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"Globalisation, Environmental Degradation and Ulrich Beck's Risk Society"

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This paper is organised in three interconnected parts. First, contemporary political economic approaches to understanding the structure of the global economic system are outlined and synthesised. Specifically, it is suggested that the current structural configuration of the globe is a transitional phase between the spatially-bounded configuration hypothesised by world-system theory and the configuration hypothesised by globalisation theorists. Second, the contemporary problem of environmental degradation is situated in a global structural context. Third, an outline and critique of Ulrich Beck's theory of the "Risk Society" is presented to illustrate the increasing inadequacy of nation-state-centric theories in explaining the dynamic linkage between global capitalism and local environmental degradation.

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