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Due to the shortage
of space it turned out to be impossible to mark in the scheme above all the
relationships.
For example, defeats by external enemies and growth of banditry lead to
further declines in state revenues; increasing severity of famines leads to
growth of banditry, which in its turn contributes to the rise of rebellions.
Only some peasants who loose their lands become tenants.[1]
As was shown by Nefedov (2002a; 2004), it does not make sense for a landlord to
rent out his land in plots barely sufficient to provide subsistence for a
tenant and his family. As the standard rent rate in China was 50%, such plots would be
at least twice as large. Hence, if two poor peasants having minimum size plots
each have to sell their land, only one of them will be able to accommodate
himself in his village as a tenant. The other will have to accommodate himself
in some other ways. One of the possibilities was to find an alternative
employment in non-agricultural sector, e.g., in cities. As was suggested
by Nefedov, the very process described above would in fact tend to create new
possibilities for such employment, as landowners were more likely than poor
farmers to buy goods produced in cities. This is confirmed by historical data
indicating that the fastest growth of cities (and, hence, overall sociocultural
complexity) tends to occur during the last phases of demographic cycles.
However, not all the product paid by tenants to the landlords would find its
way to those landless who tried to accommodate themselves in the
non-agricultural sector of economy; hence, some of them would tend to accommodate
themselves through illegal means, thus, leading to the growth of banditry.
Other important relations not indicated in the scheme are the negative
feedbacks between famines, infanticide etc. and population growth.

With respect to the
relationship Elite Overpopulation â€“ Overstaffing of the state apparatus â€“
Decreasing ability of state to provide relief during famines the following
illustration seems to be relevant:
"By Chia-ch'ing times
(1796Â â€“1820 â€“ A.K, A.M., D.K.) this vast grain administration had been
corrupted by the accumulation of superfluous personnel at all levels, and by
the customary fees payable every time grain changed hands or passed an
inspection pointâ€¦ The grain transport stations served as one of the focal
points for patronage in official circles. Hundreds of expectant officials
clustered at these posts, salaried as deputies (ch'ai-wei or ts'ao-wei)
of the central government. As the numbers of personnel in the grain tribute
administration grew and as costs rose through the eighteenth century, the fees
payable for each grain junk increased accordingly. Where in 1732 fees had
ranged from 130 to 200 taels per boat, by 1800 they had grown to 300 taels, in
1810 to 500, and by the early Tao-kuang period (1821), to 700 or 800
taels" (Mann Jones and Kuhn 1978: 121).

Note that we are dealing here with a system that had
been extremely effective during earlier phases of the cycle:
"In the autumn and
winter of 1743Â â€“Â 1744, a major drought afflicted an extensive portion
of the North China core, resulting in a
virtually complete crop failure. The famine-relief effort mounted by the court
and carried out by ranked bureaucrats wasâ€¦ stunningly effective. Ever-normal
and community granaries were generally found to be well stocked, and the huge
resources of grain in Tongzhou and other depots were transported in time to key
points throughout the stricken area. Networks of centers were quickly set up to
distribute grain and cash, and soup kitchens were organized in every city to
which refugees fled. In the following spring, seed grain and even oxen were
distributed to afflicted farming households. As a result of this remarkable
organizational and logistic feat, starvation was largely averted, and what
might have been a major economic dislocation had negligible effect on the
region's economic growth" (Skinner 1985: 283).

Floods: "Crises in the grain transport system
were part of a general breakdown of public functions in the early decades of
the [19th] century, stemming in part from bureaucratic malfeasance.
In the case of grain transport, malfeasance merely compounded physical
difficulties in a complex canal system that was joined at its mid-point to the
Yellow River Conservancy (responsible for flood-prevention activitiesÂ â€“ A.K., A.M., D.K.). The
physical difficulties of the system stemmed from silting caused by heavy soil
erosionâ€¦ By the late eighteenth century, the bed of the Yellow
River had risen to dangerous heights, threatening the dikes and
causing observers to predict the change in its course which finally came in
1853â€¦ Carelessness, ill-advised economies and intentional negligence in the
Yellow River Conservancy had become a marked concern in official memorials
after 1780, and corruption continued to plague the administration in the early
nineteenth century. By many accounts, the aim of the water conservancy administration
appears not to have been flood prevention, but rather the keeping of a careful
balance whereby floods could occur at intervals regular enough to justify a
continuing flow of funds into the water conservancy administration. Stories of
three-day banqueting circuits and continuous theatrical performances along the
south river conservancy suggested that only 10 per cent of the sixty million
taels that annually supported the water conservancy were spent legitimatelyâ€¦ By
the Tuo-kuang era (1821 â€“ 1850Â â€“Â A.K., A.M., D.K.) the water
conservancy, like the Grand Canal, had become
a haven for unemployed bureaucrats" (Mann Jones and Kuhn 1978: 121).

It
appears important to note that the functional scheme above does not account for
negative feedbacks (e.g., the negative feedback between the growth of female
infanticide rates [ultimately caused by population pressure] and the population
growth rates). Note that not all such negative feedbacks have been adequately
spelled out even yetÂ â€“ e.g., the influence of the growth of
monasticism (caused to a considerable extent ultimately by population pressure)
on population growth rates.

Some of the mechanisms
outlined in the scheme above are rather China-specific, for example, Bringing under cultivation
marginal lands in upstream areas " Deforestation/soil
degradation in upstream areas " Silting
of the Yellow River bottom " Increasing
severity of floods " Growing
number of indicators that the dynasty has lost the "Mandate of Haven"
and should be replaced by a new dynasty " Rebellions. One could hardly find this mechanism working in, say, Egyptian political
demographic cycles (see the next issue of our Introduction to Social
Macrodynamics [Korotayev and Khaltourina 2006: Chapters 2â€“5]).

Some other factors have
countervailing effects. For example, female infanticide, on the one hand,
delays demographic collapse by decreasing population growth rate; but, on the
other hand, it speeds it up by promoting the growth of banditry, as well as
numbers of males having no chance to get married, who make ideal potential
recruits both for bandit networks and for rebel armies. Though such factors are
immensely important if we would like to model dynamics of many particular variables
during demographic cycles (for example, life expectancies at age 1 and higher
[as was convincingly demonstrated by Lavely and Wong 1998: 736â€“8])[2],
it seems possible to ignore them on the level of basic models of demographic
cycles. Hence, in the next chapter we will restrict ourselves to the modeling
of just a few of what we consider the most basic mechanisms of political-demographic
cycle dynamics.

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[1] As was shown by Shepherd (1988), this was just one of
the sources of the origins of tenancy. Another was created by the capital
investments of landowners in various land-improvement schemes (irrigation, land
reclamation etc.). What is more, Shepherd suggests that in Late Imperial
and especially Republican China the second source was even more important than
the first. However, his own data also indicate that during earlier cycles the
first source of tenancy was more important than in the latest periods of
Chinese history.

[2] And we believe such factors should be taken into
account in future more comprehensive models.
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