

GEOG 4712: Political Geography



Lecture 18: Critiques of World-Systems Analysis

outline

- 1) Modelski's Model
- 2) Wallerstein's World
- 3) Food + Famine
- 4) Watts' World
- 5) Nigerian Nightmares
- 6) Migration + Mobility
- 7) States + Security



Naval Power Hypothesis

Thesis: naval power grants hegemon 'global reach' to maintain international order.

Arguments:

- Air power has taken on many duties of global policing, but large numbers of troops and hardware is still moved by navy.
- Coasts, national waters, chokepoints still policed by navies. (Somalia?!?)
- Navy as platform for air power > aircraft carriers

Nuclear Weapons as a Challenge to Naval Power

- 1) As an essential guarantor of international status and security: other states must respect the sovereignty of a nuclear-state
- 2) As a security blanket for a state's conventional forces
- 3) As a deterrent, not a practical tool of police activity: nuclear weapons are weapon of last resort; limited means to project power abroad

Modelski: the critique

Particular Flaws in the Naval Thesis

- 1) Naval power is an attribute of a hegemon's overall power
- 2) It is descriptive, not explanatory: what explains a state's great naval power?
- 3) What explains the social and political influence of states that lack naval power? (Egypt 1954-70, Cold War India, Japan 1980s, Saudi Arabia today)
- 4) Naval power narrow index of hegemony; economic/social metrics excluded
- 5) Indicators do not provide theory of causation: what is mechanism of change?

General Critiques of Modelski's Model

- 1) Does not provide sufficient mechanism of change in global system.
- 2) Root of this failure lies in distinction between political and economic processes.
- 3) Overlooking economic processes that underlie political cycles, he invokes a systemic need for order to explain rise + fall of hegemons.

Wallerstein's World-Systems: under attack?

- 1) *Marxists*: Capitalism is not about exchange and trade but concerns class + production relations.
- 2) *Historians*: His model is too over-arching and he gets his history wrong.
- 3) *Geographers*: Characterizes states as semi-peripheral and oversimplifies reality.
- 4) *PSCI*: State policies cannot be reduced to being a matter of responses depending on the state's position in the world-economy.
- 5) *Anthropologists*: He leaves out cultural, ethnic, and certain economic factors from his analysis.

Territorial Trap or Monstrous Hybrid

The state-centered critique of Wallerstein

- Wallerstein: the world-system is composed of multiple states that protect both wealthy and poor and help maintain a semblance of order
- Critiques:
 - States remain relevant because they can re-appropriate economic flows, leading to protectionism/mercantilism.
 - States remain relevant actors because their actions cannot be predicted from position in the world- system as 'scale of ideology'
- Challenges:
 - 1) End of Westphalian model and 'embedded statism'?
 - 2) Functions of the state (accumulation + legitimation)
 - 3) Territoriality in the state system
 - 4) Legitimizing state sovereignty
 - 5) Quasi-states and de facto vs. de jure sovereignty
 - 6) Borders + migrations in the post-Cold War world
 - 7) Nationalism
 - 8) Regionalism

Food: Forces + Famine

Famine (Sen):

Definition: short-term event characterized by acute deprivation of staple foodstuffs (Sen)

La Conjuncture (Watts):

Definition: perfect storm of global and national market forces shifting access to subsistence and determining *who* starves--say, craftsmen as opposed to peasants--and *why* (Watts).

Attributes: 1) fiscal austerity 2) debt burden 3) low commodity prices 4) restructured state role

TABLE IV
FOODGRAINS OUTPUT AND AVAILABILITY IN BANGLADESH: 1971-1975
(Base: 1971 value = 100)

Year	Index of per capita rice output (a)	Index of per capita foodgrains availability (b)	Calories per capita (c)
1971	100	100	
1972	90	103	1,900
1973	95	103	1,913
1974	105	107	2,023
1975	99	100	

Source: (a) and (b) calculated from Alamgir (1980); (c) is obtained from FAO Production Yearbook 1976.

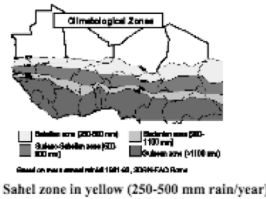
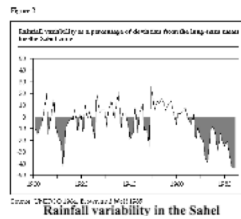
Global to Local: Enter Geography

- 1) Colonial order exploit resources for export to core processing (e.g. cacao from Ghana to UK; oil in Nigeria)
- 2) Indigenous agriculture drought coping -mix of crops (sorghum, millet, cowpeas, some grazing, etc)
- 3) Neo-colonial foreign commercial agricultural interests enter newly independent states: Bribery and corruption of state elites; Inducements (high prices initially) and pressure to switch to commercial cash crop (e.g. cotton); 'postwar international food order'
- 4) If world prices high, use export revenues (state) and crop income (farmers) for food purchases
- 5) Farmers (even if they have resources) cannot buy local food for animals since farmers producing for export
- 6) Common Property Resources (CPRs) under pressure from conversion to commodity production
- 7) Diet changes: wheat imports for white bread ('Big Macs' of Nigeria)
- 8) 'Wheat trap' (commodity) exports for food imports dumped by US
- 9) Cheap food imports undercut local farmers who leave land for cities
- 10) End result food dependency and desertification: traditional coping mechanisms for drought destroyed: Famine effects get worse.

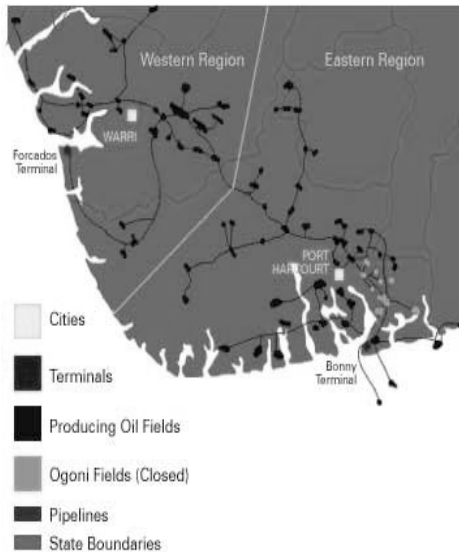
Nigerian Nightmare

Consequences of Switching in the Sahel

1. More intensive land use and irrigation (for rice)
2. Encouraging more animals unsustainable when drought returns
3. Sahelian rangelands destroyed wind erosion worsened
4. Traditional cropping regimes severely damaged, esp. polyvarietal strategies (interplanting of drought resistant crops such as millet)
5. Mixed herds less common so drought damage more lasting
6. Rising food prices forces farmers to sell herds



Mobility + Security, I



Mobility + Security, II

Tesfahuney: “International migrations interface with past and present economic and geopolitical orders of colonialism, global inequality and Western hegemony at several levels, but are not thus contextualized. The authors [Agnew + Corbridge] ignore the impact of Third World debt, aid-politics, and military-industrial establishments in inducing refugee and other migrations in the South. Consequently the authors do not study the role of migrants as geopolitical actors, the impact of migrations in the evolution of the ‘new world order’ and the conduct of geopolitics at local, regional, and global levels...”

