

A Political Theory of Territory. By Margaret Moore. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015, 263 pp., £51.

Territory is at the heart of some of the world's most difficult issues. Israel and Palestine, militarisation of the South China Sea, and the messy response to the migrant crisis all boil down to disputes over territory. And yet we still have no real cohesive theory of territory with which we can begin to assess and judge the various claims and counter claims raised by contemporary conflicts in which it is a central issue. Margaret Moore's new book, 'A Political Theory of Territory' is intended to fill this gap.

Theories of territory, says Moore, should seek to find the appropriate relationship between people, land, and the state. This leads to questions about the purpose of territory and about who the proper territorial right-holder should be. Through clear and detailed philosophical argument, Moore offers a theory distinguished from those of other scholars by its ambition, breadth, and nuance.

Two points are made clear from the outset. The first is that it is morally valuable for individuals to have "control over the collective conditions of their lives" which includes the notion of territory (p. 6). The second is the fact that the relationship between people and places is "normatively significant" (p. 6). A good political theory of territory must therefore acknowledge that territory provides not only crops and pastures but also that it cradles the memories and sentiments of the people who live in it. The proper territorial right-holder for Moore, therefore, is "the people, defined in non-cultural terms" (p. 9). 'The people' are a "collective agent" who see themselves as a group, are able to enter and maintain political institutions to exercise self-determination, and have a history of political cooperation together (p. 50). Collective self-determination of peoples is thus not only a legal but also a moral right. Notably, the territorial rights held by 'the people' are not property rights; rather they are rights to jurisdictional authority over the territory.

To put her ideas into context, Moore offers a detailed explanation and evaluation of the dominant theories of territory to date: cultural and statist. One problem with cultural theories of territory such as David Miller's is that they do not distinguish between identity and culture. Indeed, the USA and Canada have shared cultures, but their political identity is very different. Statist theories of territory, such as that offered by Hobbes, are problematic simply because they argue that justifying political authority over people necessarily creates territorial rights for the state. Because Moore looks to non-state groups - 'the people' - defined by their political identity, her position overcomes the limitations of both cultural and statist theories of territory.

The latent tension between the collective and the individual begins to emerge here. However, with regard to territory, Moore's theory sees this dynamic as mutually constitutive in terms of individual rights of residency and group rights of occupancy (p. 36). Indeed, Moore argues that "individuals think of themselves as members of groups, who share a place-related connection, who see themselves as located within a specific geographical area" such that "the [territorial] right in question is not simply a right held by individuals, but a right held by...the group, which in turn is valuable because it is important to the individuals who are members of the group" (p. 39). Therefore when discussing forcible expulsions, for instance, it is clear that even if a certain individual were not a member of the dominant group, their rights of residency would still be violated not because group rights of occupancy are a collection of individual rights of residency, but rather because individuals also hold "collective identities" which are often located in a "specific place...bound up with the specific geographic area...which is the locus of their plans and projects" (p. 39-40).

Such ideas could have important public policy implications. Consider London. It is widely reported that continually increasing rents are pricing many low-income Londoners out of the market. Many have to move out of areas in which they and their families have lived for generations. Moore states that if people took seriously the "morally significant relationships between people and places", attempts would be made to intervene in the housing market to prevent rents from forcing people out of territory to which they have a group right of occupancy (p. 44). Moore also suggests that such rights could empower people to resist gentrification and other "unwelcome change", though she does not claim that such rights can or should categorically interfere with free markets (p. 44).

Moore is not afraid to address difficult issues with intelligence and balance. Using her theory, she argues that past wrongs related to territory should be judged based on criteria related to the types of wrongs committed, how much time has passed, and how restitution might affect current residents. Sometimes the right of return can diminish as time goes on, since the initial right of occupancy is rooted in the notion that territory is central to people's various interests; something which can change over time if the wronged people have spent many years away from the territory in question. With regard to claims over unoccupied land, such as islands, Moore is clear that these should be viewed as property disputes rather than territorial disputes. On the related issue of natural resources, she argues that to ensure self-determination, 'the people' need only a right to jurisdictional authority over resources rather than enjoying the full benefits of those resources. This is because Moore values the right to subsistence of all peoples but rejects luck egalitarianism as a method for distributing resources, since it does not take

into account particularist attachments to territory. On the topic of immigration, Moore proposes a right to exclude using both policy-related and culture-related arguments. For instance, immigration can affect policy goals for collectively self-determining groups so they must have a say in who can and cannot enter their territory. More controversially, Moore argues that mass immigration of one culture can threaten the collective self-determination of another, as in white European colonisation of North America and Australia. In circumstances where one group is threatened with the dominance of another, there is a right to exclude. Moore also argues that 'the people' have a right to defend their territory in the name of political self-determination. This supposedly covers national defensive rights and national liberation rights, though Moore's deference to flawed just war principles means this argument is the least convincing of the book.

'A Political Theory of Territory' is an important work that deals seriously with some of the critical questions raised by territory-related issues today. Its detail, rigorousness, and honesty are only compounded by its lucid style. Whether or not Moore's arguments convince the reader, they have established a new benchmark for discussion about territory.

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