

Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from the above discussion? A number of questions have been raised which serve to focus further research. For instance, the questions of the relationship between trade and warfare and the impact of other dimensions of world-system integration on conflict and warfare patterns are yet to be answered. This indicates that research on this topic is still at a beginning. Thus the conclusions drawn here are to be understood as proposed directions for future research.

The problem needs to be tackled on different levels. These correspond to the explanations given for the failure of world-system position to explain differences in warfare patterns of the sample societies. What is needed in order to disentangle the effects of integration on patterns of conflict and warfare are empirical studies and a reevaluation of extant empirical data employing a world-system perspective. This would, for example, be the basis for arriving at hypotheses about the relationship between trade and warfare. An example for the reevaluation of extant data is the study by Ferguson (1990a) on warfare in Amazonia which I have cited above. Here warfare of the Mundurucú and other societies was found to be linked to interaction with 'Westerners'. A better empirical understanding of the interrelation of the variables in question, even though based on the inspection of a small number of cases should contribute to theory building. Hypotheses derived from these studies should eventually be tested cross-culturally.

The second conclusion I want to draw pertains to a modification of the framework laid out in world-system theory, which I have addressed above. The example of the introduction of cash crop cultivation which I have cited above makes it seem warranted to modify the theoretical framework of world-system theory to include the interplay of internal and external factors. Applying such a modified framework should lead to a better understanding of the complex interrelationship between external relations, internal factors and the combined effect on conflict and warfare.

I return to the initial question, if world-system theory can provide a theoretical framework for explanation of local level conflicts and violence. During the course of discussion it has been shown, that world-system position cannot account for differences in the frequency of internal or external warfare for the sample societies. Reasons for the failure of world-system position to explain the variation in warfare frequency were explored. This did not lead me to discard the basic idea of world-system theory, that internal processes of a given unit are not to be explained without regarding its external relations, but to a modification of the explanatory framework offered by world-system theory towards expanding the initial framework by including the interplay between internal and external features of a given social system.