Accounting for genocide after 1945: Theories and some findings

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Genocide has been related in social theory to both social and political structure: i.e., plural society (ethnoclass exclusion and discrimination) and types of polities - revolutionary, totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. War has also been noted as an instigator or frequent context of genocide.

This paper reviews theoretical expectations and examines the empirical relation between genocides (and other state massacres) and indices of ethnic discrimination, polity form, and war among states in Asia, Africa and the Mid-East from 1948 to 1988. Findings show that (1) most users of genocide are repeat offenders. (2) There is a high likelihood of political exclusion and discrimination of ethnoclasses producing rebellions which instigate genocides and other state-sponsored massacres. (3) As expected, unfree, authoritarian, and one-party cc
order) are most likely to use genocide. Democratic states in this era are not perpetrators against their citizens but helpers of genocidal regimes elsewhere. One-party communist states are 4.5 times more likely to have used genocide than other states. (4) States involved in wars are many more times as likely to have employed genocide than other states. Exploring these cases, we find that genocides both lead to war and war leads to genocide through several processes. (5) The use of genocide in conflicts surveyed tripled between 1968-88 compared to the preceding score of years (10:3 cases). Genocide and genocidal regimes may be considered normal in these regions. Both the theoretical and the policy implications of these findings are considered.

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