RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS

Note: The International Journal of Comparative Sociology invites communications in the form of short articles and reports about ongoing research, not exceeding 5,000 words, both in the empirical and theoretical fields.

EDITOR

1. Growth in Destructive Capacity, c. 1820-1970:
   A Study of a Seven Nation Power Elite*

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Introduction

Among the major social problems of humanity is man’s eminent capacity for organized violence. One hypothesis worthy of closer investigation is that violent behavior is more likely under conditions of unequal growth rates. This paper, as well as a previous paper (Svalastoga, 1976), tries to document the growth processes of a group of nations, which may well be termed the power elite among nations in the period covered. Of course it should be understood that membership of this elite as well as that of many other elites is time-limited. The U.S.S.R. was a member throughout the period here covered, China only at the very beginning and towards the end of the period. The previous paper dealt with the growth of space, population, energy, and information.

The present paper considers some aspects of the destructive capacities of the same set of nations.

A 19th century nation could develop military strength by expanding its army or making it more efficient, or by expanding its navy or making it more efficient. Even during the present century army strength and navy strength has continued to remain important. Table 1 provides seven readings on army strength, and Table 2 gives eight readings on navy strength. Both readings cover the period 1820-1966.

Throughout the period army strength was measured as number of army men, in the standing army. This figure was for each year divided by the largest figure for that year, and the result was multiplied by 100 (Table 2). Navy strength was measured as follows:

1820, 1840: Number of ships of the line and frigates.
1863: Number of steamers.
1887: Number of ironclads.
1898: Number of battleships.
1920: Number of dreadnoughts, predreadnoughts, and armoured cruisers.
1939: Tonnage of naval vessels (unit: 1000 tons).
1966: Total number of vessels.

The entries were converted into an index ranging from 0 to 100 for each year, just as for number of army men (Table 2).

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Table 1
Army Strength (1,000 men)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>Relative number</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>Relative number</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>Relative number</th>
<th>1884</th>
<th>Relative number</th>
<th>c. 1896–98</th>
<th>Relative number</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>Relative number</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>Relative number</th>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>325</td>
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<tr>
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<td>28</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45 est. 274</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S.S.R.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1296</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1433</td>
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<td>2423</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 est. 28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>500</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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(2) Statesman’s Yearbook for 1884.
(3) Pelet-Narbonne (1899) for 1896–1898.
(4) Schäffer (1939) for 1939.
(6) U.S. Dept. Army (1959) for early United States figures.