

Territory

Territory is another essential element of a state. Other associations either exist within the state or they extend their sphere to several states; they do not need separate territory. But the state must possess a territory where its authority is accepted without dispute or challenge.

A state comes into existence only when its population is settled in a fixed territory. Friedrich Engels, in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), notes that the formation of the state is accompanied by a division of population according to territory. In the pre-state society when people live as nomadic tribes, moving from one place to another in search of food, the members of the tribe are held together by the ties of kinship. With the formation of the state, citizens are allowed to exercise their rights and duties wherever they settle, irrespective of gens and tribes. The organization of citizens according to locality is the common feature of all states.

Some writers, like John Seeley (1834-95), hold that a fixed territory is not an essential aspect of a state. The nomadic tribes, who do not possess fixed territory, do constitute a state. This view is, however, no longer held valid. The nomadic tribes do have the institution of authority, or even government with custom-based law, but not a state. Political sociologists concede the existence of a 'political system' in such communities, but their organization still does not qualify to be a

state. Moreover, the modern state is not a matter of internal organization; it needs international recognition as well, so as to enjoy its rights and perform its duties as a member of the comity of nations. International law regards possession of a fixed territory as the essential attribute of the state. Demarcation of physical boundaries is, therefore, essential for establishing the real identity of a state.

The territory of a state includes the land, water and air-space within its boundary.

It also extends usually to a distance of three miles into the sea from its coast, and

is known as territorial waters, which may be sought to be extended further in

times of war. Territory symbolizes the sphere of sovereignty of the state. Territory provides

for natural resources for the sustenance of the population of the state. Territory

provides for a sense of security and immense opportunities for a fuller life for its

residents; it is an object of sentimental attachment—people love and worship

their motherland and are prepared to make supreme sacrifices for the protection

and maintenance of the territorial integrity of their state. The feeling of patriotism—

the sense of belonging to a state—binds the people of different races, with different

religions, languages and cultures, by the thread of national unity and mutual

cooperation.

Like population, the size of the territory of a state cannot be fixed. Territory is

usually a geographical phenomenon, dividing different states by sea, mountains or other big natural barriers. Sometimes territories are demarcated mainly on a political basis rather than on a geographical basis. In such cases, the peoples' sense of identification with a particular state becomes the basis of territorial demarcation. Reallocation of territories can bring about a merger or alteration of the existing states or emergence of new states.