Special issue introduction -- Understanding legitimacy: Perspectives from anomalous geopolitical spaces

Alex Jeffrey, Fiona McConnell and Alice Wilson

Abstract
This special issue explores the production of political legitimacy, approached from the angle of the legitimacy claims of the governing authorities of anomalous geopolitical spaces. Legitimacy sits at the heart of theories of sovereign power, a position that has drawn a range of scholars – be they political geographers, political anthropologists, international lawyers or political scientists – to focus on the state as a primary source of political legitimacy. This special issue starts from a different premise: namely, that by studying alternative sites of legitimacy, so-called de facto states, annexed territories, governments-in-exile, liberation movements or unrecognised governments, we may shine a light on the wider arena of political actors, forms of agency and sites of contestation through which legitimacy is produced. This special issue introduction draws attention to, first, the centrality of questions of legitimacy to the enactment of political authority; second, the plural disciplinary and political interpretations of legitimacy, staking a claim for why this study has interdisciplinary significance; and, third, the spatial and temporal importance of studying anomalous geopolitical spaces. The latter are presented as zones that have often been neglected areas of comparative study but may hold the key to understanding the complexities of political legitimacy in the modern world. The introduction concludes with an overview of the themes contained within the individual papers that comprise this special issue.

Keywords: legitimacy; governing authorities; anomalous geopolitical spaces; sovereignty; the state

Introduction
This special issue explores how concepts and practices of legitimacy shape claims to political authority. It does so through a lens of 'anomalous geopolitical spaces,' signifying sites that constitute unrecognised, contested or alternative forms of geopolitics from that of the sovereign state. From the outset we are keen to unsettle an image of political legitimacy that has often foregrounded the sovereign state as the sole arbiter and provider of legitimacy within a territory. This focus on the state is no surprise, as the concept of legitimacy is at the heart of some of the most established theorisations of the state sovereignty, most notably perhaps in Max Weber's definition of the state as a "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (1958: 78). But, of course, legitimacy is not as spatially or temporally straightforward as this image of state sovereignty would suggest. The world is replete with examples of sites where legitimacy is contested or where there are a number of claims to legitimacy existing in a given territory. This special issue brings together an interdisciplinary array of scholars to consider precisely the plural and unfinished nature of legitimacy claims in geopolitical entities that are unrecognised states, aspiring states, or simply non-state arenas of political contestation.

As a starting point we want to place this study of the legitimacy claims of anomalous geopolitical spaces within the context of existing – and emerging – examinations of the material, discursive and ideological processes through which authority over space has been accomplished. There is an immediate danger of referring to these works as studies of 'the state', since in many respects they are attempting to decentre, pluralise and contest the state as a coherent and singular geopolitical actor (for more on this linguistic challenge see Abrams, 1988). In part this danger stems from the hegemonic position of the state within geopolitical knowledge production, hence it is a reflection of the enduring 'territorial trap' (Agnew, 1994) within which research concerning legitimacy risks becoming ensnared (see also Bilgin and Morton, 2002). In an attempt to subvert this danger, scholarship over the past thirty years has brought to bear new theoretical and methodological tools that help deconstruct and make visible the techniques of power employed by states while also illuminating the purportedly 'non-state' sites, institutions and bodies that emulate or contest performances of state sovereignty (Jeffrey 2013; McConnell 2009a; Wilson 2015). In these opening remarks we draw attention to three characteristics of this emerging work that frame our subsequent discussion of legitimacy.

In the first, scholars have revisited established state theory to examine how a particular authority (individual, group or institution) emerges as a legitimate sovereign actor, focusing on the practices and performances through which legitimacy is secured (Painter, 2006; Biersteker and Weber, 1996). In doing so, and as the papers in this special issue attest, this work on legitimacy weaves together a more challenging array of different impulses, including legality, loyalty, morality and force. This approach has required a focus on the ways in which states operate to render problems 'legible' in order to enact administration, a process often connected to the emergence of the modern state from the seventeenth century onwards (Foucault 1979; Scott 1998; Tilly 1992). Highlighting the privileged symbolic resources of states, such scholarship illuminates how the production of legislation, and the consequent enactment of law, underpins many understandings of legitimacy (Bourdieu 1986; Engler 2003). Crucially, such arguments illustrate the forms of occlusion enacted by the reification of the state; for example, in Bourdieu's (1986) analysis the state uses law to categorise and structure society in such a way as to obscure underlying economic inequalities. Yet such categorisation is not simply a 'mask' of real social relations but a mechanism through which the legitimacy of state power may be assured. For example Ferguson and Gupta (2002) refer to a process of 'state verticality', where state practices are presented as 'above' society, thereby producing a rigid – if arguably fictive (see Painter 2003) – distinction between state and society. This sense of verticality is reproduced through the rubric of governance, of 'top-down' policies or 'heads of state' and so on.

The second characteristic – related to the first – has been to widen the methodological tools used to study where and how political legitimacy is conveyed. Again, and perhaps ironically, this work proceeds through the rubric of the state, but rather than looking at the gaze of the state and working outwards, ethnographers have sought to trace the complex social and material worlds

within which the idea of a particular state – or the state system – is embedded. Consequently, this work is less interested in 'the state' (as a concept lying at the core of political theory) and more in the production of 'state effects', roughly defined as the social practices or dispositions that emerge as a response to the imagined existence of the state (Mitchell 1991; Painter 2006). Such an approach necessarily shifts attention away from formal institutions of the state (such as governmental bureaucracies) and onto the lived experience of individuals and groups as the state is constituted in their everyday lives, a shift from *Seeing Like a State* (Scott 1998) towards the more bottom-up *Seeing the State*. For example, Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002; 2012) has undertaken ethnographic fieldwork in Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) to highlight the ways in which the state is lived and embodied, highlighting the role of documents, sites and materials through which ideas of state legitimacy are secured. Reflecting this focus on a more materialist framework, Navaro-Yashin draws on Latour's Actor-Network Theory to argue that sovereignty is not a "top-down act of political will or event", but is instead "a worked-on terrain of relationality between human actors, material land and property, and tools or devices of measurement, numeration, and allocation" (2012: 44). The consequence of such ethnographic studies of the enactment of legitimacy has been to highlight the dynamic nature of state practices (they are always unfolding), their distribution beyond classical understandings of state territoriality (for example through diasporas or refugees camps) and their prosaic existence within people's everyday lives.

The third characteristic has been the widening of the empirical gaze beyond established states and looking instead at those groups and movements that are either seeking to establish themselves as legitimate state actors in the future or are performing unrecognised state-like activities – and are hence loci of potential legitimacy – in the present (Clapham 1998; Feldman 2008; Wilson 2010). We are referring to these as 'anomalous geopolitical spaces', though as we outline below, in many instances these are not unitary spaces and such terminology is suggestive of a norm against which these examples are constituted as anomalies (Caspersen 2012). As we will argue, these debates draw into sharp relief the contestation over different interpretations of legitimacy and the hybrid nature of many of these geopolitical actors, which are simultaneously – depending on perspective – considered sources of political legitimacy and illegitimacy. Perhaps most importantly, they help us move away from a state-centric notion of legitimacy, to challenge dominant narratives of sovereignty and think instead of situations where the loci of legitimacy is dispersed and situated outside of formal state structures.

These research characteristics inform the motivations for this special issue, where an intellectual desire to expand the remit of studies of legitimacy was coupled with a political desire to illuminate the plural understandings of legitimacy that circulate within anomalous geopolitical spaces. In the subsequent sections of this introduction we, firstly, probe the concept of legitimacy, to identify the leverage this term provides within debates concerning both legal and normative concepts of political authority. We then explore the lens of autonomous geopolitical spaces, illustrating the varied practices of governance

and the political that is gathered under this term. Finally, before a brief conclusion, we trace these themes through the seven papers within the special issue.

Unsettling legitimacy

'Legitimacy', especially the legitimacy of governing authorities, is a key concept in political theory and practice. Ian Clark (2007) even goes as far as to argue that the principle of legitimacy forms the cornerstone of what is meant by an international society. More recently, Francis Fukuyama (2011) posits that, as a precondition for institutional accountability, legitimation is a fundamental question facing the current geopolitical era. As such, legitimacy is a term frequently used by practitioners of and commentators on international affairs. It has framed recent discussions around Russian annexation of Crimea, controversial elections in Burundi, humanitarian interventions in East Timor and Kosovo, and Western military campaigns in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. As well as challenges to the legitimacy of pluri-national states and their territorial boundaries, the issue of legitimacy is also central to new types of political formation such as the EU (Gualini 2004), the 'Islamic State' (Jabareen 2015) and the increasing international presence of sub-state governments (Aldecoa and Keating 1999; Cornago 2010).

The pervasiveness of the notion of legitimacy in (geo)political discourses means that it is perhaps unsurprising that it is a difficult concept to define. This is compounded by the fact that scholars from a wide variety of fields have sought to examine the vexed question of political legitimacy. Two broad schools of thought can be identified, which map onto two distinct definitions of legitimacy: an entity or action being genuine and valid, and conformity to the law. The first emerges from political theory, broadly defined, which attends to questions of political obligation. Political philosophy, for example, generally understands legitimacy in a normative sense as the right to govern: a status conferred by the people on the government (Sternberger, 1968). In this regard, considerable debate has focused on the nature of democracy and its various articulations (e.g. Dahl 1989, 2000). Meanwhile in political science and political sociology issues of legitimacy have, following Locke, been seen as linked to those of consent. Thereby framed in a positive sense, scholars such as Lipset (1963; 1984) and Easton (1975) have argued that legitimacy involves the capacity of a political system to engender and sustain the *belief* that its existing institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society in question. From a Gramscian perspective, any claim to legitimacy entails striking the fine balance of passing off coercion as consent (Gramsci 1971). Running parallel to these normative enquiries are more empirical analyses which centre around the extent to which states can command legitimacy in practice (Pierson 1996) and examinations of legitimation crises (Habermas 1976). Alongside sustained engagement with the idea that political legitimacy is constituted by and through the legitimacy of capitalist social relations (e.g. Connolly, 1984; Gramsci, 2000; Habermas, 1976) has been the enduring influence of Weber's tripartite conceptualisation of legitimate authority being underpinned by traditional, charismatic and rational-legal modes. In recent years a small but growing body of work has sought to question the assumed evolution of these sources of legitimacy, and to probe critically the mechanisms through

which it is constructed, sustained and contested (e.g. Clark, 2007; Ferguson and Mansbach, 1996; Lemay-Hébert, 2009).

Second, in terms of legitimacy defined as conformity to the law, these subjective approaches to legitimacy – that it exists only through belief in the rightfulness of rule – are distinct from objective approaches which understand legitimacy as the adherence to external moral and legal standards (Brunnée and Toope 2010; Buchanan 1998; Buchanan 2004; Franck 1990). From the perspective of international law, legitimacy is thus approached through a lens of institutional recognition: that is whether or not a polity is recognised by other sovereign states as having met the international legal criteria for legitimate statehood (Montevideo Convention 1933). This understanding of international or external legitimacy is conventionally distinguished from internal legitimacy (effective and valid authority).
Cross-cutting both broad approaches to legitimacy is an assertion that legitimacy is key to political stability within state and across the international system (Booth and Seligson 2005), and, underpinning this, a mutually reinforcing relationship between the state and legitimacy. As Joe Painter notes, in much literature on this topic it becomes evident that:

> 'Since the state is the source of law, the suggestion that the state can be defined in terms of its monopolization of legitimate authority or legitimate violence is a tautology: the state is that which is legitimate, but what is legitimate is decided by the state. The argument is circular' (2006: 756)

In responding to this extant literature on legitimacy, the papers in this special issue seek to do two things. First, they move beyond the unidirectional idea that legitimacy emanates from the state. As such, the papers that follow challenge the idea that the state is customarily the main actor in producing legitimacy and instead bolster calls to attend to the claims to, articulations of and contestations regarding the legitimacy of a wide range of governing authorities (see also Erman and Uhlin, 2010; Ivison et al., 2000; Rose and Miller, 1992). Second, these papers argue for a more nuanced and critically attuned engagement with the notion of legitimacy. It is somewhat surprising that within human geography, whereas there been a proliferation of insightful analysis of the related concepts of sovereignty (Agnew 2005; Elden 2006) and legality (Eckert, et al. 2012; Morrissey 2011), the notion of political legitimacy has been neglected. With notable exceptions (e.g. Purcell and Nevins, 2005; Bakke et al., 2014; O'Lear, 2007; Horowitz, 2009) it is a concept which is often invoked – particularly in critical geopolitics and political geography – but rarely interrogated. In contrast, we bring the notion of legitimacy to the fore and argue that it allows us important leverage in understanding complex political relations at a range of scales that concepts such as governance, authority and sovereignty fall short of. Whilst cautious about generalising across the papers and doing a disservice to the nuanced arguments that the authors develop through detailed attention to empirical cases, we want to draw attention here to three distinctive features of legitimacy which, we argue, provoke a series of productive engagements.

First, legitimacy is a productive concept to focus on precisely because of its breadth and its ambiguity. Rather than dismiss it as a slippery concept which "suffers from a lack of empirical validity" (Shain, 1989: 166), we argue that its ambiguous nature makes it a concept that is particularly analytically useful (Wilson and McConnell, this issue). As we discuss below, it is a concept which can be productively dis-entangled from the state, recognition and legality and can thus be used as a lens onto questions of the nature of political leadership, actorness in geopolitics, and governance techniques. Its polysemous relationship to legality and to the state means that fruitful questions around the assertion and maintenance of authority, how legitimacy may be lost and gained, and who has the authority to declare this can be asked without getting tied up in questions of sovereignty and recognition. In other words, in contrast to concepts of statehood and sovereignty, there need not be a zero-sum game with respect to legitimacy. As Nina Caspersen puts it, we can think of "degrees of legitimacy" (this issue). It is therefore a concept which offers flexibility and thus a more subtle framework for dealing with the complexity of international politics. The flexibility and breadth of legitimacy also means that it is a concept which is particularly productive for interdisciplinary arenas. As the papers that follow demonstrate, it is a concept which can act as an interdisciplinary meeting point where the sharing of ideas and the bringing together of different disciplinary traditions (including those not based on western scholarship) can be fostered. It is both an analytically rich concept which has important utility in terms of opening up and exposing connections between a series of interrelated issues – power, authority, rights, recognition, consent, governance, democracy, sovereignty – and it provides a useful route through the complexity and diversity of governance arrangements, spaces and moments in the world today. Yet, as noted above, it is a route which does not presuppose the existence of particular (i.e. state) institutional forms of governance.

Second, with legitimacy being constituted of both supply and demand sides, it is a concept which lends itself to being examined from the bottom up as well as more conventional top down perspectives. With attention turning to both the governed as well as the governing, legitimacy allows for a honing in on the nature of relationships based on consent and coercion that are at the core of articulations of governing authority (e.g. Purcell and Nevins, 2005). Moreover this understanding of legitimacy as a relational aspect of political authority extends beyond the relationship – or in Habermas' terms the antagonism – between the constituent power of the people and constituted power of governing institutions. It also shines a spotlight on the role of audiences for legitimacy claims, it encourages a disaggregating of those who seek and those who grant legitimacy, and it offers important insights into the relationship between politics and the political (Byrne and Klem, this issue).

Third, and relatedly, this special issue posits an approach which holds in tension a processual understanding of legitimacy with an understanding of legitimacy as an ascribed and normative aspect of government. The former attends to legitimacy as continually in production (Alagappa, 1995) and therefore as a processual technique of governance rather than an achieved status. The latter turns attention to questions of morality and normativity: under what

circumstances can a governing authority be considered as valid? What engenders the belief that a particular rule, institution or authority ought to be obeyed? At a time when different disciplines are questioning normative issues around justice, inequality and the role of religion vis-à-vis politics (e.g. Fox and Sandler 2006), the notion of legitimacy thus provides a useful platform from which to analyse the juncture between power and morality, and the legal and the normative aspects of political authority.

Anomalous geopolitical spaces

A context that is ripe for interrogating political legitimacy are what in this themed issue we call 'anomalous geopolitical spaces'. We mean thereby a diverse range of spaces where international norms or ideals of statehood, that is a neat coincidence of statehood, territory and sovereignty, are called into question. Such spaces are diverse (see McConnell 2009b). They would include non-self governing territories that are ongoing cases of decolonisation, annexed territories, unrecognised or partially recognised states, and enclaves. They include spaces that, whilst not necessarily seeking acceptance as a state in the international system, have resulted from disputed sovereignty and territory, for instance refugee camps run by alternative governing authorities to that of the host country. Anomalous geopolitical spaces are also at stake in governments-in-exile which claim authority over a territory and citizens from which these governing authorities have been (sometimes partially) displaced.

In bringing such diverse spaces into a comparative dialogue, we seek to recognise that these spaces present a common challenge to narratives of concomitant statehood, territory and legality. Territorial sovereignty is also challenged through means such as transnational corporations and regulatory authorities (e.g. Ong 2006; Sassen 1996; Sidaway 2002). Our focus here, though, is on anomalous geopolitical spaces that speak to quests for recognition or a change of status in the international system. We also recognise that anomalous spaces and governing authorities are marked by important differences amongst themselves, which is one challenge in undertaking a comparative study such as this themed issue. The diversity of anomalous geopolitical spaces is marked by the proliferation of terms in scholarly, policy, diplomatic and advocacy circles, such as unrecognised state, de facto state, failed state, quasi state, government-in-exile, annexed territory, states-within-states, non self-governing territory (e.g. Bahcheli, et al. 2004; Caspersen 2012; Kingston and Spears 2004; Pegg 1998; Talmon 1998) – and Rangwala (this issue) discusses another such term, 'government-in-waiting'. We use the term anomalous geopolitical spaces here not only because we have embraced a wide range of spaces extending to entities that do not directly claim statehood (such as refugee camps, cf Feldman, this issue) or territories that wish to change their status within a parent status (such as Darjeeling, cf Wenner, this issue). It is also because many terms in circulation imply that these spaces' deviation from a classic conception of the relationship between sovereignty, territory and legality is a lack, a failure, a problem. In contrast, here we take the view that precisely because these spaces question the relationship between sovereignty, territory and legality, they are a powerful lens through which to open, question and reconceptualise that very relationship. As a consequence, anomalous geopolitical spaces are also ideal scenarios through

which to probe the concept of legitimacy which, in its breadth and ambiguity, sits at the productive fault-line between sovereignty, territory and legality.

The appearance of anomalous geopolitical spaces is by no means recent. Importantly, such spaces can only appear as anomalous in the light of particular norms of sovereignty that developed historically (cf Benton 2009). Specific historical moments may intensify the production of such spaces: the break-up of a series of empires following World War I (WWI) was one such moment, as was explored by James Roslington in his contribution to the conference which led to this themed issue, where he examined the creation of aspiring, and often short-lived, experimental polities in Europe and Central Asia between 1917 and 1925. Likewise the fragmentation of empire following WWII and the Cold War, and the breakup of post-colonial states (in the recent Arab Uprisings) have seen a heightened production of anomalous spaces of governance. What lends this themed issue its timeliness is not only current events, or the intensified proliferation of diplomatic voices from unrecognised peoples and states (in forums such as the Unrepresented Peoples and Nations Organisation or an NGO such as 'Independent Diplomat' which lends diplomatic services and training). The timeliness of the present discussion also arises from an intellectual coming of age of the questioning of sovereignty in political geography, political anthropology, political science, international relations, history and related disciplines (e.g. Agnew 2005; Chalfin 2010; Clapham 1998; Hansen and Stepputat 2005; Kalmo and Skinner 2010; Krasner 1999; Ong 2006; Painter 2006; Philpott 2001; Weber 1995). This corpus of scholarship has enabled the comparative discussion undertaken here. Many studies of geopolitical anomalies focus in detail on one case, due to factors ranging from an intellectual tendency to approach anomalous geopolitical spaces as exceptions and therefore in isolation, to a methodological appeal of an in-depth ethnographic approach for interrogating an apparent exception (e.g. Feldman 2008; Jeffrey 2013; McConnell forthcoming; Navaro-Yashin 2012; Peteet 2005; Wilson under review).

In taking a comparative approach to anomalous geopolitical spaces, this themed issue is a much-needed successor to *Third World Quarterly*'s 1987 special issue on governments-in-exile, and takes inspiration from the more recent work of Bahcheli and colleagues (2004), Caspersen (2012), Clapham (1998), Kingston and Spears (2004), Pegg (1998) and Talmon (1998). In this themed issue, we forge an interdisciplinary conversation between political geography, political anthropology, historical anthropology, political science and international relations, with enriching results. In contrast to narratives of exceptionalisation and pathologisation, and from a platform spanning multiple disciplines, geographies and histories, we highlight the potential of anomalous geopolitical spaces – precisely because of their precariousness – for interrogating the production of legitimacy and the relationship between sovereignty, territory and legality.

Dilemmas, displacement, morality and temporality: perspectives on legitimacy

The seven articles that follow foreground the multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of legitimacy as it is contested in spaces of geopolitical anomaly. Between

them, the articles prise open the legitimacy dilemmas of unrecognised states that seek greater recognition in the international system (Caspersen this issue; Pegg and *Kolstø this issue); the innovative and trans-territorial legitimacy of governing authorities that are (at least partially) displaced from territory and population (Wilson and McConnell this issue; Rangwala this issue); the moral qualities of legitimacy in South Asia for governed populations wary of recent or potential political upheaval (Byrne and Klem this issue; Wenner this issue); and the open-ended quest for leading legitimate, full lives even in the exceptional circumstances of protracted refugeehood (Feldman this issue).*

An acute scenario in which quests for legitimacy come to the fore concerns governing authorities that aspire to, but have not achieved, full international recognition as a sovereign state. Political scientists Nina Caspersen (this issue) and Scott Pegg and Pål Kolstø (this issue) take up the question of the kinds of legitimation strategies that are available to such unrecognised or de facto states, both in the pursuit of external legitimacy from states and international actors, and internal legitimacy in the form of support from and endorsement by the local governed population. Whilst the urgency of legitimacy-seeking practices for unrecognised states is familiar, Caspersen points out that little attention has been paid to the strategies available to such governing authorities. Crucially, as she examines legitimation strategies for unrecognised states ranging from the Republic of Abkhazia (Georgia), to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Cyprus) and Transnistria (Moldova), Caspersen shows that the strategies to pursue one kind of legitimacy may be in tension with strategies to pursue another kind of legitimacy. For instance, the impetus to 'earn' legitimacy from certain states and inter-state organisations by adopting Western-inspired democratic practices may imperil internal legitimacy through the encouragement of internal opposition movements that undermine internal solidarity. Legitimacy is both a "top priority and a source of tension" for unrecognised states, Caspersen finds.

For Pegg and Kolstø, who examine the case of Somaliland, strategies for the pursuit of internal and external legitimacy are also in tension - such as in the possibility that the adoption of a Western-style democratic government will undermine support from traditional leaders. The case of Somaliland is all the more intriguing for destabilising the concept of legitimacy because of how its situation and that of its parent state, Somalia, transgress normative clusterings of sovereignty, legality and territory. Somalia enjoys full international recognition and membership of interstate organisations but is unable to govern its territory and citizens to a standard expected in such international circles. Somaliland, in contrast, benefits from high levels of internal legitimacy as it provides a functioning government and security for its citizens, but to date lacks recognition as a state from other states. In Pegg and Kolstø's analysis, questions of temporality – a theme that links all the articles – cast a heavy shadow over Somaliland's future viability. The authors suggest that, even if the lack of external recognition does not currently prevent Somaliland from governing effectively, the long-term likelihood is that the absence of external recognition and legitimacy will make it more and more difficult to maintain internal governance and legitimacy.

Where the legitimacy claims examined by Caspersen, Pegg and Kolstø are articulated from within the territories over which jurisdiction is claimed, Alice Wilson and Fiona McConnell (this issue) and Glen Rangwala (this issue) examine the forging of legitimacy claims in territorially complex scenarios combining displaced populations and (potential) governing authorities, diasporas as well as actors in a claimed homeland. In these cases, against the grain of territorial approaches to sovereignty, legality and legitimacy, neither the lack of or limited access to territory, nor the absence of full international recognition (an element in common with the work of Caspersen, Pegg and Kolstø) prevents innovative claims to legitimate governance. Wilson and McConnell combine ethnographic research methods from political anthropology and political geography in a comparative study of two cases of long-term governing authorities which operate from exile: Sahrawis from Western Sahara based in Algeria, and Tibetans based in India. Observing the breadth of conceptualisations of legitimacy, Wilson and McConnell argue that this makes legitimacy 'good to think with', especially for a critical revision of the relationship between the state, sovereignty, territory and legality. By taking up cases where a governing authority seeks to act like a state, even though it lacks full access to territory and full international recognition, Wilson and McConnell destablise assumptions that legitimacy is the prerogative of a state authority and that full legality is a necessary basis from which to make claims for legitimacy to rule. Indeed, territorial and legal liminality in these cases proves not an obstacle, but a catalyst for the production of legitimacy claims.

Sahrawis and Tibetans' active participation in governing structures in exile runs alongside their prolonged waiting over decades for a resolution of long-running conflicts. Rangwala (this issue) turns to cases where waiting has proved more short-lived: the 'governments-in-waiting' that emerge as potential successors to administrations that are perceived to be in the process of collapsing. As he points out, this phenomenon has become a feature of the recent Arab Uprisings, following on from the earlier precedent of Iraq in anticipation of the fall of Saddam Hussein. The emergence of such governments-in-waiting for Libya, Syria and Yemen, on which the article focuses, occasioned no small amount of terminological confusion as diplomatic observers fluctuated from terms such as 'interim government' to 'legitimate representative' and even state titles such as Prime Minister. Stepping well beyond such terminological uncertainty, Rangwala offers a clear account of the features of these governing authorities as a particular species: they are multi-site, combining actors (including military and political 'defectors') in exile and in the diaspora, actors in the home territory and actors from powerful and neighbouring states; they appear in the absence of a functioning government at home, or in the anticipation of its imminent collapse; and, lacking for the most part the chance to govern a home territory, they seek to boost their legitimacy through claims such as to inclusivity or to technical competence.

Whilst governments-in-waiting look forward to a time when they may become simply governments, populations that have lived through war continue to experience consequences for the constitution of post-conflict legitimate politics, as political geographers Byrne and Klem (this issue) explore. Drawing on fieldwork in post-war Nepal and post-war Sri Lanka, they examine how in both cases the post-conflict setting leads to a double effect. On the one hand there is a curtailing of 'the

political', or topics open for political debate – for the sake of avoiding sensitive questions that might 'rock the boat'. On the other hand, there is an expansion of 'politics', or the politicking of entrepreneurs who seek to advance their own positions by activating clientelist networks (a route that had been more difficult to follow during the conflict period). The authors perceive these challenges as part of a broader panorama of democracy's 'inherent adverse potential' – which can be observed in established democracies, but is 'more pronounced, more grievous and more visible' in post-war settings.

In Byrne and Klem's analysis, '[l]egitimacy inhabits the juncture of morality and power'. The moral dimensions of legitimacy are also foregrounded in Miriam Wenner's study of how Darjeeling residents appraise their elected and non-elected representatives in the context of ongoing aspirations for the formation of an administrative state of Ghorkaland, separate from India's West Bengal. Striking a similar note to Caspersen's and Wilson and McConnell's findings, Wenner explores how legitimacy is constructed and contested with regard to a number of (potentially contrasting) platforms. In a political landscape that Wenner characterises as competitive authoritarianism, one of the important ways through which a party enjoys popular legitimacy is by distributing resources through patronage. This entails a fine line – for instance interlocutors discuss that it is important "not to take more than 40%" of available resources for oneself, in order not to lose support. Thus patronage is not necessarily delegitimising, if 'done right'. But to distribute resources, a party must rely on its relationship with West Bengal as the purveyor of resources, and this paradoxically can lead to a party losing credibility in its advocacy for Ghorkaland. The possibility of a redrawing of political boundaries elicits, once again, a legitimacy dilemma.

By turning to the question of how political subjects bring moral criteria to the evaluation of their would-be governors, Wenner turns attention from the 'supply side' of legitimacy as serviced by a potential or actual state, to the 'demand side' of legitimacy from governed constituencies. Drawing on both archival and ethnographic research, Ilana Feldman (this issue) expands upon the question of how political subjects (here refugees) debate and reflect upon the living of a legitimate lives in a context where normal life has been usurped (here exile). Examining refugee camps for Palestinians in Jordan, Syria and the West Bank, Feldman observes that "there is no settled position on what compromises legitimate refugee life in the Palestinian case" (or indeed in many other cases). She goes on explore three related, overlapping and yet at times contrasting approaches to legitimate lives in refugee camps. When camps are viewed as humanitarian spaces, debate turns to the question of whether humanitarianism calls merely for saving lives without changing them, or can legitimately introduce changes such as material improvements to living conditions. A second view, espoused by the Palestinian political leadership, is of the camps as a political space intimately linked to a political identity of refugees as those who suffer – which, for some refugees, leaves limited space for recognising their positive achievements in exile. The third approach that Feldman examines is that of the camps as an emotional space. This vision "does not entirely reject [the humanitarian and political] positions, but it does challenge them" as refugees construct attachment to camps and their sociability, even though they are spaces which, ultimately, refugees seek to

leave. Scenes and conversations from Palestinian refugee camps in this article remind us that debates about how to lead legitimate lives in particular political circumstances, for both rulers and ruled, have an open-ended temporality.

In his Afterword, Christopher Clapham situates each of the papers within the wider panorama of the historical interplay between domestic and international legitimacy. The modern international system created geopolitical anomalies, where we observe "the vitality of discourses of legitimacy" voicing "moral claims". *The latter* stand out in a global system "dominated, as always, by the interests of its most powerful actors".

A coming of age for legitimacy studies

Taking as its springboard the multi-disciplinary critical readings of state power, this special issue advocates that the study of political legitimacy gains from looking beyond the state as a privileged site for the production of legitimacy. Scholars' and practitioners' understanding of legitimacy expands if we look also towards anomalous geopolitical spaces. Spaces such as de facto states, annexed territories, governments-in-exile, liberation movements, unrecognised governments, or refugee camps that speak to the vulnerability of states, although often pathologised and thus relatively neglected in comparative political analysis, illuminate the contested and dynamic nature of legitimacy claims, practices and dilemmas. Anomalous geopolitical spaces highlight how legitimacy claims are not necessarily the purview of the state; their legitimacy practices expose fresh perspectives on the complex relationship between sovereignty, territory, governance and legality. Legitimacy has been studied from many angles and from many disciplines. As we take up legitimacy as an interdisciplinary meeting point in this themed issue, we open up a dialogue in which legitimacy studies, unmoored from a restrictive association with the state, embark upon a coming of age.

Acknowledgements

This special issue is indebted to all those who attended and who gave papers at the conference 'Producing legitimacy: governance against the odds', held at the University of Cambridge, 22-23 April 2013. The conference was able to take place thanks to generous support and funding from: the Contested Political Economies Research Group, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge; the Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge; the Division of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge; Emmanuel College, Cambridge; Homerton College, Cambridge; and the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Conference Series Fund, Trinity College, Cambridge. Our thanks go to the authors for each of their contributions, and to the reviewers and editors of Geoforum for helpful feedback and guidance.

References

Abrams, Philip

1988 Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State. Journal of Historical Sociology 1(1):58-89.

Agnew, J.
2005 Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics. Annals of the Association of American Geographers 95(2):437-461.

Agnew, John
1994 The territorial trap: the geographical assumptions of international relations theory. Review of international Political Economy 1:53-80.

Aldecoa, Francisco, and Michael Keating, eds.
1999 Paradiplomacy in action: the foreign relations of subnational governments. London: Frank Cass.

Bahcheli, Tozun, Barry Bartmann, and Henry Felix Srebrnik, eds.
2004 De facto states: the quest for sovereignty. London: Routledge.

Bakke, Kristin M, et al.
2014 Convincing State-Builders? Disaggregating Internal Legitimacy in Abkhazia. International Studies Quarterly 58(3):591-607.

Benton, Lauren A.
2009 A search for sovereignty: law and geography in European Empires, 1400-1900 Pp. xvi, 340 p. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bilgin, Pinar, and Adam David Morton
2002 Historicising the Representation of 'Failed States': Beyond the Cold War Annexation of the Social Sciences. Third World Quarterly 23(1):55-80.

Booth, Jonh A., and Mitchell A Seligson
2005 Political Legitimacy and Participation in Costa Rica: Evidence of Arena Shopping. Political research quarterly 58(4):537-550.

Bourdieu, Pierre
1986 The force of law: toward a sociology of the juridical field. Hastings law review 38:805-853.

Brunnée, Jutta, and Stephen J. Toope
2010 Legitimacy and legality in international law: an interactional account. Pp. xviii, 411 p. Cambridge studies in international and comparative law. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buchanan, A.
1998 Democracy and secession. *In* National self-determination and secession. M. Moore, ed. Pp. 14-33. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buchanan, Allen E.
2004 Justice, legitimacy, and self-determination: moral foundations for international law. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Caspersen, Nina
2012 Unrecognized states: the struggle for sovereignty in the modern international system. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Chalfin, Brenda
2010 Neoliberal frontiers: an ethnography of sovereignty in West Africa. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Clapham, Christopher
1998 Degrees of statehood. Review of International Studies 24:143-157.

Clark, Ian
2007 Legitimacy in international society. Pp. viii, 278 p. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Connolly, William E., ed.
1984 Legitimacy and the state. New York: New York University Press.
Cornago, Noé
2010 On the Normalization of Sub-State Diplomacy. The Hague Journal of Diplomacy 5:11-36.
Dahl, Robert
1989 Democracy and its critics. New Haven: Yale University Press.
—
2000 On democracy. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Easton, D.
1975 A re-assessment of the concept of political support. British Journal of Political Science 5(4):435-457.
Eckert, Julia, et al., eds.
2012 Law against the state: ethnographic forays into law's transformations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Elden, Stuart
2006 Contingent sovereignty, territorial integrity and the sanctity of borders. The SAIS review of international affairs 26(1):11-24.
Engler, Stephen
2003 Modern times: religion, consecration and the state in Bourdieu. Cultural Studies 17:445-467.
Erman, Eva, and Anders Uhlin
2010 Legitimacy beyond the state? : re-examining the democratic credentials of transnational actors. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Feldman, Ilana
2008 Governing Gaza: bureaucracy, authority, and the work of rule, 1917-1967. Pp. xii, 324 p., [4] p. of plates. Durham: Duke University Press.
Ferguson, James, and Akhil Gupta
2002 Spatializing states: toward an ethnography of neoliberal governmentality. American Ethnologist 29(4):981-1002.
Ferguson, Yale H., and Richard W. Mansbach
1996 Polities: authority, identities, and change. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press.
Foucault, Michel
1979 The History of Sexuality: Volume 1. Introduction. London: Allen Lane.
Fox, Jonathan, and Shmuel Sandler
2006 Bringing religion into international relations. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Franck, Thomas M.
1990 The power of legitimacy among nations. New York: Oxford University Press.
Fukuyama, Francis
2011 The origins of political order: from prehuman times to the French Revolution. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Gramsci, Antonio
1971 Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci. Pp. xcvi, 483 p. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
—
2000 The Gramsci reader: selected writings, 1916-1935. New York: New York University Press.

Gualini, Enrico
2004 Integration, Diversity, Plurality: Territorial Governance and the Reconstruction of Legitimacy in a European 'Postnational' State. Geopolitics 9(3):542-563.
Habermas, Jürgen
1976 Legitimation crisis. London: Heinemann.
Hansen, Thomas Blom, and Finn Stepputat
2005 Sovereign bodies: citizens, migrants, and states in the postcolonial world. Pp. vi, 366 p. Princeton, N.J. ;Oxford: Princeton University Press.
Horowitz, Leah S.
2009 Environmental violence and crises of legitimacy in New Caledonia. Political Geography 28(4):248-258.
Ivison, Duncan, Paul Patton, and Will Sanders, eds.
2000 Political theory and the rights of indigenous peoples. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Jabareen, Yosef
2015 The emerging Islamic State: Terror, territoriality, and the agenda of social transformation. Geoforum 58:51-55.
Jeffrey, Alex
2013 The improvised state: sovereignty, performance and agency in Dayton Bosnia. Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons.
Kalmo, Hent, and Quentin Skinner
2010 Sovereignty in fragments : the past, present and future of a contested concept. Pp. ix, 269 p. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kingston, Paul, and Ian S Spears, eds.
2004 States-within-states: incipient political entities in the post-Cold War era. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Krasner, Stephen D.
1999 Sovereignty: organized hypocrisy. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Lemay-Hébert, Nicolas
2009 Statebuilding without Nation-building? Legitimacy, State Failure and the Limits of the Institutionalist Approach. Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding 3(1):21-45.
Lipset, Seymour Martin
1963 Political man. London: Mercury Books.
—
1984 Social conflict, legitimacy, and democracy. *In* Legitimacy and the State. W. Connolly, ed. Pp. 88-103. New York: New York University Press.
McConnell, Fiona
2009a De facto, displaced, tacit: The sovereign articulations of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Political Geography 28(6):343-352.
—
2009b Governments-in-Exile: Statehood, Statelessness and the Reconfiguration of Territory and Sovereignty. Geography Compass 3(5):1902-1919.
—
forthcoming Rehearsing the State: The Governance Practices of the Exile Tibetan Government. Oxford: John Wiley.
Mitchell, Timothy

1991 The limits of the state - beyond statist approaches and their critics. American political science review 85(1):77-96.

Montevideo Convention

1933 Convention on the Rights and Duties of States.

Morrissey, John

2011 Liberal lawfare and biopolitics: US juridical warfare in the war on terror. Geopolitics 16:280-305.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael

2002 Faces of the state: secularism and public life in Turkey. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael.

2012 The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Postwar Polity. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

O'Lear, Shannon

2007 Azerbaijan’s resource wealth: political legitimacy and public opinion. The Geographical Journal 173(3):207–223.

Ong, Aihwa

2006 Neoliberalism as exception: mutations in citizenship and sovereignty. Pp. 292 p. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press.

Painter, Joe

2003 State-society. *In* Spaces of geographical throught. Deconstructing human geographies' binaries. P.J. Cloke and R. Johnston, eds. Pp. 42-60. London: Sage.

—

2006 Prosaic geographies of stateness. Political Geography 25(7):752-774.

Pegg, Scott

1998 International society and the de facto state. Aldershot, England ;Brookfield, VT: Ashgate.

Peteet, Julie Marie

2005 Landscape of hope and despair: Palestinian refugee camps. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Philpott, Daniel

2001 Usupring the sovereignty of sovereignty. World Politics 53:297-324.

Pierson, Christopher

1996 The modern state. London ;New York: Routledge.

Purcell, Mark, and Joseph Nevins

2005 Pushing the boundary: state restructuring, state theory, and the case of U.S.-Mexico border enforcement in the 1990s. Political Geography 24:211-235.

Rose, Nikolas, and Peter Miller

1992 Political power beyond the state: problematics of government. The British Journal of Sociology 43(2):173-205.

Sassen, Saskia

1996 Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization. New York: Columbia University Press.

Scott, James

1998 Seeing like a State. How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Shain, Yossi

1989 The frontier of loyalty: political exiles in the age of the nation-state. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press.

Sidaway, James D

2002 Imagined regional communities: integration and sovereignty in the global south. London: Routledge.

Talmon, Stefan

1998 Recognition of governments in international law : with particular reference to governments in exile. Oxford :Oxford ;New York: Clarendon Press ;Oxford University Press.

Tilly, Charles

1992 Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990-1992. Oxford: Blackwell.

Weber, Cynthia

1995 Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the state and symbolic exchange. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weber, Max

1958 Politics as vocation. *In* Max Weber: essays in sociology. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. Pp. 77-128. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, Alice

2010 Democratising elections without parties: reflections on the case of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. The Journal of North African Studies 15(4):423-438.

—

2015 Refracting custom in Western Sahara's quest for statehood. Political and Legal Anthropology Review 38(1):72-90.

—

under review Remaking sovereignty: state power, revolution and exile in a Saharan liberation movement. Monograph under contract with Pennsylvania University Press.