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On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

ABSTRACT

English Version

This thesis project is a two-part inspection of Long Cycle Theory, the world systems model as expressed in George Modelski's *Long Cycles in World Politics*. This theory posits that, after transoceanic sealanes opened at fifteenth century's conclusion approximately until the end of Cold War, the following was true of international geopolitics: (1) it was more ordered than anarchic on the international plane of differentiation, (2) this international order was upheld by relatively stable cycles wherein Great Power coalitions are managed by a World Power enjoying temporary political, naval and technological preeminence (3) and during the previously cited period, this dance of Great Powers progressed through five such one-hundred year cycles of World Power predominance, delegitimation and then deconcentration bookended by multi-decade Global Conflict phases, hereafter GCP. This thesis qualitatively and quantitatively deconstructs the Theory's core assumptions regarding historical replicability, which states rank as Great and World Powers, and which wars waged between these constituted a GCP.

The mission of this thesis project is to qualitatively and quantitatively approach the question: "Do Global Conflict phases skip multiple policymaking generations" through the lens of Long Cycle Theory. This approach involved, firstly, critical analysis of the theory's core assumptions about world order and, secondly, indexing of its empirical claims about the length and character of its cyclical sub-phases through the turnover of policymaking generations. In the former, it holds itself successful, reevaluating the theory's usefulness as a historical explanatory model and an analytical tool for contemporary geopolitics through cross-comparison of the relevant literature with foundational works, parallel 20th-century

scholarship, and more recent scholarly work. In the latter, there is much to be desired, given a lack of data for earlier generations, seventeenth and eighteenth-century outlier conflicts, and ambiguities about what constitutes a ‘policymaking generation’.

Using this model, ninety-two different statesmen and monarchs across five warring generations were identified based on involvement in their state’s decision to enter a GCP, then judged on a point system indexing their formative exposure to prior interstatal conflicts, regional or otherwise. Following the temporal guidelines laid out in the four to six overlapping phases in Long Cycle’s Systemic and Learning subcycles, this thesis sought to empirically prove that (A) three to four policymaking generations lapse between each (B) GCP, and the Great Power policymakers initiating each new phase lack formative exposure to war compared to prior generations. Despite a loose correspondence, the sample size of ninety-two individuals was deemed statistically insignificant, given the vast sample size, cultural complexity, and relative pools of comparable psychological studies on intergenerational trauma and cultural transmission. This thesis is a call for further empirical research into the quantitative vectors of the developmental cog in Long Cycle Theory, either via economic study or psychological review. Ultimately, this thesis revisits Long Cycle Theory forty years on, not as a predictive script for global war but as a historically grounded model illuminating phases of international order, leadership, and conflict repeating across one of the most varied five-hundred-year periods in human History.

ABSTRACT

Deutsche Version

Diese Master-Thesis ist eine zweiteilige Rezension der „Long Cycle Theory“ (Theorie der langen Zyklen). Dieses Projekt stützt sich auf die Theorie, wie sie in „Long Cycles in World Politics“ von George Modelski dargelegt wird. Die Long Cycle Theory ist ein Geschichtsmodell, das besagt, dass der Wettbewerb der Großmächte die internationale Politik zwischen etwa 1500 und 1980 geprägt hat. Diese Theorie behauptet weiter, dass: (1) die internationale Politik relativ organisiert ist, (2) diese Organisation mit Hilfe des Wettbewerbs der Großmächte und der Führung einer Weltmacht mit maritimer, wirtschaftlicher und politischer Dominanz zustande kommt, (3) Zyklen der Weltmacht jedes Jahrhundert auftreten, wobei sich zwischen jedem Zyklus globale Kriege wiederholen. Diese Masterarbeit ist eine kritische Betrachtung dieser drei zentralen Ideen, und ihre Analyse betont die Wiederholung globaler Konflikte, die in diesem Text als „GCP“ (Global Conflict phases/globaler Konfliktphasen) bezeichnet werden.

Um das Konzept zu analysieren, das sich GCPs jedes Jahrhundert wiederholen, stellt dieses Projekt die Frage: „Überspringt der Krieg der Großmächte Generationen von Politikern?“ Diese kritische Analyse besteht aus zwei Komponenten: zum einen aus einer Literaturrecherche zum Originaltext, zum anderen aus einer empirischen Analyse der politischen Psychologie zwischen den Generationen. Die Literaturrecherche analysiert die spezifischen historischen Annahmen des Buches von George Modelski und vergleicht diese mit denen antiker Gelehrter, ähnlichen Forschungen aus dem 20. Jahrhundert und neueren wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten. Dieser Literaturteil war erfolgreich und zeigt, wo dieses Modell nützlich ist und wo nicht. Die empirische Studie verglich 92 wichtige Politiker aus den „Großmachtländern“ vor Beginn der GCPs (Großmachtkriege). Diese Politiker waren

Könige, Minister und Generäle. Jeder von ihnen wurde hinsichtlich seiner Erfahrungen mit dem Krieg vor dem Erhalt seiner politischen Position bewertet. Es wurde eine schwache Korrelation zwischen begrenzter Kriegserfahrung und der Bereitschaft, in einen Konflikt einzutreten, festgestellt, aber die Gruppe war zu klein, um eine nützliche akademische Analyse durchzuführen. Dieses Projekt ist ein einfacher Versuch, die Long-Cycle-Theorie zu analysieren, und es kommt zu dem Schluss, dass viele ihrer Annahmen zur frühneuzeitlichen Geschichte von akademischem Nutzen sind. Diese Theorie erfordert sicherlich weitere Forschung.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Ceaseless Wheel and the Modern World

“We do not first perceptually ‘pick out objects and later name them... rather, we learn to notice them by naming.” - David Loy (Loy 1983, 359)

There is something about the cyclical pattern that speaks to the human condition in body and mind. Biologically, humans are an animal species bound by statistically predictable cycles of life, death and birth determined by their innate biology and their environment (Grotius 1625, 24). Psychologically, humans are capable of forming their own complex systems of belief which apparently compel them to pursue intra- or even inter-generational behavioral patterns. Long Cycle Theory, as it is articulated by the famous Neorealist and Washington University professor George Modelski in his 1987 work *Long Cycles In Global Politics*, weaponizes the evocative image of the cycle pattern to measure the occurrence of global war by measuring it against a backdrop of generational growth and innovation and correlating its repetitive pattern to a self-affirming system of great-power conflict.

This is to say that an image of a great temporal wheel, ceaselessly turning on the emblematic spokes of birth, love, violence and death, has captivated human imagination for at least since the inception of History as a discipline. This enduring image has appeared under the Greek guise of anacyclosis and the eternal return (Modelski 1987, 58), the Buddhist wheel of life-death-and-reincarnation of Samsara, the Mayan civilizational circles of Baktun as well as a thousand other names in cultures separated by vast expanses of sea, desert and time. These often unrelated instances of generational repetition speak to a human superpower

which has manifested in myth, madness and the modern scientific process; Superior Pattern Processing or S.P.P. (Mattson 2014). This lattermost variant, the analytical or academic application of SPP, must naturally figure into every significant academic endeavour. A multivariable experimental hypothesis always appears first as some variant of the eternal question: “What mechanism relates all these disparate sets of data?”

Nowhere is SPP a more powerful tool, or a dangerous pitfall, than in History and Economics, whose empirical work pivots upon the whims of that most fickle of independent variables, the human individual. Where man as a variable is concerned, Long Cycle Theory offers one of the 20th century’s most compelling historical hypotheses. It encapsulates over 500 years of global geopolitics in one grand wheel of Great Power conflict and socioeconomic development, hinging on three bold claims. These are as follows: (1) the nature of international order, (2) the consistency of transition between World Powers [AKA hegemon] and (3) the consistency with which GCPs occur.

Long Cycle Theory’s first bold claim is that, since Transatlantic and Transpacific sea lanes were opened at the close of the fifteenth century, international politics have been largely ordered and only periodically anarchic. The second claim is that this order is generated by Great Power competition among a rotating roster of nine elite states, specifically in cyclical systemic sub-phases. In this systemic subcycle, an identifiable World Power leads, its contemporaries follow in a loose coalition, and emergent rival Powers clarify a national agenda, coalesce international power, contend with the sitting power and implement their agenda on an international scale, forming a new Great Power coalition. The third claim is a more contemporary twist on the ancient Thucydides Trap; this order has and continues to cycle through five systemic cycles of peace and war, each lasting between eighty to one-hundred-and-ten years, each delineated by decades-long phases of global war, the

aforementioned GCPs. The theory purports that these cycles come and depart according to a dual mechanism with two parallel cogs: the regulatory mechanism of Great Power conflict which imposes order, and the developmental mechanism of population growth, economic change and 'innovation" (Modelski 2014, 51). In essence, order exists when a World Power leads with such absolute naval dominance, such a lead in innovation and such a financial centrality that the state has no incentive to wage any global wars that would disrupt their imposed peace and no other Power has the wherewithal to oppose it.

Each of these systemic claims about order, leadership and global war are individually staggering. Each covers a period broad enough to justify a thesis of this length simply to investigate their usefulness as a historical framework. Above all else, this paper approaches the lattermost claim regarding the regularity of Global Conflict phases empirically by comparing the coming and going of policymaking generations to the occurrence and absence of wars involving multiple Great Powers. The question behind this empirical exercise is as follows: did Great Power conflict skip policymaking generations? This is not an attempt to make a "law of human history" or a unified theory of human political behavior on the international plane (Modelski 1987, 54), nor an attempt to project Modelski's five cycles onto contemporary developments. The first notion runs the risk of historicism by assuming a universal set of human traits or social pressures; a criticism leveled at this theory since its inception (Dunn, Allen and Haddox 2012, 12). The second notion, using Long Cycle Theory as a predictive model at the time of writing in the year 2024-2025, goes against the grain of Modelski's intent.

Long Cycle Theory's most seminal text, Modelski's 1987 publication, clearly states that the theory only exists as a product of opposing institutional and innovative pressures unique to a 'modern' world system (Modelski 1987, 67). Modelski christens the birth of this

‘modern’ world with the 1494 signature of the Treaty of Tordesillas and assumes its tenets still held analytical weight for the Great Powers at the time of publication in 1987, but no further than that date. If the Theory has any use as a predictive or analytical tool today, it may only be useful as a guidebook to understanding those policymakers who still hold Great Power conflict as a key axis of global geopolitical change. For the purposes of this inquiry, the years from the 1494-1945 temporal bloc will be the scope of all quantitative study. This paper first aims to understand if, by dividing the core ‘participants’ in international politics by Jeffersonian generations of roughly twenty years, exposure to global conflict among the policymakers most responsible for the macrodecision to engage in further war actually corresponds to their involvement in GCPs or lack thereof.

Why attempt to find a pattern of correspondence between generational change and phase shifts in Long Cycle Theory? Feasibility is one reason. The relatively small size of the pool of Great Power policymakers: kings, ministers, presidents and secretaries, makes this simple inquiry theoretically possible. It is true that generations are only one of several quantifiable mechanisms identified in Long Cycle Theory which could be used to track the repetition of systemic events; financial patterns like Kondratiev waves, boom and bust cycles, financial investment and naval accumulation might all be used to explain how political power could have concentrated in the hands of a select few powers on a numerical basis, or how certain economic patterns precede and follow global conflict. The psychological implications are another worthy consideration. Generations, although conceptually a sociological construct, are superimposed on biological reality; early childhood psychology is more prone to be altered by its environment than that of a middle-aged politician, and concepts from the past have more staying power when disseminated through personal experience and familial anecdotes (Yehuda, Rachel, Halligan, Bierer 2001, 1).

The notion that global war would ‘wait’ several generations appeals to this psychological concept as well as the Polybian notion that laws outlive their institutional foundations, because the macrodecision to engage in global war has historically depended on a council of powerful men [and in rare cases, women] weighing the potential spoils of war against the potential devastation it might cause. This notion is certainly influenced by the outcomes of the most recent Global Conflict phase beginning in 1914 and ending in 1945, the birth of the UN charter and contingent intergovernmental organizations and the manifest intent of the USSR and United States to pursue a cold, rather than a hot, conflict. To a lesser extent, this concept that risk-averse and risk-prone traits correlate to risk exposure [or lack thereof] could be easily associated with the systemic fatigue felt after the Napoleonic wars for Hegemony and the corresponding creation of the Concert of Europe.

This paper chooses to empirically investigate Modelski’s assertion that GCPs wait approximately seventy to ninety years [three to four Jeffersonian generations] on a generational basis because it is both striking and counterintuitive. The superficial association between war and peace tied to Napoleon’s and Hitler’s bids for hegemony quickly disappears when transferred to the three previous Global Conflict phases. These are in chronological order: the Portuguese Wars for the Indian Ocean and contemporary conflict in Italy, King Phillip II and III of Spain’s wars against other western European Powers, and the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century French attempt at continental hegemony ending with the treaty of Utrecht. The Crimean War, Thirty Years War, Seven Years War and most of the Ottoman wars notably fall outside any stated Global Conflict phases. The Seven Years War in particular challenges many of the model’s assertions in both its scope and its lethality, which qualify it for many scholars as the ‘first global war’ with fatalities thought to have considerably exceeded the million mark from various theaters over the globe (Dobie 2009, 1851). In fact, the whole nature of pre-nineteenth century Great Power conflict seems to defy

the entire thesis of Modelski's structured view, given the seemingly constant exchange of Great Power conflict in the 18th century and the preceding spate of religious wars from the publication of Martin Luther's theses to the Westphalian peace. Many other scholars hold that the armed global peace and its "new international system", one implied by Long Cycle Theory either dates back to the Congress of Vienna or the Westphalian peace at the earliest (Gutman 1988, 752). The theory justifies its departure from traditional Realist notions of international anarchy and Great Power coalitioning by recontextualizing continental conflicts as wars for regional rather than global supremacy; World Powers often dominate far more numerous enemies through naval [and later aerial] might rather than standing armies. Despite the fact that all nine of Modelski's Great Powers, with the notable exception of Japan, are European, Long Cycle Theory settles its scores in international waters.

This critical analysis approaches Long Cycle Theory from two different vectors: a qualitative review of its assertions in light of subsequent academic works and a quantitative attempt to index Global Conflict phases in the context of Modelski's Theory using policymaker generations as an independent variable. In the first effort, a notable achievement in recontextualizing modern Great Power competition has been made, juxtaposing the theory's claims against: (A) the original text's inspirations in Thucydides, Polybius, Kondratiev and numerous 20th century scholars, (B) parallel works such as Modelski's own *Seapower in Global Politics* (1988) and his contemporary William R. Thompson's *On Global War* (1988), © subsequent works by Francis Fukuyama, Alexander Wendt and Samuel P. Huntington involving the end of the Cold War and developmental changes to international politics. The qualitative component, a complex literature review grounded in relevant primary and secondary historical sources corresponding to the many claims regarding particular ages, states and individuals, was an attempt to identify potential empirical grounds whereupon

Long Cycle Theory could be further quantified, examined, and applied as a historical framework or as an analytical tool for contemporary interpretations of history.

The second component, a quantitative indexing of Long Cycle Theory by some quantifiable vector of change that would broadly fall under the Theory's developmental mechanism, did not achieve its objectives. This occurred due to the scope of the project, involving 92 separate individuals measured by multiple temporal and psychological factors, goes beyond the scope of this thesis and its temporal and page count constraints. It is simply unfeasible to include both a review of the theory and a quantitative analysis in a paper of this format without reducing it to pure statistical analysis devoid of broader historical analysis or flooding the paper with multivariable analyses of concerned individuals.

Consider the Theory's empirical component: five Systemic world power cycles beginning in 1494 structurally lasting to the present day and beyond, concretely binding five hundred years of History into nineteen repeating phases centered around an ever-changing cast of 9 Great Powers. This spans a period of 500 years bridging the Renaissance period up to what Modelski terms the "postmodern period" (Modelski 2014, 21). Developmental change has driven most of the change in the roster of global powers as growing populations in rising powers like the Netherlands, Russia, Germany and Japan, which elevated their ambitions above any single regional theater and investing them in interoceanic commerce, diplomacy and resultingly, naval competition. The original text further asserts that "the world powers are the lead economies of their time and their economic activities, especially innovations in crucial segments, have impact on the entire global system in a manner that is systematically related to their global role" (Modelski 2014, 61). There is an abundance of literature from the period in which the book was published investigating the relation between

war and economic cycles (Van Duijn 1983, 3), and so this thesis took a different route: generations.

The quantitative element rearticulates the question: “Does Great Power conflict skip policymaking generations” in a more strictly defined, limited context by trying to correspond the exposure of young policymakers in their formative years to their later decisions to formally declare war and enter a Global Conflict phase as empowered officials. The first step towards accomplishing this was exploring Global Conflict phases as a notion. Why are some wars included but others deliberately left out despite sharing many characteristics? Global Conflict phases were analyzed by three metrics: (1) their level of systemic impact on world leadership, (2) the extent and transoceanic nature of naval engagements, (3) the involvement of multiple Great Powers fighting on opposing sides of some conflict. Upon further review, these metrics justify the distinction between Modelski’s chosen wars and important intraphasal conflicts like the Crimean or Seven Years’ War. Intraphasal wars simply lack one of the three metrics needed to qualify as a Global Conflict phase. The timeline follows previously mentioned dates, ranging from the beginning of the first Global Conflict phase with Charles VIII’s 1494 invasion of Italy and ending with the unconditional surrender of the Japanese in 1945. With the temporal limits and political actors borrowed from Modelski’s work, the project was able to create a sample pool of ninety-two policymakers tied to declarations of war at the start of conflicts.

Holistically speaking, Long Cycle Theory would be a powerfully specific explanatory model provided its core assumptions can be applied across the length of its 493-year sample period. Modelski christens the birth of the international system with the 1494 signature of the Treaty of Tordesillas, and for the purposes of this inquiry, it will end in 1987, the year that *Long Cycles in World History* was published. With that empirical border established,

Modelska's fifth and most recent phase assumed that the 20th century's leading power, the United States would experience gradual delegitimation in the eyes of the rest of the world up until 2000, whereupon it would enter into a deconcentration phase where a rival power would increasingly challenge the American government for naval and financial dominance up until 2030. Although not stated in Modelska's works, this model would further imply that the Great Powers would then slip into another Global Conflict phase. As concerning as this implication may appear to contemporary readers in 2025 when the People's Republic of China has clearly settled into the role of challenging power, it depends on a model conceived before the fall of the Soviet Union, before globalization, the formation of the European Union, the rise of the Internet and a dozen other revolutionary systemic changes that may render the prerequisite conditions for previous great power competition null and void (Elleman 2018). This potential systemic disconnect should strongly discourage any use of Long Cycle Theory as a predictive model to be taken literally in the year 2025, but this does not signify that it should be ignored altogether in contemporary political analysis.

This project was conceived in a global moment when, according to the most recent Global Peace Index at the time of its inception, more countries were engaged in armed conflict than at any other point in recorded history (Institute for Economics & Peace 2024, 4). This trend, in the view of the reporting Institute for Economics and Peace has continued steadily since the time of the 2007 financial crisis and would, curiously enough, align closely with the increase in regional conflicts Modelska attributes to the deconcentration phase of American World Power that he projected to last from 2000-2030. This grim overlap between projected cyclical phase and contemporary conflict includes the war in Ukraine, itself a war of succession in the aftermath of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The People's Republic of China's desire to reclaim lost territories challenges American guarantees in the South China Sea. Wars rage on the European periphery in the Caucasus and the Levant.

These regional conflicts threaten the geoeconomic security of the United States, China, the European Union and most obviously, Russia. This multipolarity reflects, among other things, the passing of the Kantian, interdependent global moment that Johns Hopkins professor Francis Fukuyama famously envisioned in his seminal work “The End of History and the Last Man” (Elliott 2008, 35). This seeming vindication of Long Cycle Theory in the face of looming global conflict may be a coincidence, but the sheer potential impact of such a war justifies renewed inquiry.

The belief that ‘a globalized world’, one defined by the spread of liberal democracy, the expanded jurisdiction and power of intergovernmental institutions and economic interdependence, would triumph over the Lockean dance of power was a remote consideration for Modelski circa 1987. He held that those aspects of the world system independent of great power competition “lack[ed] cultural coherence and [were] weak on global solidarity, that necessary element of social organization” (Modelski 1987, 200). In a world without the Soviet Union and its separate economic communities, the world system has developmentally warped in many ways beyond recognition. It may be that the developmental mechanism of population growth correlated to innovation, which pushed Long Cycle Theory forward, has stopped turning with the advent of the Internet, World Trade Organization and the International Criminal Court. However, given the eternal relevance of global conflict and the current state of affairs, this paper wishes to assist in the rekindling of academic interest in this remarkably specific world systems theory as soon as possible.

Chapter 2

INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

Thucydides, Polybius and a Problem as Old as History Itself

“This law reason has enjoined upon the learned, necessity upon barbarians, custom upon nations, and nature herself upon wild beasts, that always, with whatever means of defense they possess, they ward off all violence from body, from head, from life itself.” - Cicero (Grotius 1625, 33)

2.1 SEPARATING MYTH FROM OBSERVATION

While Long Cycle Theory in its current form has only recently turned forty, it is almost as old in spirit as History itself. Therefore it was necessary to first revisit the multitude of historical theories from the ancient and modern periods which are so instilled in Long Cycle Theory while simultaneously defining its terms, its claims and its intellectual dangers. In other words, now that the fissures in the metaphorical work has been spotted and the means of repair are established, it is best to familiarize oneself with the analytical tools available. Therefore, the following section is equal parts glossary and historiography because it broaches the following questions as they are ordered here: (a) which earlier theories inspired Long Cycle Theory, (b) what are the intellectual pitfalls that the theory may lapse into, © what are its five cycles and 4-6 subcyclical phases and finally, (d) how are these cycles and phases defined. In short, only once the empirical foundations were excavated and defined could further empirical construction within an adjusted theoretical frame finally continue.

What are these cycles? The cycles, ninety to one-hundred-and-ten years in length, each last roughly a century and are divided into two alternating subcycles, one systemic and one learning/developmental. The Systemic subcycle follows the World Power as the source of international order, while the Learning or developmental subcycle traces the growth of a rising power. The declining Systemic subcycle has four systemic subphases: World Power, Deconcentration, Delegitimation, and Global Conflict. The “World Power” phase follows the resolution of a systemic war, in which a coalition of states elevates a dominant naval and economic power able to command interoceanic sea lanes. This four-phase cycle was most directly inspired by “Thucydides’ Trap,” an idea first articulated in the eponymous historian’s *History of the Peloponnesian War*, where he first observed that, “What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian Power and the fear which this caused in Sparta” (Thucydides 1972, 1.23). The trap describes a phase in transnational [not necessarily international] politics where a rising power confronts an established leader. This is a dynamic Long Cycle Theory that translates as an overlap of its learning and systemic modes, which manifests tangibly in the form of Global Conflict Phases. Both Modelski’s subcyclical phases and this project’s micro-independent variable, policymaking generations, owe their existence to Polybian anacyclosis, the cyclical rotation governments follow as they progress through monarchy/tyranny, aristocracy/oligarchy, and democracy/ochlocracy. This Greco-Roman concept offers one plausible causal mechanism for a natural shift in Great Power relations lightly implied in Long Cycles in World Politics and heavily used in this thesis’s empirical work. Likewise, this project taps into the well of economic theory through its use of Kondratiev Waves and the associated boom-bust cycle theory. These fifty-year cycles of expansion and contraction in global capitalism constitute half of the model’s ‘developmental’ mechanism, taken together with the concurrent demographic revolutions that filled the world stage with an ever-growing cast of political characters. Together, these ancient concepts of

rivalry, generational political learning and economic development provide an analytical toolbox which this project, in repeating Modelski's, has used to define "the international system" as his unique brand of Neorealism found it.

2.2 THUCYDIDES TRAP

Modelski is quick to acknowledge the great debt his work owes to prior scholarship (Modelski 1987, 1), so it is necessary to echo this sentiment here. Thucydides' so-called Trap is debatably the oldest theory in Political Science and it remains, perhaps due to its antiquity, one of the field's most frequently cited (Thibault 1973, 32). His account of the Peloponnesian War asserted that war must ensue when one rising hegemon ascends just as the sitting hegemon declines, vis a vis the imperial policies of Ancient Athens against her Peloponnesian rival Sparta. This book, refining the dramatic art practiced by Herodotus into a laboriously researched and elaborated prose, did more to define the discipline of History than any before or since. It also heavily influenced subsequent writings by Polybius, Cicero, Grotius and Modelski himself, a cascading chain of historians exhuming old "laws of history" with new historiographical tools (Podes 1991, 580). This project continues that chain and owes a unique debt to Thucydides and Polybius, thanks to their respective insights on violent hegemonic transfer and intergenerational cycling between institutions. Furthermore, credit must also be given to Rex Warner's 1973 translation of Thucydides and Stephan Podes 1991 review of the famous 1889 translation of Polybius's history, as well as the latter scholar's clarifications of Polybius's laws of history. These two translations were chosen in particular because of their continued use at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, the institution sponsoring this very thesis.

Whether true or no, Thucydides' Trap is far too diffuse a concept to explain modern Great Power conflicts by itself, its dynamic of relative growth and decline does not offer any

empirically tested micro-elements which limit its scope to this subject and offer any ground for mathematical proofs. Those who read Thucydides' history will be convinced, by way of over a dozen speeches by Athenian Strategoi, councillors [of the Boule] and emissaries, that many Athenian policymakers after the death of Pericles at least believed that their political, naval, and financial leadership of the Delian league forced them to establish a Hegemony to retain these privileges. They furthermore believed that this Hegemony must grow to defeat growing internal dissent and external rivals, namely Sparta and its Peloponnesian league allies. Even the famously temperate Pericles agreed that by the time the Second Peloponnesian War had begun... "[our] empire is now like a tyranny: it may have been wrong to take it; it is certainly dangerous to let it go" (Thucydides 1972, 2.64). This historical background is relevant to Long Cycle Theory because, even if the Thucydides' Trap should not have been grounded in innate human psychology, it was grounded in the beliefs of policymakers with the power to realize it. Even if this project's empirical component had completely correlated low generational exposure to conflict to the onset of GCPs, it would not have proven why these two overlap and why the cycles come and go as they do— this question demands either a sweeping psychological review of all involved policymakers or, even more demanding, a unified theory of human political behavior that can explain how Great Powers always consolidate on the national level of differentiation and how they always interact on the international level of differentiation. Long Cycle Theory does not offer any such theory, only a political pattern bound to a 500 year period and one continuous "civilization" as Toynbee would describe it (Toynbee 1956, 28). The story of Long Cycle Theory is therefore that of Western civilization, propelled by a critical massing of demographic and innovative developments, searching for a self-fulfilling systemic order among itself as a region and, by virtue of colonial expansion, the entire world during one of History's most turbulent eras.

2.2 POLYBIAN ANACYCLOSIS

While the Theory is an extremely bold attempt to index the world's most complex era, its assumptions pale in comparison to that other Antique theory: Polybian Anacyclosis. Anacyclosis is, at once too broad in its subject and too narrow in its assertions. In the sixth book of his account on the defeat of the Achaeans and the conquests of the late Roman Republic, Polybius outlines a series of "global laws of constitutional change" (Polybius 1889, 6:9) which argue that political change on the state level are driven by a cyclical rotation between six forms of government, Monarchy which arises from an vague "state of nature" degenerates into Tyranny, itself replaced by Aristocracy which degenerates into Oligarchy, which in turn is replaced by Democracy which degenerates into Ochlocracy before finally dissolving back into the nebulous state of nature. Unlike Long Cycle Theory which uses four levels of differentiation; international (defined by World Power and its challengers), regional (defined by contingent rivalries), national (defined by the state and its policymakers), and local (defined by localized fluctuations in 'developmental' economic and demographic flows), Anacyclosis as defined by Polybius has just two levels of differentiation. The macro level is the law, wherefore the laws arise from the collective experience of their authors. The authors and their descendants are the micro element themselves, a turning wheel of generations whose differences erode the old laws before producing the new ones. Polybius justifies this causal chain through a series of psychological laws, the most important being that of experience.

This theory optimistically assumes that when the old decadent form of government collapses, the authors of the next constitution personally learn from the chaos of its collapse and therefore qualify themselves to devise and implement new laws to address the problems of the day. Subsequent generations cannot however, benefit from this learning experience

within the prosperous bounds of their new constitution and gradually forget the spirit of the law while remembering the letter. Power leads to systemic delegitimation, which leads to systemic deconstruction and finally, violent collapse, which takes the form of a coup or revolution rather than a GCP. These are the valuable intuitions of Polybian Anacylosis, which would later serve Long Cycle Theory. In fact, its deterministic claims were also inspired by this very project long before Modelski's framework was chosen, only to be abandoned as a potential historical model because humanity is, again, that most independent of variables, far too complex a collective to be reduced to a simple theoretical mechanism in any empirical work.

2.3 CHOOSING LONG CYCLE THEORY

What framework then, could help reconcile both while providing some relevant insight into modern geopolitical rivalries? This search for a bold, comprehensive historical framework slipped past Plutarch, Cicero and Gibbon, given their bounded focus on Roman Affairs. It lingered on the works of Dutch polymath and political philosopher Hugo Grotius, particularly the "Laws of War and Peace", whose legalistic philosophy so influenced the treaty of Westphalia, often cited as the genesis of the modern nation state. This book was ultimately discarded for its lack of positivist, disprovable assertions. However, it was later reconsidered for its stances on war and its causes as they helped in separating the wheat of GCPs from the chaff of conflicts merely involving one or more Great Powers (Grotius 32, 1625). Hereafter, the project leapt ahead to the twentieth century with the recommendation of some scholars at Johns Hopkins and found its expression in the five centuries, five cycles and five GCPs of Modelski's neorealist Theory.

2.4 INTELLECTUAL PITFALLS

All of human science and all of human belief depends partially on the human capacity for Superior Pattern Processing, or SPP. Pattern recognition, the prerequisite to identifying any historical cycles or repetition, is one application of this mental ability produced by the greatly enlarged human cerebral cortex. Cycles of all types, the aforementioned Samsara death-life-cycle of the Buddhists, Hindus and Jains, the cycles of Polybius, and that of Modelski depend on two expressions of SPP: “magical thinking” and “mental time travel” (Mattson 2014). This project may not be psychological by nature per se, but by depending on the beliefs of policymaking individuals, it becomes a psychological study by proxy. The first step to isolating the relationship between statesmen and war is to eliminate any teleological or heuristic thinking in its assumptions.

This is to say, are these cycles simply arbitrary collections of dates, states and other numbers? This project initially approached Long Cycle Theory with the aim of attempted to disprove its bold claims on all relevant academic grounds, and finding it to reflect a real pattern of hegemonic succession, then proceeded to empirically test some of its more quantitative assertions. While all historical framing requires a certain degree of arbitrarily dividing the past into eras far more delineated than reality, this project considered Long Cycle Theory in light of teleological thinking, mythmaking and Apophenia [as a psychosis]. Each of these intellectual pitfalls should be defined in the mode they were addressed during research.

Historicism, a prime example of teleological thinking, is the most immediate threat to Modelski’s thesis. The idea that history advances in an absolute direction by design, whether human or divine, is the most basic representation of this. According to Dunn and Haddox’s 2011 publication, which this project frequently referenced as it reviewed the empirical claims

of the Theory, many of those antique theories which blend philosophy and history, what Foucault called “Platonic Modalities of History”, fall into the trap of historicism because they assume that humanity has an implicit nature (Dunn & Haddox 2011, 30). Long Cycle Theory avoids this intellectual trap by remaining very specific in its claims and specific in its implications, the World Leadership cycles occur because this mode of international coexistence is ‘simple and effective’ and its war cycles occur because it is the only means by which the transoceanic system, grounded in the influence of a single World Power too interconnected to reform itself, can change (Modelski 1987, 230). Long Cycle Theory is true because the political circumstances and problems facing elites in self-sustaining Great Powers have repeated. If this is true, as the empirical results of this paper imply, the question is only how much individual psychology and personal belief in such a system supplemented its practical effects from 1494 to 1987. Long Cycle Theory skirts by historicism because it does not try to form any unified theory of human nature in its analysis of these years.

What are these concerns, then, about mythologizing and Apophenia? In warding off historicist dismissal of its claims, Theory also dismisses further claims that it might be ‘mythologizing’ history or simply recognizing nonexistent patterns in a type of academic Apophenia. What is meant by Myth is an example of magical thinking that presupposes some kind of karmic balance, in the sense of Samsara, where death and rebirth are traits natural to the universe, and the legacy of past lives haunts the present (Loy 1983, 533). Long Cycle Theory avoids this by emphasizing the personal element in power transfer, remaining general about its implications on Political Economy (Modelski 1987, 57). That is to say- if there is a myth at work, it is because those with the power to enact the next cycle believe in it. If there is economic repetition, it is due to a convenient consolidation of economic resources in the right place at the right time. A prime location with good institutions under the right developmental circumstances will consolidate wealth and power unto itself if the greater

scheme of Great Power Conflict permits it as in the case of the Netherlands or Portugal, or if it cannot otherwise prevent it as in the case of Britain and the United States.

What is meant by Apophenia then, is the “psychological inclination” to perceive logical connections where there none to found, especially in situations that are largely passive or coincidental (Blain et al 2020, 17). This is the neurosis of the conspiracy theorist and amateur historian, who sees faces in clouds and a worldwide network of meaning in the existence of pyramid-like structures across the planet. The concern that Long Cycle Theory might be the product of such imagination was dismissed early on, as its thorough and empirical nature examined events first and tried to categorize them later. In short, Long Cycle Theory was found to be well grounded despite its unusual choices in Great Powers and GCPs that will be explained shortly.

2.5 LONG CYCLE THEORY SUBCYCLES AND PHASES

The idea of generational political change, is so ancient that Francis Bacon and John Colomb’s 17th century works are considered “modern” iterations (Modelski 2014, 53) in comparison to Polybius and Aristotle’s ancient laws, also naturally figures into Long Cycle Theory as one of several indices by which its progression may be measured. It follows the belief expressed by Toynbee in more recent times and Polybius originally that institutions, whose quality depends on the ability of their constituent elites, are subject to natural decay because the turbulent conditions that prepared their founding generations disappear as the institutions grow in strength. Later elites no longer have the means to reform themselves to meet new challenges (Polybius 1991, 6. 7 6-7). Long Cycle Theory repeats this idea in a far more positivist, numerical formulation via cycles conveniently fitted to the Jeffersonian notion that the “no society can make a perpetual constitution... The earth belongs always to the living generation.” , meaning that every 19 years or so the structures of state power

functionally do and officially should change(Jefferson 1789). These subcyclical phases, lasting 20-30 years, are divided into two overlapping subcycles: the learning cycles of one or more rising Powers and the overlapping Global Conflict/Macroddecision phase, which resolves into the next systemic phase and the rise of a new world order.

2.2 LONG CYCLE THEORY SUB-CYCLES

<u>SYSTEMIC SUBCYCLE</u> [Sitting Power as the International System]	<u>LEARNING SUBCYCLE</u> [Rising Powers as Agents]
	[1] CLARIFICATION * Strategic repositioning as world system fades ⇩
	[2] COALITIONING * Targeted mobilization and innovation ⇩
[1] GLOBAL CONFLICT * 3+ opposing powers war for leadership ⇩	[3] MACRODECISION * Entry into Global Conflict Phase ⇩
[2] WORLD POWER * Pax Britannica, American Century, etc... ⇩	[4] IMPLEMENTATION * (if successful) transition to World Power ⇩
[3] DELEGITIMATION * Financial overextension, developmental change ⇩	
[4] DECONCENTRATION * Great Power consensus erodes, regional wars ↻	

Figure 2.1, systemic and learning subcycles. Each phase lasts between 20-30 years, with the systemic Global Conflict phase overlapping with the learning Macroddecision phase, and the systemic World Power phase overlapping with the learning Implementation phase, WHEN AND ONLY WHEN the rising power is the prime beneficiary of a successful Great Power coalition victory. There are often multiple, overlapping learning phases and only one systemic phase.

2.6 DEFINING THE SUBCYCLICAL PHASES

Now that the subcycles and their respective phases have been named and ordered, it is necessary to briefly explore the systemic and developmental factors that define each. The

Learning subcycle, of which again, there may be multiple during a single cycle although only one can successfully transition into a Systemic subcycle, also consists of four phases. The first two, clarification and coalitioning, involve the Great Power in question politically and then economically repositioning itself to handle the question organically raised by the changing demographic and technological framing of the given cycle: how should this state confront A) global trade, B) colonial expansion, C) revolutionary ideals, D) nationalist pushback, E) imperial saturation? As Thucydides, Mahan and eventually Modelski observed, the Learning Great Power with the greatest chance of success is always one with a profoundly naval orientation thanks to its geographical and geopolitical position in its formative years. Alexis de Tocqueville, noting the domestic significance of riverpower in the early industrial revolution and the strategic need for seapower, was able to predict an American rise to Hegemony one century in advance by the navigable length of its rivers and general oceanic position alone (de Tocqueville 1832, 34).

The first learning phase, clarification, is therefore the development of a naval policy of innovation which matures over the decades, producing new locally developed ship types like the Portuguese Carrack or the British Dreadnought, new fleet formations and gunnery platforms, and lastly innovations in commercial means like the Portuguese Royal companies or the Dutch Joint Stock enterprises (Modelski 1987, 201). In this phase, innovation and global commerce are inextricably linked. Coalitioning is then the consolidation of these disparate new technologies and techniques into a naval force. Once fully coalitioned, the previous World Power's grip on global stability has loosened to the point that Global Conflict is the only means of recalibrating the system. The mature Rising Power faces a macrodecision on how or if it should enter the GCP, the first phase of the Systemic subcycle. Notably in this model, the Rising Power has always elected to participate in the third phase

called the ‘macrodecision’, therefore joining the greater stream of systemic change in the overlapping GCP.

The Global Conflict phase, the first and last of the systemic cycle, has the messiest beginning but often the neatest conclusion in the form of a Treaty of Brussels, Paris, or Utrecht, ringed by a series of Potsdam Conferences and Viennese Congresses or their equivalents. Defining how such a phase begins may be difficult, as it is in the case of the first three Global Conflict phases, to the point that this topic will be treated as a separate issue. This established, the moment a Great Power emerges from a Global Conflict phase as the victorious leader of a coalition with control of the world’s oceans, it loses the agency it possessed during its learning phase as its naval policies become the de facto law of the high seas. This is why the fourth phase of the Learning cycle, Implementation, blends with the second phase of the systemic cycle, World Power.

Once the World Power, the leader of the triumphant coalition who also has the most naval and commercial resources after the GCP’s conclusion, emerges, their “power” begins to climb. The first World Power, Portugal, spent its time consolidating its Indian Ocean Empire with colonies near Goa, Zanzibar and even in Brazil. Whatever policies were conceived in the clarification phase reach their final strategic form in proto-International Law in the case of the Dutch Law of the Open Seas (Modelski 1987, 76) or literal international law in the case of the UN Charter and subsequent constituent treaties among intergovernmental organizations, conceived in the spirit of “a permanent system of general security” as articulated in the Atlantic Charter (Churchill & Roosevelt 1941).

These are the phases as Modelski first described them, which this project painstakingly synchronised to relatively fixed historical dates wherever possible. It then judged how accurately these phases corresponded to the expected level of power

concentration around the presumed World Power. Table 2.3 depicts the phases in the Systemic mode as they should be, and given how the very specific nature of the cycles might be controversial, the next section will show how all fifteen Systemic phases [the American cycle is not measured past the book's publication midway through phase three, Delegitimation] were catalogued and probed by example of the very first cycle, the Portuguese thalassocracy of the 16th century.

2.3 SYSTEMIC SUBCYCLE INDEXED BY POWER CONCENTRATION

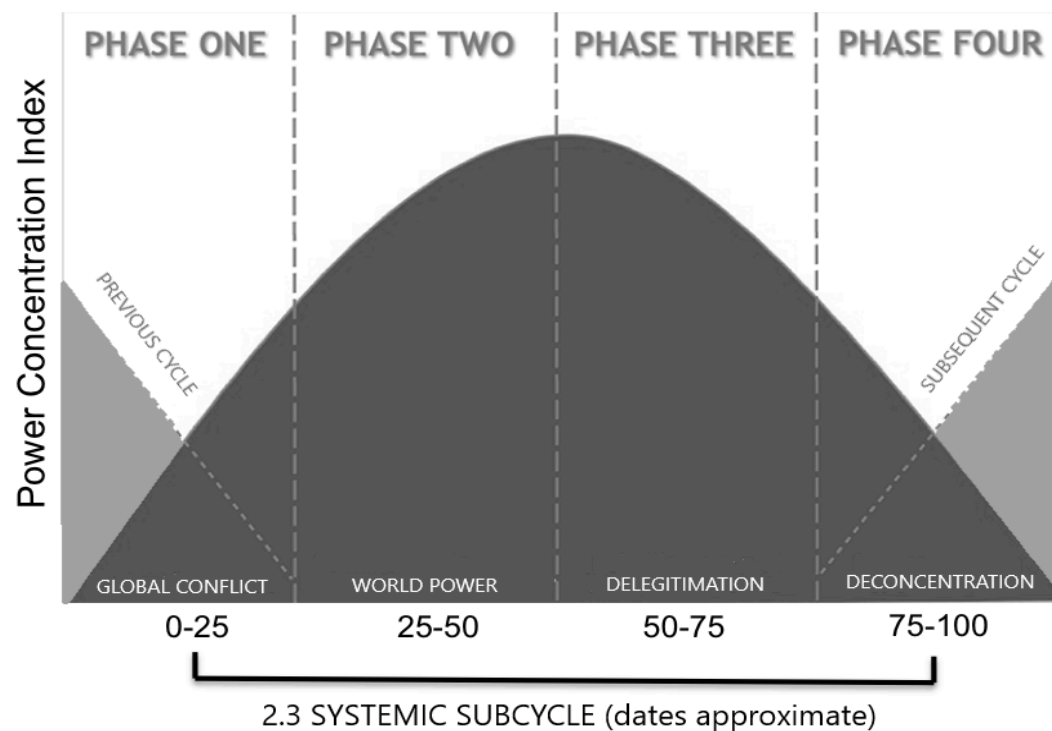


Figure 2.3, systemic subcycle visualized. Note the overlap during the GCP and that World Powers only reach their relative zenith between the World Power and Delegitimation phases, 20-30 years after the conclusion of the GCP.

Chapter 3

HISTORICAL REVIEW

The Long 16th Century and the First Long Cycle

“There is nothing so weak and unstable as a reputation for power that is not backed up by its own army.”

“Quod nihil sit tam infirmum aut instabile quam fama potentiae non sua vi nixa.” - Niccolo Machiavelli (Machiavelli 1999, 56)

3.1 LONG CYCLES IN APPLICATION, POWERS AND PHASES

Modelski chose cycles as his framework because the concept was both extremely well formulated by several millennia of prior scholarship and because of its simplicity, which is both intuitive to the reader and less presumptuous than more complex models. Policymakers and their respective governments must be assumed to be largely rational, meaning that inasmuch as a twentieth-century foreign ministry resembles a sixteenth-century enlightened despot's cabinet of foreign councillors, and inasmuch as the means of mobilizing a response to a similar ultramarine situation in 1909 resemble those policy options available in 1588, their policy decisions will somewhat parallel each other. When logical constraints are constant, the logical thinker chooses consistently. This argument is aesthetically appealing because it is universal as much as it is dangerous for the same reason; it enables comparison between the abortive oligarchic coup of Athens in 411 BC with a similar failed Soviet Putsch in 1991 or between any other set of historical events with similar institutional framing (Thucydides 1972, 8.52). However, the validity of such comparisons depends on the strength of their specificity: political pressures on the Politburo must be compared to those facing

Athenian Strategi, the nature of Alcibiades' demagoguery must be compared to the Glasnost and Perestroika of General Secretary Gorbachev, and a thousand such other considerations, a list growing more numerous the more temporally and culturally distant each event is. The five Long Cycles and their assertions of repeatability, given their global scope and cumulative length of 493 years, had to be analyzed on similar complex grounds in historical context. The first empirical component of this project was therefore to (A) investigate if Modelski's nine Great Powers merit their positions, (B) align the alternating subcycles to the Global Conflict Phases in order to determine how well they follow real geopolitical events, (C) compare Global Conflict phases to similar Great Power conflicts to determine if they really serve a unique systemic purpose.

3.2 DO THE GREAT POWERS DESERVE THEIR RANKS?

The term "Great Power" is a very subjective one until some quantitative meter-stick is introduced in order to actually measure "greatness". Thankfully, Modelski's attached book *Seapower in Global Politics* (1988), an academic collaboration with William R. Thompson, repeatedly mentioned in *Long Cycles in World Politics* offers several- the most important being: an oceanworthy navy. Modelski abhors the term hegemon not only because of its moral implications inherited from the Greek philosophers, but furthermore because those connotations of a vast and dominating empire do not suit his Great Powers who rule the sealanes and channels first and any great landmasses second, if at all. Judging by a combination of (A) oceanworthy heavy ships, (B) expeditionary financial means and (C) a capable international network of owned and leased ports, there are only nine Great Powers in a 493 year period where other historians using other metrics would have found twenty (Modelski & Thompson 1988, 21).

Of these nine Great Powers, only two retain their status as such throughout the five cycles: Britain [meaning England and then later the United Kingdom] and France. They join Portugal, the unexpected first World Power, and Spain, as the original four powers during the birth of the modern international order, circa the Treaty of Tordesillas and related events in 1494. Portugal falls precipitously out of favor in 1580 with a succession crisis which sees it temporarily unify with its neighbors, Castille and Aragon, only for the fifth great power to rise about the same time with its 1585 alliance with Queen Elizabeth I of Britain (Modelski 1987, 76). The Netherlands enjoys a brief reign as a commercial hegemon before Britain emerges from the wars of King Louis XIV [hereafter referred to as the Ludovican Wars] as the ruler of the waves, fading from both World Power and Great Power status by the time the Treaty of Utrecht is signed. The Treaty of Utrecht is also a death-knell for Spain as an independent Great Power, as its colonial empire now depended on capricious French support. At the same time, the sixth Great Power emerges in the cold eastern rim of the Northern European Plain. The Tsardom of Russia, led by Peter the Great, was fresh from victory in the Northern Wars. Its privileged access to the Baltic, Black Sea and eventually, Sea of Japan, would soon make it a Great Power by default. The last three powers arrived well after the French Wars of Revolution had concluded in the late 19th Century, Imperial Germany and its Kriegsmarine, Meiji era Japan, and finally the United States after debuting its Great White Fleet (Manley 2024).

The nine Great Powers appear as follows in chronological order: Portugal, Spain, France, Britain, the Netherlands, Russia, Germany, Japan and the United States. This project looked upon this list with skeptical eyes, cross-referencing it with parallel accounts of Great Power politics and their metrics. Paul Kennedy's 1988 work on *the Rise and Fall of Great Powers* offered an extremely level comparison with its qualified assessment of states by their economic might and military means. Thanks to his differing criteria, the Great Power rosters

are startlingly different between these two works despite their academic similarities. Kennedy begins his five century analysis in 1500 instead of 1494, treating the game of Great Powers less as a self-reinforcing narrative and more a historical cross section deriving political significance from established or reasonably estimated statistics. Kennedy's Great Powers in 1500 are radically different: the Chinese Ming dynasty, the Moghul empire based on the Indian Subcontinent, the Ottoman Empire centered in the Mediterranean and the Princes of Muscovy located in present day Russia (Kennedy 1988, 31). Not a single one of Modelski's original four colonial empires appears here. Given Kennedy's far more in-depth, quantitatively sourced roster of Great Powers, should this not disqualify the entire notion of Long Cycle Theory? Not at all, for as Kennedy himself soon clarifies, the Great Powers of 1500 are all megaliths of an older, regional "world order" predating Vasco da Gama's travels around Africa or the opening of the Columbian exchange (Kennedy 1988, 25). These states, massive according to their population, land area, economic activity and military all have one common flaw- over-centralization. Safe from the cutthroat geopolitics of the neatly divided European landmass until their colonial reach had grown too powerful, all four of these states depended excessively on the capabilities of an absolute monarch: a sultan, a tsar, or an emperor. "An idiot Sultan" could cripple the nation's ability to innovate, explore, trade and colonize - Kennedy emphasizes how the Ming burned their fleets and turned inwards, how the Ottomans abandoned the idea of American colonies and how the others followed similar courses (Kennedy 1988, 11). Modelski's assertion that Great Powers are those states which can exert military and political influence over multiple continents and alter the flow of international trade without compromising their own security. Portugal accomplished this through their trade monopoly on India, the Dutch made their case via the Law of the Open Seas (Grotius 2004, 8), Britain flexed its might by enduring a pitched trade battle with Napoleon's continental system, just as the United States retains naval dominance even now

vis a vis the 700+ bases and 11 aircraft carriers that nation has in some form of active service(Kruse 2015).

Maritime innovation, financial centrality and political relevance on the open seas are therefore the ingredients for success in Modelski's view. As the global system develops over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Great Powers as reckoned by Long Cycle Theory and by Kennedy and other mid-20th-century historians such as Toynbee increasingly converge (Toynbee 1956, 313). By the dawn of the two World Wars, all lists are one and the same. A consensus on economic and political power is finally reached. Therefore, the Great Power Status of the United States from 1914 to the end of the sample period, that of Britain from 1713 to 1945, that of Russia from 1708 to to the end of the sample period, that of France from 1600 to 1945, that of Spain from the 1516 accession of Charles the Fifth of the Habsburg line to their defeat in 1713, that of Japan from 1870 to 1945 and that of Germany from 1870 to 1945 were all accepted without further questioning once other literature was consulted. Likewise, two World Power cycles went unquestioned: that of the American Century from 1945 to the end of the sample period in 1987 and that of the Pax Britannica lasting between 1815 and 1914. The American Century needs no introduction to a 21st Century audience. Pax Britannica, given the scale of Britain's 19th century empire upon which the sun never set and its ironclad status as the first truly 'industrial nation' (Kennedy 1988, 144) is also considered an obvious World Power for reasons of Political Economy as well as naval policy. However, the first three Cycles, those being the Portuguese century (1494-1580), the Dutch Golden Age (1580-1688), and the First British Century (1688-1792), each required further inquiry.

How, then, are World Powers set apart from the others? By making transoceanic activity functionally subject to their leadership during their respective World Power phases,

and perhaps also into their delegitimation phases. Modelski's choice of early World Powers seems almost willful; the Portuguese are the first World Power, followed by the Dutch and less controversially, the British, but even they curiously hold onto that title two consecutive Long Cycles.

British World Power status seems justified when considered in context of the two largest intraphasal wars in the Eighteenth Century, the Seven Years' War and the War of the Austrian Succession. The battles of Quiberon Bay and the English blockade of 1749, as well as the general lay of the naval campaigns in these wars, demonstrate what Modelski and Thompson's ship-counting in *Seapower in Global Politics* implies: overwhelming British Sea Power (Higonnet 1968, 87). The British rule of the waves at this time is hardly less dominant than it seemed after the battle of Trafalgar or their naval expedition to Crimea, only in the first British Long Cycle that empire manifests purely through global trade and lacks the industrial quality of its supremacy in the second Cycle.

How are the former two World Powers when the likes of Austria, the Ottomans and the Prussians never qualified even as second-rate global power? The answer is again, as shall almost always be the case in this project, of a naval character. Each choice merited targeted historio-economic investigation, as will be seen subsequently. Yet, according to Modelski, during their World Power phase, these nations commanded roughly fifty percent of the world's 'heavy' naval assets, granting each the capacity to protect trade, enforce blockades, and project power globally during its Global Power and Delegitimation phases (Modelski & Thompson 1988, 15). Remarkably, both seem to have indeed possessed this capacity not only by oceanworthy fleet size during their World Power phases, but also by the feats. Only Portugal, with its control of African harbors from the Azores to Walvis Bay and Zanzibar, had the means to battle Mamluk fleets and Ottoman ambition in the Indian Ocean circa 1516.

Likewise, during their World Power Phase circa 1620-1640, only the Netherlands could “[challenge] the Iberians for global mastery in American and East Indian as well as Western European waters” (Baugh 1989). As Spain turned inwards due to defeat abroad and rebellions at home, only the Dutch could ensure freedom of commerce in both the South China Sea and the Caribbean one century later; these feats and the logistics involved deserve recognition for the creation of a global, colonial network of commerce often associated with later nations and more recognizable Great Powers. In Modelski’s own words, Amsterdam may have never been a world capital, but it was the global metropolis, dockyard and financial center of its time (Modelski 1987, 78). The choice of Great Powers is not above criticism, but does serve Long Cycle Theory’s assertions quantitatively enough to provide a valuable lens on understanding the evolution of international order on the transoceanic plane.

3.2 IDENTIFYING THE GLOBAL CONFLICT PHASES

After identifying the participants in Global Conflict Phases, it is possible to judge their constituent wars by their systemic impact. Every conflict involving three or more Great Powers in the allotted period was considered, and three particularly noteworthy conflicts falling outside a GCP but within the 1494-1987 timeframe were singled out for further review: the Thirty Years’ War, the Seven Years’ War and the Crimean War. Each of these wars lacks one of the three criteria Modelski used to distinguish his GCPs, (1) systemic impact, (2) multiple transoceanic theaters, and (3) the involvement of three or more Great Powers.

Without the first condition, the war is not dynamic enough to serve the GCP’s systemic purpose as a cleansing agent which dismantles the old set of security arrangements, trade norms informal and legal, and related strictures so that a renewed coalition may replace them with institutions suited to the century’s new material circumstances. This, surprisingly,

disqualifies the Thirty Years' War, which rivals the later Seven Years' War in all but intercontinentality, even objectively surpassing it in terms of estimated lethality (Dobie 2019, 1851). The Global Conflict Phase preceding this calamitous conflict, referred to here as the Philippine Wars with reference to the eponymous Spanish monarchs, reached a functional conclusion with Dutch independence and Habsburg losses in the former Burgundian territories. This is temporally marked by the publication of Grotius's "Mare Liberum" and the Twelve Year's truce (Shearer 1983, 46). Given that the powers most affected are the Austrian archdukes, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and other states associated with the Holy Roman Empire which would be considered regional states at best by the Theory's stipulations, this conflict might be understood as a regional parallel to the 'world of open trade' the Dutch were advocating. The French and British were unaffected by the conflict, the Portuguese regained their independence but not their potency, and the Netherlands fought at great cost to itself and ultimate profit, but it retained its independence. Only Spain suffered a serious change of fortunes, one that would be more decisively revealed in the ensuing Global Conflict phase, the Ludovican wars whereby the French Bourbons sought to dominate Iberia and the Netherlands, as well as Europe by extension. While the impact of the Thirty Years' War should not be underestimated, it enabled rather than challenged the Dutch commercial system.

The Seven Years' War was, relatively speaking, less fatal at home but far fiercer abroad to the point that it is one of several wars to earn the moniker "World War 0" (Dobie 2019, 1853). If the British were not already considered the premier naval power of their day by Modelski's and Thompson's Naval Power Concentration Index, British victory over the Indian subcontinent might be considered a system-breaking achievement. However, Britain is considered the World Power of this time by force of its naval and commercial dominance and all this war does, in the scheme of the Systemic subcycle, is postpone the final French bid for

absolute leadership till its final defeat in the Wars of Revolution beginning in 1792. At this moment, with the decay of Spain and the Netherlands, the newly minted Russian Great Power is the only other contender, and although it is involved, it can hardly be said that its fortunes were irrevocably altered in this conflict.

Therefore, the Thirty Years' War and the Seven Years' War are both disqualified as potential Global Conflict phases due to their surprising lack of systemic impact. The former most notably helped the Netherlands, and the latter arguably positioned the English to weather the subsequent blockade, but no new powers were crowned or destroyed as in the prior three GCPs or the subsequent Seven Wars of Coalition, which saw the demographically preeminent France make its last realistic attempt at mastery of both the Oceans and the European region. The Crimean War, must also be mentioned as it technically fulfils the second and third requirements, these being serious naval engagements and 3 or more Great Powers involved. The second requirement is only met due to engagements in the Baltic and Black Seas, both of which ended without improving the Russian position in the war. The war itself stymied Russia's attempts to become a serious naval contender by preventing it from seizing the Bosphorus (Anderson 1961, 39), but favorable demographics ensured that it would return for the fifth and final recorded GCP, the World Wars, which need no explanation nor introduction on the grounds of relevance, naval significance or Great Power involvement. This same metric, while depending on Long Cycle Theory's roster, was applied to dozens of other conflicts, which shall not be named here, as well as the Global Conflict Phases themselves, with the results shown in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 GLOBAL CONFLICT PHASES AND INTRAPHASAL WARS

Global Conflict phase or Intraphasal War	Constituent Wars	Justification for Inclusion or Exclusion
GC PHASE 1 Italian and Indian Ocean Wars (1494-1516) Portugal Spain France England/Britain	ITALIAN WARS Invasion of Charles VII to Treaty of Geneva (1494 - 1516) WAR OF THE LEAGUE OF CAMBRAI (1508 - 1516) INDIAN OCEAN WARS First Luso Malabarese War to the Portuguese Mamluk Wars (1500-1516)	(1)Systemically important? Yes. Established pattern of Great Power influence in Italy through Spanish and French conquest in a critical moment. (2)Significant Oceanic Combat? Yes, relative exception. Blockades crucial to Mediterranean conflicts, Anglo-French War involved Near-Atlantic naval combat. Contact limited to European Periphery. Portuguese conflicts with Mamluks and other Indian Ocean states near exclusively naval. (3)Great power involvement of 3 parties or more? Yes, relative exception. France and Spain are heavily involved. Britain less so.
GC PHASE 2 Philippine Wars (1585 -1609) France Spain England/Britain Portugal↓ Netherlands ↑	ANGLO-SPANISH WAR (1585-1604) EIGHTY YEARS' WAR II fall of Antwerp to Twelve Years truce (1585-1609)	(1)Systemically important? Yes. Preserved British great power status, elevated Netherlands to status of an Independent State and power. (2)Significant Oceanic Combat?

		Intercontinental and naval in scope, included all major great naval powers. (3)Great power involvement of 3 parties or more? Yes, relative exception. All major powers involved. Minor colonial conflicts.
INTERPHASAL WAR Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) Netherlands France Spain England/Britain	THIRTY YEARS' WAR Numerous Wars near H.R.E. (1618-1648) EIGHTY YEARS' WAR III End of Twelve Years Truce to Treaty of Westphalia (1621-1648)	(1)Systemically important? No. Dutch Independence established after act of abjuration and Twelve Years' Truce. Austrian continental power is considered regional as any alterations. (2)Significant Oceanic Combat? Yes, but peripheral to the conflict as a whole. (3)Great power involvement of 3 parties or more? Yes, all great powers excluding Britain are involved.
GC PHASE 3 Ludovician Wars (1688-1713) Britain France Netherlands↓ Spain↓ Russia↑	WAR OF THE GRAND ALLIANCE (1689-1697) WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION Death of King Charles II to Treaty of Utrecht (1701-1713)	(1)Systemically important? End of the Dutch Golden Age and Dutch Leadership Phase, end of Spanish competitive ability. (2)Significant Oceanic Combat? Yes. Significant naval conflict in the English Channel and

		the Americas. (3)Great power involvement of 3 parties or more? Yes, France, Netherlands, England, Spain.
INTERPHASAL WAR Seven Years' War (1756-1763) Britain France Russia	SEVEN YEAR'S WAR (1756-1763)	(1)Systemically important? No. Did not end French competition for leadership, did not unseat Britain as a leading power, did not affect Russian standing. Prussian and Austrian changes not considered relevant. (2)Significant Oceanic Combat? Yes. Noteworthy naval engagements at Europe and Americas. (3)Great power involvement of 3 parties or more? Yes. Britain, France and Russia all involved significantly.
GC PHASE 4 Wars of Revolution (1792-1815) Britain France Russia	1ST COALITION ((Russians not involved)) (1792-1797)* 2ND COALITION (1798-1802) 3RD COALITION (1805) 4TH COALITION (1806-1807) 6TH COALITION (1812-1814)	(1)Systemically important? Yes. French bid for leadership ended indefinitely, coalitioning enables Pax Britannica. (2)Significant Oceanic Combat? Yes, extremely. Battle of Trafalgar, naval engagements in the Atlantic result in the loss of French and Spanish colonial empires.

	HUNDRED DAYS (1815)	(3)Great power involvement of 3 parties or more? Yes, all great powers and European regional powers involved.
INTERPHASAL WAR Crimean War (1853 - 1856) Britain France Russia	CRIMEAN WAR (1853 - 1856)	(1)Systemically important? No. Did not end Russian bid for hegemony indefinitely. Did not alter French or British standing as great powers. (2)Significant Oceanic Combat? No. Naval engagements confined to the Black and Baltic Seas. (3)Great Power involvement of 3 parties or more?
GC PHASE 5 German Hegemonic Wars (1914 - 1945) United States Britain Germany Union of Soviet Socialist Republics France Japan	WORLD WAR I (1914-1919) WORLD WAR II (1939-1945)	(1)Systemically important? Yes, extremely. Ended German bid for leadership indefinitely. Elevated United States and USSR to Great Power status. Ended French, British, German and Japanese great power status. (2)Significant Oceanic Combat? Yes. Extremely. Unprecedented combat across the Pacific and naval engagement across the Atlantic.

		(3)Great power involvement of 3 parties or more? Yes. Once again unprecedented levels of involvement, six Great Powers are involved.
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3.3 THE FIRST CYCLE IN CONTEXT

This newborn World Power quickly becomes a prisoner of its own making and cannot revise its grand strategy without revising the global strategic picture itself, because now that it is a World Power, it commands the seas and oceanic commerce by extension. It cannot longer debase its currency or change interest rates without consequence its most common currency of reserve in open ports and its military guarantees multiply as the Belgiums of the world and various proxy and client states like South Vietnam appeal to the one power logistically close enough to intervene but too distant to profit from invasion.

The most expedient means of analyzing these two interwoven subcycles is to turn to the year 1494 and, from there, measure their course through the first Long Cycle. This is the year that the political consciousness, economic concentration and technological accumulation that will drive Modelski's five cycles most obviously coalesce. The notion of a 'nation-state' was but a distant dream, only the Portuguese could claim a 'colonial empire' of any note and the world appeared quite divided into a half-dozen or more semi-isolated regions. Why would a modern global order begin in 1494 of all years, when the global population is scarcely more than four hundred million and the printing press and the cannon-mounted carrack ship represented the cutting edge of Renaissance technology (Guinane 2023, 5)?

The choice is not arbitrary. In June of 1494, three of Modelski's powers clarified their stance on the changing global stage: the kings of Portugal and Spain would split the world in twain between themselves through the Treaty of Tordesillas, and the French would make a bid for hegemony in Europe by their invasion of Italy under Charles VIII (Diffie & Winnius 1972, 172). The former decision clarified the rules of early colonial expansion and transoceanic trade with the help of Europe's premier intergovernmental organization at the time, the Pope. This established a world order independent of European regional conflict that rising powers would seek to challenge and dominate. These vast oceans are the stage whereupon Long Cycle Theory plays out and where World Powers rise and fall. The European theater is normally central to subsequent Great Power Competition, but not overbearingly so. This is why the first Global Conflict Phase includes two parallel conflict sets, each exceptional for the notable lack of a pre-existing "World Power"; no such state yet existed.

The first such wars would be Portugal's naval expeditions in the Indian Ocean, beginning with skirmishes off the Indian coast circa 1500 and concluding with the Ottoman destruction of their prospective rival in the Indian Ocean, the Mamlukes. The second set of conflicts would be the more famous Franco-Spanish contest for supremacy in Italy, or the Italian Wars. By Modelski's reckoning, the relevant conflicts here commence with Charles VIII's expedition out of Lyon and are concluded by signing of the Treaty of Brussels in 1516 (Modelski 1987, 71). The former wars served to cement Portugal as Modelski's unlikely World Power, a state chosen for its unparalleled naval dominance in oceanworthy 'heavy' vessels and early colonial preeminence. The latter wars served not to propel Spain or France into dominance, but to clarify their standing as sovereign states and cement their rivalry in Europe. By dominating all of Italy save the Papal States and Venice, this multi-decade contest

shifted the axis of European Power permanently to the North, West and closer to its oceanic face.

So concludes the first Global Conflict Phase, for although wars in Italy and the Indian continue, their systemic impact has been made. In this way, three of the four original Great Powers have made themselves known, while the fourth power England [later Britain], sits on the periphery, only interjecting in the Global Conflict Phase to humble its ancient Valoisian rivals in Paris. These four powers, Modelski's proto nation-states, did not suddenly spring from the jungles of feudal law like Athena did from the head of Zeus- each had to experience its own (1) clarification and (2) coalitioning learning phases before it could contemplate a colonial empire and oceanic trade. Portugal had already established its extant borders by 1249 and its independent identity through its conflict with Castille (Modelski 1987, 71). The crowns of Castile and Aragon were bound by blood through the literal union of their joint monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, and through the symbolic union with the defeat of the Nasrid sultanate which concluded Spain's national clarification [although it would take time for this elite union to translate into a nation state] (Godoy 1995, 75). Unlike Portugal, which was deep into its explorations of the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans, Spain had yet to coalition enough resources to contest Portuguese oceanic supremacy. The Columbian expedition marks the symbolic beginning of this process, although perhaps not the practical. As for the French and English, they were both far behind the Portuguese and Spanish in the naval and commercial departments, but both would slowly develop their nascent colonial empires through the course of the first cycle. Both likewise shared a clarifying historical experience in the bloody Hundred Years War.

Portugal's World Power phase therefore begins around 1516 as the chosen conflicts conclude and lasts until 1540 or 1550, when Spanish coalitioning aligns with Portuguese

delegitimation. It may seem strange that Portugal should be this cycle's World Power to begin with, parallel works such as esteemed Yale Historian Paul Kennedy's *Rise and Fall of Great Powers* (1988) would prefer Spain as an obvious leading Great Power. Kennedy's review of 1500, his chosen start date for the modern global order, actually mentions Spain first, the Ming Empire second and the rising Ottomans third (Kennedy 1988, 7). These latter two nations, much like later continental powers such as the Austrian and Prussian states, do not even rate as 'Great Powers' in this model's view because they do not meet its oceanic and naval criterion. Nevertheless, Modelski holds in his related collaborative project that only the Portuguese navy with its fleet of ocean-ready nau [also known as carracks or 'great ships'] could exercise control over oceanic sealanes. However, about the same time that Portugal's own Magellan completed his circumnavigation of the globe, Spanish naval power was growing after its completed conquests of the Aztec and Incan empires and Portuguese power was coming under strain- a delegitimation phase stretching sometime between the mid-1540s and mid-1560s, marked by several unsuccessful Portuguese conflicts, most notably in Morocco. Portuguese naval control had largely dissipated by 1570, when the Portuguese entered a clear deconcentration phase capped by the 1578 death of its heirless monarch, King Sebastian (Modelski 1987, 75). Following this, the Portuguese phase of deconcentration was completed in the Spanish assumption of the throne in Lisbon, a union that saw two Great Powers merge into one for a short while.

The following succession crisis, followed by a series of wars waged by the Spanish Kings Phillip the Second and Third for control over the Netherlands and religious supremacy, mark the end of the first cycle lasting 90+ years with the following phases.

1494 - 1516: Global Conflict Phase (1), Italian and Indian Ocean Wars

1516 - 1540~: World Power phase, Portuguese Naval predominance

1540~ - 1560: Delegitimation phase, financial troubles and internal wars

1560~ - 1578: Deconcentration phase, disastrous wars followed by succession crisis

1580 - 1612: Global War phase (2), Philippine Wars.

The correspondence is somewhat loose, it is hard to identify any specific starting date for the Portuguese Delegitimation phase unless some date of Spanish success is noted, as they are one of two powers who begin to clarify their Transatlantic policy during this period. 1540 is chosen given the Spanish conquest of the Incas about this time and their Amazonian conquests (Elliott 2008, 34), completing a Transcontinental American network of colonies stretching from the Spanish Main to the Pacific and bounding future Brazilian claims as a bonus. Conceptually, Portugal's loss of trade monopoly due to the opening of Spanish trade routes and subsequent, English [Cabot], French [Champlain] and Dutch [Eerste Schipvaart] expeditions does occur around this time and Portuguese relevance in the Iberian peninsula crumbles completely during the Deconcentration phase, due to a financial crisis at home worsened by a progressively more disastrous series of defensive campaigns in Morocco ending in their monarch's own death (Modelski 1987, 76). The conclusion is therefore ambiguous: while the Portuguese did possess a temporary oceanic Hegemony until the Spanish fleet surpassed their during the 1540s, they hardly acted as a World Power by the time the Spanish had completed their colonization of central America circa 1580 and ceased to even an independent state at the start of the next Global Conflict phase, the Philippine Wars for European Supremacy hinging on the rise of the next World Power- the Netherlands. At the very least, it is impossible to conceive of a colonial balance of powers without Portugal's early leadership.

Chapter 4

LITERATURE REVIEW

Long Cycles as seen in Antiquity and the 20th/21st Centuries

“...many thinkers have seen order as depending primarily on custom, habit and tradition...

Order rests rather on the human tendency to do what has always been done, to think what has been thought, and to respect what is ancient.” - Professor Glenn Tinder, University of Massachusetts (Tinder 1986, 83)

4.1 LITERARY OVERVIEW

In order to clarify Long Cycle Theory’s core assumptions, index its phases by generation, and evaluate its contemporary relevance, this project contrasted the claims of *Long Cycles in World Politics* against literature predating, paralleling, and revisiting the idea of geopolitical cycles in international politics. Having acknowledged that this thesis project’s core question about policymaker generations and GCPs [as well as Modelski’s work] were both inspired by the works of Thucydides and Polybius, a further debt to well over 50 other scholars past and present, must now be acknowledged. It was imperative to test the assertions of Modelski's model against the scholarship available to him at the time and the targeted scholarly work done since. The core tenets of (1) limited but consistent international order, (2) Great Power competition as the system supporting such order, and (3) equally consistent global wars to rebalance this competitive mechanism are daring assertions; they needed to be sounded out against competing literature before any further empirical work could be laid atop them.

The intellectual background and literature review are treated here as separate entities because the former establishes the conceptual origins and definitions of foundational notions like Great Power competition, GCPs, historicism and anacyclosis, and the latter projects them

onto a world stage more familiar to us than that of the Roman Empire or Achaemenid Hegemony. Now Long Cycle Theory's foundations are compared to their fellow intellectual constructs of the mid 20th century, the preceding works of Kondratiev, Schumpeter and Toynbee. These texts, as well as the analytical tools and narratives bequeathed to Long Cycle Theory, were measured by an empirical lens to better understand *Long Cycles in World Politics* and subsequent studies as a branch of academic thought that bridges from the end of the Long 19th Century [meaning from the storming of the Bastille in 1789 to the outbreak of World War I in 1914] and to the waning days of the Cold War and the supposed midpoint of 20th century American Delegitimation.

It would be impossible to fully detail all other works consulted herein in a timely fashion, especially as many sources on battles or wars not included in the final schema, or individuals considered but not included in the empirical indexing of policymaking generations, certainly number well over one hundred. Those sources which have been actively cited in any capacity are naturally all included in the bibliography. The unique nature of this project as a literary review and an empirical inquiry requires that (A) certain foundational works by Thucydides, Polybius and other classical scholars were consulted before the project was fully shaped, (B) a wealth of 20th century literature on the Great Powers, their wars, and other geopolitical developments relevant to the subcycle were considered as the empirical section was outlined, (C) numerous other biographical and official texts on birth dates, entries into office and declarations of war were considered during the empirical research, and (D) finally a collection of more recent works critical of Long Cycle Theory specifically or Neorealist/World Systems theory generally were consulted in order to round out a structural analysis of the Theory and its assumptions.

4.2 TEXTS CONSULTED BEFORE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Long Cycle Theory is, in many respects, itself a Neorealist synthesis of History, Historiography and Political Economy. This paper made the internal distinction between implicit sources of a primarily ancient character, which are once referenced and repeatedly utilized in *Long Cycles in World Politics*, and explicit sources of a more modern character that are repeatedly referenced in context throughout the narrative as intellectual supports or secondary sources of information. The former group is best represented by the *History of the Peloponnesian War* and *Polybii Historiae*, already discussed in so much detail. The latter group is best represented by Toynbee's *A Study in History* (1956), and *The Long Wave in Economic Life* (1983).

Thucydides and Polybius inspired this project, which eventually found its outlet in Long Cycle Theory. After this new historical framework was chosen, each work was consulted in its original context, and a chain of historical research began that alternated back and forth between the 1987 work and the ancients, gradually progressing through the classical era. Aristotle's ideas were considered but not implemented, as Polybius's concept of anacyclosis more closely resembled Modelski and Toynbee's ideas of elite succession. Plato's works, as expressed by Glenn Tinder, did not contribute much to the historical analysis of Long Cycle's three assertions. However, they did at least inform its epistemology and how this project conceived of 'myth' as a potential pitfall (Tinder 1986, 196). Furthermore, examination of Cicero and Plutarch's insights on the conflicts that led to the rise of Rome and the fall of the Greek and Macedonian Hegemons were considered, but not implemented. Even Galileo's 1632 *Dialogue on the Two World Systems* was consulted, for its parallels with Modelski's work. The historical review turned next to the works of Grotius, *Mare Liberum* (Grotius, Hakluyt & Welwood 2004, 50), and *The Laws of War and Peace in Three Books*, where the notion of proto-international law as expressed in Dutch Naval Policy and the later Treaty of Westphalia lent credibility to the first claim of Long Cycle Theory, that despite all

appearances, World Power even in a country as slight as the Dutch could produce an order on the High Seas to be expected more from a Lockean World than the anarchy of traditional Realists (Wendt 1999, 73). All other works written before 1800 and consulted, but not referenced in this text were sourced from Sommerville and Santoni's excellent text, *Social and Political Philosophy*, which covers the works of Plato, Locke, Jefferson, Thoreau, and other political thinkers who influenced the subjects of Long Cycle Theory, Great Power elites if not the Theory itself (Sommerville & Santoni 1963, 15).

Those ancient works help deconstruct Modelski's macro-historical framework by breaking it apart into digestible concepts whose evolution could be traced from the first philosophers and historians to Baroque historiographies and finally to the late 20th century work in question. Hegemonic transfer, Anacyclosis, elite cultural transmission, Jeffersonian generations and 'true myth' as they are explained above are the fruits of this particular study (Sommerville and Santoni 1963, 30). In terms of parallel 20th century scholarship; Modelski avails himself of five works in particular: Alfred Mahan's historical *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (Mahan 1890, 1), Modelski and Thompson's own calculations on Naval Power Concentration in *Seapower in Global Politics* (Modelski & Thompson 1988, 105), Toynbee's profound and civilizational work *A Study in History* (Toynbee 1956, 1), Kondratiev's Long Waves in Economic History (Grinin et al 2016, 16) and, finally, Schumpeter's *Business Cycles* (Schumpeter 1938, 1). Each work was consulted in its original text, save that Mahan's historical review on Seapower is divided into a volume that was consulted in part and not full and due to issues of access, while Kondratiev's theory was explored in quotations and through more recent studies like the more contemporary Grinin et. al tests or Jacob Van's 1983 book *The Long Wave in Economic Life* which proceeds from the Russian's original works in the 1920s, updated for the more Neorealist, positivist mentalities of the 1980s that Modelski's work reflects everywhere (Van 1983, 37). *Seapower in Global*

Politics was consulted primarily as an ‘in-text’ empirical index which was used to gauge if the Great Powers actually deserved to be described as Oceanic states of note and found to be without any flaw, save a lack of clear data on the size of Portuguese navies due to the destruction of records in the eighteenth century catastrophe at Lisbon (Modelski 1987, 75). Schumpeter’s *Business Cycles* is another work that is frequently referenced in order to explain Long Cycle Theory’s ‘developmental mechanism’ which appears as demographic change, innovative clusters and industrial reform; material factors that serve to make new powers rise over the old in conjunction with good policy [Britain being the only Power who managed to adapt to the new developmental circumstances]. Although boom-and-bust cycles are referenced extensively throughout the text, they are not so heavily cited here given the abundance of scholarship on their application. Toynbee, Van and others have already tried to source the origins of this model in the long sixteenth century in such a manner that aligning it with Long Cycle Theory can easily be done in a staggered fashion. Modelski built this measure into the model itself, leaving the question of business cycles outside of this inquiry into the relationship between systemic pressures and individual agency.

In addition to those foundational, ancient texts mined for their concepts and more modern works explored for their individual statistical and historiographical contributions to *Long Cycles in World Politics*, a curious third category of works was consulted. This group included, most notably, Paul Kennedy’s *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, as well as a mix of psychological and philosophical studies either not mentioned in Modelski’s original work, or not yet created. Kennedy’s text has a clear enough role: a parallel measure of the Great Powers which could be used to test the internal validity of Modelski’s roster of Great Powers and his choice of GCP wars. Despite all the academic siThose ancient works help deconstruct Modelski’s macro-historical framework by breaking it apart into digestible concepts whose evolution could be traced from the first philosophers and historians to

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psychological support in understanding how generations transmit information to help its general view of the Theory's assertions on repeatability, as well as probing out the feasibility of the intended empirical component.

4.3 TEXTS CONSULTED DURING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Sources cited during empirical research component can be divided into one of three types, biographical accounts of the policymakers, historical accounts of the wars in each GCP, and supplementary texts from the time policymakers actually lived. The formermost category needs little explanation that will not be provided later, dates of birth and entry into office were sourced from Modelski, Toynbee and Kennedy where possible, secondary accounts where not as in the case of Godoy's account of the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs, and sometimes, simply impossible to find as was the case for many of the non-monarchial officials living in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This work required some significant translation from Spanish, German, Portuguese, Russian and frequently, Latin. Translations from Spanish and German were completed by the author of this project, using his knowledge of both languages, whereas other languages have been translated by more accomplished scholars who are duly credited in the bibliography. As for historical accounts, a host of articles on events such as the sailing of the American White Fleet (Manley III 2024), the impact of the Seven Years' War on the Wars of Revolution (Dobie 2009) and other books cited within Modelski and Kennedy's texts were used to determine how war was declared by each power and which policymakers could be considered most involved. The third category, perhaps the most intellectually stimulating, concerned relevant texts from the times; whether it be Locke's *Treatises* (Sommerville & Santoni 1963, 222) Or Niccolo Machiavelli's *the Prince* (Machiavelli 1999, 1). Similarities between the works, including assumptions on the state drive to find security, the importance of great power competition, the

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4.4 TEXTS CONSULTED AFTER EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The final category of texts consulted in this work consists of more recent criticisms, cumulatively intended to test the model's academic relevance in light of several decades of new scholarship. The first criticisms, curiously enough, come from those Realists who challenge the idea of structured historical cycles. Classical Realists such as Hans Morgenthau and Neorealists like John Mearsheimer very much agree that international politics is driven by perpetual competition, but it is competition in a Hobbesian world without orderly transitions (Morgenthau 1967, 74). While Modelski is frequently branded Neorealist himself, his acceptance of long-term order in great power competition sets him apart from the rest of the tradition and the more static views of traditional Realists. Mearsheimer and Morgenthau would object to his interpretive subjectivity. What are the markings of a Great Power? They would no doubt not be satisfied with Modelski's matrices on Naval Power Concentration and Systemic Impact, considering them far too arbitrary to be of use. Such Realists [and those Neorealist more aligned to the Offensive Subgroup] argue that anarchy ruled the ancient world in name and in fact, while only in the contemporary period has a truly international

system emerged. They would argue that even this system which has so publicly guided international discourse vis a vis the United Nations, only does so in name. Famous University of Chicago Professor John Mearsheimer's notion of anarchy derives from his assertion that "there is no higher ruling body in the international system. There is no 'government over governments'" (Mearsheimer 1994, 10). The constant competition between governments cannot be separated at the regional and international levels in the way that Modelski does, partly disentangling major continental continents from those states he calls regional powers which others consider Great. Certainly, Realist critics scoff at the notion that interstate relations on the international level of differentiation could be analyzed because the defining trait of said anarchy is the lack of information between parties, human behavior is far too variable to ever be mechanically codified across time in such a sweeping fashion.

Alternatively, Liberal thinkers, especially those writing after the fall of the Soviet Union, offer a far less fatalistic world view than one with repeating GCPs. Francis Fukuyama's *End of History* posited that liberal democracy represented the endpoint of ideological evolution, implying a break in the cycle rather than its continuation (Elliott 2008, 52). From this perspective of Liberal world order triumph, economic interdependence, international institutions, and the growing importance of non-state actors (like corporations and NGOs) suggest that nation-states are no longer the exclusive or even primary actors in international politics. While this perspective doesn't discount Modelski's view of past global order, it suggests that Long Cycle Theory may have historical validity that has since become obsolete in a more interconnected, peaceful world order.

Finally, there are several Constructivist critiques also challenge the structural determinism of Modelski's theory. Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics* introduces the idea that anarchy is subjective. Its form and level of threat are shaped by

shared ideas than any immutable sort of structure. Wendt outlines three cultures of anarchy (Hobbesian, Lockean, Kantian), suggesting that the nature of international politics is contingent on intersubjective meanings, not just material capabilities. While Modelski accepts the premise that anarchy drives competition, he asserts that cyclical order emerges through coalitions led by World Powers-a kind of ordering within anarchy. This partial alignment with Wendt's idea of Lockean Anarchy highlights both the limits and implementability of Modelski's framework within a Constructivist paradigms.

In conclusion, *Long Cycles in World Politics* provides a powerful, empirically grounded model for understanding how World Power cycles from naval state to naval state, but its relevance and accuracy are bounded within its assumptions- many other theoretical schools suggest that it has limited or no real use as historical framework in spite of this project's findings. Foundational and contemporary works offer both support and complication to Modelski's theory, while Liberal, Realist, and Constructivist critiques question its assumptions about actors, agency, and the nature of international order. Whether seen as a robust historical framework or an outdated structuralist narrative, Modelski's Long Cycle Theory should always be considered when Great Power Conflict threatens by force of its observations on Naval Power concentration and the self-affirming nature of Great Power conflict. If there are Great Powers, who are the only actors capable of manoeuvring an international system, and the only mechanism for solving difficult disputes comes in the form of a GCP, then both shall be. Great Powers will come to be recognised, and they will turn from time to time to war.

Chapter 5

EMPIRICAL WORK

Policymakers and Declarations of War

“... war is nothing but the continuation of state policy by other means.”

“...*der Krieg nichts ist, als die fortgesetzte Staatspolitik mit anderen Mitteln.*”

- General Carl von Clausewitz (Clausewitz 1832, 21. Translated by the author of this text.)

This project set out to correspond formative exposure to war among policymaking generations of the Great Powers and their subsequent decisions to enter into Global Conflict phases. These GCPS are, as previously stated in chapter 3, made distinct from ordinary wars by force of three criteria: their Systemic impact on the World Power/Great Power coalition, the intensity of transoceanic naval warfare, the simultaneous involvement of multiple Great Powers. This second empirical component sought to correspond the formative exposure to intraphasal wars among “generations” [in the Jeffersonian sense] of policymakers in relation to the macrodecision to enter the war. These generations were not defined by age or birth year, but rather by date of entry into office and prior exposure to formative political conditions during phases of intraphasal or other regional conflict. This distinction was made to test whether reduced exposure to warfare in early life correlates with greater willingness to embark on large-scale war when they reach decision-making roles. This, again, did not intend to prove a causal link between formative experience and policymaking outcomes but rather to establish a structured index of exposure, generation, and bellicose macrodecisions, one that could serve as a guideline for further inquiry. Because of the project’s limited timeframe, a complete census of policymakers was impractical. Instead, a sample of four core

policymakers per Great Power per GCP [in total ninety-two] was assembled, focusing on those most directly responsible for authorizing their state's entry into the first war listed for each global conflict phase. Even at this limited scale, the methodological difficulties in sourcing biographical information, especially for early modern policymakers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, proved to be a serious barrier.

The empirical component of this study was therefore conducted in four progressive phases, unintentionally mimicking Modelski's own Systemic subcycle. Phase one involved determining which conflicts qualified as Global Conflict Phases by applying Modelski's three principles as seen in chapter 3: Systemic change in the distribution of World Power leadership, significant naval warfare beyond a single regional theater, and the involvement of at least three rated Great Powers. Following Modelski's timeline from the first to final GCP [from again, 1494 to 1945] the Global Conflict Phases identified were: the Italian and Indian Wars [1494–1516], the Philippine Wars [1580–1609], the Ludovican Wars [1688–1713], the Wars of Revolution [1792–1815], and the finally the German Hegemonic Wars/two World Wars [1914–1945]. Other major wars such as the Thirty Years' War, the Seven Years' War, and the Crimean War were excluded as intraphasal conflicts, because each lacked one or more of Modelski's three qualifying elements. The Thirty Years' War, for example, lacked the transoceanic naval scope and systemic World Power turnover that marks the transition from one Long Cycle to another, while the Crimean War, despite the involvement of three Great Powers, did not do much to reconfigure the world system. Phase two determined who the policymakers were, based on proximity to the declaration of war and authority over the decision to enter the GCP. This included monarchs, prime ministers and other cabinet leaders, legislative leaders with formal war powers [such as presidents of senates], and foreign or war ministers, with three to four officials selected for each great power. For instance, in Phase One, King Manuel I of Portugal, Charles VIII of France, Ferdinand II of Aragon/Spain, and

Henry VIII of England, alongside their most senior ministers and commanders, were selected as those representative policymakers who brought their states into the Italian or Indian Wars. Phase three then separated these policymaker “generations” by their age of entry into political or military office, in order to better distinguish the careers of statesman/stateswoman from their adolescent development. Finally, phase four corresponded these cohorts to previous conflicts, indexing whether their formative years included direct exposure to regional or global war. This chronological mapping was intended as a preparatory geometric plotting of exposure levels against decisions to engage in global conflict, with adjustments made for life expectancy and the average professional lifespan across the centuries studied. An abortive phase five, geometric plotting, was abandoned when the sample size was deemed too small.

Four policymakers were chosen per Great Power per Global Conflict phase to create a broad subject pool in the style of previous psychological studies. This schema prioritizes those directly responsible for declarations of war: monarchs, prime ministers, legislative leaders, and foreign or war ministers. Policymakers were then organized into cohorts by entry into office, reflecting their entry in political life in an attempt to circumvent any deep personal psychological analysis on their careers may have altered their personalities and world views- exposure was indexed by prevalence of conflict before this entry into high office. This choice was inspired by previous psychological studies on intergenerational cultural transmission (Elliott 2021, 3). This study recognizes that very few policymakers with the powers to declare war saw active combat upon entry into high office, or that such men were otherwise military officials for the entirety of their relevant career. Exposure was then indexed by exposure to prior intraphasal [or significant regional wars], and then this exposure was corresponded to the cohort and the decision to support or oppose entry to war. Given the complex psychological and personal nature of these decisions involved, this project was ultimately left incomplete after attempts to plot indexed exposure revealed that the necessary

sample size would number in the hundreds and reaching this critical mass was simply not feasible. There were simply too many research restraints: firstly, the reduced sample size [still too large for individual biographical analysis], incomplete biographical information on many earlier policymakers and the inability to generate statistical significance, generally speaking. That is not to say that this quantitative element was not helpful, it is the sincere wish of this author that the quantitative model be used for other developmental vectors corresponded to Long Cycle Theory, in the hopes that if enough vectors are corresponded and contextualized, subsequent works on this topic may establish previously undiscovered causal links between macrodecisions on war and important metrics like population and Economy.

The rationale for this generational mapping is drawn from developmental psychology, and its emphasis on how formative experiences in adolescence shape later professional attitudes and decision-making (Yehuda 2001, 3). Exposure to conflict in early adulthood was hypothesized to shape policymakers' perceptions of risk and war, potentially making those who grew up in relatively peaceful environments more willing to resort to global-scale conflict when they reached positions of authority. Institutional memory, as it was handed down through bureaucracies, military chains of command, and ministerial networks, was also acknowledged as a factor. This study nevertheless refrained from assigning causal weight to these overlaps, limiting itself to simple quantitative correspondence and indexing. If such a causal connection is to be made, it will first require multivariable analysis covering all five Long Cycles, if such a thing is even statistically possible.

Policymakers identified for each phase were then sorted into cohorts based on the date they assumed their first relevant office. Their formative years, which were defined as the period from adolescence [9 to 15, depending on local coming of age ceremonies] to early official service, were cross-referenced with records of regional or global wars involving their state. For example, Portuguese decision-makers of the first cycle had formative exposure to

regional Iberian conflicts but little precedent for the systemically significant naval engagements they initiated in the Indian Ocean, while the French monarchs Charles VIII and Louis XII attained the throne in ages of regional disorder but without Systemic exposure to oceanic warfare. The design was intended to plot these correspondences geometrically to identify median relationships between low exposure and later willingness to commit to systemic conflict. Yet as the sample grew, it became evident that even the reduced dataset of ninety-two policymakers [exactly four per great power across multiple phases] exceeded the feasible scope of the project. A complete and rigorous index would require dozens, if not hundreds, of character studies to properly contextualize generational exposure across four and a half centuries, unfortunately, going well beyond the page and time limits allotted to this thesis.

The findings of the project are necessarily inconclusive, reflecting both the scope of the data required and the unevenness of historical sources. While the framework succeeded in producing a structured methodology for identifying global conflict phases and mapping policymakers into generational cohorts, the sheer volume of data needed to substantiate the hypothesis proved unmanageable within the constraints. The greatest difficulty lay in obtaining precise biographical information for early modern policymakers. For many sixteenth-century officials, records of early military service, political entry points, or personal exposure to conflict are either fragmentary or absent, limiting the ability to judge their formative contexts. Even for better-documented leaders, such as Elizabeth I or Louis XIV, connecting their exposure to earlier wars with their later macrodecisions demands interpretive leaps that go beyond the strict empirical boundaries of this project. The question of what constituted exposure posed another difficulty: should indirect exposure through court politics, financial crises, or diplomatic negotiations be weighted equally with direct battlefield experience? The project also faced difficulties in operationalizing the criteria for generational

cohorts, since entry into office could vary significantly across cultural and political systems - from hereditary succession in monarchies to bureaucratic appointments or parliamentary careers. Moreover, while the theoretical framework is clear that global conflict phases require systemic change, naval combat, and great power involvement, the line between qualifying and non-qualifying wars was not always sharp, as evidenced by the ambiguous status of the Seven Years' War, which was global in geographic reach but fell short of Systemic reordering in Modelski's sense. Taken together, these difficulties demonstrate both the ambition and the limits of the study as conducted.

As inconclusive as these results may be, the preparatory work for this project yielded several useful insights for the study of global politics and Long Cycle Theory. It distinguished the role of naval innovation and power concentration, the role that sealanes play in shaping global politics, and the distinction between the European Theater and International Politics as a whole. It proved that, albeit in a limited capacity, world power succession in a naval hegemonic sense has existed since the unfurling of the international stage and that the notion of Thucydides' trap still serves scholars to this day. As strange as it may seem, tiny nations like the Netherlands and Portugal, with the right combination of policy, finance and favorable geography, were able to lead the world into its respective exploratory and commercial eras. This is a fact often underrepresented in traditional accounts of Great Power succession and competition. Development depends on innovation as much as demographics, in other words. Yet the attempt to correspond generational exposure to war with the macrodecision to enter a GCP remains incomplete, perhaps for future scholarly work to finish. The limited sample of policymakers, the lack of intergenerational links, the lack of room for complex psychological and biographical analysis mean that these results cannot sustain any sort of robust correspondent conclusion, let alone a causal one. A truly comprehensive study would need to index every policymaking generation across the entire

1494–1495 period, including near-miss conflicts that did not escalate to the level of a GCP, such as the intraphasal wars. This study would require a much larger timespan and scope than available here, but the design itself remains promising as a template. This project should therefore be understood less as a complete study and more as a methodological pilot on how future works might index Modelski's wheel of war and peace.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

LONG CYCLE THEORY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

“But just as the wheels of the Long Cycle continue to turn, so the study of this process goes on. Even if the basic outlines are in place, the framework is likely to receive additional enrichment, and like the system it attempts to model, it may also experience evolutionary growth.” - George Modelski (Modelski 1987, 215)

Those reading this text soon after its publication will find themselves in a world governed by international law, at least in name. The laws of this order, stemming from a thousand treaties and embodied through an army of intergovernmental organizations, are united in their mutual mission “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” (United Nations 1945, 1). In theory, these readers live in a world where trade is conducted through a series of “reciprocal and mutually advantageous arrangements” (World Trade Organization 1995, 1) rather than a mercantilist inclination to “inflict... injuries on [enemy] trade and thus undermine [their] morale” (Anderson 1961, 34). They should be preserved from the threat of another Global Conflict phase by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which forbids any “act of aggression which, by its character, gravity and scale, constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations” (International Criminal Court 1998, 10). These treaties, conceived in the devastation following the deadly German Wars for Hegemony, were intended to prevent the cycle of increasingly fatal Great Power competition from turning once more (Modelski 1987, 46). In this world, the United

Nations should be the perpetual sovereign that frees the nation-states of the world from the burden of ensuring “international peace and security” by means of their own military force and influence (Morgenthau 1967, 106). In this way, the Systemic subcycle should be defunct; in theory, there is no present need for a new World Power to supplant American might and lead a revised coalition of Great Powers into a hypothetical sixth Long Cycle.

Of course, this Kantian image of a world where “the victory of democracy and capitalist economics” has ensured an economic interdependence and geopolitical tolerance is visibly threatened by commercial as well as actual military conflict (Elliott 2008, 31). As might be expected of the Deconcentration phase of American Power, projected to occur roughly between the distant year 2000 and 2030, trade conflicts and other “conditions that precede major conflicts are higher than they have been since the end of the Second World War” (Global Peace Index 2024, 4). This overlap should not be ignored, but it must also be considered in the context of the original text; Modelski published *Long Cycles in World Politics* before the collapse of the USSR seemed inevitable. Still, given the grim circumstances, one must be thankful that Long Cycle Theory only presupposes that Global Conflict phases occur because war appears to be the most logical possible macrodecision at the time to those policymakers with the means to declare their national participation. There is no law of human nature described therein, no myth or inescapable sense of destiny. While the institutions brought forth by American preeminence in 1945 and expanded after the collapse of the Soviet Union must be seriously revised if they are to survive the developmental changes of the past half-century, there are more multilateral channels available now than ever to enable such nonviolent behavior.

The empirical component of this project was unable to establish a statistical correspondence between formative exposure to war among Great Power policymakers in the lead-up to Global Conflict phases, not because the quantitative results contradicted this

possibility, but because they were simply too scarce to draw one conclusion or the other. The hidden question here is ‘what role does psychology play in supplementing practical incentive towards war’? Is the decision to engage in global war simply a logical conclusion, or is that decision impacted by experiential factors that might be classed under cultural transmission or a lack of intergenerational trauma that influenced prior Statesmen/women (Yehuda 2001, 5)? If a causal answer can be found to this broader question through any further empirical research, this project will have far exceeded its original aim in rehabilitating Long Cycle Theory and world systems in contemporary academic discourse. Such an answer could be sought through a modern Kondratiev wave analysis of modern ‘Great Powers’ using Grinin, Korotayev, and Tausch’s 2016 model (Grinin et al. 2016, 14). This project itself may lead to a more elaborate biographical study with a far broader sample base in the same vein as this thesis’s empirical component. A psychological analysis of the same persons on grounds of cultural transmission, trauma or egotism might achieve similar results. Whatever the approach, any further illumination will enable the academic community of today and tomorrow to better use Long Cycle Theory as an analytical framework for Modern History and perhaps, even as a methodological tool in contemporary studies in Political Science.

Modelski’s Long Cycle Theory asserts that international politics have been ordered, that this order was derived from Great Power competition centered around cycles of World Power, cycles borne from and ended by repeating phases of Global Conflict. These phases, each deadlier than the last, occurred because states were either unable or unwilling to adjust the institutional frameworks built around the declining power of the day in a nonviolent manner. Declining Powers predictably refuse to surrender their position, while Rising Powers are eager to seize their moment; Thucydides’ ancient model, interpreted through the lens of interlocked systemic and learning subcycles, explains that part of international geopolitics which economic theory cannot (Grinin et al 2016, 14). If, in the words of Russian president

Vladimir Putin, a “circle of states advocating a just world order and ready to resolutely defend their legitimate rights” stands are ready to act where the United Nations and contingent intergovernmental organizations cannot (Teslova 2024), then there are many geopolitical hot zones that are poised to erupt. War in Ukraine continues in spite of ICC warrants, the South China Sea continues to inspire trade wars despite the WTO’s best efforts, and in many other regional conflict zones around the globe, potential beneficiaries of a more multipolar stand ready to profit from American withdrawal. It is to be hoped that developmental changes in the world order, such as the burgeoning global population coupled with the onset of new technologies like the internet, which bring the common citizens of all states closer together, shall offer new means of resolving these disputes rather than new avenues for their violent contestation.

Such troubling questions must be taken up by further scholarly work. This project concludes with the assertion that Long Cycle Theory’s three core assumptions on order, in spite of many valid criticisms of Realist, Constructivist and Liberal origin, past and present, hold. Portugal and the Netherlands, in a limited naval sense laid out by *Seapower in Global Politics* and previous works by Mahan and Thucydides, did indeed rule the ‘international system’ in the sense that such a thing existed on the high seas, outside and beyond the confines of regional competition in Europe (Mahan 1890, 3). These comparatively tiny nations hold a prestigious rank besides the British Empire and the American alliance system that has, until recently, defined international geopolitics almost exclusively in this narrow sense. This realisation should not fundamentally alter how European history is understood, although it is very helpful in understanding how and where global commerce and related colonial empires developed in conjunction with the regional politics of the European continent. Deadly conflicts such as the Thirty Years’ War and Seven Years’ War may not rank as GCPs in reference in this ocean-centric framework, but that does not diminish their

importance in the European theater, it only reminds us that the past five centuries, the past five Long Cycles, may have been borne out of a collective European identity crisis but they have evolved into a genuine global stage which includes and surpasses continental geopolitics. The World Powers, the Global Conflict Phases, therefore, come and go with regularity, but what does the cycle signify? This is an open-ended question that, inasmuch as it is symbolic, may never be answered. But inasmuch as it is a practical question, the political scientists and historians of today must at least attempt an answer.

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