

Dear Bob,

This is a very interesting essay about the how the rise of transnational corporations has changed the face of society at every level. Overall, you have done a good job of discussing the key issues surrounding how transnational corporations have overtaken the nation-state as society's basic unit. Things wander a bit, though, due mostly to the fact that the thesis is not clearly stated, and so subsequent body paragraphs do not have a clear path to follow.

Since the paper's primary problem is a lack of organization, I have proposed an outline.

Proposed Outline for Your Paper:

- I. Thesis – Transnational Corporations and their non-profit cousins, non-governmental organizations, eventually will render the nation-state irrelevant.**
- II. Background on Nation-State – List all roles of nation-state that you can show have been or will be replaced by transnational corporations. Give brief history of need.**
- III. Size and Growth of Transnational Corporations; Importance of NGOs to the future. Show that there is a trend towards bigness and cross-border business as well as an increasing power for NGOs.**
- IV. Proof that roles mentioned in II have been or will be filled in other ways.**
 - a) The fact that most countries learn English and purchase American pop culture – music, movies, Coca-Cola, McDonald's – will break down the differences between nation states by normalizing culture.**
 - b) The adoption of the Euro currency and free trade agreements show that a nation-state is no longer needed to provide common language, currency.**
 - c) Nation state no longer needed to provide protection because people will have same culture and work for same countries. Fighting a war will hurt them since it will disrupt their companies and thus their livelihood. Give examples that most recent serious wars – Cold War and Mid East Crisis were fought between culturally disparate combatants.**
 - d) Transportation – no longer a role that needs to be filled by government – toll highways, FedEx and UPS more effective than inefficient government contracts and Post Office**

- e) **Standard Setting – government not needed to impose standards. Adoption of many wireless, Internet, and technical standards are best led by industry.**
- f) **Judicial Systems – presumably this function will need to be replaced as well. Could envision a company that ensures law and order, but this is one of the reasons I think your thesis is too aggressive.**
- g) **Education – Recent proposals to give school vouchers and allow parents to educate their kids at private schools.**
- h) **Taxation – not clear to me how NGOs or corporations will replace the need for governments to levy taxes for social welfare, military protection, education, and basic maintenance. You might imagine a way out of this – corporations together form a committee to allow this -- or change your thesis to say that there will still be Governments with power but that these powers will be to ensure public safety and monitor corporations.**

V. How will these transnational corporations be policed? By NGOs. At what point will the nation-state disappear? As I mentioned, I think a wiser thesis will not claim that the nation-state will vanish but that it will become less important. This way you can identify the roles the corporation cannot replace.

VI. Conclusion

You need to establish your thesis more clearly. You make some good points and I often see what you are getting at, but without a clear thesis, your essay wanders. If you don't believe that roles like law and order, security, etc. will ever be taken over by corporation, then you must change your thesis to argue something more nuanced like "While the borders between governments may at times seem blurred by recent economic and geopolitical transformations, ultimately, only the nation-state can provide the necessary level of security to its citizenry, enforce laws facilitating economic activity, and facilitate nationalistic fervor necessary in time of crisis."

Having read your essay over a few times, the point you seem to be making is that the growing influence of transnational corporations has rendered the nation-state, as we know it today, neither viable nor necessary. You need to make that point explicitly, since that will be your thesis, in your introduction. That corporations are growing bigger and exerting more control on governments through powerful lobbies is not nearly the same as corporations filling governmental roles.

I will make more such specific comments in my notes in the text, but that's a general example. Just make sure that every essay you write has a clear thesis, a clear point you are proving, illustrating, demonstrating, etc. Make sure every paragraph after that makes

some point that contributes to the goal of the essay overall as stated in the thesis. Also, make sure that your paragraphs have a logical progression with clear transitions from one to the next. These transitions ensure that you have an essay that starts with a thesis and builds its argument step-by-step, moving in a clear direction, as opposed to one that just accumulates facts until you reach the required page length.

Good luck with the revision!

Yours truly,

WritingLabEdge Tutor

Tutor comments in Red. Tutor grammatical changes are underlined or crossed out.

Paper Topic: Nation-states and transnational corporations.

[Begin with some illustrative example of a transnational corporation taking over something that nation-state would previously have handled. Then make clear that certain developments are changing the role of the nation-state, rendering it less and less relevant.]

“Nation-states are no longer viable or necessary and will disintegrate into smaller, more culturally homogeneous units.” (Robbins p. 117) [This sounds like your thesis. You should put your thesis in your own words near the end of your introduction – you can either combine that opening anecdote if it’s short into a single introductory paragraph or you can have a two-paragraph introduction with the anecdote separate.] The three developments that hurt the life of nation-states are: trans-nationalism, an increase in the number of people living and working in countries other than the one in which they hold citizenship; the growing power and influence of transnational corporations; and the growth in the number, and possibly influence, of non-governmental organizations. Without the nation-state there is no essential element of the culture of capitalism, or no guarantee that people could own their own property or provide a means of production for themselves [This should be deleted as it has nothing to do with your argument. The corporation can only replace the nation-state if in fact there are other ways of protecting property holders.] The rising of the new age causes the nation-state to soon be replaced by new institutions, the most being the transnational corporation. [You stated this more clearly in your opening quote, but you do not want to use a quote from someone else as your thesis, so restate in your own words. Eliminate this concept of “new age” as it will not be useful to your argument. Limit yourself to discussing whether or not corporations are taking over the nation-state’s roles.]

A nation-state is an expression used by people to explain an area brought together by a common culture, or tradition, common language, or a common race. Being a product of nineteenth century Europe, the nation-state is a more recent product of the older idea of the state. [The first sentence is fine, but just say what a nation-state is, not what the ‘expression’ is.]

The state was established as a means of providing transportation, communication, judicial systems, and education. ~~As~~ Required by the capitalist form of production, the state was required to maintain all establishments ~~provided, and also~~ and keep order ~~with the people its providing for~~ among the people and protect its people from adversaries. Yet, anthropologists have been long concerned with of idea of the origin of the state. [This is good but be sure that in mentioning the roles of the nation-state that you later make clear how transnational corporations fill these roles. Because your thesis claims that transnational corporations are replacing and will replace the nation-state, you must make clear that all roles that the nation-state now has can be replaced. You could also change your thesis into a more nuanced and reasonable position suggesting that there is a role for nation-states even with transnational corporations.]

“Due to population increases, the people needed to have a more formal means of government and control and will lead to greater social stratification and inequality. Also with the population increased and food production becoming more complex, a class of specialists emerged and created a stratified society. As the irrigation systems became more complex, groups of specialists emerged to plan and direct activities, and this group developed into an administrative elite that ruled over despotic, centralized states.” (Robbins pg. 104) [Work these ideas into your own writing, citing as necessary. You don't want a whole paragraph taken directly from someone else's work.]

Another idea that could have led to the emergence of new states was war. A group would come together and develop into a central group of authority, in which this group could go and take over smaller groups that also developed into central groups of authority. In return, the smaller groups would attempt to defend themselves, in this overtaking and expanding. In the end, the group that would conquer over the other would form into a united village and a state. [This is fine so long as you later make clear that transnational corporations render or will render such war impossible or no longer a factor. To do this, you might use the idea of NGO's as the governing bodies preventing wars and imagine a situation in which people in all states work for the same corporations and have no reason to fight each other. For example, they used to say that no two countries with a McDonald's had ever fought a war against each other. Remember if your point is that the transnational corporation is taking over, your goal should be to show why the nation-state came to be in ways that are no longer relevant. For example, you can say that the nation-state allowed people to agree on common weights and measures. Then, later in the essay, you will talk about the transnational corporation and how it has either taken over these roles or rendered them unnecessary.]

“The modern state has three tasks: to secure obedience and gain a monopoly on force with legitimate violence; to exert control over economic life to ensure the orderly circulation of goods and to take for itself a share of the national income to pay for its own expenditure, luxury, administration, or wars; and to participate in spiritual or religious life and derive additional strength by using religious values or establishing a state religion.” (Robbins pg. 106) But, with the beginning of the nineteenth century, the modern state was facing new problems and challenges. Two, specifically, were the main focus of problems for the state. Due to the fall of the divine rights of kings, and state

having absolute power, the political leaders faced a crisis of “political legitimacy.” Also, with the degree of economic integration being “weak and nonexistent,” the state residents were having trouble identifying themselves as residents of that state. People spoke different languages, transacted with different types of money, and used different means of measurement.

To solve ~~this problem of economics and~~ these economic and political issues, the state had to decide to turn into a nation. Nations had to be created by the people around the world, by deciding on a common language, common currency, common culture, and a common taste. [The above two paragraphs are not necessary to your thesis. It is not clear what the difference between states and nations are. They seem to have the same role and in any case the paper should be about how corporations are replacing the nation-state.]

After about two or three hundred [years?] passed, the nation-state is suggested, as stated in the opening paragraph, [to be] “no longer viable or necessary and will disintegrate into smaller, more culturally homogenous units.” These units are broken down into three major areas of threat to the nation-state. Trans-nationalism, which is “an increase in the number of people living and working in countries other than the one in which they hold citizenship,” is the first unit that is that breaking down the nation-state.

[Now you need some transition. You have told us what the nation-state did. You should define exactly what it did more clearly so your reader would know exactly what roles the nation-state has so that he/she can determine if you successfully show how the nation-state is being replaced. You need a line at the beginning of the paragraph to show this transition.]

Trans-nationalism, people living and finding jobs in countries other than the one in which they hold citizenship, is a growing threat to the nation-state. People work outside of their own countries, but they still keep close ties within them. In ~~one~~ the case of being a father, it ~~could~~ might be cheaper to come to the U.S. and work, ~~then~~ and then send the money back to your family in Bosnia. Food, education, and lifestyle could be cheaper for a family in Bosnia, rather than a family in the United States. [This is not a valid argument. People will always want to work and live near their families. This will never be more than a special case and so should not have a role in your paper. People will likely continue to live in one region, but maybe all regions will have less conflict if all people are working for the same companies.] The difficulty of finding jobs, and low pay wages, drive people outside of their own countries, and lead them into the U.S., or other high paying countries. “Trans-nationalism requires a reconceptualization of the nation-state; whereas it was once thought of as people sharing a common territory, it now must include citizens who are physically dispersed among other states but who remain socially, politically, culturally, and sometimes economically part of the nation-state of their ancestors.” (Robbins) [Are you saying that, say, Italian immigrants to this country are transnational? They are not. Most simply became American, and they fought and died in WWII as Americans fighting Italy. Your paper should steer clear of people immigrating to improve their lives – as this is an age-old phenomenon and not recent. Your point is

that corporations do business in a number of countries and that these ties undermine the role of the nation-state.]

Yet, another unit of the nation-state, is the transnational corporation. [You are arguing that the nation-state is being replaced by transnational corporations but here you are claiming the opposite: that a corporation is just a unit of the nation-state.] The ever-growing need to integrate national economics is grass-rooted from the nation-state. [This is not clear. Must clarify.] Transnational corporations can be described as, “the growth of business and the creation of the consumer required standardized weights, measures, and currencies, common wages, and prices, and a homogenous consumer population such that a product produced in a given country would be desired by everyone in that country,” (Robbins) [It is not likely that Robbins is describing the transnational corporation in this quote. It is likely you are quoting him out of context. What you must do is understand your argument. There are some transnational corporations. These corporations prefer to do business in the same currency with price stability with a common language and they prefer to have worldwide demand for their goods. To the extent that transnational corporations dominate business, nations will not want to fight each other because they will have nothing important to fight about. You can use examples like the Euro and the fact that a merging of culture make wars less likely. For example, the Cold War was caused by cultural differences between capitalist society and communist society. The Mid East conflict is a fight between Moslems, Jews, and Christians. Use the fact that no two countries with a McDonald’s have ever fought each other to show that the nation-state will not be needed to ensure security and might therefore be replaced by non-governmental authorities that might administer interest rates and diplomacy.]

“The corporation has evolved from an institution with limited power to one that some claim is the dominant governance institution of the world and which exceeds most governments in size and power.” (Robbins pg. 122) [This is a good point. Now you must show that transnational corporations are doing or will do at least some of the things that the nation-state used to do through other methods. For example, you claimed that nation-states are useful for standardizing weights and measures. You can now argue that we have established such systems and no longer need a nation-state to do so. You can also argue that things like Internet protocols or technology platforms do not require government intervention and that standards emerge from the companies or industries that create them. You need to show that the roles of nation-states can be filled by transnational corporations.]

Corporations have ~~evolved~~ acquired such power by convincing governments of an ideology called “corporate libertarianism,” which gives all the rights and freedoms of the corporations above the rights and freedoms of the employers. [Do you mean employees?] Corporate powers keep getting larger and larger. “Of the world’s 100 largest economic entities, 51 are corporations and only 49 are countries, measured by annual corporate sales and annual domestic products. Our calculations indicate that the Top 200’s share of global economic activity has grown rapidly over the past decade. In 1982, the Top 200 firms had sales that were the equivalent of 24.2 percent of the world’s gross domestic product. Today, the figure has grown to 28.3 percent of the world's gross domestic

product.” (Lobe pg. 1) [You’ve proven that these corporations are big, which is good, but bigness has nothing to do with whether or not they are replacing governments. Bigness is useful to show that they are exerting more power on governments and are becoming more important to the world.]

Transnational corporations control more than a quarter of the world’s economic activity, but nobody controls them, except for their shareholders. “Unchecked and unregulated, the labor market in the global economy is becoming nothing more than a vast shopping mall for the transnational corporations.” [This is not true. The American government controls corporations that do business in America. All companies of any size face constant regulation and risk breakup for monopoly action – Microsoft, AT&T, Standard Oil, etc.]

[You need to write a conclusion in which you reiterate the roles that transnational corporations are filling. You should remind the reader that there was a need for the nation-state at one point but that in time this need will lessen and eventually fall away. Also, do not argue that big corporations are bad, as that has nothing to do with your thesis. If big corporations are bad, no one will want to replace the nation-state, which protects its people from anti-competitive corporate practices, with a system that does not protect the people from the power of corporations. Instead, you might see NGOs or other regulatory bodies that do the work currently performed by the nation-state. To get there however, you need to identify how the nation-state is in the way and will be replaced. Things like the globalization of the English language, the Euro, NAFTA, etc. are all steps away from the power of the nation-state.]