

Causes of Civil Wars		
Basis of comparison	Spanish Civil War	Chinese Civil War
Timeframe	1936-1939	1927-1937, 1946-1949
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Spanish Civil War was a watershed event in the history of Spain Irreversibly tied Spain's course with that of the Nationalists' Fought between the Republicans, loyal to the Second Republic, and the Nationalists, led by General Francisco Franco Triggered by the failure of the military coup launched by Senior Africanista military officers in July 1936 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chinese Civil War was a watershed event in the history of China Irreversibly tied China's course with that of the CCP's Fought between the CCP, led by Mao Zedong, and the GMD, led by Jiang Jieshi Triggered by the launching of the White Terror by Jiang in April 1927 Resumed following the failure of Marshall's negotiations in 1946
General Argument	Long-term regional differences compounded by the economic woes of the peasants led to discontentment among the general Spanish population. A weak government unable to resolve these problems plunged Spain into a period of political instability, polarising the nation into two distinct ideological factions. The failure of the military coup launched by Senior Africanista military officers in July 1936 plunged Spain into a civil war.	Long-term ideological tensions between the CCP and the GMD had resulted in a history of violence and conflict between both parties. This was exacerbated by the GMD's weak rule over China, coupled with widespread regionalism. Poor economic conditions only served to further alienate the rural peasants from the urban elite, driving them to support the CCP. The launching of the White Terror by Jiang in April 1927 triggered the civil war.
Compare and Contrast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subtle differences in the long-term historical context Similar patterns of fragmentation and political instability Similar framework of ideological differences between opposing factions 	
Most important factor	Political polarisation that enabled ideological differences to escalate into violence	Competing ideologies between the CCP and GMD
Economic	<p>Topic Sentence Chronic economic problems plaguing Spain sparked discontentment among the rural population and disdain for the wealthy landowning classes, who were seen as exploiting the poor. This fomented deep tensions and unrest, which made civil war more likely.</p> <p><u>Long-term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weaknesses in Spain's agricultural system, the main source of employment, as well as a lack of modernisation resulted in widespread poverty among peasants There was a large gap between the rich and the poor, as land ownership was concentrated among wealthy landowners In the centre and south of Spain, land was owned in huge estates by the 'Grandees', who dominated the political system In the north, farmers only had small, uneconomically viable plots of land 	<p>Topic Sentence Significant socio-economic inequalities existed in China in the early 20th century in both the rural and urban areas. These inequalities led to the rise of the CCP and created the conditions necessary for civil conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> China had been predominantly rural since the imperial Manchu dynasty The peasants, who comprised 85% of the population, bore the brunt of poor harvests, landlordism, natural disasters and war, while living standards remained abysmal Similarly, urban workers faced poverty and poor working conditions; were exploited by employers When the GMD government came to power in 1927, it largely neglected the plight of the peasants, failing to carry through its declared policies of land reform and equitable rents as part of Sun Yixian's Three People's Principles

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Cordoba province alone, 52% of agricultural land was owned by 7% of all landowners • Likewise in the cities, workers faced low wages, long hours, poor housing and unregulated working conditions • Trade unions aimed at alleviating their plight like the CNT and UGT had little political clout and failed to achieve anything substantial • With no legal means of improving their situation, violent uprisings were seen as the only way out of poverty by the poor eg. Asturian miner's uprising in October 1934 • Thus, the failure to effect an improvement in the lives of the poor produced a fragmented population fraught with tensions, raising the possibility of conflict and war <p><u>Short-term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the short-term, urban and rural problems helped to further the division between the Left and Right, which would seek different economic policies during the Second Republic • The Left Republic under President Azana in sought to modernise Spain through land reform • Passed the Agrarian Reform Law in 1932, which enabled the state to take over estates and redistribute land to the poor • By contrast, when the Right-wing CEDA came to power in 1933, it halted Azana's land programme and suppressed the Asturian miner's uprising in October 1934 • By 1936, the differences in economic policies between the Left and Right during the Second Republic were so entrenched that no democratic process could reconcile them • According to Helen Graham, the reason why the military stepped in to launch the coup was to block the Popular Front's constitutional and legislative reforms that the Right had failed to stop by legal means, resulting in civil war <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaknesses in Spain's agricultural system had existed since the 19th century • Peasant and Worker uprisings eg. 1909 General Strike were relatively common in Spain and were not a significant new development • While economic instability provides the historical backdrop to the conflict, it does not explain why civil war erupted only in 1936 • What truly made economic distress a cause of the civil war was the inflow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wealthy Chinese businessmen and landowners, who made up the main support base of the GMD, had little sympathy for the peasants and thus led to little progress in their living standards • Hence, socio-economic inequalities divided Chinese society, which played a significant role in the outbreak of hostilities between the GMD and CCP • Provided an audience for the CCP's message of social revolution and economic reform from among the peasantry and proletariat, who were disillusioned by the GMD's failure to implement reform • The middle and upper classes saw the CCP agenda as a direct threat and sought protection from the GMD • Thus, economic distress polarised society between the two factions and made civil war more likely <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China had arguably been in an economic crisis since the Taiping era with foreign domination of trade and markets, as well as a massive foreign debt and government budget deficit • Hence, economic causes alone do not explain the outbreak of civil war in 1927 and 1946 • What truly made economic distress a cause of the civil war was the fundamental ideological differences between the GMD and CCP in terms of their visions for China's economy, which made compromise impossible
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	of the ideologies that provided alternatives to the existing system	
Compare and Contrast	<p>Similarities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In both China and Spain, tensions arose because of the failure of governments to resolve widespread economic problems plaguing the poor • Moreover, economic conditions resulted in the division of society between the lower and upper classes • Both the lower and upper classes supported factions with contrasting ideologies • The lower classes tended to support groups that promised better living standards through radical economic reform while the upper classes tended to support conservative regimes that protected their interests 	<p>Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Spain, religion played a crucial role in reinforcing the socio-economic divide in society • The landowners and aristocrats were strongly supported by the Catholic Church, which held great political influence • Much of the clergy was comprised of landowners • Consequently strengthened resentment from the peasants • Region had little impact on the division in China
Political	<p>Topic Sentence Weaknesses in Spain's political system meant that there was an ineffective political mechanism to manage ideological divisions in the country or to force compliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Paul Preston, the Spanish political system was historically based on two great pillars, electoral falsification and physical violence, which greatly undermined democracy and political stability • The Spanish constitutional monarchy disguised a rigged and corrupted electoral system, which was controlled by the caciques, the rich landowning political bosses • While power shifted between the two main parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, both only sought to protect the interests of the wealthy oligarchs and there was little representation for the lower classes • This tarnished its legitimacy and meant that the ordinary Spaniard was disillusioned with the political system • In addition, the army frequently intervened in politics due to its role in Spain's imperial past • Coups were undertaken by the army whenever they felt it was necessary for Spain • Between 1803 and 1936, no fewer than 19 military coups had taken place • Hence, the military retained the potential power to create or destroy governments, and were accustomed to operating outside the legal system • One reason why the military coup occurred in July 1936 was because the Senior Africanista military officers lost faith in the democratic system, as the Right had failed to stop the Left by legal means, prompting them to resort to force 	<p>Topic Sentence The long-term fragmentation and instability that characterised Chinese politics undermined unity in China and the GMD's ability to consolidate its rule. It was this atmosphere of persistent violent conflict that enabled the rise of the CCP to fill the power vacuum and challenge the GMD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China under imperial Manchu rule experienced political fragmentation and decentralisation of power, which greatly eroded the central authority of the government • Moreover, following the 1911 Revolution and the death of Yuan Shikai, China lost the only figure that had maintained some degree of unity, plunging it into a period of warlordism • The nation was broken up into small states and provinces, each controlled by a warlord who ran his territory independently of any central government • This exacerbated the fragmentation of political power and prevented the GMD from filling the power vacuum in China • As a result of the warlord era, there was a deep desire for change amongst the Chinese population through the unification of China • Would be exploited by the CCP to build up the support base necessary to engage in armed conflict and challenge the GMD as the legitimate government of China • Political instability thus created the conditions for a civil war to take place by leaving behind a power vacuum for the CCP to fill • The long history of conflict and attainment of power through violence also meant that there was not much resistance to a possible conflict

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without a sufficient monopoly of force to crush the coup and maintain unity, the Popular Front government disintegrated and Spain was plunged into a civil war Thus, the lack of a strong political system in Spain enabled divisions in society to erupt into war <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> However, according to Preston, a civil war was still unimaginable when the Second Republic was established in 1931 While tensions still existed, they were insufficient to escalate into an all-out armed conflict Thus, the events thereafter were far more crucial in the outbreak of the civil war, namely the political polarisation caused by ideological differences between the Left and the Right, which reached their climax in 1936 	<p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While chronic political instability create a power vacuum in China and increased demand for unity and stability, it would not have sufficed to trigger a civil war without the inflow of new ideologies with a range of goals and visions for China Furthermore, the First United Front between the GMD and CCP saw the successful defeat of numerous warlords in southern and northern China from 1926-28 Does not explain Jiang's reason for launching the White Terror in April 1927 Thus the role of ideology in the outbreak of armed conflict must be analysed
Social	<p>Topic Sentence The failure of the political system to reconcile chronic social divisions in Spain strengthened national disunity and tensions between various factions, making civil war more likely.</p> <p><u>Long-term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historical linguistic and cultural differences ran deep among the Basques, Catalans and Castilians, fracturing society and undermining loyalty to Spain as a whole This fuelled separatist movements, especially in the Catalonia and Basque regions, which demanded secession from the centralist state This ongoing struggle greatly increased tensions among the Spanish population and exacerbated its fragmentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition, religious divisions were apparent in terms of attitudes towards the Catholic Church The Spanish aristocracy was closely tied to the Church, which used its wealth to gain considerably political and social influence Thus, it was inclined to defend the rights of the aristocracy, which drew deep resentment amongst the poor Was strong resistant to the liberal and egalitarian values of Marxism, Socialism and Anarchism, and was greatly alarmed by the growth of anti-clericalism promoted by these ideologies This led to deep hostilities between the Catholic conservatives (the Nationalists), and those who were seen as godless like the communists, 	

	<p>socialists and anarchists who were represented by the Left-wing Republicans</p> <p><u>Short-term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the short-term, regionalism and religious issues helped to further the division between the Left and Right, which would seek different social policies during the Second Republic • The Left Republic under President Azana sought to undermine the catholic church by ending state support for the clergy and excluding religion from education • The new government would also recognise civil marriages and laws • Granted Catalonia a separate president and parliament, as well as its own language and flag in 1932 • Right-wing groups saw this as a loss of power, privilege and right, and systematically reversed all of Azana's policies when CEDA came to power in 1933 • The persistent failure of the government to alleviate these hostilities and resolve the many divisions within society stirred the desire for change • Further polarised the Right and Left and raised the possibility of conflict <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideological divisions prevented the reconciliation of regional divisions while promoting uprising as a means to effect change 	
Compare and Contrast	<p>Similarities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In both China and Spain, regionalism was a long-term cause of the civil war • There was a lack of a strong political system in both countries to reconcile ideological differences 	<p>Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regionalism tended to be of a different nature in China and Spain • In Spain, much of the divisions were amongst different cultural groups, whereas in China, the period of Warlordism existed as more of a political division, most of them being Han Chinese • In China, warlords operated independently of the GMD while the Basques, Catalans and Castilians remained under the control of the central government • Also, in Spain, religion played a large role in reinforcing the divide whereas in China there was little impact of religion • In Spain, the political system was ineffective in managing the ideological divisions in society, while in China there was no encompassing political structure to begin with
Ideological	<p>Topic Sentence</p> <p>Fundamentally, the failure of the Second Republic to prevent the volatile situation in Spain from escalating into violence and erupting into a civil war was</p>	<p>Topic Sentence</p> <p>The inability to resolve ideological differences over their visions for China's future escalated hostilities between the GMD and CCP, and eventually led to</p>

due to the political polarisation and ideological divide within the government.

- Disunity within the Second Republic saw swings between the Left Republic, Right Republic and the Popular Front, where ideological differences were translated into national policies backed by either side
- Left-wing groups, consisting of the Socialists, Anarchists and Communists under President Azana pursued socialist policies and were determined to enact sweeping reforms to Spain
- However, the Right-wing reactionary faction and CEDA fundamentally opposed radical change and sought to preserve traditional social orders and values in Spain eg. the dominance of the Church and army
- When the Left Republic came to power in 1931, its radical reforms such as reducing the Church's powers, land redistribution and creating a new constitution greatly incensed and alienated the Right, which perceived these reforms as a deliberate attack on the traditional order of Spain and a threat to Spain itself
- Consequently, the rise to power of the Right in 1933 saw the systematic and rapid reversal of most of the reforms introduced in the previous two years
- Resulted in a prolonged political impasse, which increased tensions between the two factions and emboldened them to oppose each other

- In the short-term, these ideological differences between the Left and Right fomented anxiety among the Senior Africanista military officers
- Led them to launch the military coup in July 1936 in order to block the Popular Front's constitutional and legislative reforms that the Right had failed to stop by legal means
- Thus, the inability to reconcile fundamental ideological differences between the two factions led to civil war

Limitations

- Ideological differences do not in and of themselves cause civil wars
- The key ingredient why the civil war was allowed to erupt was due to a lack of an effective political system to manage ideological divisions in Spain or to force compliance
- Most democracies would have models of representation that provide an avenue for parties to voice and defend their ideological positions
- However, in Spain, the political system was weak and corrupt, which tarnished its legitimacy and enabled the polarised ideologies to escalate into violence when differences could not be solved constitutionally

the breakout of violence.

- The CCP's ideology was firmly entrenched in Marxist-Leninist and Maoist principles, which argued for a classless society and a socialist economy
- Long-term aim was the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the confiscation of private property
- In contrast, the GMD wanted the reunification of China under a democratic nationalist government, based on Sun Yixian's Three People's Principles – nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood
- Had close links with the wealthy elite such as businessmen and landlords, who were in favour of maintaining a capitalist, private enterprise system in China and saw the CCP's agenda as a direct threat to their interests

- **Immanuel Hsu:** Both the CCP and GMD existed as revolutionary parties dogmatically committed to fundamentally different causes, meaning that any cooperation would be superficial and short-lived
- While the CCP and GMD collaborated under Comintern's influence to form the First United Front against the warlords in 1923, it proved merely to be a "marriage of convenience" due to circumstances
- Once the Northern Expedition had ended, Jiang was convinced that the CCP needed to be crushed before China could truly be unified under the GMD and launched the White Terror in 1927, triggering the civil war
- Hence, ideological differences placed both parties at odds with each other, eventually escalating into a civil war

- Furthermore, the failure of negotiations between the GMD and CCP following the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the immediate cause of the civil war's resumption in 1946, was due to the fact that Marshall was trying to repair an irreparable relationship
- The deep ideological divide and bitter fighting between the two factions since 1927 meant that any lasting peace was out of the question
- Therefore, the ideological rift between the GMD and CCP was the primary cause of the civil war

Limitations

- The socio-economic inequalities faced by peasants and workers made the CCP's ideology more appealing
- Allowed the CCP to achieve widespread support to sustain a prolonged civil war

	<p>Topic Sentence Ideological differences between the Conservative Right and Libertarian Left caused deep divisions within the heart of Spanish society and made a civil war more likely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 19th and 20th centuries saw the emergence of libertarian ideals, such as Marxism, Socialism and Anarchism, which called for a more egalitarian society by removing the privileges of the bourgeoisie • Clashed with conservative ideas held by the traditional elite • Supported the preservation of traditional social orders and values such as the dominance of the church and army • Ideological differences between centralism and regionalism also caused tension within society • There had been pressure from the Catalonia and Basque regions for secession from Spain, which was strongly opposed by the traditional elite • Spanish society was gradually being divided between Rightist-Conservative parties and Leftist-Liberal parties during the Second Republic 	
	<p>Topic Sentence Moreover, the pervasive ideological divisions within the Spanish government were a crucial cause of the civil war by attracting the involvement of foreign nations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Right consisted of various monarchist factions and CEDA, which was modelled after the German Nazi party, thus attracting Adolf Hitler to provide ideological and military support for the Right led by General Franco • Despite initial hesitation, a reason for Stalin's support of the Left was due to his obligation to promote the world communist movement as its leader • According to Preston, it was this foreign intervention that was critical in causing the war • The military coup of 1936, which has long been considered as part of the initial stages of the civil war, was initially one that should have been defeated easily • The rising failed in the main industrial areas, and the rebels failed to take the capital Madrid • Half the army had remained loyal to the Republic • Hitler provided the transport aircraft necessary to airlift Franco's Moroccan army to Spain, which kept him in the game • Thus, without foreign involvement drawn in by ideological divisions, the military coup would not have escalated into a prolonged civil war 	

Compare and Contrast	<p>Similarities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In both China and Spain, ideology was crucial in dividing society and the two opposing factions • Moreover, ideology served to increase the support base of the CCP in China and the Left-wing in Spain by providing an alternative to the incumbent government 	<p>Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of ideology in attracting foreign support and enabling the civil war to happen in the first place was more important in Spain than in China • Foreign involvement propped up a failing military coup by Franco in 1936 • In contrast, the trigger of the Chinese Civil War was Jiang's 1927 White Terror, wherein foreign involvement had no role
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps the most fundamental long-term cause was the disillusionment and apathy of the Spanish people towards the political system, who turned to new ideologies for solutions • When the army led by Franco lost faith in the political system, a military coup was historically the only answer • Ultimately, the political factors, combined with economic distress, social divisions and ideological fanaticism caused Spain to descend into a civil war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic economic problems plaguing China cemented divisions within society and increased the demand for new ideologies for solutions • The anarchical political situation in China during the Warlord period only served to promote violence as an instrument of settling disputes • The incompatibility of the CCP and GMD's ideals, coupled with a history of animosity and conflict between the two parties, meant that armed conflict was bound to occur and persist until either side emerged triumphant