Territory

A unit of **contiguous** space that is used, organized and managed by a **social** group, individual person or **institution** to restrict and **control** access to people and places.

Though sometimes the word is used as **synonymous** with place or space, territory has never been a term as primordial or as generic as they are in the canons of geographical terminology.

The dominant usage has always been either **political**, in the sense of necessarily involving the power to limit access to certain places or regions, or **ethological**, in the sense of the dominance exercised over a space by a given species or an individual organism.

Increasingly, territory is coupled with the concept of **network** to help understand the complex processes through which space is managed and controlled by powerful organizations.

In this light, territory is only one type of spatiality, or **way in which space is used**, rather than the one monopolizing its employment.

From this perspective, territoriality is the strategic use of territory to attain organizational goals.

Territory is particularly associated with the spatiality of the **modern state** with its claim to absolute control over a population within carefully defined external **borders**

Territory

territory (n.)

late 14c., "land under the jurisdiction of a town, state, etc.," probably from Latin *territorium* "land around a town, domain, district," from *terra* "earth, land" (from PIE root ***ters-** "to dry") + *-orium*, suffix denoting place (see **-ory**). Sense of "any tract of land, district, region" is first attested c. 1600. Specific U.S. sense of "organized self-governing region not yet a state" is from 1799. Of regions defended by animals from 1774.

"Since *-torium* is a productive suffix only after verbal stems, the rise of *terri-torium* is unexplained" [Michiel de Vaan, "Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages"]. An alternative theory, somewhat supported by the vowels of the original Latin word, suggests derivation from *terrere* "to frighten" (see **terrible**); thus *territorium* would mean "a place from which people are warned off."

Territory

Until Sack (1986) extended the understanding of human territoriality as a strategy available to individuals and organizations in general, usage of the term 'territory' was largely confined to the **spatial organization of states**.

In the social sciences, such as sociology and political science, this is still mainly the case, such that the challenge posed to territory by network forms of organization (associated with globalization) is invariably characterized in totalistic terms as '**the end of geography**'.

This signifies the extent to which territory has become the dominant geographical term (and imagination) in the social sciences.

It is then closely allied to state sovereignty.

As **sovereignty** is seen to 'erode' or 'unbundle,' so goes territory. From this viewpoint, territory takes on an epistemological centrality in that it is understood as absolutely fundamental to modernity.
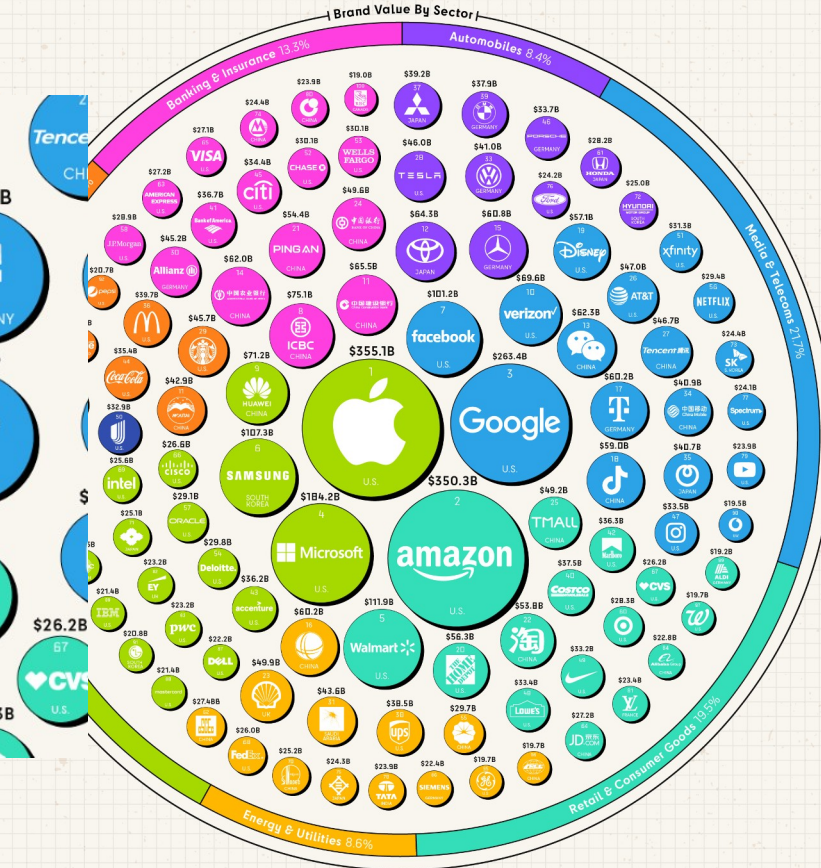
Territory

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GLOBAL RANK
CIRCLE SIZE BASED ON BRAND VALUE
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Banking & Insurance 13.3%
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Retail & Consumer Goods 19.5%
Energy & Utilities 8.6%

More than 50% of the U.S. population has an iPhone.
Source: Statista

Despite a challenging year filled with supply chain issues and labor shortages, Amazon's brand value grew by 38% since last year's ranking.

Over the past year, TikTok has tripled in brand value, making it the fastest-growing brand on the list.

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Territory

As such it can then be given an **extended meaning** to refer to any socially **constructed** geographical space, not just that resulting from statehood.

Especially popular with some French-language geographers, this usage often reflects the need to adopt a term to distinguish the **particular and the local** from the more **general global or national** 'space'.

It then signifies the '**bottom-up**' spatial context for identity any cultural difference (or place) more than the '**top-down**' connection between state and territory.

The territorial state is a highly specific **historical entity**. It first arose in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Since that time, political power has been seen as inherently territorial. Politics take place only within 'the institutions and the spatial envelope of the state as the exclusive governor of a definite territory.

Territory

We also identify political territory with social space, perceiving countries as '**state-societies**'.

The process of state formation has always had two crucial attributes:

Exclusivity. All of the political entities (the Roman Catholic Church, city-states etc.) that could not achieve a reasonable semblance of sovereignty over a contiguous territory have been delegitimized as major political actors.

Mutual recognition. The power of states has rested to a considerable extent on the recognition each state receives from the others by means of non-interference in so-called internal affairs (sovereignty).

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Together these activities have created a world in which there can be **no territory without a state**.

In this way, territory has come to underpin both **nationalism** and **representative democracy**, both of which depend critically on restricting political membership by homeland and address, respectively.

In political theory, control over a relatively modest territory has long been seen as the primary solution to the '**security dilemma**': to offer protection to populations from the threats of anarchy, on the one hand, and hierarchy (distant rule and subordination), on the other.

The problem has been to define what is meant by 'modest' size.

To Montesquieu, the enlightenment philosopher, different size territories inevitably have different political forms: '**It is, therefore, the natural property of small states to be governed as a republic, of middling ones to be subject to a monarch, and of large empires to be swayed by a despotic prince**.'

Territory

Sometimes posed today in terms of a **world of flows** versus a **world of territories**, this is better thought of in terms of territories and/or networks of flows rather than one versus the other.

Territories and networks exist relationally rather than mutually exclusively.

If territorial regulation is all about tying flows to places, territories have never been zero-sum entities in which the sharing of power or the existence of external linkages totally undermines their capacity to regulate. If at one time territorial states did severely limit the local powers of transterritorial agencies, that this is no longer the case does not signify that the states have lost all of their powers:

'Territory still matters. States remain the most effective governors of populations. . . . The powers to exclude, to tax, and to define political rights are those over which states acquired a monopoly in the seventeenth century. They remain the essentials of state power and explain why state sovereignty survives today and why it is indispensable to the international order' (Hirst, 2005)

Territory

Early modern Europe offered propitious circumstances for the emergence of a fragmented political system primarily because of its topographical divisions.

Montesquieu further notes, however, that popular representation allows for the territorial extension of republican government.

The founders of the USA added to this by trying to **balance** between **centralizing** certain security functions, on one side, and retaining **local** controls over many other functions, on the other.

The recent history of the European Union can be thought of in similar terms.

Human activities in the world, however, have never conformed entirely to spaces defined by proximity as provided by territory.

Indeed, and increasingly, as physical distance proves less of a barrier to movement, spatial interaction between separated nodes across networks is an important mechanism of geographical sorting and differentiation.