

A Vacuum of Authority

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There are strong parallels between societal dynamics and what I learned during my career as an ecologist specializing in successional ecology, or how systems react to change. The change involved in transitioning from a society in which law enforcement keeps the peace by removing unlawful people presents a similar situation. And so, applying the theories of successional ecology, several possible outcomes can be generated.

When formal law enforcement by city police and county sheriff is eliminated, or perhaps only reduced in efficacy, what really happens is that a structured authority is no longer respected as the authority.

While no particular outcome can be predicted immediately, the most likely possibility is that everyday people and business owners would open fire on anyone near their homes or businesses after closing time. In short, if formal law enforcement won't secure the area, the people will deal with it themselves creating a de facto tribal war: not a civil war, because the government will have withdrawn.

Considering current events, while the existing authority would have been removed, the "protests" would still exist as a variable in the dynamics.

The effect of removing the "authority" is that there would be chaos for a time but eventually the authority would be replaced with a new authority. The replacement authority would be, for all purposes, vigilantes. As has happened in Hong Kong, where the law abiding citizens have become the protestors, if the new authority is drawn from the rioters and terrorists, the people raised in a free society will resist. The alternatives are that the 'protesters' or the 'terrorists' become the authority. For a time, it may be both, or even all three. Eventually, however, only one will dominate, at which time, the other two groups will become the protesters - possibly silent at first.

What is most important for us all to remember as these events unfold is that this is not a Left-Right, Conservative-Progressive situation. Left and Right have become diluted terms. There are protesters (wide base) and rioters (terrorists). The rioters are not necessarily the standard left or progressive. They are a new breed. They are not standard run-of-the-mill progressive liberals. They are more in the mold of Che Guevara; violent revolutionaries.