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Rethinking Violence

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Chapter 6

Driven to Arms? The Escalation to Violence in Nationalist Conflicts

Adria Lawrence

On the morning of August 20, 1955, residents of Oued Zem, a small town in Morocco southeast of Casablanca, took to the streets armed with rifles, knives, and pistols, demanding the return of the exiled sultan Mohammed V and an end to French colonialism in Morocco.¹ Armed tribesmen from the countryside rode down from the hills and joined the rioting townspeople, who had severed telegraph and telephone lines connecting Oued Zem to the rest of Morocco. Accompanied by a single gendarme, the assistant civil controller, Paul Carayol, went out to calm the crowd; both were lynched. Mobs proceeded to sack and destroy European houses and enterprises. Moroccans accused of collaborating with the French were beaten and killed. At 10:30 am, a crowd entered the André Mallet hospital and killed all of the European patients. The hospital chief was also killed and his body was mutilated. For hours, rioters were able to act as if there was no French authority in Morocco. The French had foreseen little trouble in this normally peaceful town, and their troops were stationed elsewhere. By the time French forces arrived, an estimated 60–100 Europeans had died, along with many more pro-French Moroccans.²

The explosion of nationalist violence in the previously quiet town points to a general question for scholars of violence: what would incite

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1. The sultan had been sent into exile on August 20, 1953, for supporting nationalist demands. These events occurred on the second anniversary of his deposition.

2. The events of Oued Zem have not been widely studied. This description relies on participant interviews and the following sources: Dr. René Pech-Gourg, *Oued-Zem, août 1955*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report 1955, Paris, France; Dale F. Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a Twentieth Century Notable* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985); Guy Delanoë, *Le retour du roi et l'indépendance retrouvée* (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 1991); Khalid Bin Seghir, "Intifada 20 ghuust 1955 bi waadi zem: al jidhour wa al waqaa'" [The August Twentieth Uprising in Oued Zem: Causes and Effects,] in *Nadwa al mouqaawama al maghrib did al Isti'maar, 1904–1955* (Rabat: undated), pp. 337–372; as well as archives at the *Service Historique de l'Armée de la Terre* (SHAT) in Paris and the *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes* (MAE).

normally peaceful townspeople to take up arms, destroy public buildings, lynch officials, and execute their neighbors? For some, the answer appears obvious: in the context of an ongoing nationalist struggle, the eruption of violence makes considerable sense, particularly when non-violent means have made little headway in achieving nationalist aims. By the time violence erupted in Oued Zem, Morocco had endured over forty years of French rule; a nationalist movement had been engaging in appeals and demonstrations in favor of independence for over ten years; and in major cities, an anti-colonial terrorist campaign had been operating for two years. Given the existence of an ongoing nationalist struggle, the actions of Oued Zem residents are comprehensible. One participant in the uprising thought the motivations were obvious to everyone involved: they were angry at continued French rule and tired of colonial oppression. "We rose up for our honor and our freedom," he remembered.³ Faced with the continued French presence, the residents of Oued Zem were ultimately driven to take up arms to forcefully demand Moroccan independence.

In the context of nationalist struggles, in which multiple parties claim the right to rule the same piece of territory, the adoption of violence suggests a failure to resolve the conflict through other means. In this view, nationalists turn to violence when confronted by a state that refuses to cede its claim to the territory. Scholars of the French empire, for instance, have suggested that France's refusal to decolonize after World War II prompted nationalist violence, making French decolonization a bloodier process than it needed to be.⁴ For Algeria, Frantz Fanon wrote that "the violence of the occupier, his ferocity, his delirious attachment to the national territory, induced the leaders no longer to exclude certain forms of combat."⁵ The war of national liberation in Indochina has likewise been associated with France's determination to stay in Indochina despite nationalist demands.⁶ Writing about ethnic conflicts more generally, Monica Duffy Toft argues that when an ethnic group demands independence and the state refuses, "ethnic war is almost certain to occur."⁷ Violence, by this account, escalates from an unresolved national struggle.

Understanding violence as the outcome of escalating conflict is fairly common; violence is often conceptualized as a *degree* of conflict, rather

3. El Hajj Mohammed Naji, Moroccan insurgent, interviewed by author, Oued Zem, Morocco, March 6, 2006.

4. See Raymond F. Betts, *France and Decolonisation 1900–1960* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), p. 6; Anthony Clayton, *The Wars of French Decolonization* (London: Longman Group, 1994), p. 1; Hendrik Spruyt, *Ending Empire: Contested Sovereignty and Territorial Partition* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005).

5. Frantz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled," in Prasenjit Duara, ed., *Decolonization: Perspectives from Then and Now* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 51.

6. Stein Tønnesson, "National Divisions in Indochina's Decolonization," in Prasenjit Duara, ed., *Decolonization: Perspectives from Then and Now*, p. 253.

7. Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 32.

than a *form*.⁸ Violence, according to this logic, exists at the upper end of a continuum of conflict. The adoption of violence typically suggests that the conflict has grown worse, and reached a new level of contention. Violence thus tends to be treated as the “unproblematic extension of ordinary social movement processes.”⁹ Doug McAdam et al. see violent collective action as a subset of the larger phenomenon of contentious politics, and argue that both violent and non-violent acts result from similar mechanisms and processes.¹⁰ The eruption of violence may reflect the existence of extreme grievances or strong commitment to a cause.

Yet others point to problems with understanding violence as a product of ongoing conflict. Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin assert:

We lack strong evidence showing that higher levels of conflict (measured independently of violence) lead to higher levels of violence. Even where violence is clearly rooted in preexisting conflict, it should not be treated as a natural, self-explanatory outgrowth of such conflict, something that occurs automatically when the conflict reaches a certain intensity, a certain “temperature.” Violence is not a quantitative degree of conflict but a qualitative form of conflict, with its own dynamics.¹¹

They advocate disentangling violence from conflict and theorizing violence as a distinct object of study. Stathis N. Kalyvas likewise critiques the tendency to treat violence as a synonym for conflict, such that terms like “ethnic conflict,” “ethnic violence,” or “ethnic war” take on the same meaning.¹² Conflict need not be violent; violence need not reach the level of war; and the causes of violence may differ from the causes of other forms of conflict. Several chapters in this volume suggest that the adoption of violence is a choice; actors in conflict adopt violence only in specific contexts.¹³ Conflict does not eventually and inevitably produce violence if unresolved. The turn to violence may have little to do with the duration of the conflict, its intensity, or the level of antagonism between the parties to the conflict. Additionally, violence may not begin only after other options have been tried and rejected. Violence, according to this logic, is not a “stage” of conflict, but a separate kind of conflict, different from non-violent conflict.

The question of whether violence should be theorized as a stage of conflict or as a distinctive form of conflict is an empirical one, and cannot be settled solely by thinking through the problem theoretically. Both

8. Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin, “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence,” *Annual Reviews of Sociology*, Vol. 24 (1998), p. 425.

9. See Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 22.

10. Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 4. See also Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

11. Brubaker and Laitin, “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence,” p. 426.

12. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence*.

13. See the chapters by Bakke, Bulutgil, Cunningham and Beaulieu, and Downes in this volume.

views are plausible. The idea that violence escalates from ongoing, intractable conflict remains appealing, and is widespread in both scholarly and journalistic accounts of violence. Treating violence as an autonomous phenomenon goes against the intuition that prior conflict must somehow be related to subsequent violence. Yet the critique that violence is qualitatively different from other kinds of political opposition also resonates with what is known about the vast number of differences between violent and non-violent contexts. Violence hardly seems to be an extension of ordinary politics, but is instead an abrupt rupture of the existing political process. To understand whether uprisings like the one in Oued Zem result from exasperation with ongoing conflict or from other factors, we need to consider the ways that violence emerges from conflicts theoretically *and* empirically.¹⁴

This chapter investigates the relationship between ongoing conflict and the eruption of nationalist violence, asking whether we should treat violence as a degree of conflict or a different form of conflict. The objective is not to address all potential explanations for nationalist violence, but instead to evaluate those arguments that conceptualize violence as the outgrowth of conflict.¹⁵ I begin by considering the ways that conflict may escalate and produce violence theoretically, pointing to both possibilities and problems with accounts that see violence growing out of contexts characterized by political conflict. Second, I turn to empirics, drawing on cases from the French colonial empire. These cases should favor an account that associates escalating conflict with violence. The most common explanations for violence in the French empire see it emerging from the growing conflict between colonized populations and the French over France's refusal to relinquish its colonies. Yet while opposition to French rule exists in all of the cases under discussion, violence erupts in only some. This variation provides an opportunity to consider why an existing political conflict might or might not lead to violence.

Analyzing cases from this one empire is advantageous not only because of the degree of variation, but also because this research design controls for differences between occupying powers, holds imperial policies and attitudes common throughout the empire constant, and restricts the time frame of the analysis, thereby introducing fewer confounding factors. In addition, a medium-N analysis permits a better grasp of the case material than a large-N analysis would; data quality is higher. In section three, I provide additional empirical analysis in the form of a systematic subnational study of violence in colonial Morocco.

14. Brubaker and Laitin are correct in asserting that we lack evidence linking high levels of conflict to high levels of violence, but empirical evidence can be brought to bear in favor of or against this hypothesis.

15. I therefore bracket explanations for violence that do not fit into a violence-escalation framework. For example, one potential explanation for violence is based on diffusion: violence in one place may influence violence elsewhere. This alternative argument is not one I evaluate here; the objective is instead to consider one influential group of theories of violence.

I demonstrate that the eruption of violence cannot be explained by arguments that see violence resulting from intransigent French rule. France's refusal to cede to nationalist demands did not inexorably produce violent resistance. Surprisingly, violence did not erupt where French rule was most long-standing, stubborn, or cruel. Nationalist violence in the French empire does not fit an account that sees violence as the self-explanatory outgrowth of an ongoing, intractable conflict. These findings suggest that violence may indeed be a different form of conflict, rather than a higher degree of it. Violent conflict, I argue, is qualitatively different from non-violent conflict. I conclude by considering the wider implications of the argument for the study of violence.

Conflict Escalation and Violence

Nationalist conflicts are characterized by competing claims to the same territory, but not all conflicts become violent. Why might some nationalist conflicts lead to violence, while others do not? One obvious answer is that some conflicts may be resolved before violence erupts if one side withdraws its claim. If one side cedes the disputed territory to the other and the basis for conflict evaporates, it is hard to see why further conflict, violent or otherwise, would ensue. This point is entirely obvious: there needs to be some conflict for the conflict to be either violent or non-violent. Of course, this simple scenario could be complicated by a number of factors. For instance, if all the parties on the ceding side are not in agreement, the conflict cannot be said to have been resolved and may persist. Alternatively, even if the ceding side fully withdraws, conflict and violence could occur among the victors as they establish control over the territory, but this conflict would be not be the same as the initial one; it would oppose actors who had previously been on the same side, and might not be coded as nationalist.

But setting aside the possibility that one side gives up and the conflict ends, what are the consequences of intransigence? If both the existing ruler and the nationalists opposing the existing ruler persist in claiming the same territory, why might violence follow? Violence does not erupt in all unresolved nationalist conflicts; other options exist. Nationalists can negotiate, seek assistance from outside actors, organize non-violent demonstrations, and appeal in international arenas. We need mechanisms that link an existing conflict to the very specific outcome of violence. Below I discuss four reasons why ongoing conflict could prompt nationalists to take up arms.

First, ongoing conflict may turn violent if violence is believed to be more effective than non-violent tactics. Continued non-violent pressure may come to seem increasingly futile over time, and persistent conflict may point to the potential utility of violence for settling the question. One interviewee, El Hajj Mohammed Naji, claimed that the Oued Zem uprising was more effective than other forms of nationalist action because the French announced their withdrawal from Morocco just three months after

it took place. “In one day, we achieved what it took eight years to achieve in Vietnam,” he stated.

However, the potential effectiveness of violence is difficult to know in advance. The problem with Naji’s statement is that the effectiveness of the Oued Zem uprising only became apparent after the French announcement; prior to the uprising, its potential efficacy might have seemed questionable.¹⁶ When non-violent strategies have not yet achieved results, nationalists must make estimates about whether those strategies will pay off in the future or whether violent strategies will work better. Such calculations are exceedingly difficult to make; embracing violence might shift the balance of power in favor of the nationalists, but it might also fail spectacularly, leading to the destruction of nationalist actors and visiting brutal reprisals on the population. Violence by a non-state actor is risky, particularly when used against a well-armed foe.¹⁷

Moreover, evidence suggests that violence may be a suboptimal strategy for non-state actors. A number of scholars have argued that social movements turn violent at moments of weakness. Marsha Crenshaw suggests that elites embrace terrorism when they cannot get mass support for peaceful mobilization.¹⁸ Sidney Tarrow and Donatella Della Porta argue that violence erupts on the downside of a mobilization cycle.¹⁹ Della Porta, for instance, suggests that violence begins when resources for mobilization become scarce. V.P. Gagnon argues that elites in Serbia provoked ethnic violence to divert attention from the ongoing economic crisis and strong demands for democratic reforms.²⁰ These accounts see violence as a strategy seized out of weakness, not one chosen out of a belief in its efficacy. Using large-N data, Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth find that non-violent strategies are more effective than violent strategies at helping non-state actors achieve their goals.²¹ The existing empirical evidence

16. Furthermore, attributing the French withdrawal to this particular uprising is problematic, given that both peaceful and non-violent tactics had been used elsewhere in Morocco and also affected the French decision.

17. Scholars also have difficulty assessing the effectiveness of violence, and sometimes assume that violence is chosen for its effectiveness without investigating the relative effectiveness of violent and non-violent strategies. For examples, see Edward N. Muller and Erich Weede, “Cross-National Variation in Political Violence,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (1990), pp. 624–651; and Andrew Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, “Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence,” *International Organization*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring 2002), p. 278.

18. Martha Crenshaw, “The Causes of Terrorism,” in Catherine Besteman, ed., *Violence: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), pp. 99–117.

19. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

20. V.P. Gagnon, “Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/1995), pp. 130–166.

21. Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, “Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,” *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Summer 2008), pp. 7–44.

undermines the claim that non-state actors adopt violence because of its proven effectiveness.

A second way that violence may result from an ongoing conflict is via state repression. If non-violent mobilization is growing and demands on the state are mounting, the conflict may appear increasingly threatening. The state may therefore decide to respond to nationalist demands with violence. Nationalist violence may then erupt in response to state violence. Charles Tilly has suggested that the state is often the initiator of violence, starting off a violent conflict with its own use of violence.²² Jeff Goodwin has argued that revolutions begin when the state represses non-violent political action, leaving non-state actors with no other option besides violence.²³ This argument implies that violence erupts when the non-state actor is in a position of strength; the logic is that a popular non-violent movement provokes state repression which then leads to the adoption of violence.

Evaluating the relationship between state repression and nationalist violence is tricky. The effects of repression on regime opposition have been widely discussed in the literature on opposition in authoritarian regimes. Yet repression seems to have contradictory effects. On the one hand, it is thought to be a critical authoritarian tool capable of silencing opposition.²⁴ But on the other hand, repression has also been said to spur opposition.²⁵ For example, one historian wrote that repression stifled Tunisian nationalists in 1938, but fueled Tunisian nationalism in 1952.²⁶ Repression apparently produces different results at different times. Even if repression does provoke opposition, it may do so by prompting further peaceful opposi-

22. Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), p. 177.

23. Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Moments, 1945–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

24. See, for example, Timur Kuran, “Now out of Never: the Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989,” *World Politics*, Vol. 44 (October 1991), pp. 7–48; and Ronald Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

25. See Steven Heydemann, *Authoritarianism in Syria: Institutions and Social Conflict, 1946–1970* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999). Like Goodwin in *No Other Way Out*, he argues against the view that repression helps regime longevity, pointing out that authoritarian regimes have collapsed even with high levels of repression.

26. Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 349. This is but one example of the tendency to attribute contradictory outcomes to the use of repression. To take another, in *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), John L. Esposito argues that “Black Friday” was a turning point in the Iranian Revolution. On that day, repressive measures became intolerable; “white- and blue-collar workers, traditional and modern middle classes, city dwellers and rural peasants swelled the ranks of the opposition...in Tehran almost two million people called for the death of the Shah.” Just two pages later, however, Esposito credits the excessive use of repression as the reason for Khomeini’s success in implementing his revolution. His analysis thus suggests that repressive tactics can have unpredictable outcomes. Ellen Lust-Okar points to the failure of repression to explain divergent outcomes in *Structuring Conflict in the Arab World: Incumbents, Opponents, and Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 15.

tion or generating more popular support for the cause rather than by specifically causing violence. Repression can therefore have several different logical outcomes: it may silence opposition, provoke further peaceful mobilization, or lead to violence.²⁷

Another difficulty with evaluating the impact of repression on violence is the potential for endogeneity. It can be hard to discern whether violence is initiated by the state or state violence is carried out in response to nationalist violence; there are often conflicting claims about which party first used violence.²⁸ One way to address this problem is by looking not at repression, but at its antecedent. If strong nationalist movements are more likely to appear threatening and therefore to invite repression, and repression leads to nationalist violence, then a strong nationalist movement may be a good predictor of violence.

A third way that an ongoing conflict may push people to embrace violence is by altering perceptions that violence is immoral. As conflict continues, and the state refuses to recognize the legitimacy of nationalist aspirations, the sense that violence is an inappropriate way to resolve conflict may erode. Ongoing conflict may serve to make the enemy appear unjust, even demonic.²⁹ The very intransigence of the foe may invite violence. For instance, one scholar writes: “the violence and cultural hubris of European colonialism called forth its violent negation in the national liberation movements of the 1950s.”³⁰ The injustices of colonialism, in this view, merited a violent response; violence was an appropriate and equivalent answer to imperialism.

Violence may not just become appealing for cognitive, ethical reasons. A fourth and related way that enduring conflict may produce violence is via emotions. An unresolved conflict is likely to generate anger and frustration, which may spark violence.³¹ A number of scholars have suggested

27. Studies have also looked at the impact of repression on the use of violence in the context of ongoing civil wars, asking whether particular types of repression, either discriminate or indiscriminate, are effective against insurgencies. These studies do not posit, however, that such repression explains the initial adoption of violence, since in these contexts, state repression is used when violent conflict has already begun. For examples, see Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence*, particularly chaps. 6 and 7; Matthew Adam Kocher, Thomas B. Pepinskiy, and Stathis N. Kalyvas, “Aerial Bombardment, Indiscriminate Violence, and Territorial Control in Unconventional Wars,” unpublished manuscript; Jason Lyall, “Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (2009), pp. 331–362.

28. See Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 273.

29. See Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence*, p. 65, for a discussion of works that link violence to the demonization of the enemy.

30. Edmund Burke III, “Theorizing the Histories of Colonialism and Nationalism in the Arab Maghrib,” in Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, ed., *Beyond Colonialism and Nationalism in the Maghrib: History, Culture, and Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 21.

31. See Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).

that ethnic and nationalist conflict in particular involves intense hatred and the desire for vengeance.³² These emotions may then contribute to the sense that violence is morally warranted.

But the problem with basing a theory of violence on anger, frustration, or a sense of the justness of violence is one of incompleteness. These explanations assume an unproblematic leap from emotions to violence or from support for violence to its use. Beliefs about the appropriateness of violence and emotions about the enemy do not constitute an explanation for violence without an account of how such beliefs and emotions produce violent acts in particular. Anger, frustration, and a sense of injustice rarely generate violence. As Randall Collins put it:

such explanations assume violence is easy once the motivation exists. Micro-situational evidence, to the contrary, shows that violence is hard. No matter how motivated someone may be, if the situation does not unfold so that confrontational tension/fear is overcome, violence will not proceed. Conflict, even quite overtly expressed conflict, is not the same as violence, and taking the last step is not at all automatic.³³

Collins finds that people are generally not good at violence; he shows that while humans certainly have the capacity to be angry and aggressive, the most frequent tendency is to stop short of violence. The typical response to confrontational situations is to swallow one's anger and frustration and back down, or to let emotions go with bluster and bluff.³⁴ In Jon Elster's terms, frustration can merely lead to "sour grapes," and induce preference change, whereby actors adjust to circumstances they find distasteful.³⁵

If emotions and beliefs are consistent with a variety of actions, and violence only rarely results, it is difficult to base an explanation for violence on such factors. Ongoing nationalist conflict may indeed produce anger, frustration, and support for violent actions, but further consideration is required to specify the conditions under which these feelings lead to violence. Still, while these factors do not provide a complete account of violence, they may be useful as a partial account. Anger, frustration, and support for violence may raise the probability that violence erupts. They may be necessary for nationalist violence. The key challenge empirically

32. For examples, see Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Robert E. Harkavy and Stephanie G. Neuman, *Warfare and the Third World* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); and Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001).

33. Randall Collins, *Violence: A Micro-sociological Theory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 20.

34. Collins, *Violence*, pp. 10, 21, 27. On p. 22, he specifically addresses the eruption of violence in situations akin to nationalist conflicts when he discusses resistance theories that see violence as a response to subordination in large-scale social structure. He likewise argues that while such theories assume violence is easy and requires only a motive, resistance violence is just as difficult as other kinds of violence.

35. Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

is measurement; it is difficult to measure emotions and beliefs, and even more difficult to compare relative levels of emotions and beliefs across places. Moreover, emotions and beliefs may be endogenous to violence once it begins.³⁶ In the next section, I consider whether places where the population had more reason to be angry and frustrated at the injustices and persistence of French rule were those where violence erupted. Before turning to an empirical evaluation of the proposed mechanisms that link conflict escalation to violence, two further issues are worth keeping in mind. First, accounts of violence often reason back from the violence to identify triggers of violence. For instance, the very presence of violence itself is sometimes seen as evidence that actors must have thought violence would be effective, or that participants were motivated by anger, frustration, or a sense of righteousness. It is likewise easy to identify an outburst of violence and fix on a preceding instance of repression as the reason for the violence. This practice of “doing history backward”³⁷ biases analysis of the causes of violence, both because the outcome is used as evidence of the causes of that outcome and because individual motivations are extrapolated from macro outcomes even when individual-level data are lacking.³⁸ The challenge is to measure the potential factors linking conflict to violence independently of any subsequent violence.

A second issue to consider is the relative rarity of violence. Violence could potentially be effective at attaining all sorts of ends, yet it is used only rarely. Anger, frustration, and moral indignation are common human emotions that generally do not prompt violence. Even in situations of persistent ethnic and nationalist difference, violence seldom erupts.³⁹ Most nationalist conflicts do not produce widespread violence.⁴⁰ Any useful theory of nationalist violence needs to address why conflict so often fails to produce violence. Using a dataset of cases from the former Soviet Union, Mark R. Beissinger finds it difficult to identify structural determinants of violence that differentiate violent conflicts from non-violent conflicts and concludes that “mobilized nationalist violence is generally a less structured and less predictable phenomenon than nonviolent nationalist mobilization.”⁴¹ While Lars-Erik Cederman and Luc Girardin find that violence is more likely to erupt where one ethnic minority dominates other ethnic groups, they too note that violence does not always erupt in such situations, and point to the need to analyze cases that actually feature

36. See Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence*, p. 78; he suggests that while deep group rivalry and resentment is often seen as a cause of war, polarization between different parties may be endogenous to the war itself.

37. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 26.

38. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence*, p. 76.

39. James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Explaining Interethnic Cooperation,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (December 1996), pp. 715–735.

40. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization*, p. 273.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

ethno-nationalist violence from those that have similar structural features, but no violence.⁴²

In the next section, I look at cases from the French empire. In these cases, the French dominated ethnically, linguistically, and racially different populations, ruling in a way that was widely acknowledged as unjust and exploitive, yet violence erupted in only a portion of these cases. These cases facilitate consideration of both the occurrence and the non-occurrence of violence in nationalist conflicts.

Violent and Non-Violent Nationalist Conflict in the French Empire

The dominant explanations for the onset of nationalist violence in the colonial world focus on the intransigence of colonial rulers. For the French empire, the accepted wisdom is that exasperation with continuing colonial rule and the failure to achieve aims through other means prompted violence.⁴³ This explanation reflects the view that violence escalates from existing nationalist conflict in the ways suggested in the previous section: ongoing French rule has been linked to anger, frustration, and a growing sense of the justness and efficacy of violence, particularly given that the French often repressed peaceful nationalist activity. These cases therefore provide a difficult test for the argument that violence constitutes a separate form of conflict, and is not an outgrowth of a worsening, intractable conflict.

The French confronted numerous nationalist movements demanding independence in the mid-twentieth century, yet while nationalist opposition was widespread, violent opposition was rarer. Nationalists' use of violence varied across the empire, with lengthy wars in Algeria and Vietnam, terrorism and insurgency in Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Cameroon, and Madagascar, and peaceful mobilization elsewhere (see Table 6.1).⁴⁴ If intransigence is to account for the distribution of violence across the empire, it needs to vary. Violence may have erupted only where the French were particularly stubborn about maintaining colonial rule. France wanted to retain control over Vietnam and Algeria, for instance, and fought long wars to do so. The problem with explanations based on intransigence is that intransigence itself is often measured by whether or not there is a

42. Lars-Erik Cederman and Luc Girardin, "Beyond Fractionalization: Mapping Ethnicity onto Nationalist Insurgencies," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 101, No. 1 (February 2007), p. 182.

43. For examples that link violence to France's refusal to relinquish its territories, see Betts, *France and Decolonisation*; Clayton, *The Wars of French Decolonization*; and Spruyt, *Ending Empire*.

44. Since this article is concerned with analyzing why conflict sometimes leads to violence, the table excludes French colonies with no significant nationalist movement in the mid-twentieth century (and therefore no ongoing nationalist conflict): French Polynesia, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St Pierre and Miquelon, Réunion, French India, Wallis and Futuna, French Guiana, and New Caledonia.

violent conflict, rather than through prior indicators of France's commitment to specific colonies. I posit instead a number of potential indicators of French intransigence, and evaluate their ability to account for patterns of violence across the empire.

Table 6.1. Twentieth-Century French Colonies with Nonviolent and Violent Nationalist Movement.

Non-Violent Mobilization	Violent Mobilization
Cambodia	Algeria
Chad	Cameroon
Comoros	Madagascar
Dahomey	Morocco
Djibouti	Syria
French Sudan	Tunisia
Gabon	Vietnam
Guinea	
Ivory Coast	
Laos	
Lebanon	
Mauritania	
Middle Congo	
Niger	
Oubangui-Chari	
Senegal	
Togo	
Upper Volta	

ENDURING FRENCH RULE: TIME AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENCE

The first indicator concerns the impact of time. If violence is more likely to occur when a conflict has dragged on, the passage of time should increase the likelihood of violence. This hypothesis reflects a number of the mechanisms linking escalating conflict to violence. Opponents of French rule may be willing to be patient for a time before using violence to attain their ends, but the passage of time may make the conflict seem more intractable and may lead actors to estimate that violence might be more effective. The passage of time may also anger and frustrate colonized populations and lead them to support the use of violence.

One indicator that captures these arguments could be the length of time that the French controlled a territory. Where the colonial power ruled for a longer period of time, we might reasonably expect people to be more exasperated with ongoing colonial rule and more willing to take up arms. Yet this distinction does not appear to correlate with the occur-

rence of nationalist violence across the empire. In addition to Vietnam and Algeria, which were long-standing French possessions, violence also occurred in Morocco and Syria, places the French had not controlled for long. Moreover, the French were adamant about maintaining their control over French Africa, yet there was little anti-colonial violence there, even in places like Senegal, which had been a French possession since the mid-nineteenth century. Instead, there was violent conflict in Cameroon, which had only been in French hands since World War I. Table 6.2 shows the territories with nationalist movements by century of French colonization. Only a quarter of the territories that were colonized in the nineteenth century had violent nationalist movements, while over a third of later acquisitions experienced violence. Enduring a longer period of colonialism is not associated with a higher incidence of nationalist violence.

Table 6.2. French Territories with Nationalist Movements, by Century of French Conquest.

Violence?	19th	20th	Total
No	13 (76%)	5 (63%)	18 (72%)
Yes	4 (24%)	3 (37%)	7 (28%)
Total	17 (100%)	8 (100%)	25 (100%)

Fisher's exact test: $p=.6$

This indicator does not specifically capture the duration of conflict between the colonizing power and the population, however. The relevant amount of time to consider may not be the overall length of the colonial period, but the amount of time that local peaceful organizers have been challenging French rule. According to this argument, the time-bomb starts ticking not when colonial rule begins, but when opposition to colonial rule begins; people will wait only so long before they turn to violence to solve the conflict. The duration of the conflict may also be a good indicator of the strength of the nationalist movement. Stronger nationalist movements may invite more repression and therefore may be more likely to become violent.

Identifying the onset of nationalist conflict in each territory is not easy. Evidence of resistance to French rule can often be documented from the early days of conquest, meaning that the duration of the colonial period may in fact be a good measure of the duration of conflict between the French and the occupied.⁴⁵ Alternatively, the conflict could be said to have

45. Even where resistance was not overt, colonized populations relied on "weapons

begun with the first instances of organized political action objecting to French colonial rule, or the first calls for independence (which often came from those who were working or studying overseas in Europe, not inhabitants of the colonies), or the first instances of mass nationalist protest against French rule.

Regardless of how the start of the conflict is dated, its duration is unlikely to explain the distribution of violence across the empire. Nationalist conflict in three of the seven violent cases had a very limited history. In Madagascar, violence erupted only a year after the founding of the first nationalist party.⁴⁶ In French Cameroon, the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) turned violent within five years of its founding.⁴⁷ Likewise, armed revolt broke out in Syria within five years of the establishment of the French Mandate.⁴⁸ The other violent cases occurred in places with varying histories of nationalist resistance. In Morocco and Tunisia, nationalist claims had been made for about a decade before violence began. In Vietnam, nationalist organizing had been sporadically occurring since the 1930s before violence erupted during World War II. Depending on how it is calculated, nationalist conflict in Algeria lasted between eight and seventeen years before violence erupted.⁴⁹ The wide variation in the time it took for violence to begin in these seven cases undermines the claim that long, intransigent conflict produces violence.

A look at the peaceful parts of the empire likewise fails to show a relationship between the duration of conflict and nationalist violence. Nationalist mobilization began at about the same time in Lebanon and Syria, yet violence erupted only in Syria. Senegal had a much longer history of political organization than Madagascar and Cameroon, where violence erupted despite the weakness of nationalist mobilization in both places.

of the weak" to resist throughout the colonial era. On this type of resistance, see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987).

46. For more on nationalist violence in Madagascar, see Jacques Tronchon, *L'insurrection malgache de 1947* (Paris: Librairie François Maspero, 1974); and Jennifer Cole, *Forget Colonialism? Sacrifice and the Art of Memory in Madagascar* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

47. See Richard A. Joseph, *Radical Nationalism in Cameroun: Social Origins of the U.P.C. Rebellion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

48. See Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

49. Nationalist demands were first heard from a small group in France, but it may be more reasonable to date the onset of nationalist conflict in Algeria to the founding of the *Parti du Peuple Algérien* (P.P.A.) in 1937, although nationalist mobilization was neither popular nor widespread in Algeria until the mid-1950s. Violence erupted briefly in 1945, but an organized, sustained violent campaign did not begin until 1954. For more on nationalism in Algeria, see Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962* (New York: Viking Press, 1977); John P. Entelis, *Comparative Politics of North Africa: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1980); Benjamin Stora, *Algeria 1830–2000: A Short History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001); and James M. McDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Although violence did not occur in most of French Africa, political conflict was not absent. Opposition to the French occurred across French territories in Africa, but it often took a different form; most opposition to the French focused on demanding equality and citizenship, not national independence.⁵⁰ Nationalist claims in much of Africa did not become widespread until 1956, but violence was not adopted before independence arrived, not even in places like Djibouti and the Comoros, which did not become independent until the mid-1970s.⁵¹ It is thus difficult to sustain the argument that longer conflict leads to violent nationalism. Nationalist movements with a long history of opposition to colonial rule appear neither necessary nor sufficient for nationalist violence.

TYPE OF COLONIAL RULE AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENCE

Another indicator of France's intention to maintain its rule is the status of the territory. France's imperial possessions were divided into several categories. Algeria was composed of three French departments, and thus was considered an integral part of the French republic itself. Other territories were designated as colonies, protectorates, or mandates. Protectorates and mandates were explicitly created as temporary arrangements, while colonies and departments were integral territories of France overseas. Mandates were supposed to be moving toward independence, and protectorates were understood to have distinctive national personalities that the French promised to protect. We might thus expect that because France saw its colonies and departments as integral possessions, it would be more reluctant to decolonize those than its protectorates and mandates. This reluctance might prove frustrating to opponents of the French living in colonies and departments. If frustration with seemingly permanent colonial rule produces violence, we should see more violence in colonies and departments than in protectorates or mandates.

Additionally, the status of the territory may be correlated with patterns of repression and injustice; the French may have had a freer hand to mistreat populations in their colonies and departments than they did in protectorates and mandates. The French had to answer to the League of Nations for their actions in the mandates; in protectorates, the French typically ruled in collaboration with a local leader who may likewise have been able to restrict French actions to some degree. If repression is cor-

50. Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940, the Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 39. As in Algeria, demands for African independence were largely articulated by African student and activist groups in France, not in the African territories themselves, where political leaders advocated reform.

51. For more on the peaceful parts of the empire, see Yves Person, "French West Africa and Decolonization," in Prosser Gifford and W.M. Roger Louis, eds., *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization 1940-1960* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 141-172; Patrick Manning, *Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa, 1880-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*; and Adria Lawrence, "Imperial Rule and the Politics of Nationalism," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2007.

related with territorial status and increases the risk of violence, we would expect to see more violence in colonies and departments.

The data, however, do not suggest a relationship between territorial status and violence. Five of the seven territories with violent nationalist movements were protectorates or mandates (Syria, Cameroon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Vietnam). Table 6.3 suggests that colonies and departments were *less* likely to experience nationalist violence than mandates and protectorates, although the difference was not statistically significant. This indicator of intransigence does not appear to explain the pattern of violence.

Table 6.3. French Territories with Nationalist Movements, by Territorial Status.

Violence?	Colony/Department	Mandate/Protectorate	Total
No	14 (87.5%)	4 (44%)	18 (72%)
Yes	2 (12.5%)	5 (56%)	7 (28%)
Total	16 (100%)	9 (100%)	25 (100%)

Fisher's exact test: $p=.06$

SETTLERS AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENCE

Another important indicator of French intransigence is the presence of settlers. Settlers could prompt nationalist violence for a number of reasons.⁵² First, French settlers were consistent advocates of maintaining French rule; where large numbers of them lived, we might expect serious resistance to decolonization. Settler pressure to maintain colonial rule might then incite violence, since nationalists may see peaceful tactics as ineffective where settlers were blocking negotiations.

Second, settlers are an observable indicator of colonial injustice. Settlers enjoyed privileges that natives were denied; they had a voice in government, favorable land-settlement policies, and a better standard of living. French settlers were often cruel to indigenous populations, whom they saw as uncivilized and inferior.⁵³ Settler behavior may have exac-

52. On settlers and conflict, see Ian S. Lustick, *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

53. For example, settlers in Algeria commonly referred to Algerians as "*sales Arabs*" (dirty Arabs). Even educated Algerians were often treated with condescension and contempt; settlers tended to address all Algerians not by name, but by an all-purpose name, usually "Ahmed." See Charles-André Julien, *L'Afrique du Nord en marche. Nationalismes musulmans et souveraineté française* (Tunis: Cérès Editions, 1972), p. 58 ; and

erbated grievances, produced anger and resentment, worsened the conflict between the colonizer and the nationalists, and ultimately provoked violence. If violence happened where colonial rule was most unjust, we should observe a correlation between settlers and violence.

Third, settlers often had a disproportionate say in colonial policy and typically advocated a hard line against nationalist agitators. It is reasonable to suppose that repression was more widespread in settler territories than in other places, because settlers influenced local policing. If repression provokes violent nationalist responses, settler colonies should be more violent.

Table 6.4 uses data from the post-war period to show the presence of European settlers across the French empire in the mid-1940s.⁵⁴ The territories are listed by increasing percentage of settlers, and are somewhat suggestive of a relationship between settlers and violence. The three territories with the largest percentage of settlers experienced violence, and eleven of the sixteen territories without violence had populations with less than a quarter-percent of settlers. Yet the correlation is imperfect: Senegal and Djibouti had a relatively large percentage of settlers, but no violence, and the populations of Cameroon and Vietnam were less than 1 percent settler, yet violence occurred.

In addition, sub-national population data do not support the view that the presence of settlers encouraged violence. The places where settlers were most numerous were often not the most violent places. In Vietnam, only 18 percent of French settlers lived in the north of the country, where the majority of violence occurred. The rest lived in the south and the center of the country. In Algeria, violence primarily occurred in the countryside, while settlers were concentrated in towns.⁵⁵ In Syria, the Great Revolt began as a local affair in a remote, mountainous region with almost no French presence.⁵⁶ In the third section of this chapter, I systematically consider the impact of settlers on violence in Morocco.

David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French. Colonialism in Bône, 1870–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 208. The situation was no different in other parts of the empire; French settlers used the more familiar “*tu*” rather than the more formal “*vous*” when addressing natives in Africa.

54. Data are drawn from the *Annuaire Statistique de l’Union Française Outre-mer, 1939–1949, Tome Premier*, Ministère de la France d’Outre-mer, Service des Statistiques, Paris, 1951. Since the data concern the post-war empire, Syria and Lebanon, which had become independent, were excluded. Excluding them strengthens the relationship between settlers and violence, since Syria was violent yet had few settlers. Data on the French population were missing for Upper Volta, but can be assumed to be less than 1,000, since there were under 2,000 people in the European and assimilated natives category. The data come from censuses taken in individual territories from 1946–1950.

55. In Algeria, violence most often took the form of insurgency in the rural areas, while the FLN employed terrorism in the cities. This conforms with Matthew Kocher, “Human Ecology and Civil War,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2004. He argues that insurgency flourishes in less densely populated areas, while terrorism is the strategy of choice for cities, where state forces are concentrated.

56. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 152.

Table 6.4. French Settlers and Violence.

Territories	% Settler	Violence
Chad	0.03	No
Upper Volta	0.03	No
Togo	0.04	No
Niger	0.06	No
Mauritania	0.07	No
Oubangui-Chari	0.1	No
Laos	0.11	No
Dahomey	0.15	No
Comoros	0.17	No
Guinea	0.19	No
French Sudan	0.19	No
Cameroon	0.25	Yes
Vietnam	0.27	Yes
Gabon	0.3	No
Ivory Coast	0.34	No
Middle Congo	0.4	No
Madagascar	1.06	Yes
Senegal	1.09	No
Djibouti	2.14	No
Morocco	3.09	Yes
Tunisia	4.46	Yes
Algeria	10.1	Yes

Table 6.4 does not control for other demographic factors. Table 6.5 provides another list of French territories, this time ordered by total population size. The table shows that five of the six territories with nationalist violence were also those with the largest overall populations. One of the most robust findings in the literature on civil war is that places with larger populations are more prone to civil war.⁵⁷ Of the most populous territories, Algeria, Morocco, Madagascar, and Tunisia also had a relatively large percentage of settlers. The evidence is thus inconclusive; settlers and violence may not be causally related; instead they could both be artifacts of the overall population size.⁵⁸ Given the limits of existing data, it is

57. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," World Bank Report, 2001; and James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (February 2003), pp. 75–90.

58. I also considered the impact of the absolute number of settlers on violence, although the percentage of settlers better captures the visibility of settlers in the population. Places with the largest number of settlers tended to be violent, although again this may be an artifact of overall population size. Elsewhere, I suggest that settlers

difficult to fully ascertain the importance of settlers for violence. A large-N dataset that could test alternative theories while controlling for factors such as population size would be helpful, but reliable cross-national data on colonial territories is currently unavailable.⁵⁹

Table 6.5. Total Population and Violence.

Territories	Population `000s	Violence
Djibouti	56	No
Comoros	142	No
Gabon	409	No
Mauritania	518	No
Middle Congo	684	No
Togo	982	No
Oubangui-Chari	1072	No
Laos	1169	No
Dahomey	1505	No
Senegal	1992	No
Niger	2029	No
Ivory Coast	2066	No
Guinea	2180	No
Chad	2241	No
Cameroon	3006	Yes
Upper Volta	3070	No
French Sudan	3164	No
Tunisia	3231	Yes
Madagascar	4207	Yes
Morocco	8617	Yes
Algeria	8682	Yes
Vietnam	22663	Yes

indirectly affected violence via their impact on colonial government. See Adria Lawrence, "The Competitive Origins of Nationalist Violence," *International Security*, forthcoming.

59. A large-N dataset would also create new problems for analysis because it would include territories from other empires, yet settler populations may not have affected colonial decision-making in the same way in each empire. French settlers had an unusual amount of leverage in the central government in Paris and may thus have had more control over policy than settlers in other empires. See Spruyt, *Ending Empire*.

REPRESSION AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENCE

Thus far, I have discussed the potential of state repression to explain the distribution of nationalist violence across the empire indirectly, via the strength of the movement, the type of settlement, and the presence of settlers. These factors may be associated with increased reliance on repression. But good direct comparative measurements of repression in the French Empire are difficult to assemble, in part because repression was fairly ubiquitous. The French were not bound by democratic principles outside mainland France, and ruled their colonial territories using authoritarian means. They frequently used repression against those seen as potential agitators; colonial administrators often jailed, exiled, and even killed those suspected of harboring ill feeling toward the French regime. Those targeted had no recourse to French courts of justice. My suspicion is that French repression was far too widespread to explain why some territories turned violence, while others did not.⁶⁰ Certainly, secondary sources suggest that repressive measures were used in many of the territories that never exploded with nationalist violence. But direct cross-colony testing awaits better measures of state repression. In section three of this chapter, I make use of sub-national data on French repression in Morocco to consider the ability of state repression to account for the use of violence.

OTHER MEASURES OF INJUSTICE AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENCE

The presence of settlers and the use of repression are both indicators of the injustices that accompanied colonial rule, but there are other indicators. Other forms of colonial injustice, such as forced labor, mandatory service in the French Army during times of war, and economic exploitation are also potential triggers of violence, if colonial injustice exacerbates nationalist conflict and raises the probability of violence. Secondary works on the colonial period, however, suggest that these factors were far more prevalent in the peaceful parts of the empire than the violent cases, with the notable exception of Algeria. In Syria, Tunisia, and Morocco, colonial rule was exploitive, but some native institutions were preserved and conditions were often better than they were in other parts of the empire.⁶¹ In the territories of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa, along with Algeria, indigenous populations were subject to the Native Code, which laid out penalties for the most minor infractions or perceived slights to French rule. Indigenous populations were required to fulfill *la corvée* –

60. See Lawrence, "Competitive Origins." This article disaggregates state repression and argues that only particular kinds of repression matter for violence. Specifically, it finds that decapitation of the nationalist leadership prompted actors to turn to violence to compete for leadership of the remaining movement. Leadership repression was only effective in silencing opposition if it was carried out when the movement was small and largely made up of elites.

61. Native leaders were preserved in Morocco and Tunisia, and the French often ruled through traditional elites. Syria had an elected parliament, which was limited by French authority but nonetheless was a form of representation absent in other French possessions.

forced labor on public works. Africans also served in both world wars, and were sometimes forcibly conscripted.⁶² These types of exploitation are therefore unlikely to differentiate violent and non-violent territories. It is doubtful that Africans failed to violently rebel against French rule because they were more satisfied with it than those in other territories, given the persistent injustices of colonial rule in Africa. Indeed, Africans in Madagascar and Cameroon did employ violence, suggesting that there is nothing particular about Africa that made African subjects unwilling or unable to use violence.

Sub-National Evidence: Violence in Colonial Morocco

The Moroccan nationalist movement began in January 1944 with the creation of the *Istiqlal* (Independence) Party, the first organization in French Morocco to begin openly advocating independence. From 1944–1952, the *Istiqlal* Party was the dominant voice of Moroccan nationalism, advocating independence using peaceful means of protest and diplomacy. Nationalist violence began in 1952 and lasted through independence in 1956. The use of violence varied: an urban terrorist campaign opposed the French in a number of towns and cities, and a rural insurgency began in 1955 in remote mountain regions. Variation in the use and prevalence of violence across Morocco provides an opportunity to consider some of the hypotheses linking conflict escalation to violence at the sub-national level. In this section, I draw upon a dataset of violent events in urban Morocco to test competing explanations.⁶³ The data concern the campaign of urban terror, which entailed 4,520 armed attacks from August 20, 1953 to April 6, 1956, including assassination attempts, bomb attacks, arson, and sabotage.⁶⁴

The most prominent explanation for nationalist violence in Morocco is the French decision to exile the Moroccan sultan. The sultan had worked with the French for many years, but in the post-war era, he began to show signs that he supported nationalist aspirations. The French administration

62. During World War I, several episodes of resistance occurred in Africa in response to the efforts of French administrators to conscript soldiers, sometimes forcibly. On West Africa during World War I, see Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), chap. 5.

63. My thanks to historian Mohammed Zade at *Le Haut Commissariat aux Anciens Résistants et Anciens Membres de l'Armée de Libération* in Rabat for providing me with data on the urban terror campaign. The data are drawn from two French newspapers: *le Petit Marocain* and *Maroc-Presse*, and two Arabic ones: *As-sa`âda* and *Al-`umma*. Arabic newspapers were severely censored by the French, but these papers were published in the Spanish zone. On the nationalist press, see Amina Aouchar, *La Presse Marocaine dans la lutte pour l'indépendance (1933–1956)* (Casablanca: Wallada, 1990).

64. Acts of sabotage include the destruction of harvests and farm equipment owned by settlers and Moroccan sympathizers, attacks on telephone and electrical grids, and a spectacular sabotage of the rail line, which derailed the Casablanca-Algiers train on November 7, 1953.

decided it would be easier to maintain French rule without their increasingly recalcitrant partner and deposed him in August 1953. The majority of violent events followed his deposition, and violent resistance has been widely portrayed as an expression of outrage and loyalty to him.⁶⁵ The dominant story therefore fits an account that sees violence resulting from the worsening conflict between the French and the nationalists. French intransigence was manifested through the decision to exile the Moroccan leader, an action that exacerbated anger and frustration, and drove the nationalists to arms.

Another factor besides the sultan's dethronement may also have affected the eruption of violence: the presence of French settlers. Morocco had the second largest settler population in the empire. The 1952 census of French Morocco lists 7,442,000 Muslims, 363,000 non-Muslims (largely Europeans), and 199,000 Jews living in the French zone of Morocco. Table 6.6 lists the twenty-five most violent towns in Morocco, and gives the percentage of the town's population that was made up of settlers. Many of the most violent towns do indeed have a large proportion of Europeans, well above the national average of 4.4 percent European.

Variation in settler populations across Moroccan towns facilitates further disentanglement of the relationship between settlers and nationalist violence; settlers may matter for patterns of violence within states. The presence of settlers may suggest the potential permanence of the colonial system. A town with a high proportion of settlers may serve as a continual reminder to the population of the injustices of the political system and the inequality of colonial society. Settlers in Morocco also behaved in ways that may have provoked violence, displaying racism and superiority in their interactions with the population.⁶⁶ Indeed, one Moroccan likened the settler presence to the apartheid system in South Africa.⁶⁷ The presence of settlers also provides obvious targets for militant groups, so we might expect settler towns to experience more violence.

65. Those who attribute violence to the deposition include: Stéphane Bernard, *Le conflit Franco-Marocain 1943–1956* (Brussels: Editions de l'Institut de Sociologie de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1963), p. 192; Abdelmajid Benjelloun, "Contribution à l'étude du mouvement nationaliste marocain dans l'ancienne zone nord du Maroc," Thèse, Université Hassan II, Casablanca, Faculté des Sciences Juridique Economiques et Sociales, 1983, p. 420; Selma Lazraq, *La France et le retour de Mohammed V* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2003); Bernard Lugan, *Histoire du Maroc des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 2000); Wilfred Knapp, *North West Africa: A Political and Economic Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 280; David Montgomery Hart, *The Aith Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif: An Ethnography and History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976), p. 423.

66. On the settler community in Morocco, see Daniel Rivet, *Le Maroc de Lyautey à Mohammed V: le double visage du protectorat* (Paris: Editions Denoel, 1999), p. 363–365. He compares them to the white community in South Africa, and suggests that tensions multiplied in the post-war era.

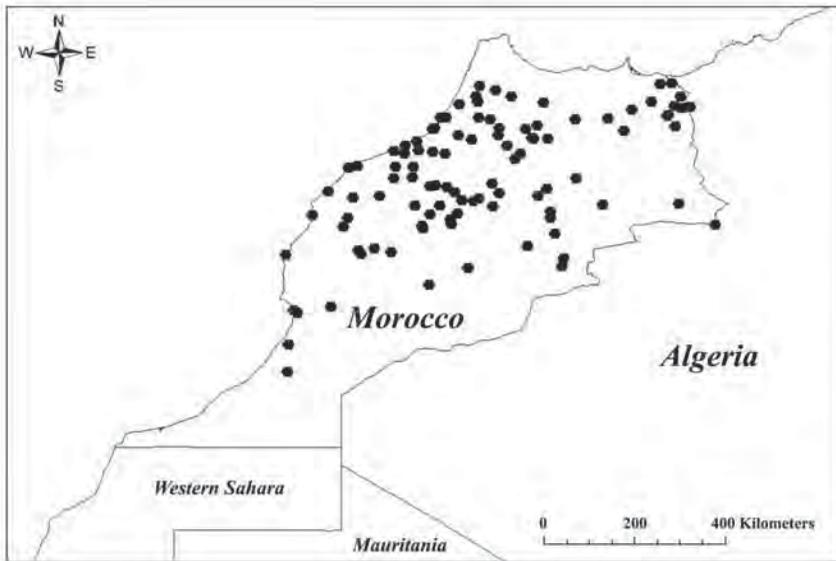
67. Leila Abouzeid, author and daughter of nationalists, interviewed by author, Rabat, Morocco, February 15, 2006. Abouzeid remembered watching settlers board first-class train compartments, while Moroccans had to board lower-class cars at the rear of the train from a separate platform.

I test the two main explanations for nationalist violence in Morocco using data from the urban terror campaign. The unit of analysis is towns with a population greater than 1,000 (see Map 6.1).

I test the relationship between settlers and violence by positing that towns where Europeans make up a larger proportion of the population are more likely to experience violence than towns where they constitute only a small portion of the population.

Table 6.6. Morocco's Most Violent Towns, 1953–1955.

Town	% European	# Violent events
Casablanca	19.7	1945
Rabat	26.1	273
Meknes	15.2	271
Fez	8.8	142
Marrakech	5.7	124
Oujda	33.8	110
Fedala	15.5	97
Settat	3.5	75
Kenitra	15.9	65
Safi	6.8	57
Khemisset	5.5	51
Sale	4.8	41
El Jadida	7.4	34
Berrechid	11.8	32
Berkane	18.7	30
Benahmed	5.4	27
El-Kelaa des Srarhna	3.6	25
Azrou	6.9	21
Beni-Mellal	2.8	19
Khenifra	4.7	19
Khouribga	17.8	17
Oued Zem	9.0	14
Agadir	20.1	13
Taza	18.5	10

Map 6.1. Towns in French Colonial Morocco.⁶⁸

I also constructed a variable to test the hypothesis that loyalty to the sultan prompted violence. Moroccan towns were not equally likely to be outraged by the sultan's deposition; some had a longer history of rule by the sultanate and were more likely to be loyal to him. I coded towns in the south that were not historically controlled by the sultan, but spent most of the colonial rule under the thumb of the "Grand *Caid*s" like the infamous al-Glawi. Such an instrument is imperfect, but it does attempt to differentiate between places in Morocco that were more likely to be loyal to the sultan from those that had fewer historical ties to the sultanate. The variable is a dummy variable which is coded 1 if the town fell in Tuhami al-Glawi's portion of the country, and 0 if it fell in the area of the country traditionally ruled by the sultan.

I also included several control variables: the logged population of each town, the percentage of the population that is Jewish,⁶⁹ and proximity to rail lines. The dependent variable is coded for each location with the total number of violent events from August 1953 to December 1955. I use a negative binomial model because the pattern of violent events, like many event count data, presents the problem of overdispersion. Table 6.7 summarizes the results.

68. Map generated by author.

69. French officials in Morocco suggested that anti-Semitism drove violence. I include the percentage Jewish even though I doubted the validity of this claim; the excluded population group is therefore Moroccan Muslims.

Table 6.7. Negative Binomial Regression Estimates of Violent Events in Moroccan Towns.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Independent Variables	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
% European	.054 (.042)	-0.06* (.024)	-0.06* (.024)
Glawi Territory	1.2 (1.273)	.056 (.681)	.052 (.695)
Log Population		1.60** (.190)	1.64** (.211)
% Jewish	4.980 (7.035)	-3.77 (2.85)	-3.70 (2.90)
Distance to rail	-2.269** (.727)	-0.463 (.480)	-0.462 (.489)
Constant	2.725** (.792)	-11.63** (1.67)	-12.00** (1.87)
N	97	97	96

* $p < 0.05$ level ** $p < 0.01$

NOTES: Standard errors in parentheses. Model 3 drops Casablanca.⁷⁰

A likelihood-ratio test permits rejection of the null hypothesis of equidispersion.

The results do not support the hypothesis that towns with a higher proportion of settlers experienced more violence. In Model 1, the presence of settlers has a positive coefficient, although the result is insignificant. However, when logged population is added (Models 2 and 3), the settler variable becomes significant, but in the opposite direction from what we might expect. Controlling for population, a higher proportion of settlers actually had a *negative* effect on the incidence of violence. For every one-unit increase in the percentage of settlers, the expected number of violent events decreases by about six percent.⁷¹ Places with a high percentage of settlers may have better policing, which may deter organizations from

70. The city of Casablanca accounted for nearly 55 percent of violent events in Morocco, and thus is a major outlier. Casablanca was a hub of the urban violence campaign. While urban attacks were not coordinated by a central actor, many resistance groups in other towns began as offshoots of organizations in Casablanca or were made up of migrants to Casablanca who had witnessed the tactics of violent organizations, and returned to their home towns to organize terrorist cells. In Model 3, I dropped the city in case it was skewing the results, but a larger percentage of settlers continued to be associated with a lower number of violent events.

71. I carried out two other tests that are not reported here. A test using absolute number of settlers rather than percentage of the population produced similar findings. I also tested to see whether the presence of settlers had a non-linear effect on violence, hypothesizing that areas with either very few settlers or a very high percentage of settlers would be less violent. I found no support for this hypothesis.

carrying out armed attacks. I also found no evidence that areas ruled by al-Glawi rather than the sultan were less susceptible to violence; towns with a long-standing connection to the sultan were not more violent in the wake of his deposition. The findings fail to demonstrate that French intransigence, measured by the presence of settlers or the affront to those loyal to the sultan, accounts for the distribution of violence across Morocco. The only consistently significant variable is population size. Larger towns experienced more violent events than smaller towns. These results support the view advanced in the previous section that violence is associated with large population centers, not with settler colonies.

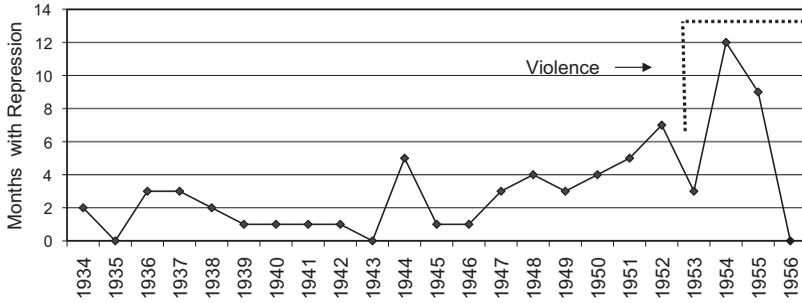
Sub-national data can also illustrate some of the problems with associating state repression and violence. I compiled data on repression from *bulletins de renseignement* (information reports) issued by the political bureau of the French Residency in Morocco on a monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly basis for the entire colonial period. These reports summarize the main events in the protectorate for the specified time period and include information from civil controllers in the different administrative regions of Morocco. Each description of a nationalist event describes the response of the administration, detailing the actions of the police and the numbers of arrests, if repression occurred. If there were casualties, the reports typically list any available figures. Drawing on the reports, I coded whether or not the French employed repression for each month of the entire colonial period. Specifically, I coded a month as repressive if the French carried out political arrests or violently attacked those leading or participating in nationalist events.

These reports provide a unique opportunity to investigate the effects of repression. This kind of data is typically difficult to come by; most authoritarian regimes do not provide information on their use of repression. We might expect that the French would underreport their use of repression, but in fact, there is little evidence that they were reluctant to discuss their use of repression, perhaps because the reports were initially classified as secret. Indeed, in some places the reports betray a certain pride in the use of repression; one report described repression in 1937 as "swift and just."⁷²

The overall picture of repression in Morocco does not support the hypothesis that nationalist violence follows state repression. Repression was simply too ubiquitous to explain why violence happened in particular times and places. Out of the 263 total months of colonial rule, the French repressed political activists during 71 months, nearly a third of the colonial period. Violent events mainly occurred in the last 33 months of the period. Figure 6.1 shows the pattern of repression for the colonial period.

72. *Bulletin de Renseignements Politiques et Economiques*, Novembre 1936, SHAT 3H1413.

Figure 6.1. French Repression in Morocco, 1934–1956.



Repression occurs throughout the period; 1936 and 1937 saw three months of repression, while 1944 had five months of repression, and 1952 had seven months of repression, yet nationalist violence did not follow repression at any of these times. Moreover, we might expect repression to be highest in the period just prior to the eruption of violence if it is a trigger of violence, yet repression takes a downward turn in 1953, just before violent events really started to take off with the deposition of the sultan in August. Repression jumps to its highest point in 1954, after the campaign of nationalist violence has already begun. Every single month in 1954 saw some repressive action by the French, suggesting that repression was a response to the eruption of violence in 1953, not a cause of it.

Repression may be associated with nationalist action more broadly, rather than violence in particular.⁷³ Once again, a potential explanation for violence is confounded by the relative rarity of the phenomenon. Repression in Morocco cannot account for the non-occurrence of violence for much of the colonial period: it happened too often.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by asking whether we should conceptualize violence as the outcome of escalating conflict, a higher degree of conflict, or as a different and distinctive form of conflict. In both the theoretical and empirical discussions, I attempted to find ways to link unresolved conflict to the eruption of violence, but with little success. Both theoretical and empirical considerations suggest that violence cannot be treated as the unproblematic outgrowth of non-violent conflict. Non-violent conflict does not appear to escalate to violence when conflict reaches a particular duration or level of intensity.

73. Elsewhere, I have found an association between the use of repression and the occurrence of non-violent nationalist events in Morocco, but this association does not imply causality. It is unclear whether repression causes mobilization or results from it. See Lawrence, “Imperial Rule,” chap. 3.

I have drawn upon cases from the French empire to evaluate the connection between intransigent conflict and the eruption of nationalist violence. The problem with seeing colonial intransigence as the cause of nationalist violence in the French empire is that measures of colonial intransigence fail to differentiate the non-violent cases from the violent cases. At best, colonial intransigence is a necessary condition for nationalist violence, but only in the most trivial sense. Colonial intransigence is necessary for there to be any sort of conflict between nationalists and the colonial power, because if the colonial power were to immediately give up its claim and depart at the first call for national independence, we would not expect to observe peaceful or violent nationalist opposition. But colonial intransigence cannot answer the most important questions about nationalist violence: it cannot tell us which conflicts will turn violent, or when violence will erupt.

The French empire is only one context, and the results may not generalize to all instances of nationalist conflict. Yet the results are surprising. The selection of these cases should, if anything, be biased in favor of an account that sees violence as the outgrowth of an unresolved, deeply entrenched conflict. These cases are perhaps the archetype of the kind of places where we would expect to see violence escalating from an ongoing nationalist struggle. After all, the dominant explanations for violence in the French empire suggest that colonial intransigence was the key factor that led to violence, and case histories confirm that colonial subjects were angry and frustrated with the indignities and inequality of French rule and actively opposed it. If intractable, escalating conflict cannot explain the turn to violence in these cases, there are good reasons to expect that it likewise cannot explain the use of violence in other cases of nationalist conflict.

Decoupling conflict from violence is highly counterintuitive. Skeptics of this approach will surely state that in the end, violence is about the conflict, so clearly the conflict must play a causal role in the violence. Violence seems intrinsically linked to the underlying conflict, and indeed it is. Ongoing nationalist conflict provides a language and justification for violence; violent actors invoke the conflict and may be motivated by their desire to see the conflict resolved. But violence is a very specific outcome that only happens in a fraction of conflicts. Often, actors in conflict rely on non-violent strategies, which may either be disruptive (such as protest or other non-violent contentious action), or involve working through existing political channels to advocate change. Persistent conflict occurs far too often to serve as the basis for an explanation for the rare outcome of violence.

The explanations I have evaluated in this chapter do not exhaust the possible causes of nationalist violence; my goal has been to test only those that come from conceptualizing violence as the natural outgrowth of intractable conflict. To investigate nationalist violence as a distinct form of conflict and develop theories to explain why nationalist violence erupts in particular times and places, we need to turn away from explanations

that point to conditions that are common in both violent and non-violent settings, and consider those that can account for the rarity of violence. This requires thinking of violence as a dynamic process that evolves over time, rather than looking only at stable factors designed to distinguish violent and non-violent places. The factors I considered here largely operate at the macro-level: the duration of the conflict, the type of regime, the presence of settlers, and the existence of institutionalized injustice. These variables are suitable for comparing different places, but have little to say about the timing of violence. We need to tie macro factors that raise the probability of violence in a particular place to mechanisms that lead to the specific outcome of violence at particular points in time.

Scholars of violence are beginning to meet this challenge. In this volume, Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham and Emily Beaulieu consider the conditions that prompt non-state actors to embrace violent strategies. H. Zeynep Bulutgil shows that timing and context are crucial for explaining the phenomenon of ethnic cleansing. Elsewhere, I have posited an explanation for nationalist violence in the French empire by looking not at the *longue-durée* consequences of colonial rule, but at specific colonial policies that fragmented certain nationalist movements and produced violence. I argue that competition among nationalist groups, rather than the conflict between the nationalists and the imperial power, creates incentives to use violence.⁷⁴ These kinds of explanations consider not only the kinds of places where violence might occur, but also the dynamics that produce incentives for violence at particular moments in time. More research and better data can help unravel the question of when and where nationalist violence is likely to erupt.

74. Lawrence, "Competitive Origins."

