Systematic Early Warning of Humanitarian Emergencies

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More than 60 communal minorities were victimized as a result of internal wars and state failures between 1980 and 1996. Two theoretical models provide the basis for systematic early warning of future victimization of communal and political groups. The potential for communal rebellion is said to be a joint function of group incentives, group capacity, and opportunities for collective action. Indicators of these concepts from the Minorities at Risk project are used to identify 73 groups at high risk of communal rebellion in the late 1990s. Genocide and politicide are attributed to background conditions (e.g. political upheaval), intervening conditions (e.g. elite fragmentation), and a short-term increase in theoretically pre-specified accelerators. Monitoring of accelerators and de-accelerators in potential crisis situations provides a link between risk assessments based on structural models and early warnings of use to national and international policy-makers. The approach is illustrated by an analysis of accelerators prior to the occurrence of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Humanitarian Emergencies

The concept of complex humanitarian emergencies or crises refers to disparate phenomena with different etiologies. For example, man-made disasters such as genocide and

ecological disasters such as floods and famines (if not artificially induced) are both termed humanitarian emergencies. Also labeled emergencies are episodes in which ethnic or revolutionary war and state repression lead to refugee flows, forced displacement of people, and massive destruction of property. Väyrynen observes that humanitarian emergencies have four aspects: warfare (mainly within states), disease, hunger, and refugee flight (Väyrynen, 1996: 16–19). Policy-makers tend to define the concept in terms of its consequences. For example, the United States Mission to the UN defines humanitarian emergencies as situations 'in which large numbers of people are dependent on humanitarian assistance ... from sources external to their own society ... and/or ... are in need of physical protection in order to have access to subsistence or

external assistance'. These situation are at-
tributed to 'internal conflicts or policies of
repressive governments' and sometimes are
'exacerbated by natural disasters. . . .' (US
Mission to the United Nations, 1996: 1).
Väyrynen's definition emphasizes both social
context and consequences: a humanitarian
emergency is 'a profound social crisis in
which a large number of people die and
suffer from war, disease, hunger, and dis-
placement owing to man-made and natural
disasters, while some others may benefit
from it' (1996: 19).

For the purpose of this article, humani-
tarian emergencies are defined more simply
as open conflicts within states that result in
the victimization of substantial numbers of
members of ethnic or other identity groups.
They may be exacerbated by international
war and natural disasters, but their principal
and immediate cause is open conflict among
groups within states. We suggest that the
term be restricted operationally to conflicts
in which one thousand or more non-com-
batants die annually as a direct or indirect
result of open conflict. This parallels
Wallensteen's widely used definition of
armed conflicts (Wallensteen & Sollenberg,
1997).

This article is concerned with developing
better risk assessments for two types of con-
flict within states that have been responsible
for most humanitarian emergencies in the
1990s: ethno-political warfare, and genocide
and politicide. Specifically, we focus on the
communal groups that are the likely con-
tenders and victims in these conflicts. We
assume, first, that empirical theory and evi-
dence on ethno-political warfare and geno-
cide and politicide are good enough to
identify sites of potential future episodes.
That is, we can identify high-risk situations
and provide analytic tools that make it poss-
ible to track the escalation or de-escalation of
these situations. Our second assumption is
that if researchers can forecast more accu-

rately the sites and sequences of crisis escala-
tion, policy-makers will be more likely to act
early than late. The article summarizes
theory and evidence in support of the first
assumption; the problematic connection be-
tween early warning and early action is ad-
dressed elsewhere (see Davies & Gurr, 1998:
ch. 20–22; Gurr & Harff, 1996: ch. 4).

Conceptual Issues, Empirical Linkages

The literature on conflict is rich in theoreti-
cal arguments and comparative studies con-
cerning the causes and dynamics of civil war,
revolutions, protracted communal conflict,
and institutional instability. In contrast, the
theoretical and empirical literature on the
causes of humanitarian emergencies is slim.
Recent empirical work by Schmeidl and
Jenkins (Jenkins & Schmeidl, 1995;
Schmeidl, 1997) has concentrated on the
conditions that determine the extent of
refugee flows. Their results show that com-
munal conflict and genocides are major con-
tributing factors.

Another relevant study is the State Failure
project, whose objective is to identify empir-
ically the correlates of a larger set of serious
political crises.   The aim of this collabora-
tive effort, initiated in 1994 at the request of
the office of the Vice President of the United
States, is to provide an empirical basis for
risk assessments that will help policy-makers
in the advanced industrial countries antici-
pate emerging political crises at an early
stage and, it is hoped, to plan timely re-
sponses. The State Failure project is worth
detailing in several respects. The project has
systematically identified all episodes of revol-
utionary wars, ethnic wars, genocides and
politicides, and 'adverse or disruptive regime
transitions' between 1955 and 1996. Many
of the 230 episodes occurred in complex
combinations. For example, the 1994 geno-
cide in Rwanda was preceded by a revol-
utionary challenge by invading Tutsi exiles

that began in 1990 and by an abortive 1991 regime transition toward democratic power-sharing by Hutus and Tutsis. When the 230 cases were consolidated they numbered only 127 'state failures'. Second, the State Failure project has evaluated empirically the correlations between these episodes and some 600 possible causal variables – political, demographic, economic, and environmental. Many alternative statistical models were tested; they consistently identify a handful of structural variables that increase the likelihood of state failure of all types. Third, it is clear from initial results that one cannot rely on general models alone to anticipate which kinds of crises, with what magnitude of humanitarian consequences, are likely to occur. This requires more complex modeling of the causes and dynamics of specific types of state failures.[1]

The findings of the State Failure project help justify the focus of this article on ethnic warfare and genocides and politicides. Our approach to theoretical explanation begins with the concept of political upheaval as developed by Harff (1986, 1987), which captures the essence of the structural crises and societal pressures that are preconditions for these and other kinds of conflicts. Political upheaval is defined as an abrupt change in the political community caused, for example, by the formation of a state through violent conflict, when national boundaries are redrawn, or after a war is lost. Types of political upheaval include revolutions, anti-colonial rebellions, separatist conflicts, coups, and regime transitions resulting in the ascendancy of political elites who embrace extremist ideologies. International wars and political upheavals have been shown in empirical and comparative case-studies to be a common precondition for serious ethnic conflict (Gurr, 1994) and for genocides and politicides (Fein, 1993; Krain, 1997; Licklider, 1995; Melson, 1992; Rummel, 1995). Analysis of sequences of conflict in the state failure cases that began between 1955 and 1996 provides further evidence of these linkages. Of 60 ethnic wars, 30 began within four years of the onset of major political transitions or of revolutionary conflict, as follows:

4 followed the onset of international wars
13 followed independence or territorial transfers,
12 followed the occurrence of abrupt and disruptive regime transitions,
5 followed the onset of revolutionary wars.[2]

The impact of international war, regime transitions, and internal warfare on genocides and politicides is even more pronounced. Of 35 genocides and politicides that began between 1955 and 1996, all but two followed the occurrence of political upheavals, ethnic warfare, or both:

27 (77%) were preceded by international wars, regime transitions, revolutionary wars, or a combination of several such upheavals as follows:
5 followed the onset of international war,
6 followed independence,
11 followed the occurrence of abrupt and disruptive regime transitions,
13 followed the onset of revolutionary war.

[1] The authors of this article directed a research team at the University of Maryland that compiled information on cases of state failures, building on their own and others' comparative research. The larger study was commissioned by the Central Intelligence Agency's Directorate of Intelligence in response to Vice President Gore's request and was carried out by a Task Force consisting of academic experts, data collection and management specialists, and analytic specialists from Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). The findings of the study are being published; see Esty et al. (1998) for an overview of initial results. The enumerations reported here are based on an update completed in early 1998. The list of cases will be made available on a university-based website in late 1998.

[2] Four ethnic wars are double-counted because they began following two kinds of transitions and conflicts.

Table I.   Minorities Targeted in State Crises and Communal Wars of the 1980s and 1990s[1]

Country	Groups	Years of open conflict	War victims	Displaced	Communal	Repress	Genocide/politicide
Europe							
Yugoslavia	Kosovar Albanians	1988 to present				X	
Azerbaijan	Armenians	1988–94	X	X			
Croatia	Serbs	1991–96	X	X			
Georgia	Abkhaz	1991–93	X	X			
Bosnia	Muslims	1992–95	X	X	X		X
Bosnia	Croats	1992–95	X	X	X		
Bosnia	Serbs	1992–95	X	X			
Russia	Chechens	1994–96	X			X	
Middle East and North Africa							
Iraq	Kurds	1961 to present	X	X		X	X
Iraq	Shi'is	1975 to present	X			X	
Israel-OT	Palestinians	1967 to present		X		X	
Lebanon	Palestinians	1967–91	X	X	X		
Morocco	Saharawis	1975–89		X			
Iran	Kurds	1979–94	X	X		X	
Iran	Bahai's	1979–92		X		X	
Turkey	Kurds	1984 to present	X	X		X	
Asia							
Burma	Kachin, Karen, Shan, Mon	1961 to early 1990s	X	X		X	
Burma	Rohingya Muslims	1993–94		X		X	
China	Tibet	1953 to present		X		X	X
China	Uighurs (East Turkomen)	1980 to present		X		X	
India	Nagas	1950s–96	X		X		
India	Tripuras	Late 1970s to present	X				
India	Sikhs	1982–95	X				
India	Bodos, Assamese	1989 to present	X	X	X		
India	Kashmiris	1990 to present	X	X	X		
Indonesia	East Timorese	1975–96	X	X		X	
Pakistan	Mohajirs	1983–96	X		X		X

Table I. *continued*

Country	Groups	Years of open conflict	Principle Types of Victimization[2]				
			War victims	Displaced	Communal	Repress	Genocide/politicide
Africa South of the Sahara							
South Africa	Blacks	1950s–90		X		X	
South Africa	Xhosa, Zulu	1990–96			X		
Ethiopia	Eritreans	1960–91	X	X		X	
Ethiopia	Oromo	1960s to present	X	X		X	
Ethiopia	Tigreans, Afars	1975–1991	X	X		X	
Angola	Ovimbundu	1975–94	X		X		
Zimbabwe	Ndebele	1980–87	X			X	
Sudan	Dinka, Shilluk, Nuba, others	1983 to present	X	X	X	X	X
Chad	Southerners	1985–94	X			X	
Liberia	Gio, Mano	1985–90	X			X	
Somalia	Isaaq clan	1988–91	X				X
Liberia	Mandingo, Krahn	1990–91			X		
Mali	Tuareg	1990–94	X				
Kenya	Kikiyu, Luo, Luhya, Kisii	1991–93		X	X	X	
Congo-Kinshasha	Luba of Kasai, Banyarwandans	1992 to present		X	X		
Rwanda	Tutsi	1993–94		X		X	X
Burundi	Hutus	1993 to present	X		X	X	
Latin America							
Guatemala	Mayans	1966–95	X	X		X	X
Nicaragua	Miskito	1981–90	X	X			

[1] All groups that suffered serious adverse effects in 'state failures' and communal wars underway at any time between 1980–96 (from the State Failure project and Gurr, 1994: 369–375). Only the most serious types of victimization are categorized, based on information compiled by Harff (1992) and the files of the Minorities at Risk Project.

[2] Principal types of harm suffered by members of the ethnic group: *war victims*: civilian members of the group were targeted during warfare between rebel and regime forces; *displaced*: substantial numbers of group members were forcibly resettled or dispossessed of its lands and property; *communal*: the group was subject to widespread and deadly attacks by rival communal groups; *repress*: most or all civilian members of the group were subject to repressive policies, or were at risk of violent attacks and deprivation of freedom and property by security forces or vigilante groups acting with tacit approval of state officials; *genocide/politicide*: the groups was the target of deliberate, sustained policies aimed at its collective destruction.

Most (23 or 61%) also followed or coin-
cided with ethnic wars.

Political upheavals and internal wars, thus,
are antecedents of most humanitarian emer-
gencies. They provide the context and pre-
text for the victimization of communal and
political victims that are at the heart of hu-
manitarian emergencies. The remainder of
this article draws on our own theoretical and
empirical research to identify groups at
greatest risk of victimization in future
episodes of ethnic warfare and genocides and
politicides.

The theories outlined below identify
the background and intervening conditions
for ethnic wars and genocides and politi-
cides. We also specify accelerators of both
kinds of conflict (Appendices 2 and 3).
But the fit between our theories, evidence,
and purpose of improving risk assessments
and early warnings of humanitarian crises
is imperfect. First, we have empirical data
on indicators of ethnic war risks for politi-
cally-active communal groups but lack the
empirical data necessary to identify, in a
comprehensive way, non-communal groups
at risk of politicide. Second, we are con-
vinced that theoretical models, even with
the best available data and statistical
techniques, are not sufficient to bridge the
gap between risk assessments and early
warning. A comprehensive system for ex-
plaining and forewarning of humanitarian
crises also requires the systematic, close to
real-time monitoring of potential crisis
situations identified in risk assessments.
Without such systematic monitoring, pre-
vention is largely precluded and planning
must focus on providing humanitarian
assistance and rebuilding shattered
societies. Accelerators are tools for theory-
driven monitoring. This article reports on
aspects of pilot projects by the first author
that demonstrate their utility (see Harff,
1996, 1998) but, to date, accelerators of

humanitarian emergencies have been
studied in only a few cases.

Victimized Communal Groups

This section delineates the extent of com-
munal victimization in recent humanitarian
emergencies. The risk assessments and early
warning procedures described later are de-
signed to identify future situations in which
communal groups will be targeted in these
ways. At least 60 distinct ethnic and reli-
gious minorities were victimized in ethnic
and revolutionary wars and in genocides and
politicides between 1980 and 1996. The
groups are listed in Table I, with infor-
mation on the years of open conflict and the
principal types of victimization to which
each group was exposed. The most common
type of victimization is the deliberate target-
ing of civilian members of a group during
armed conflict between government forces
and rebels: according to our evidence 39
groups were seriously affected in this way.[3]
To cite an extreme example, hundreds of
thousands of civilian victims of ethnic war-
fare in Sudan have died as a direct conse-
quence of attacks by government forces,
militias, and rival rebel factions: executed,
massacred, bombed, shelled, starved, or
otherwise killed.

Also common has been forcible resettle-
ment of members of a group or dispossession
of their property: 38 groups were seriously
victimized in this way. Such policies may be
followed for security reasons, for example
when governments in Guatemala and
Nicaragua forced native peoples suspected of
supporting rebels into army-controlled re-
settlement camps. The Iranian government's
religiously-motivated confiscation of the
property of Baha'is during the 1980s is a
second example. The use of force to cleanse

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[3] Multiple groups have been victimized in some episodes.
The tabulations in the text refer to numbers of groups, not
episodes.

an area of a particular ethnic group, a policy followed in the former Yugoslavia, is a more extreme example. If 'cleansing' involves widespread killings, the policy is more accurately called genocide (see below).

A somewhat smaller number of groups, 23 in all, were seriously victimized in attacks by rival communal groups. Conflict between the Zulu's Inkatha movement and the Xhosa-dominated African National Congress in post-apartheid South Africa is one example; we know now that the Afrikaaner regime's security personnel encouraged Inkatha to initiate such attacks. Far more deadly are the attacks, clashes, and reprisal massacres between Hutus and Tutsis in contemporary Burundi. Elements of the regime – Tutsi military units – also are implicated in these attacks.

Thirty-five groups have been targeted by direct repression, which refers to government policies that forcefully restrict the movement and political activities of most or all members of group. Also included here are groups subject to acts of state terrorism, i.e. violent attacks and abductions by security forces or vigilante groups acting with the tacit approval of state officials (see Harff, 1986). Such policies usually aim to discourage group members from giving active support to rebels. The most severe forms of victimization occur during genocide and politicide, concepts that are discussed in detail below. Ten of the 61 groups in Table I are judged to have been systematically targeted by such policies.

Most of the victimized minorities identified in Table I have suffered multiple kinds of harm. Seven have suffered on four or all five of the dimensions: the Muslims of Bosnia; Kurds in Iraq, the people of East Timor; the Dinka, Shilluk, and Nuba in Sudan; and Mayans in Guatemala. Another eighteen have suffered three kinds of victimization: Croats in Bosnia; Palestinians in Lebanon; Kurds in Turkey; Tibetans; Bodos

and Assamese in India; regional rebels in Burma; Eritreans, Oromo, Tigreans, and Afars in Ethiopia; Kikiyu and their allies in Kenya; and Hutus in Burundi. This list includes most of the serious humanitarian emergencies of the last 15 years. Other humanitarian emergencies whose victims are on the roster include Lebanon, Liberia, Somalia, and Rwanda.

By early 1998, more than half the internal wars and state failures responsible for the humanitarian emergencies identified in Table I had ended but 15 are still underway, among them persisting conflicts in northern Iraq, northeast India, Kashmir, Sudan, Burundi, and Congo-Kinshasa. The ongoing conflicts also include several of low magnitude that have not recently precipitated mass killings and large-scale refugee flows among minorities, for example in Kosovo, Turkey, western China (Tibet and Xinjiang provinces), and Ethiopia. The question for the remainder of this article is, which of these groups – and others in similar situations – are most likely to become the victims of humanitarian emergencies in the next decade?

Two Theoretical Models

We concentrate on two specific sources of humanitarian emergencies whose dynamics are reasonably well understood: rebellions by ethnic and religious minorities (Gurr) and state policies of genocide and politicide (Harff). The potential for communal rebellion is proposed to be a joint function of group incentives for collective action, group capacity for collective action (i.e. mobilization) and opportunities for action. This argument is derived from extensive theoretical and empirical research on the causes of collective action generally and ethnic conflict specifically.[4] By contrast, genocides and

[4] See for example Horowitz (1985), Rule (1988) and Gurr (1993a). Recent empirical studies include Gurr (1993b) and Gurr & Moore (1997).

mass murder have been analysed mainly in case-studies. Some scholars have addressed these events comparatively (for example Harff, 1987; Melson, 1992); several also have tested general explanations using data on a substantial number of cases (see Fein, 1993; Harff, 1996; Krain, 1997). Here, they are proposed to be a response to background conditions such as political upheaval, strength of group identities and regime structures; intervening conditions such as characteristics of the governing elite; and accelerators (see below).

There is significant interaction among the background conditions specified in the two models outlined below. Abrupt political changes affecting the state are included in both models, for example. However, the models differ in two general respects. The model of ethno-rebellion is structural and focuses on characteristics of communal (ethnic and religious) groups, whereas the model of genocide and politicide is a dynamic one that includes state and international system characteristics plus accelerators, de-accelerators, and triggers. Accelerators are variables operationalized as events that typically increase the level or significance of the most volatile of the background and intervening conditions; moreover, they often develop a momentum of their own capable of escalating a crisis. Monitoring of accelerators, de-accelerators, and triggers provides a potential link between risk assessments based on static models and early warning of impending crises.[5]

A Risk Assessment Model of Ethno-political Rebellion

The likelihood that a politically active ethnic identity group will initiate rebellion against the state is posited to be a joint function of three conditions: *collective incentives*, the *capacity for joint action*, and *external opportunities* (see Gurr, 1999: ch. 3 for a detailed presentation). Each of these three concepts subsumes a set of theoretical arguments, each of which can be represented by various indicators. We rely here on the Minorities at Risk project's coded data on more than 200 politically active ethnic groups in the 1980s and 1990s. These data have been used to estimate structural models of the causes of ethno-rebellion in the recent past (Gurr, 1993b; Gurr & Moore, 1997; Moore & Gurr, 1997). The theoretical arguments, in combination with the analytic results, give us the basis for identifying a parsimonious set of indicators that can be used to identify groups at risk of new and intensified rebellion in the late 1990s. The theoretical argument is sketched below, along with explanations of the indicators used for risk assessments. The indicators are described in Appendix 1.[6] The theoretical framework is not likely to change but the results of future research may lead to changes in the indicators used to operationalize its key concepts.

Group Incentives for Collective Action A communal group's incentives for action are high to the extent its members are, or perceive themselves to be, disadvantaged vis-a-vis other groups with whom they interact. Historical factors – especially the loss of collective autonomy and the experience of

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[5] De-accelerators and triggers are described in below. There is a long-established inductive tradition of using events data to track international political conflicts and crises, beginning with the work of Bloomfield & Leiss (1967), Barringer (1972), Azar (1980) and McClelland (see Tomlinson, 1994). The approach proposed here, by contrast, specifies theoretically the variables that accelerate specific kinds of internal conflicts and crises, then operationalizes the accelerator variables using events data.

[6] The Minorities at Risk project tracks and analyzes the status and conflicts of politically active communal groups throughout the world. Phase I of the project reports data on 233 groups from 1945–89 (Gurr, 1993a). Phase III provides more in-depth profiles and coded data on 268 groups for 1990–95 (Gurr, 1999). The project is the source of data for most indicators used here, as shown in Appendix 1.

discrimination and repression by the state or dominant group – add to the sense of grievance that animates ethno-political movements. In other words, the greater a group's disadvantages, and the greater its members' grievances about past injustices, the greater the potential for its leaders to initiate and to persist in collective action. The empirical studies cited above show that the following indicators have been associated with past magnitudes of ethno-rebellion.[7]

(1) *History of Lost Political Autonomy.* Virtually all national and indigenous peoples and most communal contenders – groups that make up more than two-thirds of all the 268 groups now being tracked by the Minorities project – once were politically independent or were part of other political entities than the states that now govern them. The lost of autonomy is an historical fact around which myths and grievances are formed. Appeals to those myths and grievances are a potent source of mobilization for future political action. We use a complex indicator, AUTLOST, that takes into account both the extent of autonomy lost and how recently the loss was incurred. The greater and more recent the loss, the higher a group's score on the indicator (see Appendix 1).

(2) *Active Political, Economic, and Cultural Discrimination in the 1990s.* Discriminatory policies against members of an ethno-political group directly threaten group status and help perpetuate the group's disadvantages vis a vis the dominant society. We have coded information on the extent to which each ethno-political group was subject to political or economic discrimination, or to cultural

restrictions as a matter of prevailing social practice or explicit state policy in 1994–95. This provides the basis for three risk indicators described in Appendix 1.

Group Capacity for Collective Action The greater the sense of common identity in a collectivity, the greater its potential for joint action in pursuit of any objective. Identity alone is not sufficient: it needs organizational expression. The argument is similar to the contention made by Tilly (1978) that group mobilization is the precursor to collective action. Our argument emphasizes not the degree of mobilization per se (Tilly defines it as the extent to which group resources are under collective control), but two preconditions for mobilization: the extent of shared identity and the existence of organizations that give expression to group aspirations and objectives.

(1) *Strength of Group Identity.* A sense of common identity is a requisite for sustained collective action in any collectivity. The indicator used here for communal identity takes into account the extent to which a group differs from others with respect to language, lifestyles, religious beliefs, and physical appearance (i.e. 'race'). The more distinct a disadvantaged group is with respect to these traits, the greater are the inferred strength and salience of group identity to its members.

(2) *Militant Mobilization.* The organizational framework for rebellion is provided by militant (illegal) parties and movements that act in a group's name and interests. Examples are the Moro Liberation Front in the Philippines and the Shanti Bahini, the guerrilla army of the Chakma peoples of the Chittagong Hills in Bangladesh. The Minorities project profiles each significant political organization that acts on behalf of an ethno-political group, including approximations of the extent of their

[7] Repression used against a group also is expected, on theoretical grounds, to have strong effects on the potential for future rebellion. Three-stage least squares analysis of 1980s data on ethno-rebellion using measures of the extent and success of repression suggests their effects are complex and mainly indirect (Gurr & Moore, 1997). Repression's effects will be incorporated in some future risk assessments.

support. The indicator used for risk assessment, MILMOB, takes into account the number of such organizations and the maximum estimate of their support.[8]

Group Opportunities for Collective Action
Group leaders make strategic decisions about when to initiate, escalate, and terminate collective action. They do so in the context of changing political environments that shape the chances of successful rebellion. A great many factors may be argued to provide, or increase, the opportunities for successful ethno-rebellion. Two are included here.

(1) *Recency of Major Change in the Structure of the Political Regime.* The tabulations of data on cases of State Failure, above, showed that abrupt, disruptive regime transitions often preceded the onset of ethnic warfare. We assume that such changes provide a window of opportunity for ethnic contenders to press their claims. For purposes of risk assessment we use an indicator that takes account of the number of years since the last major, abrupt change in a country's 'polity', i.e. the structure of the political regime (see Jaggers & Gurr, 1995). This indicator also taps one aspect of Harff's more general concept of 'political upheaval', cited above.

(2) *Support from Kindred Groups.* Among the proximate causes of internal conflicts are provocative actions in neighboring states (see Brown, 1996: ch. 17). Our empirical results show that external support for communal rebels is a major determinant of the magnitude of ethno-rebellion. Several reinforcing dynamics are involved. First, protest and rebellion by kindred groups

tends to be contagious: it inspires emulation. Second, politically active kindred groups often provoke action by providing symbolic or strategic support. Third, kindred groups, especially those who hold power in neighboring states, are potential sources of material and military support and of sanctuary for rebel fighters once an ethno-rebellion is underway. The risk indicator constructed on these assumptions, KIN-SUPP, is described in Appendix 1.

A Risk Assessment Model for Genocide and Politicide

Genocide and politicide are defined as the promotion, execution, and/or implied consent of sustained policies by governing elites or their agents – or in the case of civil war, either of the contending authorities – that result in the deaths of a substantial portion of a communal, political, or politicized communal group. In genocides, the victimized groups are defined primarily in terms of their communal characteristics whereas in politicides groups are defined primarily in terms of their political opposition to the regime and dominant groups.

The model identifies international and internal background conditions for genocide and politicide; a set of intervening conditions; and accelerators that are the immediate antecedents of systematic killings. The model was first developed and tested in a series of comparative case-studies (Harff, 1986, 1987). Accelerators were specified, operationalized, and analyzed in a 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 genocide or politicide (Harff, 1996).[9]

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[8] Information is coded on conventional ethno-political organizations as well as militant ones. Statistical analyses (unpublished) show that the extent of militant organization correlates more closely with future ethno-rebellion than the extent of conventional organization.

[9] It has been argued Burundi was a genocide because of the high number of casualties between 1992 and 1997, an estimated 150,000. It does not meet the definition used in

International Background Conditions

(1) *Shifting Global Alliances* decrease the predictability of how the international community will react in situations of potential genocide and politicide, i.e. by either supporting, ignoring, or actively condemning repressive regimes.

(2) *Reaction to Political Upheaval.* As discussed at the outset of this article, political upheaval is a situation that involves the massive uprooting of peoples and institutions. It is exemplified by an abrupt change in the political community caused for example by the formation of a state through violent conflict, when national boundaries are reformed, or after defeat in war, in the aftermath of a civil war, or in the wake of a revolutionary takeover. Upheavals threaten the security of most or all groups in society and provide opportunities for challengers and regimes to further change the existing order.

(3) *International Economic Status of the Regime.* Status is awarded to regimes according to the number and value of resources they command. The lowest-status regimes typically have low GNPs, export raw materials (other than oil and gas) rather than manufactured goods, have little infrastructure, not much foreign investment, and a negative trade balance. High-status states are more likely to deal with ethnic and other challengers as they wish. Greater economic dependence decreases a state's ability to oppress internal opponents (other factors considered).

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this article, nor others, however, because there was no sustained policy of elimination. Rather, the killings have resulted from ethnic massacres by various groups. The case was chosen precisely because of the ethnic massacres and because Burundi has a history of ethnic violence turning into genocide, as in 1972. The Abkhaz situation was of special interest because Abkhaz leaders claimed their peoples were victims of genocide, a claim rejected by external observers.

Internal Background Conditions

(1) *Strength of Group Identities in Heterogeneous Societies.* The more traits people share, the stronger their group identity. Identity also is strengthened through shared experiences of repression. In contrast, extreme repression leads to denial and concealment of group identity.

(2) *Degree of Factionalization within a Communal Group.* Greater factionalization lessens the capacity of a group to mobilize effectively.

(3) *A History of the Governing Elite's Reliance on Coercion to Seize and Maintain Power.* Elites habituated to violent strife are more likely to use coercion to contain real or perceived challengers.

(4) *Duration and Strength of Democratic Experience.* Established democracies typically tolerate a wide range of political participation, including violent protests. Autocracies are more likely to use violence and coercion to quell internal opposition.

Intervening Conditions

(1) *A Governing Elite's Commitment to an Ideology that Excludes Categories of People Defined in Terms of Class, Belief or Ethnicity from the Universe of Obligation.* (see Fein, 1979). Here we are especially concerned with ideologies that assert the superiority of the dominant communal or national group over others.

(2) *Fragmentation/Competition within the Governing Elite.* This can lead to increased challenges by groups seeking to improve their status.

(3) *State Security Agencies that Operate with Few Legal or Institutional Restraints* increase the likelihood of flagrant violations of civil rights.

(4) *Charismatic Leadership that Generates Mass Followership*, especially by appeals to intangibles such as national pride, prestige or racial or ethnic consciousness.

(5) *Economic Hardship that Results in Differential Treatment for Disadvantaged Groups*. Sudden shifts or prolonged declines in national productivity may reduce a state's capacity to guarantee a more equitable distribution of resources.

Accelerators These are variables which are subject to short-term change and are operationalized as multiple events, outside of the parameters of the general model (see Harff, 1996). They should be loosely linked to variables in the general model, 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 genocide and politicide and thus exponentially increase the likelihood that an episode will occur.

Eight categories of accelerators have been specified for genocide and politicide. Examples are *increases in external support for political active groups; increases in size of, or degree of cohesion in, opposition group;* and *life integrity violations against targeted groups.* Each category is operationalized in terms of events reported in news accounts and other source material; Appendix 2 shows the coding categories used for early-warning research on genocide and politicides (Harff, 1996). The same approach has been used in a comparative study of the outbreak of ethno-political rebellions in the former Yugoslavia (Davies et al., 1998). An expanded set of accelerators has been devised and is being used in a retrospective early-warning study of a half-dozen African states (work directed by Harff, in progress). This effort, commissioned by the State Failure

project, includes accelerators of ethnic war and abrupt regime transitions in the 1980s and 1990s in a half-dozen African countries. The accelerators of ethnic war are listed in Appendix 3.

Minorities at Risk in the Late 1990s

The next step is to identify the politically active communal groups at greatest risk of ethno-political rebellion in the late 1990s. If a systematic early-warning system were in place, these are the groups that would be the focus of ongoing monitoring and analysis of accelerators. The high-risk groups are identified in Table II. The first column lists 73 groups that have a high composite score on the indicators (described in the preceding model of communal rebellion) of group incentives for collective action as of 1994–95. The second and third columns provide ratings of the capacity and opportunities for rebellion, respectively, for each of the groups.[10] Not surprisingly, the roster includes 18 groups, marked by asterisks and listed at the beginning of each region, that were engaged in serious armed conflicts in 1995. The other high-risk groups pose the greatest challenge for early warning: Which are most likely to initiate large-scale resistance movements or rebellions that might then provoke massive retaliation and generate large-scale refugee flows? The final column reports a Risk Index that quantifies information designed to help answer this question. The Risk Index is constructed using the eight indicators described above: four indicators of incentives, two each of capacity and opportunities. Each indicator is standardized with a maximum value of 1.0. The Risk Index is the sum of these eight

[10] All categorizations in the table are based on analysis of the eight indicators, as described in Appendix 1 and the notes to Table II. A more impressionistic list of high-risk groups, using some of the same data, appears in Harff & Gurr (1996).

standardized scores. It has a maximum poss-
ible value of 8.0 and maximum observed
value of 6.8 (for rebel groups in Sudan). The
global average on the index for all ethno-
political minorities engaged in rebellion in
1995 is 3.78.

Serious future rebellions are most likely
among groups with high incentives and
medium-to-high capacity *and* opportunities.
Those conditions are met by most of the
groups with Risk Index scores above 4.0.
They are listed below, with notes on politi-
cal circumstances and contingencies that are
likely to shape collective decisions about
future political strategies.

Albanians in Kosovo

The Serbian government and the parallel,
unrecognized government organized by
Kosovo leaders have been careful to avoid
mutual provocations since the early 1990s,
perhaps because of UN and, now, NATO
presence in the region. Ominously, militant
Albanians began terrorist attacks on Serb tar-
gets in 1996.

Kurds in Iran

Policy or regime shifts by the Tehran
government have the potential to precipitate
a new round in a rebellion that appeared to
have ended in 1994. Intensification of
fighting between Kurds and the Iraqi
government would likely have the same
effect.

Kurds in Iraq

This is a highly volatile situation in which
any shift in international support for the
Kurdish autonomous region, or further
changes in relations among the Kurdish
factions and the Baghdad regime, is likely
to precipitate new rounds of serious fight-
ing. In August 1996, the Barzani faction
formed a tacit alliance with the Baghdad
government, giving government forces an
opportunity to crush US-backed opposi-

tion groups and to attack the Talabani fac-
tion.

Palestinians

The Israeli government's retreat from im-
plementation of the 1993 autonomy agree-
ment is highly likely to trigger renewed
rebellion among Palestinians in the West
Bank. Palestinians in Lebanon (those in
refugee camps) and the Arab Israelis have
almost equally high potential for future re-
bellion. In Lebanon, the risks are checked by
Lebanese and Syrian policies of contain-
ment. In Israel and areas controlled by the
Palestinian Authority, however, the simul-
taneous intransigence and weakness of the
Netanyahu government provide both
incentives and opportunities for armed re-
sistance.

East Timorese

Indonesian carrot-and-stick policies have
largely ended a 20-year rebellion, but have
not reduced the incentives for resumption of
fighting in the future.

Regional minorities in Burma

Concessions to moderate factions of Chin,
Shan, Kachin, and Mon rebels led to a mid-
1990s lull in their regional rebellions. By
1997, significant fighting had resumed, in-
itiated by factions of these groups and by
others. In the longer run, a weakening of the
military government or increased external
support would likely lead to serious escala-
tion.

Arakanese in Burma and Lhotshampas in Bhutan

Both these groups have been persecuted by
dominant groups and some of their mem-
bers have organized externally-based opposi-
tion movements. The Bhutan government
has sought to make amends and thus defuse
the threat of future escalation, the Rangoon
government has been more indifferent.

Table II.   Minorities at Risk of Rebellion in the late 1990s

High Incentives due to Past Loss of Autonomy and Current Discrimination[1]	Group Capacity for Rebellion[2]	Group Opportunities for Rebellion[3]	Risk Index[4]
Europe			
Armenians in Azerbaijan*	Medium +	High	6.5
Serbs in Croatia*	High	High	5.6
Chechens in Russia*	High	High	4.9
Albanians in Kosovo	High	Medium +	5.8
Roma in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic	*Low +*	*Medium +*	*3.5*
Albanians in Macedonia	Low +	Medium +	3.4
Muslims in France	*Medium*	*Low*	*2.9*
Russians in Latvia	Low	Low	2.8
Middle East and North Africa			
Kurds in Turkey*	Medium +	Medium +	5.2
Kurds in Iran	Medium +	Medium +	5.1
Palestinians in Gaza and West Bank	High	High	5.0
Palestinians in Lebanon	Medium	High	4.5
Arabs in Israel	Medium	Medium	4.2
Kurds in Iraq	High	Medium	4.1
Turkmen in Iran	Low +	Medium +	4.0
Baha'is	*Low*	*Low*	*3.6*
Berbers in Algeria	Low +	Medium +	3.5
Shi'is in Iraq	Medium	Medium	3.4
Shi'is in Saudi Arabia	Low	Medium	3.0
Baluch in Iran	Low +	Medium +	2.9
Asia			
Kashmiris in India*	High	Medium	5.4
Karen in Burma*	High	Medium	4.2
Chittagong Hill peoples in Bangladesh*	Medium +	Medium	4.0
Tripura in India*	Medium +	Medium	3.8
Papuans in Indonesia*	Medium +	Medium	3.8

Table II. *continued*

High Incentives due to Past Loss of Autonomy and Current Discrimination[1]	Group Capacity for Rebellion[2]	Group Opportunities for Rebellion[3]	Risk Index[4]
Mon in Burma*	Low +	Medium	3.5
Shan in Burma*	Low +	Low	3.4
Bodos in India*	Medium	Medium	3.4
East Timorese in Indonesia	High	Medium	5.4
Tibetans in PRC	Low +	Medium	4.8
Arakanese in Burma	Medium	Medium	4.5
Lhotshampas in Bhutan	Medium +	Medium	4.5
Turkmen in PRC	Medium	Medium	4.3
Chin in Burma	Medium	Medium	4.3
Hindus in Pakistan	*Low +*	*Medium +*	*3.9*
Vietnamese in Cambodia	*Low +*	*Medium*	*3.6*
Ahmadis in Pakistan	*Low*	*Medium +*	*3.4*
Bougainvillians in PNG	Low +	Medium	3.2
Ache in Indonesia	Low	Medium	3.0
Koreans in Japan	*Low +*	*Low*	*2.7*
Africa south of the Sahara			
Southerners in Sudan*	High	High	6.8
Huru in Rwanda*	Medium +	Medium +	4.8
Huru in Burundi*	Low +	High	3.4
Mende in Sierra Leone*	Low	Medium +	3.3
Ovimbundu in Angola*	Medium	Medium	3.1
Tuareg in Niger	Medium	Medium +	4.9
Tuareg in Mali	Medium	Medium +	4.7
Kewri in Mauritania	*Medium*	*Medium*	*3.9*
Banyarwandans in Zaire	Low +	High	3.5
Zulu in South Africa	Low +	Medium +	3.3
Bushmen in Botswana, Namibia	*Medium*	*Low +*	*3.1*
Luba-Kasai in Zaire	Medium	Medium	3.0
Black Moors in Mauritania	Low	Low	2.5

Table II. *continued*

High Incentives due to Past Loss of Autonomy and Current Discrimination[1]	Group Capacity for Rebellion[2]	Group Opportunities for Rebellion[3]	Risk Index[4]
Ogoni in Nigeria	Low	Low	2.3
Luo, Kikiyu, Luhya, Kisii in Kenya	Low	Low	2.0
Latin America			
Mayans in Mexico*	Medium +	Medium	3.8
Mayans in Guatemala	High	Medium +	5.2
Araucanians in Chile	Low +	Medium	4.4
Indigenous Paraguayans	Medium	Medium	3.9
Indigenous Peruvians	Low +	High	3.9
Amazonian peoples in Brazil	Medium	Medium	3.7
Indigenous Bolivians	Medium	Medium +	3.4
Indigenous Hondurans	Low +	Medium +	3.4
Zapotecs in Mexico	Low +	Low +	3.2
Indigenous Argentinians	Medium	Medium	3.2
Miskitos in Nicaragua	Low +	Medium	3.1
Indigenous Ecuadorians	Low +	Medium	2.9

[1] Four indicators of incentives, described in Appendix 1, are used to identify groups for inclusion. They include an indicator of historical loss of autonomy and indicators of extent of discrimination against group members in 1994–95. The Table includes all groups with incentives scores that are at or above the global average for all groups engaged in serious rebellion in 1995. See note 4 on operational distinctions among low, medium, and high. An asterisk indicates groups who were engaged in major armed rebellions in 1995 (Minorities at Risk Phase III Rebellion score of 5 or higher). Groups in *italics* are at risk because of high incentives and cultural differences but lack the social cohesion and geographic concentration that ordinarily are prerequisites for sustained rebellion.

[2] The two indicators used to score groups in this column, described in Appendix 1, index the group's ethno-cultural distinctiveness from other groups and its level of militant mobilization. See note 4 on operational distinctions among low, medium, and high.

[3] The two indicators used to score groups in this column, described in Appendix 1, register the recency of major regime change and the extent of symbolic and material support from kindred groups in neighboring states as of 1994–95.

[4] To construct the risk index the eight indicators (four indicators of incentives, two each of capacity and opportunities) are standardized, each with a maximum value of 1.0. The risk index is the sum of these eight standardized scores. It has a maximum possible value of 8.0 and a maximum observed value of 6.8. The global average on the index for all ethno-political minorities engaged in serious rebellion in 1995 is 3.78. The standardized scores also are used to distinguish among levels of group capacity and opportunities. The two indicators of each factor are summed and these thresholds used to assign the ratings: 0–0.4 = low; 0.41–0.7 = low +; 0.71–1.0 = medium; 1.01–1.4 = medium +; >1.4 = high.

Tibetans and Uighurs in China

These non-Han groups have been subject to recurrent repression, the Tibetans more than the Uighurs, and to marginalization by Han settlers. Both pose serious long-term threats of rebellion; in 1996 violent protest and terrorism began among the Uighurs in Xinjiang province, reportedly encouraged by exile groups in the Central Asian republics.

Tuareg in Mali and Niger

Fragile ceasefires in both countries in 1994 brought rebellions to a conclusion; future peace depends on implementation of promised reforms.

Banyarwandans in Congo-Kinshasa

These people, who are kindred to both Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda and Burundi, were the objects of Zairian government repression and displacement in the early 1990s. Foreign military support prompted the Banyamulenge (Tutsis), in alliance with other political forces, to initiate the rebellion that ousted Mobutu's ineffective government in spring 1997. The key future question is whether the new leadership will attempt to accommodate other politically active communal groups in the eastern Congo, notably the Luba and Lunda. In mid-1997, there were reports of renewed communal attacks on Banyarwandan villages, suggesting that communal hostilities remain high.

Mayans in Guatemala

A long-term leftist-inspired rebellion has gradually subsided, partly due to democratic reforms in the late 1980s, and the potential may be further reduced by implementation of a December 1996 political pact between the government and the left.

Araucanians in Chile

Incentives for rebellion are relatively high, as they are for many other indigenous peoples in Latin America. This potential appears to be offset by a factor that is not represented in the risk factors, namely a continent-wide shift in opportunity structures. Since the late 1980s, democratic governments in a number of countries have responded positively to indigenous activism and international pressures. Dramatically positive responses to protest campaigns in Bolivia and Ecuador, for example, encourage indigenous groups to pursue their interests in the democratic arena rather than by armed rebellion.

From Communal Rebellion to Early Warning of Genocide

Resistance and rebellion by communal groups carry the seeds of further violence, violence in the forms of civil war, repression, isolated massacres or genocide. The aim here is to suggest the possible paths from rebellion to genocide or politicide, beginning with some conceptual issues.

Conceptual Issues

Most cases of genocide are not pure genocides but a mixture of genocide and political mass murder or politicide. In politicides, groups are victimized primarily because of their political opposition to the regime. In the original Genocide Convention, political groups were not identified as potential victims. Their exclusion was politically motivated because signatories such as the former USSR could have been accused of committing genocide against class victims. Conceptually, political groups were considered to be dissimilar from the ethnic, racial, or religious groups who were the primary victim groups of previous genocides. Political groups were considered more fluid: unlike identity groups, people could move in and out of political groups.

Most current scholarship recognizes that communal identities are not as permanent as once thought. The salience of communal

identities may grow or decline, depending on circumstances (see Gonzalez & McCommon, 1989; Olzak, 1992). For example, group identity can be created or sharpened as a result of intense conflict, as was the case for Eritreans and Bosnian Muslims. Genocide scholars have never excluded victimized groups because their identity was difficult to establish, because we know that sometimes groups have been targeted not because they had obvious common bonds, but because elites designated them as group targets for reasons of ideology or political expedience.

In addition, when the Genocide Convention was under consideration, oppositional activity was thought to invite repressive responses and thus political activists did not warrant international protection. But our comparative research on cases since 1945 has shown that differentiating genocide from politicide is difficult because often the victims are both ethnically defined and politically active; or defined in terms of political affiliation or class but not necessarily active (see Harff, 1992). Most cases of genocide and politicide since 1945 show somewhat different patterns than the Holocaust. Many victims have belonged to an identifiable communal group, some of whose members actively opposed the regime. Others were members of a socio-economic class that was deemed undesirable. For example, the class enemies of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia (1975–79) were clearly victims of a politicide. In contrast, the Chams, a Muslim minority, were the victims of genocide during the same period; the Khmer Rouge considered them undesirable because of their ethnic and especially their religious identity.

Gurr's minorities at risk include politically active communal groups but exclude groups whose primary identity is political. In other words, whereas Harff includes political membership as one dimension of group identity, Gurr includes only communal identity groups that are politically active. This is a significant point of departure between risk assessments of ethnic warfare and risk assessments of potential genocide. To be comprehensive, the latter must include class status and membership in political parties or in any other politically identifiable group, irrespective of its degree of activism. The complexities are illustrated by the Indonesian genocide and politicide of 1965–66. The Chinese victims were not disadvantaged or subject to significant discrimination and thus were not at risk given Gurr's criteria (although they are at risk in the 1990s, in part because of the legacy of victimization in the 1960s). Many indeed were economically privileged, and not especially politically active (except those who supported Communist organizations). Their mass murder was of course politically motivated and the victims eventually included any Indonesian – Chinese or not – who was regarded as a Communist sympathizer. Thus, whereas political activity may increase the likelihood of victimization, it is sometimes enough to be considered a member of a class, designated identity group, or political movement to be targeted for elimination. Furthermore, some victims of genocide and political mass murder may not have clear membership in any particular group – their victimization is a result of being designated expendable by the governing elite, as was the case in the victimization of 'educated' people in Cambodia 1975–79.

Genociders often are repeat offenders, elites habituated to the use of violence against unwanted or threatening members of their society. Such elites calculate that, given international apathy, repression and murder are efficient means to pre-determined goals. The point is that genocides and politicides do not just happen, they are intentional mass murders: policy decisions must be made, actions have to be planned, strategies

and tactics must be enunciated to the executioners, and international acquiescence secured.

To clarify one point of potential confusion, a genocide can also take place during a civil war. We need to understand that any organized group with the capacity and authority can commit mass murder. Croat and Serbian actions in Bosnia are symptomatic of this situation. When leaders indiscriminately target civilians and plan campaigns to massacre whole communities, or commit atrocities whose objective is to terrorize people into flight, we are describing situations that approximate genocide (for an extended discussion, see Harff, 1992). In contrast, international war is not genocide, although under its cover genocide can occur. Military strategists who plan a battle know that any action will incur casualties, but sometimes target civilians in order to terrorize their opponents – such a tactic is criminal warfare. Deliberate killing of civilians over an extended period of time, as in civil and revolutionary wars in South Vietnam, Afghanistan and Sudan, can be considered genocide or politicide, depending on the identity of the victims.[11]

Assessing the Potential for Genocide and Politicide

An early-warning model ideally would provide forecasts of impending conflicts with a high degree of certainty. It should generate warnings in advance of or at early stages in the escalation of particular conflicts. Furthermore, it should enable analysts to say

which types of conflict scenarios are most likely. We propose daily monitoring of high-risk situations to determine whether or not escalation occurs, efforts that would complement and sharpen the explanatory power of existing general models. The Minorities at Risk project, which identifies high-risk situations, thus could provide the first step in identifying impending conflicts.

The key to monitoring crisis development lies in tracing accelerators and de-accelerators. As pointed out above, accelerators are factors or variables subject to short-term change that are linked to general conditions of ethno-rebellion and genocide and politicides but are essentially independent of them. For example, both our general theoretical models postulate that a group's cohesion is important to its capacity to organize and sustain collective action. Possible indicators of group cohesion are the number of contending factions within a group, and members' acceptance of hierarchy and leadership within the group. Not included in the general models are cohesion-related factors that are subject to short-term variation, such as sudden increases or decreases in external or domestic support for the group – factors that case-studies suggest are critical for conflict escalation. Accelerator variables such as these, once specified, are then operationalized as multiple events, as illustrated in Appendices 2 and 3. The specification of accelerations can be clarified by extending the above example. The accelerator variable *Increase in External Support* (in the model of genocide and politicide) can be operationalized as statements of support, promises and delivery of material support, and promises and delivery of military support – events that are regularly reported by journalists and other informed observed and are subject to monitoring over time.

The current phase of accelerator research also includes de-accelerators and triggers. A de-accelerator is a significant cooperative

[11] In each of these wars, government forces deliberately targeted civilians who were thought to support or harbor rebels in campaigns that used bombing, shelling, massacres, and summary executions in various combinations. The episodes in Afghanistan and South Vietnam were instances of politicide, in Sudan of geno/politicide, i.e. the political killing of communal victims (see Harff, 1992, on definitional distinctions; and Harff & Gurr, 1996, for a comprehensive list of cases). Such episodes also have been characterized as war crimes or criminal warfare, especially in Vietnam.

event or shift in policy that tends to de-esca-
late crisis. Triggers are significant single
events whose occurrence is likely, given the
presence of other theoretically specified con-
ditions, to propel a crisis to the next phase of
escalation. Examples are a regional meeting
at which adversaries negotiate their differ-
ences (a de-accelerator) or the execution or
assassination of top political leaders (trig-
gers). The actual process of monitoring such
events requires an information base and the
coding of all daily events pertaining to the
country in question, including relevant
activities by and in neighboring states.
The coding includes all political and
economic events that meet the operational
definitions of accelerators, de-accelerators,
and triggers.[12]

Several aspects of accelerator analysis
need elaboration. The accelerators research
cited previously (Harff, 1996; Davies et al.,
1998; and work in progress) uses the Global
Events Data System (GEDS) at the
University of Maryland's Center for
International Development and Conflict
Management (CIDCM) to identify and
code events reported by Reuters World
Service for pre-specified periods in the cases
chosen. Of course, any other sources of in-
formation on current events can be analysed
in the same way. With regard to the techni-
calities of coding, the full text of articles is
retrieved, reviewed, and coded; on-screen
help-notes guide coders through discussion
of what and how relevant information
should be coded. Second, although most
cases studied to date were selected because
serious conflict occurred, work in progress
also includes several African control cases,

i.e. countries and periods in which no ethnic
rebellions, abrupt regime transitions, or
genocide or politicide occurred.

Finally, the procedures for monitoring
high-risk situations are essentially the same
as those used in retrospective studies. The
expectation, supported by retrospective
studies done to date, is that accelerator
events should increase in relative and ab-
solute frequency three to six months prior
to the onset of a major episode, and be
accompanied by a simultaneous decline in
cooperative activity (de-accelerators). High
concentrations of ethnic war accelerators
simultaneously increase the danger that a
genocide or politicide is in the making, be-
cause serious ethnic conflict usually precedes
genocide. In other words, we expect that an
overall increase in accelerators and a cluster-
ing of accelerators in pre-specified time
periods increase the probability that conflict
X will occur. One can also weigh accelerator
events on the basis of theory and evidence
that some kinds of accelerating events are
more important than others in moving con-
flict toward a particular outcome: this is
being carried out in work in progress. As the
number of retrospective cases increases, we
should have increasingly reliable guidelines
that analysts can use to interpret short-term
fluctuations and cumulations of accelerators
and de-accelerators.

Accelerators and De-accelerators of Genocide in Rwanda

The political process leading to the genocide
that began in Rwanda in April 1994 has
been described in detail by other scholars
(for example Clapham, 1998; Prunier,
1995). Acclerators are analytic tools for
monitoring and interpreting such processes.
Applying them to the Rwanda case illus-
trates some of the preceding points. The
eight accelerator variables identified in
Harff's model of genocide and politicide are
tracked in Figure 1 by the bars above the

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[12] As noted above, Harff (1996) analyzes accelerators in
three other situations of actual or alleged genocide. Figure
1 shows the preliminary results of a study of the interac-
tions of accelerators and de-accelerators, carried out at
CIDCM with the assistance of Michael Dravis. This study
is supported by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation to
the Conflict Early Warning Systems Research Program of
UNESCO's International Social Science Council.

Figure 1. Rwanda Accelerators and De-Accelerators
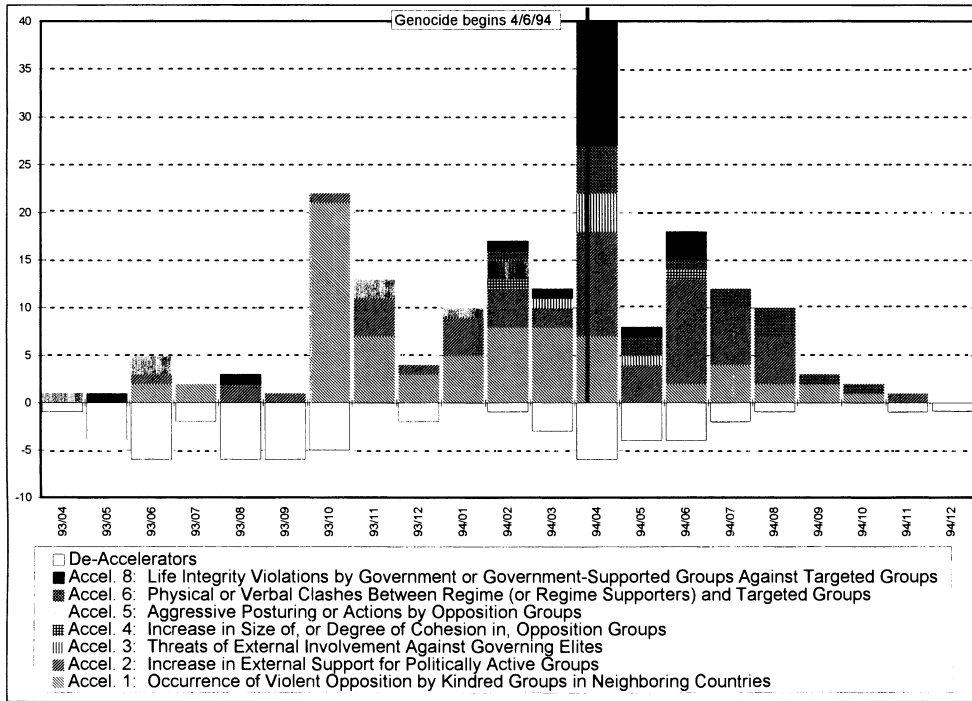
baseline. Below the baseline are the number of de-accelerator events identified in the same period: an example was the signing of the internationally-brokered Arusha Accords in 1993 that provided for some power-sharing among the contenders. Six months prior to the onset of genocide. Figure 1 shows a significant increase in overall accelerator activity. The level of de-accelerator activity is low and declines prior to the onset of genocide. Analysis of specific categories of accelerators suggests that violent action by kindred groups in Burundi (variables 1.1, 1.4, and 1.6) increasingly affected activities of Tutsis in Rwanda. In addition, cohesion among Tutsis (variable 4.2) increased in February. The assassination of prominent leaders six weeks prior to 6 April led to violent clashes between Hutus and Tutsis (variable 6.2). One month prior to the onset of genocide, external support decreased. Last-minute mediation efforts failed and 11

Belgian peace-keepers were killed. During and in the immediate aftermath of the genocidal killings, external support increased slightly – provided mainly by neighboring countries to rebel forces. International activities were reduced to verbal condemnations and literally ceased during the height of the killings. In the aftermath, various scholars and observers have pointed to ample evidence of early warnings of an armed conspiracy based on insider information (see for example Prunier, 1995: ch. 6).

The lore about the Rwandan genocide, and the wars of former Yugoslavia and other recent humanitarian crises, is that such warnings were not heeded, or that actions taken in response to warnings were inadequate. Political will to act is often lacking, true enough. The question is whether and how early-warning research might overcome this lack. There are two issues: first, whether warnings are credible enough to attract the

attention of policy-makers who are in principle prepared to take preventive action; and second, whether such warnings are early enough to allow time for planning and implementing potentially life-saving actions (see Harff, 1995). Those who are skeptical about early-warning research jump from examples of warnings unheeded to sweeping claims that policy-makers have plenty of early warnings, and that the real problem is not the absence of better early-warning systems but rather the lack of willingness of policy-makers to act upon warnings. One could equally well argue that proactive responses to impending crises have been hampered by too many people warning of impending disasters that never took place. Alternately, one could propose that the dismal failures to respond are more than offset by less visible successes. There are a number of recent European instances, for example in Macedonia and the Baltic states, in which warnings did lead to effective preventive responses.

The 'lack of political will' critique of early-warning research is based on a clear misconception of what an early-warning system requires. There has never existed an early-warning system that provides systematic forecasts of the types and timing of intrastate conflicts in general or humanitarian emergencies in particular. High-level policy-makers in the United States have urged the development of databased models and systematic, replicable analyses as means to improve their capacity to anticipate state failures. Policy-makers and researchers in the UN system who organize responses to humanitarian emergencies would like a similar analytic capability (see Ahmed & Kassinis, 1998). Proponents of systematic research in this field do not claim that theoretically-grounded risk assessments and dynamic analysis of conflict processes will lead to timely action to prevent escalation. Rather, the expectation is that better early-warning

research will help give national and international officials the more reliable assessments they need for effective, proactive policy-making.

Problems and Potentials of Dynamic Modeling

Early-warning research poses major challenges for peace and conflict researchers. Few dynamic models are in use, and we know of none that are being used to forecast civil conflicts or humanitarian emergencies in a policy setting. Some dynamic models, however, are exemplary in their capacity to assess dynamics of complex phenomena. The models used by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to assess global and local food needs are instructive. They make it possible to assess daily food needs and adjust food-assistance programs by monitoring grain production, international grain exchanges, and availability of food aid.[13] Conflict models are unfortunately less specific. We do not yet know how to avoid conflict altogether or, conversely, what types of international efforts are likely to de-escalate conflict. However, given the more precise risk assessments and theoretically-guided daily monitoring of accelerators suggested in this article, research using dynamic models can provide a greater degree of certainty about impending conflicts and, conversely, help identify those factors most successful in defusing a crisis. No modeling effort can provide all the answers – not all determinants of conflict can be known in advance or with precise accuracy. This is a problem even for FAO assessments: unexpected floods can have longer-lasting effects than anticipated; and information on food supplies is not always accurate because the FAO often must rely on self-reports of interested governments and agencies.

[13] The FAO's Global Information Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture is described by Rashid (1998).

Comparable problems of reliability are well-known to scholars who code events data from journalistic sources, but cross-checking multiple public and private sources of information should generate good enough data for analytic purposes.

There is finally an issue of validity. Initial tests of the utility of accelerator models begin by identifying known conflict events and tracing their precursor events back in time, typically over a period of two years. We know of course that the event occurred. Any such effort should also include control cases. Control cases ideally should have had an unrealized potential to cause humanitarian crises. Expectations, supported by initial results, are that control cases show lower and less concentrated distributions of accelerator activity and, furthermore, have proportionally more de-accelerators. The eventual objective is that accumulating comparative data on patterns and relative importance of accelerators in crisis and control situations will provide the basis for increasingly accurate forecasts of types and magnitudes of the conflicts responsible for humanitarian emergencies. In addition, we fully expect that future research will include the monitoring of real-time situations of impending crisis. This will provide the ultimate test of the capacity of dynamic models to increase our ability to assess the likelihood of future humanitarian emergencies.

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Appendix 1. Indicators of Risk Factors of Ethnopolitical Rebellion (Gurr)

Indicators are constructed from coded data in the Minorities at Risk dataset. Variable labels are those given in the Phase III codebook (Haxton & Gurr, 1996). The codebook and dataset are accessible on the project website at www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar.

Group Incentives

Lost Autonomy AUTLOST (Haxton & Gurr, 1996: 11). A seven-category index derived from information on the group's historical loss of autonomy. The more durable its historical autonomy, the greater the extent of loss, and the more recent the loss (prior to 1990), the higher the index score. Weights for an earlier version of the index are given in Gurr (1993b: 199).

Economic Discrimination ECDIS94 (Haxton & Gurr, 1996: 26, 68). A five-category index of the pattern of economic discrimination in 1994–95.

Political Discrimination POLRES94 (Haxton & Gurr, 1996: 24–25, 66–67). A ten-category index that combines the pattern of political discrimination with the extent of restrictions on eight categories of political activity in 1994–95.

Cultural Discrimination CULRES94 (Haxton & Gurr, 1996: 29, 69). An index of the extent of restrictions affecting seven categories of cultural activities in 1994–95

Group Capacity

Cultural Identity ETHDIFXX (Haxton & Gurr, 1996: 8–9, 83). A weighted index of the extent to which a group was distinguished from other groups in the early 1990s by language, custom, belief, and race.

Militant Mobilization MILMOB9 (Haxton & Gurr, 1996: 33–34, 73–74). An index of the number of militant organizations pursuing group interests in the early 1990s weighted by the level of support for the largest such group.

Group Opportunities

Recent Changes in Regime Structure INSTAB, an indicator of the recency of major change in the polity (the structure of the political regime) of the country in which the group is situated. These are the scale categories from the Polity III study (described in Jaggers & Gurr, 1995). The Polity III dataset can be obtained from Http://www.colorado.edu/IBS/GAD/spacetime/data/Polity.html

5: State failure as of 1996 on multiple dimensions, no effective regime
4: Last major, abrupt change in political institutions 1993–96
3: Last major, abrupt change in political institutions 1986–92
2: Last major, abrupt change in political institutions 1974–85

1: Last major, abrupt change in political in-
   stitutions 1956–73

0: Last major, abrupt change in political in-
   stitutions prior to 1956

Support from Kindred Groups KINSUPP,
a six-category indicator of the extent of sym-
bolic and material support from kindred
groups in neighboring states as of 1994–95,
coded from information in the Phase III
dataset (variables NUMSEGX, ISEGPRO9,
ISEGREB9, ISPOLK9 and ISMILK in
Haxton & Gurr, 1996: 36–37, 48, 90).
These are the scale categories:

5: Kindred groups provided sanctuary,
   material assistance, or military support in
   1994–95

4: Kindred groups engaged in armed rebel-
   lion in 1994–95

3: Kindred groups provided political or non-
   military financial support in 1994–95

2: Kindred groups engaged in ethno-politi-
   cal protest in 1994–95

1: Kindred groups were politically quiescent
   in 1994–95

0: No kindred groups were identified in
   neighboring states

Appendix 2. Accelerators of Genocide and Politicide (Harff)

Each accelerator variable is operationalized
using three to seven categories of events.
Events are scaled in approximate order of
severity. In retrospective studies, accelerating
events are coded during the 24 months prior
to the onset of geno/politicide in the expec-
tation that they will cluster during the three
months immediately preceding onset. Each
event reported in a source report is coded
separately. Notes that help coders interpret
events are incorporated in the listings.

Accelerator 1
Occurrence of Violent Opposition by Kindred

Groups in Neighboring Countries and in-
creases in refugee flows (displaced people)

1.1 Declarations against the government
1.2 Threats of physical action
1.3 Marches, demonstrations
1.4 Riots
1.5 Physical destruction of property
1.6 Physical injury: bombings, assassinations
1.7 Increase in refugee flows (numbers of
    displaced people)

Accelerator 2
*Increase in External Support for Politically
Active Groups* ranging from symbolic sup-
port by sympathetic groups to transfer of
arms. A distinction is made between existing
support and instances of new support that
occur in the Accelerator phase of the crisis.
The increase in support for a targeted group
is key. Each reported instance of support is
coded unless clearly described as only reiter-
ating an existing position, or as a regular part
of a pre-existing program of assistance.

2.1 Statements, speeches, reports issued in
    support of targeted group
2.2 Statements, speeches, reports issued
    against the government
2.3 Dispatch of peace-keepers
2.4 Transfer of non-military aid to targeted
    group
2.5 Transfer of arms or other military aid to
    targeted group

Accelerator 3
*Threats of External Involvement Against
Governing Elites,* ranging from warnings of
sanctions to the threat to intervene militar-
ily, that are not backed by action. Threats
must be issued against the government. The
number of new threats is important, as is the
type of threat and who is issuing it (e.g. US
threats of military intervention versus threats
of arms transfers from a less powerful
country).

3.1 Threat of sanctions

3.2 Threat of arms transfers to targeted group

3.3 Threat of military intervention

Accelerator 4
Increase in Size of, or Degree of Cohesion in, Opposition Group

4.1 Emergence of uncontested leadership in political opposition movement

4.2 Agreements between factions of political opposition movement

4.3 Significant new members join political opposition movement

Accelerator 5
Aggressive Posturing or Actions by Opposition Group

5.1 Declarations against the government

5.2 Threats of physical action

5.3 Marches, demonstrations

5.1 Riots

5.5 Physical destruction of property

5.6 Physical injury: bombings, assassinations

Accelerator 6
Physical or Verbal Clashes between regime (or regime supporters) and targeted groups. These events must involve reciprocal actions by both the government and targeted group – otherwise they are coded under category 5, 7, or 8. Multiple clashes may occur on any given day of the crisis.

6.1 Exchanges of verbal attacks by representatives of the regime and the targeted group (charge and response may not occur on the same day)

6.2 Physical clashes

Accelerator 7
New Discriminatory or Restrictive Policies by the Regime These are not ordered by importance, but are single events of equal importance.

7.1 Threat of new restrictions or threat of violent action by regime

7.2 Restrictions on access to education

7.3 Restrictions on access to jobs in the civil service and military

7.4 Restrictions on economic activities

7.5 Expropriation of property

7.6 Restrictions on political participation (e.g. free speech, free assembly)

7.7 Revocation of citizenship

Accelerator 8
Life Integrity Violations by Government or Government-Supported Groups Against Targeted Groups. Analysis of these events seeks to identify any rapid increase in frequency and severity, or whether severe violations are still episodic but begin to occur more systematically (for example, pogroms and massacres).

8.1 Destruction of houses or property

8.2 Attacks involving physical injury

8.3 Mass arrests or detentions

8.4 Forcible resettlement

8.5 Torture

8.6 Assassination or execution of prominent leaders

8.7 Massacres, mass executions, pogroms

Appendix 3. Accelerators of Ethno-rebellion (Harff & Gurr)

See introductory note to Appendix 2.

Accelerator 1
Violations: Attacks on or Threats to Core Symbols of Ethnic Group Identity Ethnic groups include groups that define themselves by shared ethnic, linguistic, religious, regional, and/or historical traits. This accelerator refers to actions and policies of governments, and rival groups, that increase a communal group's grievances (incentives for action) and increase a group's pressures on their leaders to act in defense of the group's status. New restrictions are emphasized. Reports on long-standing restrictive practices on a group are background.

1.1 Restrictions on group ceremonies, holidays, symbols

1.2 Restrictions on group places of assembly or worship

1.3 Restrictions on use or teaching of a group's language

1.4 Restrictions on group communication media (publications, radio stations)

1.5 Restrictions on group political activities, banning of organizations

1.6 Dismissal of group members from high-level government positions (as legislators, cabinet officers, senior civil servants, high-ranking military officers)

1.7 Physical attacks (by government or other groups) on group properties or symbols (places of worship or assembly, monuments, flags)

1.8 Unprovoked physical attacks (by government or other groups) on members of communal group

Accelerator 2

Demand Escalation: Qualitative Changes in Demands Made on Behalf of an Ethnic Group
Look for source statements which say that the demands being reported are 'new' or that leaders have escalated their criticisms.

2.1 Ethnic group leaders criticize lack of progress in meeting demands, reject proposed reforms, condemn negotiations or agreements

2.2 Ethnic group leaders use hostile, threatening, condemnatory language against government or opposing groups

2.3 Ethnic group leaders demand independence for group's region, overthrow of government or its leaders, or other fundamental changes

Accelerator 3

Group Militancy: Increases in the Disposition and Capacity of Elements within the Group to Use Force and Violence in Pursuit of their Objectives. Accelerator 2, demand escalation, is based on changes in group rhetoric. This

accelerator is based on reported changes in group actions. It reflects changes in the capacity of an ethno-political group for waging war.

3.1 Militant or radical ethnic organizations are established, or split from existing group

3.2 Ethnic group leaders express demands by large-scale demonstrations, land seizures, occupying buildings, blockading transportation routes

3.3 Ethnic organize paramilitary units, obtain domestic arms, make public shows of force

Accelerator 4

Domestic Support: Increase in Symbolic or Political Support for Group Objectives from Domestic Actors. This accelerator is likely to have significant feedback effects, by increasing group incentives for ethno-political action and by increasing leaders' perceptions that such action is likely to be effective.

4.1 Statements by government members, opposition groups, or leading public figures that encourage ethno-political groups to demand or fight for their rights

4.2 Leaders of opposition groups (ethnic, political, or others) promise to cooperate or ally with ethnic organizations to pursue common interests

Accelerator 5

External Support: Increase in Symbolic, Political, or Military Support for Communal Group Objectives from International Actors. Like accelerator 4, domestic support, this accelerator is likely to have significant feedback effects, by increasing group incentives for ethno-political action and by increasing leaders' perceptions that such action is likely to be effective.

5.1 Statements by foreign officials, representatives of regional and international organizations, or NGOs (e.g. Amnesty)

that criticize the state being coded for failing to recognize the rights of, or respond to the demands of, ethnic groups

5.2 Statements by foreign officials or representatives of regional and international organizations that encourage ethnic groups in the state being coded to demand or fight for their rights

5.3 Fact-finding missions, missions of inquiry, diplomatic delegations, civilian and military observers sent to country because of ethnic tensions

5.4 Promise of material support to ethnic organizations

5.5 Transfer of arms or other military aid to ethnic organization

Accelerator 6
Elite Instability: Disunity within the State Elite, Conflict and Inefficiency in the Conduct of Routine Government. Emphasize resignations and dismissals from executive bodies other than those that occur after national elections. They often are accompanied by reports of open conflict among members of government.

6.1 Resignations, dismissals, and reassignments of senior military officers, governors, senior officials of ruling parties

6.2 Hostile exchanges among members of the governing elite: motions of no confidence in government, personal attacks, accusations of corruption, etc.

6.3 Resignations and dismissals from executive bodies (cabinets, governing councils, juntas)

6.4 Departure or expulsion of an ethnic party or group of ethnic representatives from a governing coalition

Accelerator 7
Elite Insecurity: Responses by State Elites to Perceived Threats from Domestic Challengers Short of Open Rebellion. Signals of elite insecurity are likely to increase incentives for ethno-political rebellion (by increasing ethno-political groups' sense of threat) and to increase opportunities for successful rebellion (because they suggests a weakness in the regime). Events in these categories are coded only if they occur in the absence of armed conflict.

7.1 Expanding, reorganizing, or re-equipping internal security forces

7.2 Deploying internal security forces to counter alleged threats to public safety

7.3 Prohibition on political party activities, canceling elections, throwing out election results

7.4 Declarations of national emergencies, martial law

Accelerator 8
Occurrence of Violent Opposition by Kindred Groups in Neighboring Countries. Protest and rebellion by similar ethnic groups in nearby countries provide incentives and potential support for ethnic groups. They also may increase government insecurity. The coding categories are the same as those for Accelerator 1 of genocides and politicides and are not repeated here.

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