

A STRUCTURAL MODEL OF THE PRECONDITIONS OF GENOCIDE AND POLITICIDE

The first author has proposed and tested a theoretical model that identifies states at high risk of genocide and politicide. The model, which was first developed and tested in a series of comparative case studies,³ specifies international and domestic background conditions for geno/politicide, which are described below.

***The International Status and Connectedness of a Regime** are a function of its economic and political ties to other countries. Both resource-rich, high-status regimes and low-status regimes are likely to escape international scrutiny and sanctions for serious human rights violations. Low-status regimes are especially likely to be able to deal with minorities and other challengers without serious international repercussions. States with intermediate levels of economic and political interdependence face closest scrutiny of their actions and considerable risk of sanctions for gross violations of human rights.*

***Political Upheavals** are abrupt changes in the political community caused for example by the formation of a state through violent conflict, the reformation of national boundaries, or the restructuring of a regime in the aftermath of a civil war or revolutionary takeover. Upheavals threaten the security of most or all groups in society and provide opportunities for challengers and regimes to reshape the political order. Geno/politicides often occur in the aftermath of political upheavals.*

***Discrimination and Repressive Treatment** of minorities and challenging communal groups are major factors in the genesis of geno/politicide. Discrimination and repression create and reinforce polarization among groups and motivate disadvantaged groups to resist. Elites that represent and advance the interests of one communal group in a heterogenous society at the expense of others are likely to be challenged by disadvantaged groups. The greater their advantages and the narrower their support base, the greater their incentives for repressing challenging groups.*

***Weak States** are more likely to engage in geno/politicide for several reasons. They have limited resources for managing conflicts by reform or accommodation and their elites are likely to be more insecure when challenged by communal or political opponents. Both factors make elites more likely to respond with extreme repression.*

***Democracy and Autocracy:** Established democracies typically tolerate a wide range of political participation, including violent protests, and rarely use extreme repression. Autocracies are more likely to use violence and coercion to quell internal opposition. Autocratic elites who have gained and held power by violent means are especially likely to use extreme means to contain real or perceived challengers.*