

ACCELERATORS AND DECELERATORS OF GENOCIDE AND POLITICIDE

The background and intervening conditions in the structural model establish the potential for geno/politicide. A related model, also developed by us, identifies accelerators that are the immediate antecedents of systematic killings. Accelerators were specified, measured, and analyzed in a more recent comparative study of the antecedents of genocide in four episodes of the early 1990s: Rwanda and Bosnia, both of which had genocides, and Burundi and Abkhazia, where ethnic warfare did not lead, in the time-periods studied, to geno/politicide.⁵ Accelerators and decelerators are variables that are subject to short-term change. Most are loosely linked to the general conditions but are treated as independent factors. They can be self-stimulating, that is they affect each other but also have feedback functions. They act together to rapidly increase the level or significance of the most volatile of the general conditions of geno/politicide, and thus exponentially increase the likelihood that an episode will occur. These are the eight categories of accelerators used in the most recent analyses and the reasons for their inclusion. Several examples are given of specific kinds of events coded for each accelerator.

***Accelerator 1:** Occurrence of political opposition by kindred groups in neighboring countries and increases in refugee flows (including internally displaced people).*

Rationale: *There is a spillover effect when kindred groups become active. Either the regime perceives opposition as a greater threat, or conversely opposition leaders become emboldened. Refugee flows may enhance the fighting capabilities of opposition groups. They also stifle state capacity to deal with emergency situations.*

Examples: *Declarations against the government, verbal or written; riots; armed attacks.*

***Accelerator 2:** Increase in external support for politically active groups, ranging from symbolic support by sympathetic groups to transfer of arms.*

Rationale: *A distinction must be made between existing support and instances of new support. The increase in support for a targeted group is key.*

Examples: *Statements, speeches, reports issued in support of targeted group; transfer of arms or other military aid to the targeted group.*

***Accelerator 3:** Threats of external involvement against governing elites, ranging from warnings of sanctions to the threat to intervene militarily, that are not backed by action.*

Rationale: *Since there is a time lag between threats and action (or decisions not to act), we identify all critical responses by international actors. The theoretical assumption is that the greater the external threat to a regime (short of a specific plan and timetable for action), the quicker it is act against targeted groups.*

Examples: *UN or regional international organization put a crisis situation on the agenda but no action is envisioned; IO's or individual states threaten collective or unilateral military intervention with no time-table or specific plans.*