanted to conquer. But one morning – the empty, quite marketplace had been flooded with sunshine, when had K. ever seen it like that either before or since? – he had succeeded in climbing it with astonishing ease; at a place where he had already slipped down many a time, he had clambered with a small flag between his teeth right to the top at the first attempt. Stones were still rattling down under his feet, but he was at the top. He stuck the flag in, it flew in the wind, he looked down and round about him, over his shoulder, too, at the crosses mouldering in the ground, nobody was greater than he at that place and that moment. By chance the teacher had come past and with a stern face had made K. descend. In jumping down he had hurt his knee and had found some difficulty in getting home, but still he had been on the top of the wall. The sense of that triumph had seemed to him then a victory for life, which was not altogether foolish, for now so many years later on the arm of Barnabas in the snowy night the memory of it came to succour him" (Kafka, 1930: 34).

- Content

In social sciences, there are only very few systematic efforts for an explicit theorisation of human territoriality. The resulting approaches of the concept can be organised under two main headings. While the first, narrower perspective is built on the understanding of human territoriality as "strategy and/or behaviour of control and defence of space", the second group of conceptualisations (amongst which Raffestin's approach is situated) adopts a broader (relational) view on human territoriality as "ensemble of individual or collective relations between society and space". Interestingly, the first theoretical perspective can quite clearly be attributed to the relevant Anglophone literature, while Francophone approaches have mostly been channelled in the second type of understanding of the concept.

In this paper, I focus my attention on Claude Raffestin's approach of human territoriality. Above all, it is through the application of Raffestin's theoretical thinking to the chosen

literary extract that I aim to unfold the originality of his conceptual work and to discuss the relevance of his contribution to present-day debates on the relationships between society and space. Drawing on Raffestin's theoretical essays for over 25 years, my paper is informed by personally translated extracts from his writings, which have not yet been translated into the English language. Before moving to this specific discussion however, my paper provides a short review of other literature on human territoriality. In this, the emphasis is on behaviourist approaches of the concept, by authors such as Robert D. Sack and Torsten Malmberg, amongst others. Second, and following on from this, the main part of this article consists of two distinct chapters, which are intended to gradually explore Raffestin's conceptualisation of territory (1) and his definition of human territoriality (2). At first, this procedure aims to work out Raffestin's understanding of the term "territory", understood as relational – i.e. territorialized – space. In the following, these comments provide the basis for a more systematic problematization of human territoriality in strictly relational terms. Eventually, my paper finishes by considering some major fields of theoretical and empirical investigations which follow on from Raffestin's work.

2. Behavioural territoriality as ownership and defence of space

While the concept of territoriality is implicitly present already among naturalists during the enlightenment (Raffestin, 1977), its first explicit definitions originate from the study of animal behaviour in the early 20th century. H.E. Howard in 1920 understands territoriality as "characteristic conduct of an organism to take possession of a territory which is defended against members of its own species"⁵ (Howard, in Hall, E.T, 1971: 22). Later, this understanding of (animal) territoriality is developed by authors such as H. Hediger (1955), Konrad Lorenz (1965) and John B. Calhoun (1971) to name but some of the most famous.

Likewise these biological approaches, consistent references to the idea of ownership and defence of space are also at the core of the first geographical conceptualisations of human territoriality, defined as "ownership, division and evaluation of space" (Lowenthal, 1961 in Malmberg, 1980: 9) or as the "sense of possession of a given space and the urge to protect it against intruders" (Kuhn, 1968, in, Malmberg, 1980: 9). Comparable to the studies of animal

5 Conduite caractéristique adoptée par un organisme pour prendre possession d'un territoire et le défendre contre les membres de sa propre espèce (Howard, in Hall, 1971: 22).

behaviour, these approaches are mostly channelled in a way to understand territoriality in behavioural terms. Consider as well the definition of human territoriality by Edward Soja as 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" (Soja, 1971: 19).

From these definitions, human territoriality is generally conceived through four crucial aspects. A first quality is that territoriality can be the domain of individuals or social groups. Second, all definitions contain a spatial dimension in its core, through their explicit reference to geographical areas. Third, they all convey the idea of the ownership of specific areas, from which other individuals or groups are more or less explicitly excluded. Fourth, territoriality involves some kind of typical behaviour or conduct, following the need and motive to defend and control specific portions of space.

Most systematically, this approach is explored by R.D. Sack (1986), who defines human territoriality as "spatial strategy to affect, influence, or control resources and people, by controlling area". Sack argues that "territoriality can be asserted in a number of ways. They include job descriptions (how long you must be seated, where you are and are not allowed to go, etc.), legal rights in land, brute force or power, cultural norms and prohibitions about the use of areas, and subtle forms of communication such as body posture. But once again, if the assertion is not clear and understandable then it is unclear whether territoriality is being exercised" (Sack, 1986: 20-21). For Sack, not everybody can or wants to exercise territoriality. In this understanding, territoriality can somehow be turned on and off. "Territoriality does not exist unless there is an attempt by individuals or groups to affect the interactions of others", Sack concludes (Sack, 1986: 30).

Referring to Kafka's literary extract, Sack's conceptualisation of human territoriality can be best applied to the role of the teacher. It is through his controlling, stern face that the teacher sanctions K's actions. In Sack's terms, the teacher (as the representative of the state) asserts territoriality to defend and restore the place-specific social order, which has been threatened by K's deviant behaviour. Submitted to the teacher's territoriality, K. embodies the regulative power of the authority through his knee injury. K thus pays with his own body for his rebellious attempt to climb the wall. Typically Kafka, the power of the authority thus wins in the end, despite (and because of) K's small triumph.

This interpretation of Kafka's literary extract exemplifies the value of Sack's understanding of human territoriality in the field of territorial conflicts. Indeed, it is probably in political sciences – where territoriality is commonly understood as "spatially defined political rules" (Kahler, 2006: 3) and thus studied in relation to the control and regulation of the national territory by political authorities – that the understanding of territoriality in terms of defence and ownership of space has been most frequently applied. Sack however rightly states that territoriality is not only to be observed on the political level but in everyday social life. Strategies to control and affect territories constitute a vast domain of analysis, from social norms of behaviour in the household to street fights between youth gangs for example.

Yet, Sack's conceptual approach addresses only one "particular kind of behaviour in space" (Sack, 1986: 23). It does not explain the relationships between society, space and time in general. Also, the definition of human territoriality as a conscious assertion of control over-evaluates those actors who apparently are in power, such as the teacher in the chosen literary extract. If we really are to understand the complex and conflictual realities of social life, we also need to analyse the strategies, motivations and instruments of those actors whose intentions are not to maintain control but on the contrary to slip through the controlling net of the system through everyday "tactical ruses" (De Certeau, 1984). Eventually, studies of human territoriality as a strategy to affect, influence and control people and things by controlling space are inclined to forget that the relationships between society and space can not be reduced to its expression in terms of possession, control and defence of particular geographical areas. Sack's understanding of human territoriality does not take into account the whole myriad of conscious and unconscious engagements and interrelations between individual or collective social actors and space, which are present in the constitution of territorial claims, disputes and geographically anchored identities.

These critiques are obviously leading to Raffestin's conceptualisation of human territoriality. Before taking up with Raffestin's theoretical approach however, I am first moving to Torsten Malmberg's definition of human territoriality (Malmberg, 1980). This is important because Malmberg's approach is somehow broader but still similar to Sack in its essence. Malmberg actually agrees with Sack in that "the study of human territoriality is the study of human behaviour" (Schefflen and Ashcraft, 1976). From there, Malmberg argues that "human behavioural territoriality is primarily a phenomenon of ethological ecology with an instinctive

nucleus, manifested as more or less exclusive spaces, to which individuals or groups of human beings are bound emotionally and which, for the possible avoidance of others, are distinguished by means of limits, marks or other kinds of structuring with adherent display, movements or aggressiveness" (Malmberg 1980: 10-11). In this light, both Sack and Malmberg differ from Raffestin in that they understand human territoriality as a specific type of behaviour, while Raffestin's approach expresses territoriality in strictly relational terms. Also, Raffestin's interest rather lies in the complex modes and dynamic processes of mediation of social actors' relationships to alterity and exteriority than in the outcome of these relationships in behavioural terms. For Raffestin, since he understands human behaviour as the result of social actors' relationships to alterity and to exteriority, the study of human territoriality in behavioural terms leads to the study of a product rather than to the understanding of a process (Raffestin, 1984a: 141) and thus misses the fundamentally dynamic nature of human territoriality.

Malmberg's definition, unlike Sack's approach however, does not understand human territoriality exclusively as spatial behaviour to affect, influence or control resources and people by controlling areas, but more generally focuses on the human behaviour in space, which is linked to the use and distribution of resources. "Unrestricted and reserved use of resources seem to signify the everyday aspect of territory, more than defence and aggression (Malmberg, 1980: 11). Malmberg's definition of human territoriality thus adds some important aspects to Sack's understanding of the concept in that it tends to consider the relationship between society and space more generally than in its conflictual dimension, related to the ownership and control of particular geographical areas.

However, despite his broader focus, Malmberg maintains a strict separation between the social and the spatial realm. In this, his approach strongly contrasts with Raffestin's theoretical thinking. As Malmberg argues, "territoriality and sociality lie in different systems of relations. The conventional approach to local organization has tended to compound and thus to blur the distinctions. The result has been a certain ambiguity and confusion" (Malmberg, 1980: 12). Malmberg thus cannot succeed in understanding how closely social practices and representations are related to territory (as socially produced socio-spatial reality). To refer again to Kafka's literary extract: Neither K's behaviour nor his feelings of triumph on top of the wall can be understood without referring to the social meaning of his

acts and to his social position in society more generally. It is only through K's sociality that we can explain his territoriality and vice versa. As Raffestin would say, both the social and the territorial realm are simultaneously present, interrelated and mutually produced. They can not be considered as distinct entities, as I will point out in more depth in the following part of this paper.

3. Claude Raffestin's relational approach

Following on from the previous section, I now explore in more detail the specificities of Claude Raffestin's theoretical approach of human territoriality. To do so, I first attempt to explore Raffestin's understanding of the social processes of "territorialisation of space". These comments will then provide the basis for my review of the concept of human territoriality itself. It is through this procedure that the strong interrelations between the two terms "territory" and "territoriality" within Raffestin's theoretical thinking can be critically assessed. Here again, the selected extract of Franz Kafka's *The castle* is of major importance, for it permits to exemplify Raffestin's deliberately large definition of human territoriality, in the view of an unitary theory of the relationships between society and space.

3.1. Territorialisation of space

Speaking about Raffestin's understanding of the social processes of territorialisation of space also means to speak about his understanding of the term "territory". To clear up the meaning of "territory" is important to do first, in order to avoid any terminological confusion from the beginning. In fact, despite some obvious terminological differences, Raffestin's understanding of the term "territory" is clearly anchored within Henri Lefebvre's conceptualisation of the *Production of space*. Unlike Lefebvre however, Raffestin prefers to speak about the "production of territory" instead of the "production of space" to stress the multiple social processes through which space is socially appropriated, i.e. territorialised. "Territory must be understood as a product, which is generated from space"⁶ (Raffestin, 1980: 130). "Space becomes territory within any social relation of communication"⁷ (Raffestin, 1980: 133).

⁶ Le territoire est une production à partir de l'espace (Raffestin, 1980: 130).

⁷ L'espace devenant territoire d'un acteur social dès qu'il est pris dans un rapport social de communication (Raffestin, 1980: 133).

This approach strongly differs with the widely held understanding of territory as the sphere of influence of political authorities, mainly in form of the nation state. Raffestin on the contrary argues that territory must be seen as socially appropriated space more generally, which is closely interconnected with society on different spatial, temporal and social scales. For Raffestin, space in principle becomes territory as part of a reciprocal relationship with society (Raffestin, 1980: 133). In this sense, territory is conceived as processual and relational, socially produced reality. These comments are of fundamental importance for the understanding of Raffestin's relational approach of human territoriality. But let's first go back to Kafka's literary extract, to gain more detailed insights in Raffestin's understanding of the processes of territorialisation of space.

Within the chosen literary extract K's scene of action is basically composed by a church, a wall, a graveyard and a marketplace. On the one hand, these constructions illustrate the social production of the material dimension of territory. In this, the figure of the wall in particular exemplifies how much the built environment (yet exclusively understood in its materiality) orients and canalises social life. Its materiality (size, materials, smoothness etc.) divides and structures K's micro-territory in the graveyard (inside) and the marketplace (outside). On the other hand however, the wall can not be reduced to a pile of stones, but must also be understood in its socially produced meaning. Generally spoken, the figure of the wall also exemplifies that the territorialisation of space not only comprises material constructions but also involves the semiotic realm. Drawing on semiologist thinking, through writings by Ferdinand de Saussure and Louis Prieto (Racine, 2002: 10), Raffestin generally understands territory as "informed", "semiotised" space. As he repeatedly emphasizes, territory is filled with meaning and thus forms a socially "significant space" that consists of signifiers (the wall in its materiality) and signified (the meaning of the wall) (Raffestin, 1986a: 177).

Raffestin argues that both the material and the semiotic dimension of territory must be understood as interactive and closely interrelated. They together find expression in the social use of particular geographical areas. Specific territories thus constitute and regulate specific social practices. Raffestin concludes that "the concrete and the abstract territories define "prisons" which we ourselves create, in which our relations take place and which connote the real degree of our liberty" (Raffestin, 1984a: 141). Here again, Raffestin follows

Levèbre's analysis of the decisive part which is played by space/territory in the continuous reproduction of society. "Space can no longer be looked upon as an essence, as an object distinct from the point of view of (or as compared with) "subjects", as answering to a logic of its own. [...] Its role is more and more active, both as instrument and as goal, as means and as end" (Lefèbre 1991: 410).

To go back to Kafka's literary extract, it is important to note that the wall's active role – its power to produce society – is neither given *per se* nor will it last forever. Different walls convey different social meanings, which result in different, spatially anchored norms of behaviour. In my example, K is not just climbing on any wall, but on the wall which "protects" the church and the graveyard. K. would probably have been allowed to climb on any other wall than on the wall around the graveyard. Above all, the wall's meaning thus results from its relative position to the church and to the graveyard. It is from the "placing" and "relational arrangement" (Löw, 2001) of these constructions that the specific meaning of K's micro-territory (and thus of his own acting) can be understood. To remove the graveyard or to abandon its use would mean to de-territorialise and to re-territorialise the whole scene of action. In this case, K's acting would not have the same meaning anymore, for it is only through the symbolical (religious) dimension of the church and the graveyard that his perceived victory and his feelings of greatness, expressed through his symbolical act to stick the flag on the top of the wall, can be understood. His feelings of triumph – reminding the images of US soldiers in Iraq, wrapping the US flag around the face of Saddam Hussein's statue – not really express his successful conquest of the wall's materiality but of its symbolism.

Following on from these comments, Kafka's extract also highlights that the processes of territorialisation, de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation of space are not reserved to political authorities but occur on various spatial and social scales. Territory, Raffestin argues, results from collective and/or individual processes of appropriation by action and representation. To different degrees, at different moments and places we all are producers of territory (Raffestin 1980: 138). Referring to the chosen literary extract, this claim can be illustrated by pointing at both the material and the symbolic effects of K's actions. On the one hand, the physical marks of K's acting, in form of stones rattling down the wall, represent his individual power to produce territory in its materiality. On the other hand,

Kafka expresses the semiotic effects of K's behaviour through the description of the mouldering crosses in the ground (as religious symbols) meanwhile the marketplace (the secular symbol) appears to be flooded with sunshine.

In sum, K. is not intending to access the graveyard, which could have been done quite easily through the small wicket-gate, but to break off with the institutionalised, place-specific social (religious) norms. K's acting questions the socially produced meaning of territory. His individual attempt of de-territorialisation threatens the territory's semiotic stability. Even if K's act can not endanger the territory as a whole, this example powerfully underlines that concrete and abstract processes of territorialisation of space are not leading to an ever stable and definitive result. On the contrary, through individual and collective, diachronic and synchronic actions and representations, space is constantly territorialized, de-territorialised and re-territorialised. Produced by history and reconstituted and deformed through actions and representations of every social actor (Di Méo, in, Tizon 1996: 23), territory can thus not be understood as simple and uniform, but as complex and highly differentiated. It is in this sense, that Raffestin's deliberately wide understanding of the term "territory" allows conceiving its meaning and significance from the standpoint of the social processes and relationships that produce it. Territory is not a distinct object to society but a part of mutual, reciprocal relationships (as the product and as the producer of social life).

3.2. Human territoriality as ensemble of relationships

Let's take one step further. What do these comments actually mean for the understanding of human territoriality? Or, in other words, how can Raffestin's conceptualisation of human territoriality help to further interpret the chosen literary extract?

In contrast to previously mentioned (behaviourist) approaches, Raffestin defines human territoriality in strictly relational terms as "complex system of relationships linking individuals and/or social groups with territory (exteriority) and with others (alterity) by means of mediators (instruments, techniques, representations etc), in order to guarantee a maximum of autonomy within the limits of the system" (Raffestin, 1980). Unlike Sack for example, Raffestin does not conceptualize human territoriality as a conscious strategy which can somehow be turned on and off. Rather, his definition embraces the whole myriad of socio-spatial relations which are developed from (and lying within) everyday social life. "Everyday life, constructed and lived through the mode of concatenation and repetition, is underpinned

by this network of relationships, which builds up human territoriality. While everyday life can be seen as the visible superstructure in which we are lost ("the obvious"), territoriality somehow corresponds to the infrastructure which is built up through practices and knowledge [connaissances], both being essential to social actions, yet without ever being explicit"⁸ (Raffestin, 1984b: 441).

From the early nineties, this broad understanding of human territoriality has sparked some other definitions in relational terms, especially in francophone geography. Most of these approaches are explicitly referring to Raffestin's theoretical work. Let's consider – as a first example – Bernard Debarbieux's definition of human territoriality as an "act of cognition through which social actors establish a system of relationships with places, which are invested by values and functions"⁹ (Debarbieux, 1991, in, Tizon, 1996: 27). Debarbieux further qualifies territoriality "as an egocentric, social construction of reality, which finds its coherence in the specific functioning and identification of social actors"¹⁰ (Debarbieux, 1991, in, Tizon, 1996: 28). Another definition of human territoriality in relational terms can be found in the 1992 edition of *Les mots de la géographie*. Here, territoriality is defined as "an individual or collective link to territory, which is considered to be appropriated"¹¹ (Brunet et al. 1992: 481). Third, the most recent Dictionary of Geography in French language defines territoriality as "relationship to a territory", as "territorial dimension within a social reality" and in particular, as "individual or collective territorial identity"¹² (Lévy, Lussault, 2003: 919).

Regarding Kafka's literary extract, to approach human territoriality in strictly relational terms

8 Toute quotidienneté, construite et vécue sur le mode de la concaténation et de la répétition, est finalement sous-tendue par un réseau de relations qui constitue la territorialité. La quotidienneté est la superstructure visible dans laquelle nous sommes noyés ("ce qui va de soi"), tandis que la territorialité est cette infrastructure tissée de pratiques et de connaissances indispensables à l'action, mais dont nous n'explicitons vraiment ni les unes ni les autres (Raffestin, 1984b: 441).

9 Un acte de cognition par lequel un acteur social établit un système de liens avec des lieux investis de valeurs et de fonctions (Debarbieux, 1991, in, Tizon, 1996: 27).

10 [La territorialité] est une construction sociale de la réalité qui fonctionne sur un mode égocentré, c'est-à-dire qu'il trouve sa cohérence dans la logique de fonctionnement, d'identification de l'acteur social (Debarbieux, 1991, in, Tizon, 1996: 28).

11 Rapport individuel ou collectif à un territoire considéré comme approprié (Brunet et al. 1992: 481).

12 Relation au territoire, existence d'une dimension territoriale dans une réalité sociale. Spécialement, identité territoriale d'un individu ou d'un collectif (Lévy, Lussault, 2003: 919).

means that it is not only the teacher who "has" or who "asserts" territoriality. Human territoriality as an ensemble of relationships also applies to K and to any other individual or social group. Every social actor has his or her own territoriality. "There is not one but there are several territorialities, because there is not only one but there are several systems of relationships. [...] In one word, territoriality is differential. We further have to consider different spatial and temporal scales, as well as different scales of social groups. Eventually, we have to consider the content of these sets of relationships in terms of energy and information, which together constitute territoriality. Without a differential perspective, real-life experience [le vécu] can not be validly captured"¹³ (Raffestin, 1977: 23). Following up on this, territoriality is not only differential in its essence, but also fundamentally dynamic. It is never fixed and stable but must be understood in its processual logic as an ever changing set of relationships of an individual and/or social group to alterity and exteriority. Consisting of a cluster of sub-chapters, the following part of this paper is looking in more depth at different components of this broad understanding of human territoriality, to point in more detail at the significance of Raffestin's theoretical thinking.

- *"A complex system of relationships linking individuals or/and social groups with their life space (exteriority) and with others (alterity)"*

So far, my review of Claude Raffestin's theoretical thinking was mainly concerned with his understanding of the complex, reciprocal relationships between society and territory. In this, territory was described as socially produced, i.e. territorialized space in very general terms. I did not only explain territory from the standpoint of the social processes and relationships that produce it but also from the perspective of its productive power on society. Now, we again uncover the territorial dimension of social life within the first part of Raffestin's definition of human territoriality as a "complex system of relationships linking individuals and/or social groups with territory (exteriority)".

At the same time, the meaning Claude Raffestin persistently ascribes to human territoriality

13 Il n'y a pas une mais plusieurs territorialités parce qu'il n'y a pas un mais plusieurs systèmes de relations. [...] En un mot, la territorialité est différentielle. Mais il faut encore considérer les échelles spatiales et les échelles temporelles, les échelles des collectivités humaines et celles enfin des contenus de la relation qu'il s'agisse d'énergie et/ou d'information. Sans une perspective différentielle le "vécu" ne peut pas être valablement saisi (Raffestin, 1977: 23).

not only embraces the relationships of individuals/social groups with territory (exteriority) but also with other social actors (alterity). "Territoriality takes into account the whole set of existential relations"¹⁴, Raffestin argues together with his wife Mercedes Bresso in *Travail, Espace, Pouvoir* (Raffestin, Bresso, 1979: 35). "To conceive territoriality as a simple relationship to space would be devoid of interest and revive some type of determinism. Territoriality always includes relationships to other social actors, even if they might differ in their nature"¹⁵ (Raffestin, 1980: 146). *Per definitionem*, territoriality thus embraces both the territorial and the social realm, which are simultaneously present and fundamentally interrelated. It is in this sense that the concept of human territoriality, as it is defined by Claude Raffestin, brings together the whole complexity and multidimensionality of social life [le vécu] from a relational perspective, on different social, spatial and temporal scales.

To illustrate the importance of this point, I again refer to Kafka's literary extract. As I have argued already, if we really are to capture the meaning and motivations of K's behaviour, we also need to take into account his position and role in society more generally. K's behaviour is not a solitary act of rebellion without anybody present. His triumph on the contrary needs to be understood through the presence of the others. In this, the English version of the chosen literary extract unfortunately is not identical to the original German text, where K. is not just looking *around* on top of the wall (dt. "rund herumschauen"), but looking *in the round*, i.e. in the circle of present people (dt. "in die Runde schauen"). K's relationships to alterity are of fundamental importance in order to understand his relationships to exteriority and vice versa.

Besides the relationships to alterity and to exteriority, Raffestin in later essays refers to the relationships of an individual and/or social group to its interiority (Raffestin, 1995: 91). If we understand the relations to interiority as the ways in which social actors see and represent themselves, their capacity of self-reflection, their embodied identity and their memory of cumulated experiences, this type of relationship is present in at least two different ways in Kafka's literary extract. First, the chosen extract as a whole is referring to K's memory. K. is not climbing up the wall in the present of the story but he is remembering a personal

14 La territorialité c'est la prise en compte de toutes les relations existentielles (Raffestin, Bresso, 1979: 35).

15 Ce serait renaître un déterminisme sans intérêt que de concevoir la territorialité comme un simple lien avec l'espace. C'est toujours un rapport, même s'il est différé, avec les autres acteurs (Raffestin, 1980: 146).

triumph he had many years ago. While K. is in deep trouble on the arm of Barnabas in the snowy night, memories of his childhood come to succour him. He does not find a hold in his present relations to alterity and exteriority but in his relationships to interiority. Second, K's relationships to interiority are also present in a purely figurative sense in the chosen literary extract. Namely, we can interpret the fact that K finds some difficulty in getting home after the teacher's reproachful look as the metaphorical expression of the idea that the authority's power has hurt not only K's knee but also affected his "way back to himself", i.e. to his interiority. On a general level, the struggling inner life of Kafka's protagonists is of such fundamental importance that it can truly be seen as one of the central leitmotifs of his writing. The chosen extract of *The Castle* is not an exception to this, as it seems indeed that the whole scene of action deals above all with K's interiority, which is deeply shaped by both his triumph and suffering in the past.

- *Power*

For Raffestin, speaking about territoriality in relational terms automatically leads to the concept of power. In this, the writings of Michel Foucault have left clear marks within Raffestin's theoretical thinking. Following Foucault's relational conception of power, Raffestin argues that territoriality, as a complex system of relationships, *per definitionem* conveys the idea of power. "Territoriality [une géographie de la territorialité] invites to think social life [le vécu] in strictly relational terms. [...] It is evident that the concept of territoriality has to accord an important place to the notion of power, which - alone - can explain most dissymmetric relationships"¹⁶ (Raffestin 1977: 134). "We could somehow say that territoriality is the "lived side" [face vécue] of the "acting side" [face agie] of power"¹⁷ (Raffestin 1980: 146). It is on this basis that for Raffestin, human territoriality captures the intersections between society, space and power and thus allows to conceptualise the shaping and ordering of everyday social life through the notion of power.

In Kafka's literary extract, the exercise of power is most obvious in the relationship between

16 Une géographie de la territorialité invite à prendre en compte le "vécu" à travers les relations. [...] Il est assez évident qu'une géographie de la territorialité doit faire une large place à la notion de pouvoir qui, seule, peut expliquer beaucoup de relations dissymétriques (Raffestin, 1977: 134).

17 On pourrait dire qu'elle [la territorialité] est en quelque sorte la "face vécue" de la "face agie" du pouvoir (Raffestin, 1980: 146).

K. and the teacher, which – as I have mentioned before – can somehow be interpreted as the state's authority over its citizens. However, to understand the chosen literary extract – and the complex realities of everyday social life more generally – a wider approach of the concept of power is needed. In this regard, Raffestin's conceptualisation of the functioning of power in terms of "information" and "energy" is particularly interesting. "Power, from the perspective of its means, is defined as a variable combination of energy and information. If we understand these two elements to be always co-present, we can say that there are powers which are predominantly based on an energetic component, while there are others which are above all reliant on an informational component. It is thus conceivable to draw different possible situations [of power], considering that power – from the perspective of the employed means – can be assimilated to two vectors, composed of energy and information"¹⁸ (Raffestin, 1980: 47).

In Kafka's extract, K's behaviour is mostly situated within the informational realm of power. While the energy he has to deploy to surmount the wall's materiality is relatively minor (he succeeds in climbing the wall with astonishing ease), the most difficult part (he had slipped down many a time before) is to surmount the wall's meaning, i.e. its informational component. K. himself is re-territorializing the wall not by removing it physically but by ignoring (and thus affecting) its meaning (informational component).

Raffestin eventually argues that it is through the concept of power, understood as inherent quality of social relationships to alterity and to exteriority (the constitutive parts of human territoriality in Raffestin's sense), that the interrelations between society and space must be understood. On this basis, Raffestin is concerned to understand how, on different social, spatial and temporal scales, relationships between society and space are produced by powers and re-produce powers (see also Lefèbvre, 1974; Bourdieu, 1991; Werlen, 1995). This problematic is well expressed by Michel Foucault stating that "a whole history remains to be written of spaces - which would at the same time be the history of powers (both these terms in the plural) - from the great strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat,

18 On pourrait dire que le pouvoir, quant aux moyens mobilisés, est défini par une combinaison variable d'énergie et d'information. Ces deux éléments étant toujours présents, on peut dire qu'il y a des pouvoirs à forte composante énergétique ou inversement des pouvoirs à forte composante informationnelle. Il est possible de donner une image des situations possibles en considérant que le pouvoir, envisagé sous l'angle des moyens mis en oeuvre, est assimilable à un vecteur composé d'énergie et d'information (Raffestin, 1980: 47).

institutional architecture from the classroom to the design of hospitals, passing via economic and political installations" (Foucault, 1980).

- ...*by means of mediators*...

At the core of Raffestin's theorization of human territoriality, we find the idea that social relations of all types (to alterity, exteriority and interiority) are mediated by concrete and/or abstract means of varying nature. "All relations of a collectivity or an individual with the physical and/or human environment presuppose some type of a mediation" (Raffestin, 1984a: 140). For example, knowledge, language, social rules, technical instruments and human senses can be seen as mediators, in that they affect social and spatial relationships crucially. In consequence, spatial and social relationships not only comprise subjects (social groups and individuals) and objects (territory, respectively other social groups or individuals), but also different types of mediators which assure the ternary relations subject - mediators - object (Raffestin 1980).

Meanwhile, if mediators make relationships possible, they also influence and limit them. "Whether we are dealing with perceptions or practices, the mediator's nature is essential to understand both the process and the outcome. The mediator conditions both perception and action. I am not saying determines, because mediators - as an instrument, symbol, code or technique - have their scope and thus their limits. The concept of territoriality invites to rediscover the signification of limits"¹⁹ (Raffestin 1984b: 440). If we compare Raffestin's work on human territoriality with other approaches of the concept, his focus on the mediation rather than on the outcome of social relationships clearly stands out. While the mediation of social relationships is ignored in other definitions of the concept, it is of crucial importance for Raffestin. We here find another fundamental difference between Raffestin's relational approach of human territoriality and previously mentioned behaviourist definitions of the concept (Raffestin, 1984b: 447).

Following on from this, Raffestin's starting point to (empirically or analytically) approach

19 Qu'il s'agisse de perception ou d'action, la nature du médiateur est essentielle pour comprendre et le processus, et le résultat. Le médiateur conditionne la perception comme l'action. Je n'ai pas dit détermine, car le médiateur, qu'il s'agisse d'un instrument, d'un symbole, d'un code, d'une technique, par exemple, a une portée, et par là même secrète des limites. La territorialité oblige à redécouvrir la signification des limites (Raffestin, 1984b: 440).

human territoriality neither lies on the study of individual or collective social *subjects*, nor on the approach of territory as the *object* of social intentions. He rather emphasizes the instruments and codes through which interrelations between society and territory are mediated. In sum, Raffestin claims that it is not the "subject" or the "object" which should be given priority, or become the methodological unit of study. Rather do we have to examine the mediated interrelations between them (1986b: 94).

In Kafka's literary extract, K. obviously does not use any concrete instruments (in the form of a ladder or a chair) to climb the wall. His mediators are rather lying within the abstract realm. His relationships with exteriority and alterity are above all mediated by cultural and religious norms and by social codes of behaviour. K knows what he does by climbing the wall and he perfectly well interprets the teacher's stern face. His cultural norms are so strong that the teacher does not even have to speak to K. to make him come down the wall. We thus only understand K's behaviour, if we focus our attention on his embodied, cultural norms and on his representations about the church and the graveyard (as religious symbols), which are mediating his relationships to alterity, exteriority and to interiority.

- ... *in order to guarantee a maximum of autonomy within the limits of the system*

In the first part of this paper, I have pointed out that human territoriality is by most authors linked with (and reduced to) the ideas of ownership, defence and control of space (e.g. Malmberg, 1980; Sack, 1986). I have also had the opportunity to outline that for Raffestin, the defence and control of particular geographical areas expresses only one particular aspect within the possible relationships between society and space. Thus, in opposition to these approaches, Raffestin more generally understands the underlying purpose of human territoriality to lie in the maximisation of social actors' autonomy. Through the concept of autonomy, understood as "the capacity to maintain aleatoric relationships [with exteriority and alterity], or, in other words, the capacity to make choices"²⁰ (Raffestin, 2000: 14) Raffestin intends to take into account the whole set of interactions, exchanges, co-operations and communications within social actors' relationships to exteriority, alterity and interiority. Following Raffestin, "territoriality somehow summarizes the ways through which societies meet with their needs for information and energy at a given moment and place, within a

certain demographic situation and based on certain instruments. [...] To avoid being mistaken: everything lies in the relation, understood as a process of exchange and/or communication; as a process which relies on information and energy and as a process which permits to satisfy social actors' needs [in terms of energy and information]"²¹ (Raffestin, 1980: 135).

Within the last part of his definition of human territoriality, Raffestin eventually expresses the idea that the maximization of social actors' autonomy is generally bounded by the "limits of the system". Social actors' personal autonomy, as the *telos* of their territoriality, must thus be understood as a gradual, rather than as an absolute quality of social life (Rössler, 2001: 119). In different ways and to different degrees, social actors' relationships to alterity and exteriority are always more or less limited by the available resources of the system. There are at least three reasons why this is so, each of which deserves some discussion here.

First, Raffestin's focus on the limitedness of social actors' autonomy brings us back to his idea that social relationships are both made possible and fundamentally limited by concrete and/or abstract mediators. Mediators define quite precisely the limits to liberty or autonomy of those actors who use them in their relationships with alterity and exteriority (Raffestin 1984a: 141). Following Wittgenstein's dictum that "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world", Raffestin expresses this idea by concluding that "the limits of my mediators mean the limits of my territoriality" (Raffestin 1986a: 183).

Second, the limits of social actors' autonomy are founded by the limitedness of the available resources more generally. In this sense, Raffestin's definition of human territoriality also contains the idea of sustainability, in the sense that the maximization of social actors' autonomy must take into account the available resources of the (social and ecological) system. In some writings, this part of Raffestin's definition of human territoriality is indeed slightly changed from "...to guarantee a maximum of autonomy within the limits of the

20 L'autonomie c'est la capacité d'entretenir des relations aléatoires ou, en d'autres termes, la capacité de faire des choix (Raffestin, 1990: 14).

21 Cette territorialité résume en quelque sorte la manière dont les sociétés satisfont, à un moment donné, pour un lieu donné, pour une charge démographique donnée et un ensemble d'outils donné leurs besoins en énergie et en information. [...] Qu'on ne s'y trompe pas: tout réside dans la relation conçue comme processus d'échange et/ou de communication. Processus qui nécessite de l'énergie et de l'information, processus qui permet aux acteurs de satisfaire leurs besoins (Raffestin, 1980: 145)

system” to “...to guarantee a maximum of autonomy while taking into account the resources of the system”.

Third, and probably of most interest for my discussion of Kafka's literary extract, the limits of social actors' autonomy are somehow pre-defined by institutionalized social norms, which are regulating social actors' relationships to alterity and to exteriority. In Kafka's literary extract, K's acts were “limited” by the teacher's stern face, because K.'s behavior was literarily beyond the means, i.e. outside the socially defined, place specific limits of the “acceptable”. Through his acts, K. was trying to establish personal relationships to exteriority and to alterity which were not allowed by the system. As a direct consequence, he had to be sanctioned, which is expressed both through K's knee injury (his punished body) and by his difficulties in getting home (his marked interiority).

5. Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to discuss the specificities of Claude Raffestin's theoretical work on human territoriality, in comparison to other, mostly Anglophone approaches. In this, my paper provides a first entrance point which encourages further, more detailed reviews of Raffestin's work. To conclude this exploratory review of Raffestin's theoretical thinking, four major aspects can be retained, which together invite to re-consider the relevance of Claude Raffestin's conceptualisation of the relationships between society and space more generally.

First, unlike most other, Anglophone approaches, Raffestin does neither reduce human territoriality to a specific form of behaviour (related to the ownership and defence of space) nor does he understand territoriality exclusively as the domain of specific (political) actors. Rather he argues that human territoriality must be approached from a broader, relational point of view as the relational spectrum of social groups and/or individuals as a whole. This "relational problematic" is of major importance, for it lies the ground on which Raffestin further develops his theoretical way of thinking. Also, it is on this basis that the concept of human territoriality brings together the whole myriad of spatial practices, emotional engagements and socio-spatial micro-relations within everyday social life on different social, spatial and temporal scales.

Second, and following on from the first point, Raffestin's definition of human territoriality

embraces and interrelates the territorial, social and the mental realm. While his focus on the inseparable spectrum of relationships to alterity, exteriority and interiority on the one hand encourages social sciences to take into account the spatial dimension of social life, it on the other hand also ensures that territoriality is not reduced to a simple relationship between social actors and space. Because of these explicit linkages between the social, the territorial and the mental, Raffestin's theoretical thinking offers an enlightening terrain for developing new ways to think about human territoriality as central paradigm within human sciences. Raffestin work on human territoriality can indeed be seen as an attempt towards a "unitary theory" of social life (Raffestin, 1986b), which encompasses disciplinary borders and thus offers a far-reaching potential for profound, interdisciplinary reflections about the interwoven social, political, cultural, psychological, economic and spatial dimensions of pressing current questions.

Third, within Raffestin's relational approach of human territoriality, the concept of power – understood in a foucauldian sense as an inherent quality of social relationships – is crucial. Raffestin's relational understanding of human territoriality *per definitionem* points toward a detailed approach of the complex power issues within the interrelations between society and territory (in Raffestin's sense as both socially produced and as producer of society). In my article, these power issues have been examined on the basis of a short literary extract by Franz Kafka. But of course, my comments apply no less to the national or to any other territory than they do to K's scene of action...

The forth aspect which is of fundamental importance within Raffestin's conceptualization of human territoriality and which distinguishes his theoretical thinking from other approaches, is his explicitness about the processes of mediation within social relationships. Raffestin's focus on the (concrete and abstract) instruments and codes through which relationships to alterity, exteriority and interiority are mediated “reverses the usual geographical approach. Its starting point lies not anymore in the analysis of space but in social actors' instruments and codes which are leaving marks and indications in territory”²² (Raffestin, 1986b: 94). It is in this perspective, more than anything else probably, that Raffestin's approach of human

22 Le paradigme de la territorialité renverse l'ordre habituel de la géographie puisque le point de départ n'est pas l'espace mais les instruments et les codes des acteurs qui ont laissé des traces et des indices dans le territoire (Raffestin, 1986: 94).

territoriality requires more empirical detail.

In sum, these four crucial aspects within Raffestin's definition of human territoriality point towards a more profound review of Raffestin's theoretical thinking, which would further include a more detailed discussion of his writings. In this paper, my aim neither was to recapitulate the whole history of different meanings of (human) territoriality, nor to provide a precise account of the theoretical and descriptive studies which contribute to the genesis and development of the concept, which would be essential in the prospect of a broader theorisation of human territoriality.

MORE TO COME HERE...

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