

Notes from Sinai, J. (2022) Walter Barbara F. How Civil Wars Start – and How to Stop Them.

Anocracy, or semi-democracy, is a form of government that is loosely defined as part democracy and part dictatorship or as a "regime that mixes democratic with autocratic features". Civil wars are a distinctive feature in anocracies. Civil wars are less likely at pure democracies or autocracies. Weak governments are a feature in anocracies. They don't have the ability of democracies to change and accommodate the growing population of discontent or the brutal suppression power of the authoritarian government in its ability to suppress and control the narrative.

Ethnic Entrepreneurs: Exploit identity fault lines. Utilise discriminatory appeals and policies in the name of a particular group. Seeking political office or trying to stay in power. See Yugoslavia 1990: Milosevic and Tudjman. Exploit division in an attempt to seek control.

Strategy: Gambling for change: Effort to provoke massive change even against the odds. The catalyst for conflict could be about the economy etc. Still, they focus on the issue of the group's position and status in society, convincing the group that they are under threat from an out-group and must band together to counter the threat. Persuade the group that they are superior and 'deserve'; through incendiary language.

Average citizens are usually clear-eyed about the Ethnic entrepreneurs, know that they are not telling the truth and have their own agenda but throw their support behind them nonetheless as they perceive the threat to themselves as a greater risk of backing the ethnic entrepreneur.

If a group feels that the other could destroy them, no matter how small the chance, they will turn to the Ethnic entrepreneur, no matter how unscrupulous.

Security dilemma, people fearing violence arm themselves but in the process convince the other side that they want war. Inadvertent signalling.

The usual path from democracy to anocracy:

- Weaken individual and minority rights.
- Expand the power of government.
- Increase control of media.
- Curtail power of the judiciary.
- Remove checks and balances on the executive.

Factors that increase a group to violence:

- Political status, once held power but slowly slipping away – most important factor known as 'downgrading'. Rising populism in Western White democracies could be related to the white demographic decline.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_demographic_decline
- Left out of the political process.
- Excluded from political power.

Concept: Downgraded: A group, not necessarily along ethnic lines but that delineation is clear and easily enforceable, but a group nonetheless, which feels a loss of status to which they feel they are entitled and embittered. The core of prospect theory where people hate to lose what

they have, and they will fight to stop that loss. Exert much more energy to prevent the loss than to profit from the gain.

Less a function of wealth and more of status: People will accept poverty but not the loss of status in a place that they believe is theirs. Accept poverty but not the loss of belonging or tribe irrelevance.

‘Sons of the soil’ (SoS): Indigenous to the region or play a central role in history. Rightful heir to the place and deserving special privileges and rights. Consider themselves native. Twice as likely to start wars. Language is the lynch pin – See Franco’s exclusion of Basque, Catalan or Galician as official languages. Jobs in government are reserved for native language speakers.

James Fearon, World Bank (2010). “Not only is there no apparent correlation between income inequality and conflict, but if anything across countries, those with more equal income distributions have been marginally more prone to conflict”. The issue is not as large as it seems but it does aggravate existing anger and resentment, it makes it easier for those with wealth to suppress those without.

Globalization and urbanization (G&U) affect SoS most. They tend to be rural and less educated. G&U benefits the educated class, service-oriented workers and women. SoS’s advantage of being first on the land matters less. Furthermore, migration is a catalyst for conflict as they compete with SoS for jobs. Climate change migration is one of the huge catalysts

Yugoslavian civil war 1991-2001: Serbs, primarily rural, which outnumbered the Croats and Bosnians long resent the wealth of their city-dwelling compatriots and being looked down upon as quasi-peasants.

Syria, 2006-2010, bad drought and water policy forced 1.5m Sunnis to move into Damascus, being mostly Alawite.

Northern Ireland 1960s-1998

In 1922, the UK created Northern Ireland (NI) – the population was 2/3 Protestants and 1/3 Catholic. 1969 Protest broke out as Catholics weren’t allowed to vote in council elections because they did not own a home. The Protestants controlled home licenses. Protestants were the bourgeois merchant class and the Catholics were the proletariat. 1972, the British Army was sent in to quell the protest, shot 26 civilians and the IRA emerged to fight the civil war (“Troubles”). Once Britain took the side of the Protestants, Hope died, and violence was the only outcome that the Catholics saw. IRA was the manifestation of hope.

SoS will accept a slow decline and poverty, but they will not accept a loss of hope or a denigration of status.

Civil War Causes:

- Irrelevance of the tribe; and
- Loss of status in a place that they believe is theirs; and
- Loss of Hope.

Protest are signs that government should listen as they are usually a precursor to civil war. Last ditch attempt to fix the system.

The civil rights movement is US successful as it was a true coalition of white liberals supported by JFK and blacks as opposed to Black Panthers which FBI hunted down. The larger the population size of the group, the more attention government pays to them.

2014 Barbara Walters – Conflict Trap Study 1945-2009:

Most countries that avoid a second civil war strengthen the quality of their governance. Mozambique in 1992, moved from one-party rule to elections. Liberia, 2003,. Increased restraints on presidential power and increased judicial independence. A more transparent and participatory political environment with limited executive branch power were less susceptible to episodes of violence. Improving governance was more important than improving the economy.

Stopping civil war:

Reverse the loss of status and the loss of hope by high-quality early education, universal healthcare, higher minimum wage, and other such actions **to improve living standards and increase social mobility**. Population support comes down to who can provide the best services and most protection.

Turn down social media's volume on bullies, conspiracy theorists, bots, trolls, disinformation and hate speech.

Factionalism needs conspiracy theories to thrive:

- Stolen Elections
- Ruling elite is a bunch of stan worshipping pedophiles.
- Covid and 5G.

“Those who can make you believe in absurdities can make you commit atrocities”

-Voltaire

Basic condition of support:

‘If you make sure my family is safe, and I believe you will give me a job, I’ll support you’.
For this to be true, the person has to feel unsafe and preferably jobless or have low good job prospects.

During the Nuremberg Trails, Gustave Gilbert, an American psychologist told Herman Göring that the average person did not want to be dragged into war, Göring’s response was “Why, of course, the people don’t want war. Why would some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best that he can get out of it is to come back to the farm in one piece? ... It is always a simple matter to drag the people along .. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to greater danger”

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