J. G. Ruggie, "Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations", *International Organization*, **47, 1, winter 1993**

Ruggie begins by critiquing contemporary international relations for its inability to conceptualize a change in the nature of the system of sovereign states. Neo-realism, instrumental rationality (rat choice) and theories of regional integration are all unable to examine the EC (for instance) as a fundamentally new international entity. Realism is impoverished as "able to visualize long-term challenges to the system of states only in terms of entities that are institutionally substitutable for the state."

In turn, IR has not figured in the post-modern literature either. Modern IR finds its origins in the realism of the 18th Century, where European states defended the equilibrium amongst themselves and the idealism of the same period summed up by Kant.

Modernity in international politics has been characterized by "a historically unique configuration of territorial space." Ruggie proceeds to then examine how this peculiar arrangement came into being.

Postmodernism migrated from cultural concerns to political economy via Frederic Jameson, who saw postmodernism as a new variant of capitalism. The "modern" in the term "postmodern" has come to mean the era of western history that began with the Renaissance, which ties in with the period in which the system of states came into being.

So where did modern territoriality come from?
- Premodern systems of rule were (i) based on kinship, (ii) nomadic, or (iii) non-exclusive with regard to territory (i.e. there were acceptable overlapping claims). The moderns system of rule is characterized by the "consolidation of … authority into one public realm" where the authorities then monopolized the legitimate use of force.
- The concept of the state was neither materially determined (as Marxists would say) nor simply rational (as utilitarians would say), but required "webs of meaning and signification". The state must be "imagined before it can be conceived." Slowly the rulers of these territories began to develop a self-image based on individuality and differentiation (especially religious) from their fellows. The centralization of power was legitimated internally by provision of public order, and externally by the rise of statecraft and the falling acceptance of "primitive expansion". Reciprocal sovereignty then became the new basis of the international order. And war making became the role of states alone.
- However absolute individuation (i.e. exclusivity) of states proved impractical. The first compromise was the extra-territoriality of embassies, and then other forms of "unbundling" territory, including regimes and political communities, developed.
- States did not evolve from historical precursors. They were invented. While their origins can be traced back a long way, they were instituted relatively quickly. Furthermore, many aspects of them were not intentional, but instead the consequence of other strategies pursued at the time. Finally, many competing forms of territorial governance existed at the time (states, city states, city leagues, patchworks of principalities). The state just proved best at driving out alternatives.

So that was then. What about now?

- The modern form of territoriality is disjoint, fixed and mutually exclusive. The study of unbundling, (the way of compensating for the defects of modern territoriality), may be productive in examining the postmodern form of international politics. In the EC unbundling has gone further than anywhere. Here the single perspective (or single individual) model of the state is breaking down, as the collectivity becomes an actor in addition to its members. Looking at the global economy, it appears to exist in a "non-territorial region". In this region, conventional terms such as internal and external become less useful, but its long term importance may be in the new institutions and behaviors it induces, rather than the challenge it gives to the international system of states.
- Change could also come from a new episteme (the webs of meaning mentioned above) derived from global ecology, whose transformative potential comes from its basis in wholism rather than differentiation. This could lead to the state as custodian, where no actor tries to substitute for the state, but the state acts as the "embodiment and enforcer of community norms."
- In the field of security, multilateralism in the post-Cold-War Europe is the preferred option and "security communities" are emerging. The use of force is consequently "subject to greater collective legitimation."