

## Desert Royalty

November 17, 2017

I know people who are trying to set up their own countries. Folks at the Seasteading Institute, run by Milton Friedman's grandson, Patri, are preparing for a floating civilization. But that scheme depends on homesteading the open sea.



Land would be easier, no?

Trouble is, there is not much land on the planet unclaimed by any modern state.

But there *is* at least one.

Which is where Suyash Dixit comes in. Mr. Dixit, described as an "Indian adventurer" at *The Telegraph*, "has declared himself the ruler of an unclaimed strip of land in North Africa and is encouraging interested parties to apply for citizenship," writes Mark Molloy.

That "strip" of land (I'd call it a "patch," since it looks like an irregular quadrilateral to me) is Bir Tawil. As a result of the vagaries of the British Empire's map drawing and re-drawing efforts, and the subsequent push and pull of local politics, neither bordering nation (Egypt and Sudan) claims it as theirs.

Oops.

But their oops is Mr. Dixit's opportunity. He hired a cab (paying a huge fare, he says) and travelled to and around the uninhabited region.

No one lives there. There is not much but desert

sand and rock. But it is *technically* livable.

According to Dixit, the "ethics and rules" of ancient civilizations required that "to claim a land" one must "grow crops on it. I have added a seed and poured some water on it today. It is mine." He calls Bir Tawil the Kingdom of Dixit,

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now, and has dubbed himself (à la *Game of Thrones*?) "Suyash Dixit, first of my name."

You can find him on Facebook as @KingSuyashDixit.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.