

Civil wars

But political polarization does not increase the likelihood of civil war.

What increases the likelihood of civil war is factionalization — when citizens form groups based on ethnic, religious, or geographic distinctions — and a country's political parties become predatory, cutting out rivals and enacting policies that primarily benefit them and their constituents. And nothing abets and accelerates factionalization as much as social media.

...

A central driver to factionalism has always been conspiracy theories. If you want to incite people to action, give them an “other” to target.

Barbara F. Walter,
How Civil Wars Start