

A political theory of territory

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Résumé ou extrait : This book offers a political self-determination theory of territory. Territorial disputes are at the centre of some of the most intractable controversies facing us today, but it is also one of the most under-theorized concepts that we rely on. Most work in political philosophy, international relations, political science, and law take for granted the territorial imperative (that we need states, and states are necessarily territorial); yet, this book argues, territory itself requires a defence. Moreover, we do not have a clear consensus either about what territory is, or how disputes about territory should be resolved, or the appropriate justice limits of territorial rights. This book defends a political theory of territory, both against those who are critical of the idea of territory and those who offer different accounts of territory. The book offers a conceptual analysis of territory, distinguishes it from property, defends a particular theory of territory against rival accounts, and shows how this theory is helpful in addressing questions of historical rights to land, drawing boundaries, control over borders, control over resources, and disputes over unoccupied islands. It concludes by considering what this theory has to say in cases where the right of territorial integrity has either been defended or breached.