

5

Stages of ***SOCIAL***

Disruption

****And why Stage 4 is key.***

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Something very interesting happened in *onPoint Tactical's* recent Advanced Urban Escape & Evasion class.

I've previously written how society tends to break down when there is a disruption in the delivery of goods and services. It is a 5-stage process that can be interrupted at any stage by the resumption of the delivery of goods and services. But if the systems are not restored, then expect the social unraveling to continue.

A brief review of the stages:

Stage 1 after the disrupting event occurs, is the cooperation phase. Everyone works together to make a bad situation as palatable as possible.

Stage 2 is self preservation. If no help arrives people become slightly suspicious of others and begin to save resources for their own family.

Stage 3 is anarchy. It occurs when the rule of law is lost, and it becomes every man for himself. Without goods being delivered, a large population competes for very limited resources. Food, water, medicine in particular are not being resupplied. So as everyone goes looking for resources, there is sure to be friction.

Stage 4 is tribalism. If no resupply occurs, then the anarchy will give way to tribalism. People will realize that there is power in economy of scale. The larger group will win out of the individual or small groups every time. So people will form a tribe based usually on physical characteristics. Large groups trump smaller groups.

Today, I want to discuss Stage 4:

A couple of weeks ago, we saw this play out during our Advanced Urban Escape and Evasion class. This class is largely spent in the “urban field.” Students are expected to find a location to safely shelter each night, and make it comfortable. The first night out, the group found safety on the roof of a retail establishment in LA. Using lockpicking skills, they found a way up. They had a very safe and comfortable night’s sleep.

To avoid allowing themselves to get patterned, they decided to sleep elsewhere the second night. As they wandered, searching for a safe spot, they came through an alley. They observed ten people in sleeping bags laying in the alley. They asked them what was up and were told that at 6am, the new Air Jordan shoes would go on sale, and that supplies were limited. The team thought waiting in line would be perfect cover for action. So they joined the line. They got a great night’s sleep and were actually

contemplating purchasing the shoes and selling them on ebay for a handy profit.

Around 5 am, a large group of 15 or so outsiders from another part of LA showed up and walked right to the front of the line and proclaimed that they were now first in line and challenged anyone who disagreed to step up. The people in line were NOT a tribe. And they were too intimidated to do anything to stop it.

Not everyone was intimidated. My class members were ready to take on these interlopers, but decided there was no way to win without it being perceived as a racial thing. So this group from a distant neighborhood got their shoes ahead of everyone else. Might makes right in this scenario.

My students reported that it was interesting to hear the people in line rationalize their unwillingness to step up. The linekeepers looked at the outsiders' shoes and calculated that the outsiders would be buying size 12 and larger; and since the linekeepers wore size 8-9, they assumed there would still be shoes in their size by the time they got inside. So they were willing to accept this bullying.

As we discussed the event later, I asked the class: If this had been a food distribution point and not shoes, how would that have affected their response? They acknowledged that it would have been bloody, and that both tribes would probably have lost people, but the advantage was clearly had by the tribe that had formed before arriving.



Bielski Partisans, Belarus 1942

So how does this play out in our breakdown model? When rule of law unravels, you'd better be well on your way to organizing your community. If you wait, other tribes will be there to step into a spot you cannot protect, to gather resources you could have gathered. Or worse, they could take your resources. It would be heartbreaking to have to look your children in the eyes and say that you were unable to procure anything for them to eat.

Our company motto is **Training Trumps Gear, and Community Trumps Everything**. You will not be successful during a failure of civility unless you have formed a community ahead of time, and are prepared to do what is necessary to ensure the survival of your tribe. In the words of my Sayoc brothers,

TRIBE MATTERS.

Incidentally, **Stage 5 of the model is the evolution of warlords**, who unify disparate tribes. While joining a tribe may be a choice, being brought under the control of a warlord is usually not. You can look at many failed states and see this model playing out. Mogadishu, Libya, even Iraq to some degree are failed states that have resorted to first tribalism, then the warlord.

(For more information on the other stages, see also:
[5 Stages of Societal Breakdown and Resilience](#))

Kevin Reeve is the founder of onPoint Tactical, llc, a pioneer in the field of Urban Survival and Urban Escape & Evasion. onPoint Tactical trains professionals and select civilians in Scout skills, Off-grid medicine, and more. Visit us on FACEBOOK, TWITTER and website.

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