

# Territory

### DEFINITION

**A territory describes an area within natural or artificial boundaries. In the context of the human habitat, we consider two perspectives: From the city viewpoint, every human settlement is surrounded by territory. From a global perspective, a territory contains settlements, cities, and infrastructure connecting them, forming a network.**

**The term territory covers expressions related to countries, political systems, economic units, or human behaviour. It also refers to the area that animals request for their own habitat and which they defend against others.**

**We extend the definition of the urban system to that of the territorial system in a similar way as we extended the definition of the architectural system to the urban system. We consider that a territory can be described as a metabolic system that functions in analogy to a city's metabolism or in analogy to a building's metabolism.**

Political territories come and go. Physical territories with their mountains, valleys, rivers, fauna, flora, cities and other human made infrastructure are normally longer lasting. The size of the territory changes with the perception of the planners or inhabitants. While the citizens of Russia or Brazil could consider their territory as almost endless, the citizens of Luxembourg or Singapore are very well aware of the precise limits of their territory.

The territory includes land, sea, rivers, air, and underground. Within this multidimensional space, cities and human infrastructure are located. Humans have created more or less artificial territorial boundaries on land, sea and sky. The physical territory is relatively stable over time, if we do not consider time spans exceeding hundreds of thousands of years, or extreme land reclamation.

Humans have organised the territory in many ways. Politically, they draw boundaries, declare everything inside their own, and defend this territory against other nations. The boundaries can be physical on land – as the former wall across Germany between the East and the West part of the country – or they can be invisible, but enforced by defending coordinates in the sea surrounding countries or the air space above countries. With the exception of Antarctica, all continental territories are claimed and dotted with cities and human settlements of varying density. An intense transportation of people and goods occurs between those settlements in the territorial lands, sea, and air.