**EDITORIAL**

**10th anniversary of *Territory, Politics, Governance*:Achievements and Prospects**

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Ten years ago, the founding editor in chief of *Territory, Politics, Governance*, Professor John Agnew, published an editorial the inaugural issue of this journal. Launched by the Regional Studies Association, and enabled and supported by fellow editors and publishing team, the vision of the journal was set out clearly and concisely:

The intersection between the three words in the journal’s name defines the central

purpose of the journal: to publish and encourage research on territorial politics, spaces of governance, and the political organization of space (Agnew 2013: 1).

What followed was an overview of the scholarly landscape outlining areas of established and emerging interest across the social sciences. It built on Agnew’s scholarly portfolio, which has been dedicated to dismantling the unstated geographical assumptions underpinning strands of International Relations, political-economy, globalization, and classical geopolitics (for example, Agnew 1994, 2019). Like other critical human geographers such as Doreen Massey, Agnew argued that territory is poorly understood if thought of as an absolute container-like structure with a sharply defined sense of the domestic and the external. While such a worldview may be de rigueur to populists and nationalists the world over, contemporary crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency puncture such ‘conventional nostrums’ that Agnew’s editorial referred to (Agnew 2013: 1). Much of the work the journal has done in its first decade has been to inculcate and support a richer spatial vocabulary and conceptualization of territory.

Read in the year the journal celebrates its 10th anniversary, Agnew’s editorial reveals a world that seems radically different to the one we find ourselves in now (as noted in Agnew 2021). There is little to no reference to the climate emergency nor infectious disease. Much of the focus is on how this intersectional focus on territory, politics and governance allows scholars to excavate, recover and scrutinise a world, which is but should not be defined by the nation-state as the exclusive unit of politics and governance. We have moved beyond the ‘territorial trap’ as Agnew (1994) previously put it. This ethos continued through the journal’s first volume with two issues debating the historical and contemporary significance of territory alongside forensic interrogations of regional and national governance in Europe, Russia, and Asia. While Agnew’s editorial did not explicitly mention non-western and indigenous epistemologies and ontologies pertaining to the remit of the journal, the second editorial by Professor Ananya Roy made the compelling claim that the journal had to engage with more than ‘one place on the map’ (Roy 2013: 113). The subsequent volumes and issues of the journal have borne out the fundamental point that there is an absolute necessity to attract, support and publish work that challenges and de-normalises Euro-Western norms and experiences of territory, politics, and governance. We would expect, furthermore, a new generation of scholarship to be more prominently represented in the journal that explicitly decolonizes those norms and experiences as opposed to important work that has considered decolonization alongside the politics of sovereignty and recognition (for example, Griffiths 2017).

As the journal enters its second decade, the journal now publishes six issues per year (as opposed to the inaugural two) and attracts increasingly interdisciplinary submissions from around the world. Armed with our expanded editorial team and new editorial board members, we are excited about developing the journal’s agenda. We welcome to the team our new digital media editor, Dr Azadeh Akbar from the University of Munster, and early career editor Dr Carlo Inverardi-Ferri from Queen Mary University of London. Changes is also being drive by social and technical changes that have affected the operating environment of learned societies and journals. Agnew’s original editorial devotes relatively little attention to digital media environments and now it would be hard to imagine not reflecting on the work that the digital does in shaping the intersection of territory, politics, and governance. One only has to think of the spectacular rise in usage of social media in cultural and political life, the unsettling role of ‘fake news’ in manipulating political cultures, and the way big data has revolutionised practices of territorial control (the smart border for example) and digital surveillance. Since the pandemic unleashed a new world of digital working, we have embraced the opportunity to organise online editorial meetings and unveiled a series of virtual seminars with leading scholars such as Julian Agyeman and Simon Dalby. In 2022, Franck Bille and Caroline Humphrey, authors of *On the Edge*, will deliver the virtual annual lecture, reflecting on the lived experiences of the vast Chinese-Russian borderlands (Bille and Humphrey 2021), and the journal will also host feminist climate change scholar Farhana Sultana in conversation.

We outline below some thoughts about where our journal’s agenda is likely to take us. It reflects on four key themes for the future of the journal: climate emergency, migration state, digitalization and conceptualization. These are by no means exhaustive. Mindful of the perils of futurology, we offer these thoughts and reflections as contributing to a shared conversation. Just as we when we collaborated on a COVID-19 editorial in 2020, the spirit and sense of purpose that underpins our work on the journal will continue to be collegial and curious as to where we will travel together, intellectually speaking (Dodds et al 2020).

**The climate emergency**

The COP26 meeting in Glasgow, 31 October and 12th November 2021, provided plenty of opportunity to reflect on the intersection between territory, politics, and governance. The host city brought with it potential for the Scottish and UK governments to compete with one another in terms of leadership and public engagement. The conference site was found to be wanting by many delegates as localised security checks exposed delegates to lengthy waits, while others complained that the site itself was exclusionary to those who have more complex accessibility needs . As previous studies have discovered, the organization and choreography of summits (‘summitry theatre’) always reveal power-knowledge dynamics that mean that some voices and perspectives appear to enjoy greater prominence than others (for example, Death 2011). By the close of the conference, much of the attention had shifted back to the inter-state bargaining of powerful states and their national energy and security agendas.

The UNFCCC recorded the registration of 39,509 participants, well above those recorded at COP21 in Paris, which numbered just over 30,000 participants (McSweeney, 2021). The media attention to COP26 has been unprecedented. How can we explain this level of engagement? Paris was a landmark moment with the adoption of the Paris Agreement, which is now the legally binding international agreement in climate change. Many people expected the Paris conference to deliver a big outcome. In contrast, Glasgow was scheduled to facilitate the completion of the Paris Rulebook, the set of guidelines to execute the Agreement. The level of attention at Glasgow is motivated by something other than an expectation of a history-making event. The engagement has not deepened – i.e., getting those working on climate change politics and science more interested in the event – but has widened, attracting a wider range of people to the global stage set in Glasgow. For example, while the number of delegates in attendance is like those in Paris, NGO observers and media representatives almost doubled. COP26 may therefore represent the crystallization of the tide of public opinion into a new stage for international climate policy. The Working Group I report for the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states climate change as a fact and tracks the tangible impacts that climate change is having on so many lives and ecosystems around the world (IPCC, 2021). The report reflects the enormous change in attitudes towards climate change since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, demonstrated by the growing interest in climate change in contemporary cultural production, the evolution of attitudes towards climate denialists (who have become outsiders in climate change debates), and the enormous interest garnered around events such as COP26 in Glasgow. Polls in different countries show widespread concern about the climate emergency.[[1]](#footnote-1)

On this occasion, social movements and civil society have shaped the news narrative, and major outrages followed, including the exclusion of many people from the ‘Blue Pavilion,’ the main stage of COP26 where negotiations took place. The politics of climate change in Glasgow were also conducted in the streets of the city. The new politics of climate change is opening new spaces of involvement where climate change is repurposed as an issue that can be discussed at scales other than the nation-state (Davies et al., 2021). Exhibitions, impromptu cultural events, and alternative technologies were all showcased in Glasgow, far away from the Blue and Green Pavilions where the official conference was conducted (and where corporate discourses of climate action dominated the exhibition spaces). For example, the City of Glasgow organized the Girls@COP26 event at Glasgow Caledonian University, bringing together 2500 secondary school pupils over the two weeks of COP26 to discuss what climate change meant for them. Here, participants discussed anything from how the climate crisis affected them to what kind of individual and collective responses were possible. Many of these dialogues mention the need to keep global average temperature changes under 1.5 degrees, making it clear how recent events have brought this somewhat technical concern to the public imagination – first through the IPCC reports, then through the climate emergency declarations. Current collective action strategies may signal a shift in social movements for climate change. Expanding the basis of climate activism entails creating new strategies of change and action that recognize a diversity of positions. The diversity in social movements for climate change is more an aspiration than reality but there is a shift towards finding the cracks in the system that enable these social movements to enact a broader transformation of cultural attitudes towards what kind of change is needed. Activists in the streets of Glasgow appear to claim spaces for political action that, for now, demonstrate the collective anger against what is perceived as a lack of commitment by the main parties (national governments). Is claiming these spaces of political action a strategy to deliver place-based action and facilitate social innovation? Is it a means to call for accountability and bring climate change to the forefront of public debates? Or is it a distraction from the main business of diplomatic and legal negotiations? Whatever its role, it has demonstrated a decisive shift in the public attitudes towards climate change.

Climate change politics have a profound territorial dimension, whether this relates to resource extraction, the environment, settlement patterns or the spatial distribution of climate risk (see Latour, 2021). Coal received much attention in COP26 with increasing incomprehension about recycled arguments that give coal a lifeline. Lamenting the lack of progress in achieving the Paris Objectives, UN Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted the phasing out of coal as one of the conference's priorities. Having the UK at the presidency of COP26 meant that it could not have been complete without a significant amount of sloganeering – in this case, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s oft-repeated “coal, cars, cash and trees.” Unexpectedly, the recommendation of phasing out coal became a last-minute issue of contentious debate, despite the impetus that several, overlapping statements gave to the slogan of ‘making coal history’.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The final amendment called upon parties,

to escalate the development, deployment, and dissemination of technologies and adoption of policies to transition towards low-emissions energy systems including by rapidly scaling up development of clean power generation and energy efficiency measures including escalating efforts to phase down unabated coal power and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies including providing support to the poorest and most vulnerable in line with national circumstances and recognizing the need for support to a just transition.[[3]](#footnote-3)

While India and others were blamed for the shift from “phasing out” to “phasing down” coal, it is difficult to imagine a phasing out of coal when the share of coal in the global energy mix has been as high as 36.7% in 2019.[[4]](#footnote-4) However, this struggle also included other countries such as the US, China, and South Africa that were keen to qualify undesirable coal power as ‘unabated’ and undesirable fossil fuel subsidies as ‘inefficient,’ as if carbon capture and storage technologies were unproblematic and efficient fossil fuel subsidies achievable. Without a date, the phasing out of coal recommendation does not guarantee action. Most observers still took the first mention of coal in a COP resolution as a win. A COP declaration is not a legal guarantee to move away from coal. Still, it is increasingly clear that a transition away from coal is underway with the end of international finance for coal, large commitments not to build new coal-fired plants and the increasing pressure on ‘laggards’ who depend on what now looks like obsolete technology. While the capacity to respond to climate change is intimately linked to the extent to which coal can be left in thecold , it is still closely linked to the aspirations of many countries and to complex justice issues, whether they are played out on the global stage (coal-dependent countries) or at smaller scales (workers dependent on coal).

The impacts of climate change are already noticeable, and the theme of survival is now central to climate politics. Against the promises for collective survival that COP26 presupposes, the realities of climate change mean that some populations stand a better chance than others in what some climate scientists, reading Achille Mbembe, have called climate necro-politics (Schipper et al., 2021). COP26 noted “the gap in relation to the fulfilment of the goal of developed country parties to mobilize jointly USD 100 billion per year by 2020.”[[5]](#footnote-5) A video of the Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, denouncing mitigation and adaptation finance gaps as immoral and unjust went viral. The gap is particularly acute for adaptation, and countries agreed at Glasgow to redouble efforts. However, Glasgow also witnessed some adaptation ‘success.’ For example, the steps to achieve the global goal on adaptation attempt to deal with an important challenge in making adaptation progress calculable. Mitigation goals have long been tied to clear metrics that reduce actions to carbon emissions. Parallel metrics for adaptation do not exist. The need to measure progress is closely tied to climate politics and their presentation on the global stage. COP26 adopted the ‘Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work program on the global goal on adaptation’, which intends to develop guidance to measure adaptation, that is, to make it calculable. However, the work program calls for “a more holistic picture of adaptation progress and help to balance the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches,” laying down the limits of what is calculable.[[6]](#footnote-6) Problem framing and definition have long been a concern for those seeking to facilitate global governance of adaptation (Persson, 2019).

Every deliberate attempt to build and justify rationalities for adaptation governance encounters ontological difficulties despite the wide range of attempts to develop suitable metrics (Berrang-Ford et al., 2019) and mainstream adaptation beyond its local confines into international organizations (Dellmuth & Gustafsson, 2021).Yet, parties ended up delaying a much-needed debate on loss and damage; that is, on the need to facilitate reparations for the unavoidable impacts of climate change in some of the most vulnerable countries of the world. As Michael Jacobs, a seasoned COP commentator, explained via Twitter, countries in the Global South could not hide their anger as their request for a financial facility was met with a promise for continuing dialogue.[[7]](#footnote-7) Rethinking loss and damage requires, above all, careful consideration of the political, legal, and territorial aspects of such mechanisms.

Climate emergency is a subset of a much broader planetary emergency, which focuses on three gigantic systems operating at the planetary scale: the climate system, the ozone layer, and the ocean. Planetary emergency encompasses rapid change of earth’s life support system and the need to take swift decisions and actions to positively influence Earth’s life support systems for millennia to come. The debates about Earth as a common territory for all living things revolve around planetary boundaries as safety barriers that protect us from breaking down Earth’s life support systems. These boundaries ‘define scientifically, a safe operating space on Earth for us humans to have a good chance of a thriving future’ (Rockström and Gaffney, 2021: 81). Here, the term boundary takes a different meaning from those often used in social science in the context of identity and territorial demarcation, for example. The land planetary boundary is defined as ‘the percentage of forested land compared with original forest cover’ (Rockström and Gaffney, 2021: 82). It is worth noting that planetary boundaries are not only critical for Earth’s stable state, but they are used for mapping how Earth as a space should be governed and utilized to avoid breaking our life support systems. One radical proposal for achieving this goal is to put aside half the earth for biodiversity protection (Wilson, 2016; Half Earth, 2021). The proposal supports similar initiatives for the protection of biodiversity that require the state to implement global conservation projects that often pit citizens against their governments. This has resulted in a bifurcated state in the so-called ‘Global South’.

The Half Earth proposal raises important questions about where the half would come from, and what would happen to human populations (the other half) in the affected regions. There are concerns that the Global South will bear much of the human cost for this proposal, where agricultural land would be turned into conservation areas, and people would lose ownership and control over the natural resources on which they depend (Büscher et al., 2017). The three main remaining rainforests of Amazonia, Indonesia and the Congo have long been the target for global conservation. The Half Earth proposal has the potential to entrench the global division of the human population and its implementation is most likely to unleash a new wave of green violence that has characterized biodiversity protection in most countries of the Global South. Such violence is made possible by creating protected areas as spaces of exception, in which human rights are suspended (temporarily at least). We anticipate that themes emerging from the planetary emergency will continue to enhance debates such as the green state, resource governance, state-citizenship relations in *Territory, Politics, Governance* (Luger 2020).

**The “migration state”**

The second theme we expect further engagement and reflection with is the figure of the migrant and what we would term the *migration state*. In 2021, it was estimated that there were around 280 million migrants globally, approximately 3-4% of the world’s population (UN 2021). The drivers of migration are complex and include conflict, civil wars, climate change, persecution, and poverty. Indeed, we would argue that the spatiality and territoriality of the migration state have been central concerns of *Territory, Politics, Governance*. Varying geographies to the governance of migration is evidenced by the placement of Christopher Strunk and Helga Leitner’s article in the inaugural issue of the journal. Their article, “Resisting federal-local immigration enforcement partnerships: Redefining ‘Secure Communities’ and public safety” (2013: 66), discusses both the way in which the federal government of the United States is devolving the spaces of border enforcement to the interior of the United States – with immigration policing powers increasingly placed in the hands of states, cities, counties, police, and sheriffs – as well as the “contestations that challenge and go beyond repressive state power” with a fine-grained recounting and analysis of the coalitions that formed in the Washington DC area to push back against state power. With its important theoretical and richly detailed empirical contributions, their fine article exemplifies and portends the migration scholarship published in the journal’s first decade.

Echoing this inaugural offering, the migration scholarship published in the journal has contributed significantly to developing a “richer spatial vocabulary of [migration] politics and governance” (Agnew, 2011). This scholarship falls directly in the camp which sees the state not as diminished by globalization but as evolving and shifting as a result of neoliberal economic processes. This is readily exemplified by explorations of the *migration* *state* (Hollifield, 2004), whose sovereignty – challenged by liberalizing cross-border economic flows – is *enacted* via (restrictive) migration management and enforcement to staunch the flow of people. A recent article in this journal by Harald Bauder (2020: 675) offers a contemporary meditation on this paradox, framed within an Agambian theoretical tradition and arguing that “control over migration has always been important to enact [the United States’] settler society as a sovereign state”.

Reflecting Agnew’s inaugural call for richer understandings of territoriality and spatial politics of the state, then, one could do no better than look at the shifting territorialities of state power over migration. Trump’s “big, beautiful border wall” reflected a popular, nationalist, and outdated understanding of border enforcement: that immigration enforcement is still mostly contiguous with the territorial borders of the nation-state (Bauer 2020). This is still undoubtedly true in some cases, as highlighted by Madsen in his 2013 contribution to the journal, “The alignment of local borders”. However, as scholarship in this journal demonstrates, state sovereignty is increasingly enacted deep within and far beyond the territorial borders of the nation-state, as the nation-state’s “border” is increasingly replaced by globalizing “bordering practices”, some of which will involve physical enforcement of borders and some of which are informed by digital surveillance. For example, Johnson and Jones (2018) explore the biopolitics and geopolitics of border enforcement in Melilla, a territorial outpost of Spain on the North African coast. Three special issues of the journal have further expanded understandings of the internalization of migration enforcement (‘Mayors, Migration, and Multi-Level Political Dynamics’ – see Bazurli et al., in press), the extra-territorialization of the state’s bordering practices (‘Polymorphic Borders’ – see Burridge et al., 2017), and how states of the Global South are increasingly participating and made complicit in the governance of migration by states of the ‘Global North’ (‘– see for instance Natter2021 ).

**Digitalization**

Our third theme is the digital and digitalization in all its diversity. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to take its toll across the world, resulting not only in significant human casualties but also severely disrupting the ‘normal’ functioning of economic trade and exchanges. In responding to the challenges brought about by the pandemic, many governments around the world have turned to digital tools and technologies to trace, monitor, and contain the spread of the coronavirus. There is a simultaneous emphasis in various national contexts on the importance for economies to ‘go digital’, so that businesses and global trade can carry on with their operations in the context of mandated shutdowns and restricted activity. In this respect the pandemic has arguably accelerated the emergence of a globalizing platform economy or even “platform capitalism” (Srnicek, 2017), while simultaneously exposing the territorial and political tensions which lie at the heart of this development.

Even before the pandemic, the rapid growth of digital platforms had transformed the retail (Amazon), transportation (Uber) and accommodation (Airbnb) sectors, among many others. This extended to delivery platforms in particular—including DoorDash and Uber Eats—which experienced rapid growth through 2020 as urban residents shifted their consumption habits into their homes. Juxtaposed with the en-masse shift to working from home among the professional and middle classes, the result has been two dramatically different impacts of technology on the pandemic workforce. Privileged workers collectively used Zoom and other platforms to avoid being exposed to Covid in the workplace, while precarious “just-in-place” (Wells et al., 2021) Uber drivers and Amazon delivery workers had to individually navigate new landscapes of risk and uncertainty (Mojumder et al., 2021). Somewhere in between a whole army of ‘frontline workers’ were moving back and forth, providing essential services including health, social care, and food retail.

The pandemic has thus sharpened key political questions involving the platform economy, while the territorial governance of platform firms seems likely to be increasingly fraught. Regulators across a range of spatial scales—from the European Union (Busch et al. 2016) down to municipal governments (Geobey, 2017)—have struggled to develop and enforce laws which are able to effectively hold digital platforms accountable for the activities they enable. The arrival of cryptocurrencies and other blockchain-based transactions will only increase the porousness of national boundaries in the face of digitally mediated economic flows (Allen, 2017).

The growth of the platform economy—and digitalization more broadly—has accentuated the issue of the ‘digital divide’, whereby certain (Global South) countries, territories and peoples are still unable to gain access to even the most basic of digital services. This has led to UN Secretary-General António Guterres (2020) to proclaim that “the digital divide is now a matter of life and death”, with “global vision and leadership [urgently needed] for our digitally interconnected world.” [[8]](#footnote-8)

The digital is also caught up in global geopolitical calculations.Interestingly, digital vision and leadership are exactly what China is proposing to offer through its ‘Digital Silk Road’ (DSR) (数据丝绸之路) program. China has been keen to present itself as a global power that can help countries, particularly in the Global South, fulfil their unmet needs of digital connectivity (Arcesati, 2020). Since its inception, the DSR initiative has captured widespread attention, being framed as a “game changer” given its widespread implications and impacts (not least those associated with territory, politics and governance) (Chan, 2019; see also Blanchette and Hillman, 2020). Indeed, the potential of the DSR has been acknowledged by the Chinese state, with the internet (网络), deep oceans (深海) and outer space (外太空) being characterised as “new territories” (新疆域 ) for critical interventions (Yang, 2017). This led to the Chinese government and firms developing a multi-pronged digital strategy from constructing fibre-optic cables to being involved in cloud computing and smart city projects primarily in the Global South. DSR partners have also been granted access to the Chinese Beidou satellite system to elevate their global monitoring and positioning capabilities. Although territory has increasingly been conceptualized in vertical and volumetric terms (Elden, 2013), the DSR underscores the ways in which digital infrastructures (like satellites and underwater sea cables) are complicit and bounded up with (volumetric) territorial struggles and controls. Yet they simultaneously produce extra-territorial effects in enabling the forging of digital diplomacy and cooperation, and the shaping of cross-border digital access.

Mobilising the language of ‘territory’ to describe DSR interventions raises broader questions about the ‘who’ and ‘how’ of governance related to these ‘new’ sites and developments. Indeed, through the DSR, it is claimed that China is exhibiting the characteristic of a ‘norm entrepreneur’ in the digital arena whereby it aspires to engage in standard-setting practices to create the parameters of international digital governance (Woon, 2021). Indeed, Beijing has announced the ‘China Standards 2035’, which is essentially a 15-year blueprint that aspires to set global standards for the next generation of technologies, including 5G and artificial intelligence (Xinhua, 2018). Standard-setting can be wielded as a geopolitical tool or what Bishop (2015) terms “standard power”, with ‘buy-ins’ or compliance to prescribed (digital) regulations/guidelines almost serving as a prerequisite for joining the DSR. In responding to wider anxieties about China’s growing digital influence, Chinese authorities uphold that its ‘China Standards 2035’ vision is a benign framework that seeks to redress the problematic aspects of ‘Western’ digital hegemony. More specifically, China has sought to counterpose the ‘win-win’ and mutually beneficial nature of the DSR to a ‘Western’ geopolitical order that is zero-sum and hierarchical in nature. In this sense, (geo)politics is very much part of this Chinese ambition to create a new digital global order. Crucially, there is no lack of exhortations from US officials and think-tanks for America to respond to this Chinese challenge (see for e.g., Hillman and Sacks, 2020). During the Trump Administration, for example, the use of telecommunications equipment from the Chinese firm, Huawei, was banned due to ‘security concerns’ – and other countries were encouraged to follow suit. Commentators were quick to announce the coming of a US-China “Digital Cold War” (Champion, 2019). Former US Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson goes so far as to predict a new “Economic Iron Curtain,” while political scientist Ian Bremmer pictures a world where countries must choose between technological ecospheres (ibid.). Such rhetoric inevitably correlates digital sovereignty with polarizing and antagonistic geopolitical relations whereby hard-core activists in Beijing and Washington are mobilized to lead a ‘tug of war’ between two fundamentally different digital outlooks.

While climate change, migration, Covid-19, digitalization, and other real-world transformations present new challenges to our understanding of “territorial politics, spaces of governance and the political organization of space” - the main objective of this journal according to its first editor (Agnew, 2013: 1), ongoing academic debates also demand further elaborations of the key concepts of territory, politics, and governance.

**Conceptualization**

Our fourth theme is the conceptual vocabulary we bring to bear in responding to the challenges and opportunities identified by John Agnew. Spatial turns in the fields of (political) anthropology, (political) economy, (political) sociology and (political) history have boosted the interdisciplinary character of the journal. Material turns in (political and legal) geography and urban and regional planning have contributed also to a much wider scope, as did feminist and decolonial research agendas.

The ‘turn’ metaphor might however be limited because it suggests a paradigm shift while the academic challenge is to develop better conceptual tools to grasp the plurality of coexisting dynamics. –. This begs for concepts that investigate pluralism as well as stable and less stable, productive and less productive, configurations of different territorialities, powers, and authorities.

The revival of political geographies since the 1980s brought about the problematization of commonsensical notions of territory, politics, and governance (or administration) and their taken-for-granted characteristics. In the decade preceding the creation of this journal academics felt an urgency to nuance simplistic accounts of globalization as the end of the modern territorial (i.e. a ‘borderless world’ and the ‘end of territory’), the end of history (with the end of the Cold War) and therefore the end of politics – and of public-led governance of world society. They demonstrated how deterritorialization processes (such as globalization and the delocalization of industrial activities in global production networks) went hand in hand with reterritorialization processes. They showed how older and newer themes such as mobility, food, water, energy, climate change, digitalization, and financialization were imminently political, covering a much broader scope of positions than the traditional left/right electoral divides, ranging from commodification to non-anthropocentric understandings of humankind in its environment). They also addressed the expanding governance of issues linked to transnational migration, climate change, and the internet – highlighting both the diversity of actors involved and the multiple, intertwined scales of representation and intervention.

More recently, territory, politics and governance seem to have regained some political appeal but unfortunately as simplistic devices to mobilize nostalgic sentiments among electors, without any deeper reflection about how such devices and framings draw, and capitalize, on long-standing racist and xenophobic experiences and legacies (Dodds 2021, Jones, 2021). The political appeal of re-bordering narratives including the hardening of state borders (through the portrayal of the deployment of simplistic border walls) and their re-politization through populism typically reclaims exclusive understanding of what the people are and what they want – negating the prevalence of differences and the importance of politics as a mechanism to conciliate diverse interests. Likewise, governance has been eroded in favour of the coproduction of the executive of states and large corporations, such as the Big Tech, Big Pharma or Big Four accounting firms. This in turn obscures the role of other governments -global and macroregional intergovernmental organizations; subnational, agglomerated and municipal – and other economic and civic actors.

In such a context it is particularly important to consolidate conceptual tools (or forge new ones) to grasp the plurality of territorial political and governance mechanisms at work. This journal has published several noteworthy attempts such as the special issues on polymorphic political geographies (see Jones, 2016) and polymorphic borders (see Burridge et al., 2017). More specifically, the territories (T), places (P), scales (S), and networks (N) (or TPSN) scheme proposed by Jessop et al. (2008) was successfully elaborated in an article on the multi-spatial meta-governance of the European Union. Using TPSN as both structuring principles and fields of operation, this heuristic device enables a more detailed and nuanced mapping of the configuration of socio-spatial relations – definitively putting aside more simplistic and nostalgic rediscovery of the power of territory (Jessop, 2016).

Territory and its governance are in practice ‘plastic achievements’, an important notion which draws attention to “the tangle of socio-material agents and frictional alignments in which [they are] suspended and to recognise that they harbour *other possibilities*” (Whatmore, 2002: 87, emphasis added). Malabou’s (2008) concept of ‘plasticity’ provides an entrance to thinking further about this polymorphy and in doing so it offers a ‘more than relational’ (Allen, 2012) approach, which questions what kind of TPSN assemblages are being made and sustained. For Malabou (2008), plastic space, derived from notions of brain plasticity and other plastic materialities such as clay, captures a political geography where the space of the possible is relationally flexible but not totally arbitrary – the main possibilities are already there, constrained by contextual realities forged in and through time as “the plasticity of institutional combinations” (Dodgshon 1998: 127). This, in turn, raises important questions about the limits to seeing territory, politics and governance through always elastic deformations, twistings, and the stretching of objects and relations, which can lead to what Rosen (2006: 13) calls thrown-together “topological vagaries” (cf. Massey 2005).

This journal will continue to support emerging fields of enquiry such as geographical political economy which speak explicitly to the relationship between geography, public policy, the state, and space as well as the historical specificities, trends, and countertrends of state intervention within capitalism. As one of the editors of the journal has noted, all of this also needs to take into account dynamics involving welfare and social policy, given the wage-relation and value-relation aspects of capitalism within which state intervention occurs (Jones, 2019). Rhodes (2007: 1254) reminds us that “patterns of rule arise as the contingent products of diverse actions and political struggles informed by the beliefs of agents as they confront dilemmas that are understood differently in contending traditions”. Heeding this call for causal explanations of state intervention, where the uncovering of apparent purpose matters, two crucial elements of statehood are worthy of further explanation in this journal. The first is the notion of discursive geographies**.** This encourages us to think of the state as not ‘always-already there’: the relationship between states, ideology, and discourse matters in and through the production, dissemination and consumption of ideas and concepts to understand the whereabouts of state intervention and public policy. Our political geographies are continually being built by the state and cadres of ‘experts’ strategically assembled and proposed as the appropriate caretakers, teachers, and practitioners of knowledge. As knowledge is transferred though “from one scale to another, the particular social, political, and economic context within which it was produced is stripped away, allowing the presentation of abstract programmatic statements that are valorised as universally applicable” (Dixon and Hapke 2003: 143). Second, the geography of discourse itself matters, in the way objects of governance are constituted in relation to each other. The policy framing does not stand independently from the ideas and beliefs of politicians and policymakers but must be always contextualised in relation to concepts and ideas that are unstated. Sum and Jessop (2013) deploy the notions of ‘semiosis’ and ‘construal’ to combine these twin insights. Semiosis refers to sense-making and meaning-making, whereby policy-makers can give appreciation and meaning to their actions world, which is in turn predicted on ‘construal’—how a particular policy problem is perceived, and the solution constructed in response to this. Put simply, ‘the definition and construction of a “problem” *contains within it* the “solution” to that problem’ (Atkinson 2000: 211, emphasis added).

Finally, and briefly, less present so far in the journal are attempts to analyze legal pluralism as the outcome of politics bringing together very different systems of values and norms. Legal pluralism is still often associated with family laws in multicultural or multiethnic societies (where different rules apply to different groups of citizens depending on their ethnicity or religion, bringing about a whole set of tensions regarding contradictory rights and even more regarding the assignation of individuals to groups). For this journal, legal pluralism is particularly interesting when it reveals different values and norms regarding territory, the environment, natural resources, and Earth in general. For example, Robertson et al (2020) discuss piquhiit (‘Inuit rules’) in Uqsuqtuuq (Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, Canada), as part of everyday and informal norm- and territory-making, showing how shared norms concerning the treatment of people, the land/sea/ice and non-humans interact with Canadian and international laws. In the maritime social sciences such an approach is more common. Coastal fisheries in South Asia have been insightfully analyzed as a system of co-management bringing different legal orders together: traditional, Indian, and international (Jentoft et al 2009, Bavinck et al 2013, Bavinck 2018). Likewise legal pluralism could prove a useful conceptual lens to research the governance of other resources and territories.

**Conclusions**

As this editorial suggests, there is plenty of scope for the journal as it enters its second decade. The themes of climate emergency, migration state, digitalization and conceptualization considered above are illustrative and not exhaustive. The 2021 volume reveals well the productive intersectionality between territory, politics, and governance. The journal’s authors have provided us with conceptual and empirical insights ranging from the territorial logics of Islamic State (Kadercan 2021) to the contested political geographies of abortion in Ireland (Calkin 2021). This authorship continues to internationalise, with particularly impressive growth in China and other parts of the Global South, and a refreshed editorial board will further help the journal to expand its author, reviewer, and topical horizons. Thank you to all those who have supported the journal up to this point, and we look forward to working with you in the future to advance understandings of territory, politics, and governance.

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