

Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives
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Lecture 37
Ulrich Beck: The Nation-state and Globalization Part - II

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Ulrich Beck: The Nation-state and Globalization

The Cosmopolitan State: Redefining Power in the Global Age Author(s):
Ulrich Beck Reviewed work(s): Source: International Journal of Politics,
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Welcome back to the class. Let us continue with the same discussion on Ulrich Beck, his article, the Cosmopolitan State, Redefining Power in the Global Age. This is the second session of the same paper. So, we hope you remember the previous class where he started the argument that methodological nationalism need to be replaced with methodological cosmopolitanism, because the global scenario, global situation warrants a cosmopolitan outlook for social sciences.


So, in order to elaborate that point, he brought in a very important theme, that is the relation between power and nation-state. So, his argument is that, in a global world, in a globalized world, you require a cosmopolitan framework to make sense of the power, the relationship between power and nation-state because a nation state understood in the conventional sense is no longer viable, and it is changing significantly.

So, the first thesis as he put forward, was the emergence of this meta power, the relationship between the nation-state and the multinational corporations or that of the economy, the multinational economy, which has completely redefined the notion of power.


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Second thesis



- What does 'translegal' mean? The meta-power game derives its subjects, its dynamics of conflict, its forms of development and unpredictable consequences particularly because in this way the boundary between politics and economics is broken up, strategically negotiated, redrawn and redefined.
- A range of new actors, corporate law firms, arbitration bodies, international institutions and NGOs are contributing to the diversity of forms of regulation, to the variety of settings of rule creation and to proliferation of methods of interpretation and application of norms and standards. Law is both: privatized and transnationalized.



Okay, so let us move on to the second thesis. So, he is talking about the, what does translegal mean? Because in the sense of legality, usually we understand that a legal system is the prerogative of a particular nation state, the nation states are the ones who really formulate a law. So, this, the ability or the right to formulate new law is the purview of a nation state. But now, are we moving towards a translegal scenario, the meta power game derives its subjects, its dynamics of conflict, its form of development and unpredictable consequences, particularly because in this way, the boundary between politics and economics is broken up, strategically negotiated, redrawn and redefined.

The relationship between nation states, different nation states, and multinational companies, which start, which stays at the at the top, and the kinds of negotiations and the kind of formal and informal and or even semi formal arrangement between these two, they simply go beyond the purview of a single nation. A range of new actors, corporate law firms, arbitration bodies, international institutions, and NGOs are contributing to the diversity of forms of regulation, and to the variety of settings of rule creation, and a proliferation of methods of interpretation and application of norms and standards. Law is both privatized and transnationalized, this we also mentioned in the previous class.

There are quite a lot of arbitration bodies. There are quite a lot of legal firms that for example, there were very serious litigations between Indian state and for example, a mobile company like Vodafone. So I am sure that, I know that you, I hope that you are familiar with

that, or there were several cases between, say, vehicle car manufacturers like Toyota, or car manufacturers like Hyundai and the US government.

So how do we, how do they deal with these kinds of negotiations? So, the kind of framing of law, its interpretation and the kind of a processes of involvement, they are all beyond the purview of a nation-state, okay. So, if for example, if a particular company is unhappy with the Indian government's decision, then it is, it can give an appeal to a maybe a court in Singapore or a court in a tribunal in The Hague. So, such possibilities really redefined the whole or it puts very interesting questions about the whole idea of what does translegal means.

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- Transnational co-operations and organisations thus become private "as-if-states". They make collectively binding decisions, but at the same time they mutate into fictitious decision makers, virtual organizations.
- So we are not living at the 'end of politics', but in a time of translegal meta-politics: the neoliberal regime represents a global reform policy. It envisions a borderless world, not for labour but for capital.
- Neo-liberal futures are being contested on many grounds: distinction between mobility and migration, second the question whether the neo-liberal regime is capable of reproducing itself.
- Mobility between national states, on the other hand, is regarded as 'migration' and subjected to major restrictions. At the border posts, 'desirable flexibility' thus turns into 'undesirable migration'.



So transnational corporations and organizations thus become private as if state, okay they make collectively binding decisions, but at the same time, they mutate into fictitious decision makers, virtual organizations. So, these transnational corporations and organizations becomes a private as-if states because they are able to elaborately work in this kind of scenarios. They make collectively binding decisions, but the same time they mutate into fictitious decision makers and virtual organizations.

So, we are not leaving at the end of politics but at time of translegal, meta politics, the neoliberal regime represents a global reform policy. It envisions a borderless world, not for labor, but for capital. We know that the movement of labor is still a problem, but the movement of capital is always easy or its always welcome. So, this trans legal meta politics is

something that has emerged in a significant way, by significant, by seriously challenging the traditional understanding of the state.

Now, neoliberal futures are being contested on many grounds, distinction between mobility and migration. Second, the question whether the neo-liberal regime is capable of reproducing itself. So here, Beck is taking a bit cautious approach, unlike many of his arguments earlier, that he is wondering whether the neoliberal economy will be able to thrive. When we say that capitalism has been one of the most enduring economic systems, can we say that it will continue to thrive in the coming years?

So, basically, because there are at least two major things, when he is talking about the distinction between the mobility, between nation-states, the whole issue between mobility and migration, mobility between nation-states, on the one hand is regarded as migration, and subjected to major restrictions at the border post desirable flexibility turns into undesirable migration.

So, this whole issue of migration and mobility, because you, capitalism requires especially neo-liberal capitalism requires the movement of capital and labor, because that is what that is how this whole capitalist logic works, but borders are real and at the border, these people become a say, either they become refugees, they become illegal migrants, they become skilled laborers or semi-skilled laborers, and there are very stringent rules and regulations about that. So, Beck is very skeptical about the future of neo-liberal economy, because of one of these reasons.

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- There are well grounded arguments that the neo-liberal regime is not capable of reproducing itself.
- Major elements of instability are:
 1. financial instabilities: the series of financial crises in Asia, South America, Russia or emerging markets;
 2. unemployment, fragile employment, jobless growth, inequality, poverty and exclusion within and between countries and their nexus to conflict, security risks and withdrawal of investors;
 3. global environmental and technological risks;
 4. the downward trend of corporate taxes and the instability to finance common goods, nationally and globally;
 5. finally tensions between capitalism and political freedom, the market and democracy.



And the second one, which is even more maybe prophetic, what we are seeing today something very interesting all these five points, because we are actually seeing these points playing out in around us. So, there are well grounded arguments that the neo-liberal regime is not capable of reproducing itself, major elements of instability are one, financial instabilities, the series of financial crisis in Asia, South America, Russia or the emerging markets. There are quite a lot of economic centric arguments that this neo-liberal growth is always with this kind of spike and burst, there is always this kind of a bubbles bursting, we had one in 19 and 2008.

And so, quite a lot of such kind of bursts are, or such kind of economic recessions are an inbuilt mechanism, they are inbuilt traits of this neo-liberal quest, the neo-liberal economic policy. So, such kind of economic slowdown or economic crisis or even a recession that raises serious questions. Second, unemployment, fragile employment, jobless growth, see, look at this word became such an important word now, that we are, economy is growing, GDP is going growing, everything is growing, but we are not able to create employment.

This has been especially with the introduction of automation and artificial intelligence and a host of other things, machine learning and other stuff, this concerned about jobless growth is becoming extremely important. And please remember that Beck wrote this essay in 2005, when these concerns were not very actively proclaimed. And also causes of inequality, poverty and exclusion within and between countries and their nexus to conflict security, risk and withdrawal of investors.

So, a series of concerns from the native population about the loss of job, about other people coming and then snatching away their job, these are all becoming extremely important concerns of the contemporary times, whether it is in America or in India or in every other place, there is a tendency that people or countries are moving towards more kind of economic protectionism, economic nationalism, mainly because of this whole uncertainties and then issues that are coming from within.

Global environmental and technological risk. And we will come back to this point later. I am not going to spend time on that. What does he mean by this global environmental and technology risk. Then that downward trend of corporate taxes and the instability to finance common good, national and nationally and globally. The corporate taxes are coming down and the governments do not have sufficient resources to fund some of the most essential services, essential common goods like health or education to the ordinary people. And that becomes a major serious legitimization crisis.

Finally, tensions between capitalism and political freedom, the market and democracy. Another whole set of questions about what kind of political freedom is this neoliberalism is ensuring and can we think of political freedom, disconnected with the economic independence, a lot of other questions. So, because of all these four or five points that Beck is quite skeptical of the ability of the neo-liberal era to reproduce itself or to continue to be as robust as in the earlier case.

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Third Thesis

This reveals a central paradox of the neo-liberal model of state and politics: On the one hand, it is orientated to the ideal image of the minimalist state, whose responsibilities and autonomy are to be tailored to the enforcement of the norms of global economy. On the other hand, however, deregulating the market and privatizing public assets does not mean a weak state. What is in prospect is a stronger state, for example, in matters of surveillance and repression: chipping at habeas corpus or trial by jury, increasing prison sentences, stepping up border patrols and being prepared for terrorism as the weapon of the weak.

Globalization means reinventing borders, a tightening of border controls. Those new borders do not function like the old ones. They incorporate wholes and uncertainties because of flows of information, capital, people, risks. But because of the enforcement of new borders on a transnational level, the political power and autonomy of governments must not be curtailed in any way, rather, states must be in a position convince their societies to accept the transnational rules of power.



And the third thesis what Beck talks about, is, this reveals a central paradox of the neo-liberal model of state and politics. On the one hand, it is oriented to the ideal image of the minimalist state, whose responsibilities and autonomy are to be tailored to the enforcement of the norms of global economy. So that is what you understand it as a minimalist state, a state which has liberalized completely, a state who is ready to accept the international conventions and treaties and other thing, which is ever ready to welcome foreign investment.

On the other hand, however, deregulating the market and privatizing public assets, does not mean a weak state. What is in prospects is a stronger state, for example, in matters of surveillance and repression, chipping at habeas corpus or trial by jury, increasing prison sentences, stepping up border patrols and being prepared for terrorism as a weapon of the weak.

So, this minimalist state, minimalism, minimalist state for the external corporations or multinational corporations, does not mean the state itself is becoming weak but the state turns out to be a stronger state, a repressive states for its own internal people. It can be quite ruthless against the internal dissenters, it can be quite ruthless against the, say for example, working class who are protesting against all these things, it can be ruthless against the kind of people who create problems inside. So, the whole possibility, the whole surveillance and repression increases.

And this is an extremely important point, especially if you look at how there has been a major state violence against people who are protesting against multinational companies taking over their land, whether it is in Brazil or in India or in or any other place, there are, the indigenous people have to really face the brutality of the state in their endeavor to protect their natural resources. So, a minimalist state does not become a weak state, rather, a state becomes more and more repressive towards its own people.

And globalization means reinventing borders, a tightening of border control, those new borders do not function like the old ones, they incorporate wholes and uncertainties, because of the flow of information, capital, people, risk. But because the enforcement of the new border on a transnational level, the political power and the autonomy of government must not be curtailed in any way, rather, states must be in a position to convince their societies to accept the transnational rules of power.

Okay, so this, the very, the nation state must be able to convince its own people about the legitimacy of these transnational rules and regulations and new agreements and new conventions and other things because these border control are undergoing significant transformations.

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- In order to attain the goal of neoliberal restructuring of the world, the power of the state would have to be simultaneously minimised and maximised.



In order to attain goal of neoliberal restructuring of the world, the power of the state would have to be simultaneously minimized and maximized. That is what the point that we discuss now.

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Fourth Thesis

Political answers to the newly emergent global economic geography can be found if conceptions and paths of a despatialisation of state, politics and identity are developed and pursued. What does 'despatialisation' of state mean? Governments are essentially acting in a transnational space as soon as they negotiate binding international legal agreements, or, as for example in the European Union, join together in new transnational cooperative executives, because the responsibilities they have taken impose an obligation on all concerned. This is how transnational forms of state cooperation create spaces of "shared, interactive, cooperative sovereignty".



And the fourth point, what Beck talks about, is the political answers to the newly emergent global economic geography can be found, if consumptions and paths of a despatialisation of state, politics and identity are developed and pursued. So, he is talking about this particular term, sorry, despatialisation of state, what does despatialisation of state mean?

Governments are essentially acting in a transnational space as soon as they negotiate binding international legal agreements or as, for example in the European Union, join together in new transnational cooperative executives because the responsibilities they have taken impose an obligation on all concerned. This is how transnational forms of state cooperation create spaces for shared, interactive, cooperative sovereignty.

Okay, so a despatialisation of state, state is being less concerned about the place under its authority or a state is now allowing it, sovereignty over its own territory, over its own geography to let go to a large extent. And the best example he gives is that of the European Union, you know that around 26 or 27 countries came together with a host of new regulations about investment, about transportation, about visa regulations, about housing rights, about a host of things where people are able to move around.

So, these things come at a significant compromise of the conventional understanding of sovereignty. Okay, so that is the point that he is talking about, that Beck is talking about, globalization brings in fundamental changes in the understanding of sovereignty.

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- This strategy, however, has its price. Under the conditions of economic globalization states find themselves in a nationality trap: If they stick to the sovereignty postulate of nation-state politics, they both intensify the competition for investment between states and increase the risk of monopoly-formation on the world market, which in turn weakens the state players. If, on the other hand, they reduce inter-state competition by combining and imposing obligations on themselves, in order to strengthen their position against the global economy, they necessarily qualify their own national sovereignty.



This strategy, however, has its price. Under the conditions of economic globalization, states find themselves in a nationality trap, if they stick to the sovereignty postulates of nation state politics, they both intensify the competition for investment between states and increase the risk of monopoly formation on the world market, which in turn weaken that state players. If on the other hand, they reduce inter-state competition by combining and imposing obligations on themselves in order to strengthen their position against the global economy, they necessarily qualify their own national sovereignty.

So, if they act in self-interest, try to get maximum investment for themselves and then be so protective for themselves, what happens then both intensify the competition for investment between states and increase the risk of monopoly formation of the world market, which in turn weaken that state place. So, if you, if they work together and if they work independently, try to work out as standalone states, then that creates the possibility of monopoly and then which can be quite, which can very negatively affect the whole scenario.

On the other hand, if they reduce inter-state competition by combining and imposing obligations on themselves, something like a treaty, something like a convention, something like an agreement, in order to strengthen their position against global economy, they necessarily qualify their own national sovereignty, so that national sovereignty gets compromised in such a scenario.

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Fifth Thesis

In order to break free from the nationality trap both in thought and action, it is vital to introduce a distinction between autonomy and sovereignty. Methodological nationalism is based on the equation of sovereignty and autonomy.

From that point of view, economic dependence, cultural diversification, military, legal and technological co-operation between states automatically leads to loss of autonomy and hence loss of sovereignty. However, if sovereignty is equated with solving political problems, i.e., creating economic growth, prosperity, jobs, social security etc., then increasing transnational state cooperation, that is, the loss of autonomy results in a gain in sovereignty: The political ability of governments to exercise control increases with interstate cooperation and the subsequent rise in living standards which thus becomes possible, with their transnational legitimacy (human rights), with their technological and global economic strength.



And the fifth thesis, Beck talks about, is that in order to break free from the nationality trap, both in thought and in action, it is vital to introduce a distinction between autonomy and sovereignty, a very important point, autonomy and sovereignty. Methodological nationalism is based on the equation of sovereignty and autonomy. So, methodological nationalism or the conventional understanding of nation-state in the modern sense in the era of modernity, always equated these two things, autonomy and sovereignty as same.

Sovereignty has the complete authority over its territory and autonomy has the ability to rule by itself, its own ability to rule itself and these two things were equated in our traditional understanding, but Beck argues a very, very important point that this equation is no longer viable in a global era. Or in the era of globalization, this easy equation between sovereignty and autonomy is no longer plausible.

From the point of view, from that point of view, economic dependence, cultural diversification, military, legal and technological cooperation between states automatically leads to loss of autonomy and hence loss of sovereignty, in the conventional sense, because if you allow people to come in, and if you liberalize, if you tweak your economic laws and then regulation as per the instructions of some multinational companies and if you deactivate your military, so, what is happening is that you lose your autonomy and hence loss of sovereignty. But that is a conventional understanding.

However, if sovereignty is equated with solving political problems, sovereignty as your ability to address some of the important problems that is creating economic growth, prosperity, jobs, social security etc, then increasing transnational state cooperation, that is the loss of autonomy results in gain in sovereignty. A loss of autonomy results in gain in sovereign, you consider yourself as the most powerful and this power comes with responsibility, this power comes with the, as the sovereign authority to provide a livelihood and to lead a particular country towards prosperity.

And in today's world, that is possible only if you are able to negotiate and then cooperate with others. So, that comes at the cost of the law, at the cost of your autonomy, you cannot be autonomous all the time, you cannot take decisions by yourself, you will have to always get in touch with others, you have to compromise your position, but then if you redefine, sovereignty in that sense, even the loss of autonomy, your sovereignty could be protected.

The political ability of governments to exercise control increases with the interstate cooperation and the subsequent rise in living standards, which thus become possible with other transnational legitimacy, human rights, with their technological and global economic strength. So, this is a very interesting point that he brings in between the whole cost of sovereignty and autonomy. So, please take a note of that.

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Reduction in (national) autonomy and a growth in (national) sovereignty by no means logically exclude one another, they are in fact even capable of mutually strengthening each other. Globalization implies both an increase in the sovereignty of players (for example through their potential to act across borders and distances and thus open up new options) while at the same time leading to a loss of autonomy of entire countries.

Sharing sovereignty does not reduce sovereignty but, on the opposite, increases it. Trade-offs of pooling sovereignty include security and stability, reduce anxiety and conflict, reduce military spending and economic and technological cooperation.



Now, reduction in national autonomy, and a growth in national sovereignty, a reduction in national autonomy and a growth in national sovereignty, by no means logically exclude one

another, they are in fact, even capable of mutually strengthening each other. Globalization implies both an increase in the sovereignty of players, for example, through the potential to act across borders and distances and this open up new options, while at the same time leading to a loss of autonomy of entire countries.

Sharing sovereignty does not reduce sovereignty, but on the opposite, increases it. Tradeoff of pooling sovereignty includes security and stability, reduce anxiety and conflict, reduce military spending and economic and technological cooperation. So, again, the best example is European Union, that very bold experiment, which, so far been successful, even though you had that Brexit taking place last year, and what would be Britain's future, economic future, political future looks very, very questionable, but that whole exercise of every European Union countries, surrendering their sovereignty partially, that has led to a far better kind of scenario in that part of the world.

And please do keep in mind that these were the countries that were fighting with each other. Okay, these were the countries, those were fighting for the past so many centuries, okay, until, say the Second World War. And even after that, of course, even after that the ideological battle between the communist and capitalist country. So, if those countries who were fighting with each other in the name of religion, in the name of language, in the name of ideology, if they could come together, that is definitely possible with a compromise in the idea of sovereignty.

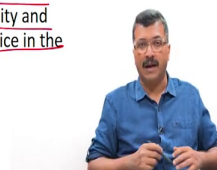
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Sixth Thesis

With that the following question arises: How can the idea of the state, the theory of the state, be opened up to the challenges of the transnationalisation of living and working conditions, the challenges of world risk society?

The same question can also be put another way: Who is going to prevent the next Holocaust? My answer is: possibly the cosmopolitan state. The latter is founded on the principle of the national indifferent of the state. The cosmopolitan state should guarantee the co-existent of national identities through the principle of constitutional tolerance. The curbing of national theology should lead to a redefinition of the scope and frame of action of the political just.

Only the post-nation, plural-nation, nation indifferent and nation-tolerant state can possibly overcome these destructive alternatives in the age of cultural globalization. So "cosmopolitan" means: acknowledging both, equality and difference. The cultural Other must be present, heard and have a voice in the community, culturally as well as politically.



And the sixth thesis is, with that, the following question arise, how can the ideas of the state, the theory of the state be opened up to the challenges of the transnationalization of living and working conditions, the challenges of world risk society? The same question can also be put in another way, who is going to prevent the next Holocaust? My answer is, possibly the cosmopolitan state.

So, he is putting forward this very interesting idea of a cosmopolitan state, a state which is less preoccupied, which is less aggressive or less rigid about its own people. We discussed about this morality of exclusion. The latter is founded on the principle of the national indifference to the state, the national indifferent of the state. The cosmopolitan state should guarantee the coexistence of national identities through the principle of constitutional tolerance. The curbing of national theology should lead to redefinition of the scope and frame of action of the political just.

See, to what extent a nation-state can be tolerant to other nationalities, other nations people coming and then articulating their own identities. It is a very, very difficult question, at what extent a state can really represent to be a cosmopolitan state. You know, not very easy question, not very easy scenario, where a nation can tolerate and accommodate articulation of other nationalities and then to create a viable space for them to deliberate, to cooperate, to have a dialogue, these are the kind of ideas that he brings in by the term cosmopolitan state, a state which is not so rigid or aggressive about its own national identity and then cultural and cultural protection, but which is more open to other ideas.

So, only the post nation, plural nation, nation indifferent and nation tolerant state can possibly overcome these distinctive alternatives in the age of cultural globalization. So, cosmopolitan means, acknowledging both equality and difference, the cultural other must be present, heard and have a voice in the community, culturally as well as politically.

And I hope you are familiar with the kind of controversies about the, the scenario through, in which many of the European countries are passing through, especially with respect to the Muslim Christian, especially in France, whether it is that Charlie Hebdo controversy, or a series of other controversies about Prophet Muhammad being depicted in provocative ways and the Muslim, the violence against those people, and the whole Muslim question that we understand in that sense.

So, to what extent European modernity, which is based on liberal ideas can accommodate different ideas is a very big question. So, the whole idea of a post nation, the plural nation, and the national indifferent and nation tolerant, these are very important, very powerful imageries, that we might be able to come up with but to what extent they are, in terms of practical practicality, they remains to be problem.

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- For me it is thus only really possible to think Europe as a new kind of transnational, cosmopolitan as-if-state structure, which draws its political strength precisely from the affirmation and taming of the European diversity of nations. Europe as a cosmopolitan state which cooperatively domesticates economic globalization as well as guaranteeing the otherness of the others ? this could certainly be or become a realistic utopia.



So, for me, it is thus only really possible to think Europe as a new kind of transnational cosmopolitan as-if state structure, which draws its political strength precisely from the affirmation and taming of the European diversity of nations. Europe as a cosmopolitan state, which cooperatively domesticates economic globalization, as well as guaranteeing the otherness of the others, this could certainly be or become a realistic utopia.

So, for Beck it is very clear that Europe, at least tentatively, represents such a cosmopolitan state, because it has demonstrated, at least for the past couple of decades, that it is possible to coexist by forgetting or by burying all the old divisions and then these many more than 20 states can come together.

And in the remaining part of the essay, he also asked the question, can it be replicated in other part? Can you have a similar scenario in South India for example, sorry, in South Asia for example? He talks about the possibilities of hybridity and other things, but you know that how it is difficult, especially with the new turn of deglobalization that we are witnessing, a kind of a national protectionism or a de-national, a kind of deglobalization process, a kind of a nationalist turn that many nations are taking place, these arguments or these points kind of remain as wishful thinking.

So, we are really yet to see what would be the future of nation-state and how they will undergo significant changes. But I hope you will agree with me that Beck's observations about nation-state, its changing power relation, the relation between autonomy and

sovereignty, they are very, very insightful. They are extremely insightful to understand the way in which countries like India or China or USA or other countries are behaving and the road ahead of them, okay. So, let us close here and we will start with Beck's theorization on risk society from the next class onwards. See you there, thank you.