Triggering Nationalist Violence

Competition and Conflict in Uprisings against Colonial Rule

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What causes nonstate actors to take up arms and wage war against the state? Despite a burgeoning literature on civil war, extrasystemic war, and terrorism, scholars continue to lack compelling explanations for the onset of civil violence. The existing literature has examined variation in political violence along a number of different dimensions, including the incidence of rebellion and civil war,[1] the distribution of violence within civil wars,[2] the behavior of violent actors toward civilians,[3] popular support for violent actors,[4] and the use of particular types of violence.[5] Yet less is known about how and why violence erupts in the first

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1. For examples, see Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War" (Oxford: Center for the Study of African Economics, March 2002); Nicholas Sambanis, "What Is a Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition," *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 48, No. 6 (December 2004), pp. 814–858; 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.
2. Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
3. See, for example, Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Alexander B. Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008).
4. See, for example, Rui J.P. de Figueiredo Jr. and Barry R. Weingast, "The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 261–298; and Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
5. On terrorism, see Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," in Catherine Besteman, ed., *Violence: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), pp. 99–117; Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); and Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005). On sexual violence, see Elizabeth Jean Wood, "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare?" *Politics and Society,* Vol. 37, No. 1 (March 2009), pp. 131–161. On riots, see Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003); and Steven I. Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

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place. Even studies that ostensibly seek to explain the onset of civil wars typically fail to provide a causal account of the eruption of violence; they tend to focus on factors more suitable for explaining cross-sectional variation than the timing of violence.[6] Yet understanding the inception of violence requires a theory that does more than identify places that are likelier to experience violence; scholars and practitioners alike want to know why violence erupts where and when it does.

This task is critical in a world in which violence by nonstate actors has become the dominant form of conflict.[7] Nationalist conflict, in particular, has been one of the most pervasive and intractable types of conflict in the modern era. Nationalist objectives have been articulated by parties to civil wars, wars against foreign occupation, and terrorist campaigns in places as disparate as Afghanistan, Algeria, Chechnya, Kosovo, Palestine, and Sri Lanka, to name a few. Identifying the triggers of violence in places such as these is vital for scholars and policymakers who seek to anticipate and respond to global conflict.

Drawing on examples from the French colonial empire, this article presents a theory of onset that accounts for both the timing and location of nationalist violence. Studying cases from the colonial era is useful because of the powerful influence these cases have had on both scholarly and popular understandings of the conditions that promote nationalist violence. Secessionist movements in the former European empires, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia have shaped existing theories of nationalist violence; systematically studying a subset of these conflicts provides a way to evaluate alternative explanations and build a compelling account for why violence begins. Moreover, these cases are analytically useful in several ways. First, the colonial period is over, and the passage of time has produced a rich descriptive literature and made colonial conflicts less controversial. Ongoing nationalist conflicts are more difficult to study because information is often poor and partisan biases are pronounced. Second, the colonial cases provide needed variation. The French Empire, in particular, had one of the bloodiest imperial collapses in the twenti-

6. See, for example, Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War"; and Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." These studies identify places with large-scale violence, but they have little to say about why violence is preferable to alternatives or when war erupts. In "The Rationality of Fear," de Figueiredo and Weingast highlight the importance of theories that account for the timing of violence.

7. For more on the rise of intrastate violence and the decline of major war, see Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, eds., *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010); John Mueller, *The Remnants of War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004); and Meredith Reid Sarkees, Frank Whelon Wayman, and J. David Singer, "Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars: A Comprehensive Look at Their Distribution over Time, 1816–1997," *International Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 47, No. 1 (March 2003), pp. 49–70.

eth century,[8] yet violence in the empire varied across time and space: protracted wars of national liberation erupted in Algeria and Vietnam; terrorism and insurgency replaced peaceful movements in Cameroon, Madagascar, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia; but in places such as the Comoros, Laos, Mali, and Senegal, nationalist movements remained primarily peaceful, forming political parties and challenging colonial rule in metropolitan and international assemblies.[9] Third, restricting the analysis to one empire allows for more in-depth analysis and serves to hold the colonial power constant, thereby avoiding the introduction of confounding factors that reduce the comparability of cases. Finally, the use of case studies rather than a large-*N* sample permits consideration of microlevel data about the internal dynamics of nationalist groups, factors that I argue are crucial for understanding the adoption of violence.[10]

I use cases from the French Empire to propose a theory of "competitive violence" that explains why nationalist movements sometimes turn violent. Conventional explanations for nationalist violence in the colonial world focus on the intransigence of imperial rule, representing violence as the result of escalating conflict between the imperial power and the nationalists. According to this logic, nationalists turned to violence when imperial rulers refused to decolonize. This argument reflects a more general view of civil conflict that sees it primarily as a two-sided contest between the state and nonstate actors. The competitive violence theory provides an alternative explanation. I argue that violence resulted from internal contestation among nationalist actors. The specific trigger of competition in the French Empire was the repression of the nationalist leadership: violence broke out when a leadership vacuum created an opening for new nationalist actors to compete for local power. When and where nationalist movements fractured, nationalist actors had incentives to adopt violent strategies to compete with one another: they used violence to demonstrate their commitment to the nationalist cause, consolidate control over particular localities, and eliminate rivals. Where nationalist movements

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8. See Hendrik Spruyt, *Ending Empire: Contested Sovereignty and Territorial Partition* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005).
9. In the mid-twentieth century, the French encountered peaceful nationalist mobilization in the majority of the empire, including: Cambodia, Chad, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey (now Benin), Djibouti, French Guinea, French Sudan, Gabon, Laos, Lebanon, Mauritania, Middle Congo (now Republic of the Congo), Niger, Oubangui-Chari (now Central African Republic), Senegal, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), and Togo. Violence erupted in Algeria, Cameroon, Madagascar, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Vietnam.
10. On the importance of case studies for understanding the processes that lead to civil war, see Nicholas Sambanis, "Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil War," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June 2004), pp. 259–279.

remained centralized, mobilization remained primarily peaceful, relying on strategies such as protest, diplomacy, and party formation.[11] The argument accounts for the onset of violence both spatially and temporally.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follow. The first section illustrates the limitations of existing theories for understanding the onset of nationalist violence. The second section lays out the logic of the competitive violence theory. The third section analyzes the turn to violence in a single case, colonial Morocco. The Moroccan case lies somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of nationalist conflict in the French Empire; it was neither an entirely peaceful conflict nor an extremely violent outlier, such as Algeria. The Moroccan conflict provides a particularly good opportunity to consider the merits of the competitive violence theory because it ought to be a hard case for the argument. Morocco is a place where one might expect to see a unified movement organizing violent resistance: it was recognized as a sovereign state before the arrival of the French; Moroccan nationality was long-standing; and the leading nationalist organization had peacefully advocated independence for years before the outbreak of violence in the early 1950s. A single case has well-known limitations, but I draw testable implications from the theory that can be evaluated at the subnational level, generating multiple observations by assessing the theory's predictions for the behavior of organizations and individuals, and paying close attention to sequencing.

My ability to account for the eruption of violence in Morocco provides preliminary evidence of the theory's merit. In the fourth section, I consider the potential of the theory to illuminate the onset of violence in other parts of the French Empire and in cases outside the colonial world. Further empirical analysis is required to determine the limits of the argument's applicability, but I suggest that it can account for unexplained yet ubiquitous characteristics of contemporary nationalist conflicts: competition among nonstate actors, intranationalist violence, and persistent violence. Moreover, whereas rival explanations of onset are typically incapable of accounting for when violence will begin, my argument provides predictions for the onset of violence in both time and space. The competitive violence theory is one path whereby nationalist movements turn violent. In the conclusion, I consider further how this theory contributes to understanding the onset of nationalist violence.

11. Nationalist movement refers to the larger group of those issuing nationalist demands. The movement may be synonymous with one organization, where there is a dominant nationalist organization such as the Istiqlal (Independence) Party in Morocco until 1952, or it may include multiple groups and organizations.

Theorizing the Onset of Violence and Mobilization

Two streams of literature can be brought to bear on the question of why nationalist violence erupts. The first directly addresses the onset of violence in civil wars and extra-systemic wars. Like this article, these studies seek to explain the causes of civil violence, yet they suffer from a serious flaw: they fall short of providing a full causal account of onset because they do not address the timing of violence. The second set of studies includes work on contentious politics that connects anti-regime mobilization to specific political opportunities. This body of work explicitly seeks to understand the triggers of contestation, but these studies are less concerned with explaining the use of violence, in particular.

CIVIL WAR ONSET

The recent literature on civil war onset points to a number of factors that encourage violent challenges to the state. To take an example, one of the most robust findings in the quantitative literature on civil war is the association between poverty and violence: richer states are less likely to experience civil war than poorer ones.[12] James Fearon and David Laitin consider poverty, proxied by per capita gross domestic product (GDP), to be an indicator for weakened state capacity; poor states tend to be financially, organizationally, and politically weak and are therefore less likely to have the capacity to prevent violence. Strong states have numerous factors that shield them from internal violence: good roads, better policing and military capabilities, and stronger administrations.[13] Alternatively, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler argue that the association with per capita GDP can be explained by rebel greed, which leads those in poor countries to seek wealth through violent means. In their account, poverty provides a motivation for rebels to gain control of easily lootable resources.[14]

Although the reason for the link between poverty and civil war continues to

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12. See Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War"; and Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." The literature on civil war onset is relevant to the French Empire given that all but one of the seven violent cases (Syria) reached the threshold of 1,000 battle deaths and are included in Fearon and Laitin's data set. Fearon and Laitin state that their theory should apply to anticolonial wars; from a theoretical standpoint, general explanations of onset may well apply across different kinds of wars. Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," p. 76.
13. Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." For a critique of the state capacity argument, see Matthew Adam Kocher, "Insurgency, State Capacity, and the Rural Basis of Civil War," paper presented at the Program on Order, Conflict, and Violence, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, October 31, 2007.
14. Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War."

be debated, there is widespread agreement that an association exists.[15] Yet despite this agreement, theoretical considerations suggest that poverty, whether it represents weak state capacity or rebel motivation, is not a good explanation for the onset of violence. Onset occurs in time; it marks a phase shift from a period of peace to one with civil war. Poverty, however, is typically an enduring condition for a state, making it a poor predictor of when a civil war will start. An examination of the civil war cases in the Fearon and Laitin data set illustrates the stability of poverty over time. The data set includes 110 civil war onsets; of these, 78 have annual measures of GDP/capita for the four years prior to onset and did not experience another civil war onset during the previous five years.[16] These cases can thus show whether poverty, measured using GDP/capita, tends to change prior to onset. Within these cases, GDP/capita varies little during the four years before a civil war erupts. The mean GDP/capita one year prior to civil war onset is $1,697; two years prior is $1,686; three years prior is $1,651; and four years prior is also $1,651.[17] A drop in real per capita income in countries about to experience civil war is not evident. On average, the years before civil war were indistinguishable in terms of income; if anything, GDP going back a couple of years was slightly lower than it was in the year before war began.

A state characteristic that is stable over time cannot explain an outcome that varies temporally. Although poverty can differentiate places that are generally more likely to experience violence from places that are not, a theory based on poverty cannot predict when violence will begin or when it will reach the

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15. For an overview of findings, see Nicholas Sambanis, “A Review of Recent Advances and Future Directions in the Quantitative Literature on Civil War,” *Defense and Peace Economics*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (June 2002), pp. 215–243.

16. The cases that did not have continuous GDP/capita data for four years prior to onset were either those in which data on GDP/capita were not measured at all or those that lacked GDP/capita data prior to onset. These included a number of cases that experienced civil war onset at or soon after independence, which is when they were added to the data set. In such cases, GDP/capita was sometimes measured during the year of onset rather than prior to it, and may thus be endogenous to violence. Cases in which another civil war onset had occurred in the same country fewer than five years earlier were also eliminated because changes in GDP/capita may be endogenous to the earlier civil war onset. See Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel, “Civil War,” *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (March 2010), pp. 3–57. They point out that the correlation between poverty and civil war may be a function of the consequences of civil war for poverty. State capacity measured in other ways may be similarly endogenous to conflict, as capacity erodes rapidly once violence has begun.

17. The variance among these cases is also roughly constant in the four years prior to onset. Moreover, about 63 percent of these cases experienced growth in real per capita GDP in the year immediately prior to onset; the percentage of these economies that were growing in the prior three years was, respectively, 71 percent, 64 percent, and 60 percent. In other words, on average the level of poverty did not change much in the years prior to civil war onset; to the extent it did, the changes were typically in the direction of less poverty. Analysis was carried out using Stata 11, and is available from the author upon request.

threshold of a civil war. Such theories are indeterminate because they do not offer an explanation capable of explaining variation over time.

Although poverty tends to be a fairly static state characteristic overall, states sometimes do experience dramatic changes in wealth and capacity. Such changes could provide the basis for a more dynamic theory of violence, and scholars since Samuel Huntington have suggested that it is not poverty per se that leads to violence, but rapid changes such as modernization.[18] Theda Skocpol, for instance, points to state crisis, rather than the more static concept of state capacity, as the trigger of revolution.[19] These theories are theoretically capable of accounting for the timing of violence, but they have received only mixed empirical support; studies that have tested the impact of income shocks on civil war onset have not found widespread or consistent evidence of an effect.[20]

Arguments that link poverty to civil war are not the only ones that have difficulty explaining temporal variation. Other macro factors that have been associated with civil war onset, such as rough terrain, rural and urban settlement patterns, domination by an ethnic minority, the presence of natural resources, and regime type, tend to be similarly stable and unsuited for explaining a sudden descent into violent conflict.[21] Indeed, geographic features do not vary at all over time. These factors are useful for identifying places with

18. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968).
19. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
20. See Blattman and Miguel, "Civil War"; and Håvard Hegre and Nicholas Sambanis, "Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onset," *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 50, No. 4 (August 2006), pp. 508–535. Fearon and Laitin likewise do not find a significant correlation between GDP growth and civil war onset. See Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." Others have argued that it is not economic variables that matter, but changes in the regime. Hybrid regimes dubbed "anocracies," or regimes in transition, have been found to be more violent. See Håvard Hegre, Tanja Ellingsen, Scott Gates, and Nils Petter Gleditsch, "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 95, No 1 (March 2001), pp. 33–48. This finding, however, has been shown to be problematic because of the conflation of anocracy with already-existing political violence. See James Raymond Vreeland, "The Effect of Political Regime on Civil War: Unpacking Anocracy," *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 52, No. 3 (June 2008), pp. 401–425. Quantitative studies face serious measurement problems, as good indicators of state capacity or fluctuations in state capacity are notoriously difficult to come by and subject to critiques of endogeneity. Measurement issues are one reason why case study approaches are a useful way forward. See Sambanis, "Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil War."
21. See, respectively, Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War"; Matthew Adam Kocher, "Human Ecology and Civil War," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2004; Lars-Erik Cederman and Luc Girardin, "Beyond Fractionalization: Mapping Ethnicity onto Nationalist Insurgencies," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 101, No. 1 (February 2007), pp. 173–185; Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War"; and Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000).

a relatively higher risk of civil war, but where they fail to address temporal variation, they are incomplete explanations of onset.

Some factors that have been associated with violence in the colonial world also share this theoretical problem. Thus far, I have considered theories of civil war onset, and though most of the violent conflicts in the French Empire can be classified as civil wars, these cases may have features that made them particularly "civil-war prone."[22] Specifically, scholars and observers have suggested that imperial rule and foreign occupation produce intense grievances, and grievances are one general explanation for civil war.[23] Nicholas Sambanis suggests that colonial settings were more prone to violence because imperial rule was more pernicious than other kinds of authoritarian rule: "Empires were uniquely autocratic regimes, in which subjects lived under different forms of government, and one argument for setting extrastate wars apart is that the legal structure of empires prevented the articulation of colonized peoples' demands (voice) and left them with rebellion as their only option."[24] The idea that colonized populations had no other option besides violence is common in the literature on violent anticolonialism. Frantz Fanon provides a classic example of this view, writing, "[I]t is the intuition of the colonized masses that their liberation must, and can only, be achieved by force."[25] Empires are not alone in failing to address people's demands, but the suggestion is that empires, foreign occupation, and external domination generally create even more grievances than other kinds of regimes.

These grievances became particularly acute as empire became outdated. Wilson's Fourteen Points, the founding of the League of Nations, and the creation of the United Nations are among the events that rendered imperial rule illegitimate. The most common explanations for the onset of nationalist violence in the colonial world therefore focus on the intransigence of imperial rule despite its growing illegitimacy. The argument is that where colonial powers failed to recognize the right of self-determination, nationalist movements turned to violence to forcibly eject imperial rulers. For the French cases, schol-

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22. Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," pp. 86, 77. See also Andreas Wimmer and Brian Min, "From Empire to Nation-State: Explaining Wars in the Modern World, 1816–2001," *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 71, No. 6 (December 2006), pp. 867–897. They find that the transition from empire to nation-state is a particularly violent process.
23. The inequalities of colonial rule and the privileged position of settlers likely produced resentment and a sense of deprivation, factors that scholars have associated with violence. See Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971); and Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). On grievances in situations of foreign occupation, see David M. Edelstein, *Occupational Hazards: Success and Failure in Military Occupation* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2010); and Pape, *Dying to Win.*
24. Sambanis, "What Is a Civil War?" p. 827.
25. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 1963), p. 73.

ars have suggested that France's refusal to relinquish its territories after World War II angered colonized populations and led to violence.[26] As one Moroccan nationalist put it, France would learn its lesson only "after traversing streets saturated with blood and strewn with corpses."[27] Sentiments such as these are echoed in statements by those living under foreign domination in a wide variety of contexts.[28]

The argument that grievances about foreign rule spark violence leaves several questions unanswered. First, like the macro factors such as poverty found in the civil war literature, this argument provides no theoretical predictions about the timing of violence. Just when actors would decide that foreign rule was intolerable and employ violence is unspecified. The inequalities of imperial rule were enduring features in the colonies; scholars still need to know when those grievances would be expressed through violence. Explaining the onset of violence requires identifying particular instances where the actions of the authorities prompted violence.

In addition, an argument about grievances cannot account for divergent behavior among nationalist groups within the same territory; it has little to say about internal divisions within a movement or disagreements over strategy. Finally, a focus on the injustices of foreign rule makes it difficult to understand why so many nationalist movements engaged in peaceful opposition. In the French Empire, the majority of nationalist movements rejected violence, despite widespread abuses by colonial rulers.[29]

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Accounting for the onset of nationalist violence requires wedding static factors that may facilitate rebellion, such as poverty and colonial injustice, to particu-

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26. See Raymond F. Betts, *France and Decolonisation 1900–1960* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), p. 6; Anthony Clayton, *The Wars of French Decolonization* (London: Longman, 1994), p. 1; and Spruyt, *Ending Empire,* who argues that the inability of the French to decolonize explains violence in the empire.
27. Abderrahim Ouardighi, *La grande crise Franco-Marocaine, 1952–1956* (Rabat: L'Imprimerie Nouvelle, 1976), p. 57.
28. Indeed, in contemporary cases, nationalist groups often explicitly draw an analogy to colonial rule, articulating their grievances by suggesting that they are victims of colonial or neocolonial states.
29. One response to this critique is that violence may have broken out only where imperial rule was most intransigent. The problem with this claim is that intransigence itself is often measured by whether or not there was a violent conflict, rather than through ex ante indicators of the colonial power's commitment to specific colonies. Elsewhere, I have analyzed three measures of intransigence that do not appear to account for patterns of violence: length of time under colonial rule, percentage of settlers, and territorial status. These measures are also fairly stable and unsuited to explaining timing. See Adria Lawrence, "Driven to Arms? The Escalation to Violence in Nationalist Conflicts," in Chenoweth and Lawrence, *Rethinking Violence,* chap. 6.

lar triggers. A large literature has focused on the importance of political opportunities for opponents of the state to mobilize and act. Scholars of social movements have agreed that "most political movements and revolutions are set in motion by social changes that render the established political order more vulnerable or receptive to challenge."[30] A focus on changes that provide opportunities for action is promising because it has the potential to explain timing. Yet a key challenge remains: work on political opportunities has grown out of the social movement literature and tends to focus on explaining nonviolent mobilization rather than violence. Even work on revolutions does not explicitly consider why violence is used; regimes may be overthrown through mass protest, violent action, or a mix of violent and nonviolent opposition.[31] Understanding the onset of violence requires theorizing the political opportunities that favor a turn to violence, in particular. Charles Tilly suggests that the shift from peaceful to violent opposition (and vice versa) continues to pose a puzzle that lacks satisfactory solutions.[32]

A related challenge is identifying what kinds of changes constitute a political opportunity for violent action. The difficulty is to find a way to theorize and measure political opportunities ex ante, without simply looking back from a mobilization event and seizing on an apparent opportunity that preceded it. It is not enough to identify political opportunities; analysts also need a way to evaluate when and where such opportunities do not exist. In response to concerns that the concept of political opportunity lacks precision, Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald lay out four dimensions that can be analyzed to judge whether or not a political opportunity exists: the relative openness of the institutionalized political system, the stability of elite alignments, the presence of elite allies, and the state's repressive capacities.[33] These four dimensions are fairly general so as to accommodate diverse situations of collective action, but they fail to advance conceptual clarity. The dimensions are challenging to measure and potentially endogenous to political mobilization itself, and the relative importance of each is unknown. How crucial is it for elites to have allies? With whom must they ally for their movement to work? How

30. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 8. Skocpol and Huntington, discussed above, likewise exemplify a focus on social changes and could equally be discussed in this section; I include them in the discussion of state capacity because of their substantive relevance to those arguments. See Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions;* and Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies.*
31. See Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions;* Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); and Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
32. Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
33. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements,* p. 10.

open does the political system need to be to allow political mobilization? How repressive does a state need to be to prevent mobilization? The dimensions for measuring political opportunities seem nearly as difficult to conceptualize and measure as the concept of political opportunity itself.

The difficulties of theorizing political opportunity have been aptly pointed out by William Gamson and David Meyer: "The concept of a political opportunity structure is in trouble, in danger of becoming a sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment—political institutions and culture, crises of various sorts, political alliances, and policy shifts. . . . It threatens to become an all-encompassing fudge factory for all the conditions and circumstances that form the context for collective action. Used to explain so much, it may ultimately explain nothing at all."[34]

In response to these criticisms, scholars have focused on identifying specific types of opportunities that are conducive to mobilization. As discussed above, some studies of revolution have focused on state crisis as the key opportunity.[35] Others have identified indiscriminate repression as an important trigger.[36] Further work to theorize and test specific classes of events that serve as general triggers of violence is required.

The literatures on civil war and contentious politics point to the need to consider both the broad factors that are conducive to violence and the particular triggers that lead to the actual eruption of violence. Put otherwise, to understand when violence erupts, scholars need to consider both motive and opportunity. Existing studies of civil war onset identify conditions that make some places more likely to experience violent conflict, but they pay less attention to the dynamic nature of violence. Studies of contentious politics are more attuned to the need to identify triggers, but focus less on explaining why state

34. William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, "Framing Political Opportunity," in ibid., p. 275.
35. See Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions;* and Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World.* Barry R. Posen points to state collapse as a trigger of ethnic conflict, in particular, but in the French Empire, violence did not occur in the context of anarchy. See Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival,* Vol. 35, No. 1 (Spring 1993), pp. 27–47.
36. Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Generalized repression, however, can have various effects: it may prompt opposition, or it may prevent opposition by raising the costs of collective action. For the various effects of repression on violence, see, for example, Douglas A. Hibbs Jr., *Mass Political Violence: A Cross-National Causal Analysis* (New York: Wiley, 1973); Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978); Edward N. Muller and Erich Weede, "Cross-National Variation in Political Violence: A Rational Action Approach," *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 34, No. 4 (December 1990), pp. 624–651; Will H. Moore, "Repression and Dissent: Substitution, Context, and Timing," *American Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 42, No. 3 (July 1998), pp. 851–873; and Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem," *World Politics,* Vol. 59, No. 2 (January 2007), pp. 177–216.

opponents would choose violent strategies in particular. In the next section, I identify a critical opportunity that gave nationalist actors incentives to take violent action.

Competitive Violence

The central claim of the competitive violence theory is that nationalist violence erupts from intra-movement fragmentation and competition. There are multiple triggers that can upset the existing balance of power within a movement and prompt competition among nationalist actors. The death of nationalist leaders, or the co-optation of some nationalist leaders, or the repression of the leadership are among the mechanisms that can fragment a nationalist movement and prompt infighting. I focus on leadership repression to explicate the theory because it was the main trigger of fragmentation in the French Empire; similar dynamics can emerge from other acts that fracture nationalist movements.

THE ARGUMENT

The logic of the competitive violence theory derives from considering intranationalist dynamics in the context of a power vacuum within the movement. When existing leaders of a vibrant nationalist movement were jailed, sent into exile, or killed, the loss of leadership provided an opening for less prominent actors to assume leadership roles. Given that multiple actors typically sought to fill these roles, nationalist movements that were previously fairly unified fragmented in the wake of leadership repression, as actors vied for positions of power. Not all actors employed violence in the struggle for leadership, but violence was a useful tool for multiple reasons.

First, the removal of the existing leadership exacerbates competition between those who favor violence and those who oppose it. Prior to leadership decapitation, actors who wish to use violence may be constrained by the existing nationalist leadership. All else being equal, once leaders are gone, those who prefer violence are less constrained; they even have a ready justification because they can cite leadership repression as a provocation. While other nationalists may continue to denounce violence, the absence of the most influential leaders emboldens those who wish to use violence to become the new voice of the movement, potentially drowning out the advocates of peaceful protest.[37]

37. Other studies have considered the ability of moderates to restrain extremists, arguing that extremists often act as spoilers during negotiations. See, for example, Andrew Kydd and Barbara F.

The presence of actors with a preexisting preference for violence is not required for violence to follow leadership repression, however. Leadership repression also produces incentives for actors to use violence, such that previously nonviolent actors turn violent. The sudden removal of the nationalist leadership and the subsequent opportunities to assume local leadership fuel violence via four mechanisms. First, to compete with others, an actor needs to be recognized as an important nationalist player. One way to gain recognition is to engage in spectacular forms of resistance that are reported and discussed widely.[38] Violence is a fast way to gain notoriety, particularly for lesser-known actors who wish to assume leadership.

A second mechanism is outbidding. Actors not only seek recognition as part of the movement; they also want to show that they are more actively involved in fighting than others.[39] Outbidding explains why violence increases over time, and why nonviolent organizations adopt violence once other actors have begun employing it.

A third mechanism is the direct use of violence against local and regional rivals. Violence is often directed not only at the state but also at co-nationals; the targeting of co-nationals serves to eliminate competitors.[40] In-group violence is a common feature of nationalist conflicts; understanding the competitive dynamics of these conflicts can make sense of this widespread phenomenon, in addition to explaining the violence that occurs across the main cleavage of conflict.

A final reason to employ violence is a lack of other means to gain political power. The fragmentation that follows the destruction of the leadership divides the movement into smaller groups, and it is difficult for small groups to compete through nonviolent means. To be truly visible, nonviolent mobilization requires a mass base that can be organized for protests, a difficult task when the movement has suffered a shock and it is unclear who leads. Violent

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Walter, "Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence," *International Organization,* Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring 2002), pp. 263–296; and Edward Newman and Oliver Richmond, eds., *Challenges to Peacebuilding: Managing Spoilers during Conflict Resolution* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2006). This argument explains violence during negotiations, but not at other times. For an alternative argument that terrorism rises when moderates accept concessions, see Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, "Conciliation, Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence," *International Organization,* Vol. 59, No. 1 (Winter 2005), pp. 145–176.

38. On violence and the desire for recognition, see Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," p. 107.

39. For more on outbidding, see Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Bloom, *Dying to Kill.*

40. On the ubiquity of intragroup violence alongside intergroup violence in civil wars, see Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War,* p. 387. Kalyvas argues that in wartime, people denounce others out of personal (and often petty) motivations, but motivations can also be political.

mobilization, on the other hand, can be noticeable even with few participants. A small number of militants can carry out highly visible attacks.[41] For would-be leaders who lack a large base of followers, violence is the only route to claiming an important role in the conflict.

A potential counterargument is that when leadership repression occurs, nationalist organizations switch to violence out of anger and frustration. This argument links leadership repression to violence, as I do, but through an alternative mechanism. Violence is a direct response to leadership repression; nationalists answer the violence of the empire with violence of their own.

Both this counterargument and the competitive violence theory predict an association between leadership repression and the onset of violence, but they have additional observable implications that can be examined at the subnational level. The competitive violence theory suggests that leadership repression emboldens other actors; it therefore leads to the following five hypotheses: leadership repression should be followed by an increase in the number of active nationalist organizations. Existing organizations that had not been prominent in the movement could seize the opportunity and become more active; new organizations could emerge; or existing organizations could fracture (H1). The competitive violence theory also predicts competition: struggles for power among local actors should be observed. Specifically, the argument predicts that actors will use violence in the ways outlined above: to gain recognition (H2), to outbid other nationalists (H3), and to directly attack rivals (H4).

The argument that leadership repression produces violence by exacerbating grievances has different observable implications. It does not predict an increase in the number of actors or intra-movement competition, as H1, H2, and H3 posit; rather leadership repression might, as Fanon has suggested, unite the population, or it might have no effect on intra-nationalist dynamics. It predicts retaliatory violence; violence should be primarily two-sided and in-group targets should be known collaborators, not other nationalists, as H4 suggests.

My argument also has implications for the duration of violence. If violence is a function of the struggle for power among nationalists, it need not cease when independence is achieved, and, in fact, it may worsen in the postcolonial struggle for power. Ongoing violence even after the stated aims of the nationalists are achieved may be observed (H5). The alternative grievance-based hypothesis makes no prediction about the duration of violence; it does not propose an explanation for violence when the initial grievances are addressed.

41. Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," pp. 104–105, suggests that terrorism is used by elites who cannot mobilize mass support.

These arguments are not mutually exclusive; leadership repression could operate in both ways, even in one setting. Evaluating them empirically can suggest their respective ability to account for patterns of nationalist violence.

WHY REPRESS NATIONALIST LEADERS?

Before turning to empirics, one further question deserves consideration: Why would a ruler engage in leadership repression if it leads to the eruption of violence? The purpose of decapitation is precisely to undermine the movement and destroy its ability to organize effectively; it would be ironic if leadership repression instead led to the flourishing of nationalist organizations and widespread violence. One potential counterargument to the claims I advance here is that leadership repression, rather than triggering violence, is a response to violence.

The only way to rule out endogeneity is by studying the empirical record carefully and searching for evidence in each case about the state's expectations of violence prior to leadership repression. It is essential, first of all, to pay close attention to sequence to ensure that violence follows rather than precedes leadership repression; if onset occurs before leadership repression, leadership repression cannot be a cause of onset. But even if violence is largely absent, rulers might employ leadership repression because they anticipate the eruption of violence. For the French Empire, this claim is difficult to sustain. French reports from the colonial period suggest two reasons for engaging in leadership repression; neither supports the view that the French anticipated violence.

The first reason for proposing leadership repression was indeed the widespread perception that nationalist movements threatened French rule. Colonial reports lamented the growth of nationalist sentiment and expressed fears that nationalist movements would make continued French rule untenable. It is crucial, however, not to conflate the perception of threat with an anticipation of violence. French records suggest that what officials feared at the time was not the prospect of a violent movement, but the movement they already faced: growing, mobilizing support, and engaging in peaceful demonstrations. French officials were not pondering a future problem, but an existing one. Their reports, as well as the subsequent history of nonviolent decolonization, suggest that a movement need not employ violence to threaten French interests.[42]

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42. I draw on a sample of monthly French colonial reports prior to leadership repression found in *Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre (SHAT)*, Vincennes, France. The French worried about movements in their territories that followed Gandhi's example. More generally, peaceful mass movements may be more threatening than violent ones. See 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.

The second reason for engaging in leadership decapitation was the expectation that it would be effective. Leadership repression sometimes works. Jenna Jordan has found that it can effectively crush a movement that is small, primarily elite, and short-lived, whereas larger, well-established organizations are difficult to destroy entirely.[43] Judging when leadership repression will and will not work is a thorny policy problem. In their empire, the French employed leadership repression with success in the early stages of nationalist movements; they had a long history of shutting down demonstrations and rebellions effectively. Once movements had successfully organized protests and gained a mass base, however, leadership decapitation proved counterproductive and prompted violence.[44] French reports document surprise when the strategy backfired; officials expected leadership repression to quell opposition, not prompt violence. Where the French left the existing nationalist leadership in place, nationalist movements remained nonviolent.

The claim that leadership repression was a response to anticipated violence can be addressed not only by considering what the French did say about their reasons for repression, but also by looking at what they did not say. French reports did not provide evidence that leaders were contemplating violence; they could not have anticipated the leaders' plans because they did not have access to them. Moreover, the organizations subjected to leadership repression were not the ones that subsequently embraced violence; violent actors were typically unknown to the administration prior to the eruption of violence.[45] Leading nationalists primarily denounced violence until their removal. The following section provides evidence that in the case of Morocco, the French failed to anticipate the emergence of violent actors and fully recognized that leadership decapitation was a mistake.

Competitive Violence in the Moroccan Nationalist Movement

On Christmas Eve, 1953, Mohamed Ben Moussa Ridha deposited a homemade bomb in the central market of Casablanca, killing nineteen and wounding

43. Jenna Jordan, "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation," *Security Studies,* Vol. 18, No. 4 (October–December 2009), pp. 719–755.
44. French archives reveal the administration's confusion over the effects of repression on nationalist opposition; sometimes reports suggest that it served to suppress the movement, whereas other reports point to its counterproductive effects. See the *Bulletins de Renseignments Politiques,* in *SHAT* 3H1415 and 3H1416.
45. A close reading of classified monthly reports from the French administration in Morocco shows no prior knowledge of the armed groups that would come to the fore in the violent phase of the nationalist resistance; the reports focused entirely on the actions of the main nationalist party, which did not turn violent in the aftermath of leadership repression. See ibid. Likewise, in Algeria the leaders of the FLN were unknown to the administration prior to its first action in 1954. See Alistaire Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954–1962* (New York: Viking, 1977), p. 86.

thirty-four. On March 19, 1954, two bombs were thrown into the Koutoubia Mosque in Marrakech, wounding thirty. On October 3, 1955, the Armée de Libération Marocaine (ALM) announced a jihad against French forces in Morocco and denounced Moroccans who failed to represent the nation's interests.[46]

These events exemplify the violence of the Moroccan anticolonial movement. Violence began in 1952 and continued through independence in March 1956. It was carried out in two organized campaigns. The first was a campaign of urban terror. From August 20, 1953, to April 6, 1956, there were 4,520 armed attacks in Moroccan cities and towns, including assassination attempts, bomb attacks, arson, and sabotage.[47] The second campaign was a rural insurgency carried out by the ALM in the Rif, Middle Atlas, and High Atlas mountain ranges.

One participant explained the use of violence; "We are not like the men of India. We could not respond to colonialism only with protest. Violence is in our nature."[48] Yet the history of the movement belies his claim that violence was natural for Moroccans. For more than two decades, opposition to French rule in Morocco had been largely nonviolent. Before 1952 the nationalist movement was both peaceful and centralized. In the 1930s, protestors sought democratic rights and reform under French rule. From 1944 to 1952, the Istiqlal (Independence) Party led the nationalist movement and advocated peaceful strategies. Moroccan nationalists turned to violence only in the last years of colonial rule, and the violent period was far shorter than the nonviolent period.

The most prominent explanation for the eruption of violence is that the 1953 French decision to exile the Moroccan sultan provoked the population and sparked violence. In 1927 the French chose the sultan because he was young and docile.[49] For the majority of the protectorate period, the sultan proved as compliant as the French had hoped. But starting in World War II, the sultan began to show support for nationalist aims. From 1947 to 1953, he held clandestine meetings with the Istiqlal Party and began dragging his feet on implementing French policy. The administration decided it would be easier to

46. *Communiqué No. 1 de l'Armée de Libération du Maghreb Arabe (et Mouvement de Résistance du Maroc Front de Libération Nationale Algérien),* Tetouan, October 3, 1955, reproduced in Brahim Tahiri, *Le temps des anciens: Mémoires—clandestinité—récits Armée de Libération Marocaine* (Rabat: Imprimerie Omnia, 2003), pp. 277–278.
47. Mohammed Zade, "Résistance et Armée de Libération au Maroc (1947–1956): De l'action politique à la lutte armée: Rupture ou continuité?" Ph.D dissertation, Université Nice-Antipolis, 2001.
48. Interview by author, February 2006. Name withheld at request of respondent, a former member of the urban resistance.
49. Rom Landau, *Moroccan Drama: 1900–1955* (San Francisco, Calif.: American Academy of Asian Studies, 1956), p. 201.

rule without him, and on August 20, 1953, the sultan was sent into exile in Madagascar.

Most scholars and participants see violence in Morocco as a reaction to the sultan's deposition.[50] The vast majority of violent events occurred after his exile, and violent resistance has been portrayed as an expression of outrage and loyalty to the sultan. French Resident General Gilbert Grandval interpreted the violence as such and described the deposition as a serious misstep.[51] On "Voice of the Arabs," exiled Istiqlal leader Allal al-Fasi called for the Moroccan people to defend the sultan using "all efforts and means."[52]

The sultan's deposition was not the only instance of leadership repression in Morocco. Before deposing the sultan, the French imprisoned and exiled leaders of the Istiqlal, the leading nationalist organization prior to the outbreak of violence.[53] At its founding in 1944, the party announced a nonviolent agenda.[54] The party organized 383 peaceful nationalist events in the years following its founding, including demonstrations, strikes, and large meetings, and challenged the French in elections in 1947 and 1951.[55] It appealed to the United Nations and set up offices in New York to gain international support for its cause. In December 1952, the Istiqlal, in collaboration with local trade unions, decided to organize a demonstration in Casablanca to protest the assassination of Tunisian union leader Ferhat Hached. This event was far from unusual; in 1952 the party typically organized multiple protests such as this one each month. The night before the strike, a demonstration took place out-

50. See, for example, Stéphane Bernard, *Le conflit Franco-Marocain, 1943–1956* (Brussels: Editions de l'Institut de Sociologie de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1963), p. 192; David M. Hart, *The Aith Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif: An Ethnography and History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976), p. 423; Larbi Essakali, *1953–1983: Dans le concert des nations,* Vol. 7 (Rabat: Nord Organisation, 1985), pp. 16–17; Bernard Lugan, *Histoire du Maroc des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 2000); and Selma Lazraq, *La France et le retour de Mohammed V* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003). The view that the sultan's exile was the primary motivation for anticolonial violence has been promoted by the monarchy in the postcolonial era, and the date of the deposition remains a state holiday.

51. Gilbert Grandval, *Ma mission au Maroc* (Paris: Librarie Plon, 1956), p. 21.

52. Quoted in Essakali, *1953–1983: Dans le concert des nations,* p. 19.

53. From 1944 to 1953, the main rival of the Istiqlal Party was the Parti Démocratique de l'Indépendance, which had far fewer members and pressured the French via diplomacy and the media. Hostility between the two parties prevented a unified front, despite an agreement in Tangier in April 1951. A Moroccan communist party also existed, but had few members. *Le Nationalisme Marocain, 1952,* in *SHAT,* 3H1417.

54. Bernard, *Le conflit Franco-Marocain, 1943–1956.*

55. See Adria Lawrence, "Imperial Rule and the Politics of Nationalism," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2007. Mobilization data were compiled from classified monthly and biweekly reports issued by the protectorate. On earlier nationalist activity, see Allal al-Fasi, *The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa,* trans. Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh (New York: Octagon, 1970); Charles-André Julien, *L'Afrique du Nord en marche: Nationalismes musulmans et souveraineté française* (Tunis: Cérès Editions, 1972); William A. Hoisington Jr., *The Casablanca Connection: French Colonial Policy, 1936–1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984); and Abd al-Krim Rhilaab, *Taariqh al-harakat al-wataniyya bi'l maghrib,* Vol. 1 (Casablanca: Al-Nejaah, 2000).

side police headquarters, and concerned that it might degenerate into rioting, police fired upon demonstrators. In the aftermath, several Frenchmen were killed.[56] The next day, strikers were confronted with police and tanks, which opened on demonstrators with heavy fire. Estimates suggest that the death toll was in the hundreds. The French arrested 400 members of the Istiqlal, the Moroccan trade union,[57] and the smaller Communist Party. Istiqlal leaders were put under house arrest in the south; nationalist newspapers were silenced; and a group of pashas and caids suspected of nationalist sympathies was dismissed.[58]

The evidence shows that the French Residency deliberately seized upon the occasion to destroy the nationalist leadership. French liberals claimed that the authorities "had 'smoked out' the nationalists in order to finish them off once and for all, had misrepresented a general protest strike as a riot directed against European lives, and had killed several hundred unarmed Moroccans."[59] The December 1952 protectorate report affirmed the administration's decision to decapitate the Istiqlal Party.[60] With the deposition of the sultan eight months later, the leading spokesmen for Moroccan independence were effectively removed.[61] The removal of the leaders who had disavowed violence preceded the eruption of violence that would last through independence.[62]

To determine whether leadership repression angered the population and led directly to violence, or whether the competitive violence theory better accounts for the turn to violence, several factors need to be considered: the effect of repression on active nationalist organizations (H1), the existence of competition among nationalists (H2 and H3), whether there was intra-movement violence or primarily two-sided violence (H4), and the duration of violence (H5).

LEADERSHIP REPRESSION AND THE SPLINTERING OF THE MOVEMENT

The nationalist movement without the sultan and the Istiqlal leaders who had led the movement since its inception was "comparable to a boat with neither helmsman nor rudder."[63] The arrest of the party leadership created a vacuum

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56. Julien, *L'Afrique du Nord en marche,* p. 583.
57. The trade union was called the Union Générale des Syndicats Confédérés au Maroc, and was an affiliate of the French Conféderation Générale de Travail.
58. See Bernard, *Le conflit Franco-Marocain,* pp. 108–120.
59. Ibid., p. 119.
60. *Bulletin de Renseignements Politiques Décembre 1952,* in *SHAT,* 3H1416.
61. Ouardighi, *La grand crise Franco-Marocaine,* p. 76, reports that French Resident General August-Léon Guillaume affirmed the need to eliminate both the party and the sultan.
62. Leon Borden Blair, *Western Window in the Arab World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), p. 169.
63. Landau, *Moroccan Drama,* p. 323.

among the rank and file.[64] Remaining party members began to vie for leadership of the decapitated party; previously unknown actors began to form urban terror cells; and in the mountains, the ALM formed.

The urban violence campaign was not unified, but was carried out by a number of small organizations, primarily centered in Casablanca. Participating groups included al-Munazzama al-Sirriyya (the Secret Organization), al-Hilal al-Aswad (the Black Rising), Usad al-Tahrir (the Lions of Liberation), and the Organization of the Black Hand, to name a few.[65] The Istiqlal had ties with some groups, but the extent to which the party was involved is a matter of debate.[66] Some groups were organized by members of the Istiqlal, but others acted independently.

The rural insurgency was likewise begun by a new nationalist actor. The ALM was distinctive, operating without coordination with other nationalist groups. Its headquarters were in the mountains, far from other organizations. The ALM itself was divided into regional branches with leaders who did not typically coordinate their activities.[67] It was created explicitly in opposition to the Istiqlal. ALM leader Nadir Bouzar described the Moroccan parties as "the source of all evil."[68] The Istiqlal likewise stated that it was not associated with the ALM's activities in the mountains.[69] The party was already in talks with the French, and ongoing insurgent violence undermined its negotiating authority.[70]

All nationalist organizations expressed the same goals: the return of the sultan and the end of French rule. If shared goals drove the violence, one might expect that the nationalist movement would have continued to be unified, as it had been under the Istiqlal up until its decapitation. The argument that the only effect of leadership repression was to anger the population cannot account for the multiplication of organizations that followed in its wake. The cre-

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64. Bernard, *Le conflit Franco-Marocain*, p. 121; and John Waterbury, *Commander of the Faithful: The Moroccan Political Elite—A Study in Segmented Politics* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p. 47.
65. Guy Delanoë, *Le retour du roi et l'indépendance retrouvée,* Vol. 3 (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 1991); and Zade, "Résistance et Armée de Libération au Maroc (1947–1956)."
66. See Blair, *Western Window in the Arab World,* pp. 169–170; and Barnett Singer and John Langdon, *Cultured Force: Makers and Defenders of the French Colonial Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 266.
67. Hart, *The Aith Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif,* p. 424, suggests that there were several armies of liberation, not one.
68. Quoted in Abderrahim Ouardighi, *Mémoires d'un ancien résistant, 1953–1956* (Rabat: Le Haut commissariat aux anciens résistants et anciens membres de l'armée de libération), p. 60.
69. Nadir Bouzar, *L'armée de libération nationale marocain: Retour sans visa (journal d'un résistant maghrébin)* (Paris: Editions Publisud, 2002), p. 18.
70. The ALM claimed to have the backing of exiled Istiqlal leader Allal al-Fasi, but the party stated that although the ALM may have been inspired by al-Fasi, no party member supported the insurgency.

ation of distinct armed actors, the ALM insurgents and the various urban terror organizations, suggests that leadership repression splintered the nationalist movement.

The French recognized the negative effects of their policy. Speaking before the French parliament on June 10, 1954, Pierre Mendès-France noted that leadership repression had prompted violence in Morocco, stating that "the force which was designed to prevent or delay events has in fact accelerated them. It is, among the most advanced, transforming demands into open revolt, and, among the hitherto indifferent masses, it is creating the concept of a national conflict and driving them to take arms against us."[71] Deciding that the groups that had sprung up in the wake of leadership repression were far less desirable to deal with than those they had repressed, the French released the Istiqlal leaders two years after their arrest. The release came too late, however; the Istiqlal had lost its position of dominance.[72] As a result, the party would be unable to prevent further violence or gain control of the new organizations.

INTRA-MOVEMENT COMPETITION AND VIOLENCE

Despite their shared goals, the new organizations that came to the forefront of the nationalist movement in the mid-1950s actively competed with one another. Competition grew among Istiqlal members still at large, urban terror groups, and the ALM.

Istiqlal members often acted against urban terror groups, even going so far as to denounce them to the French. The 1953 Christmas bombing provides a case in point. The bomber was denounced by several merchants, including Mohammed Jilali Bennani, one of the original signatories to the Istiqlal's 1944 manifesto. They declared their desire to "safeguard Franco-Moroccan friendship and the future of the country."[73] The Istiqlal set up disciplinary committees to deal with members suspected of terrorism,[74] although some well-known party members were participants in al-Munazzama al-Sirriyya.[75] Once those who had been arrested were released, they vied with the leaders of the urban campaign for leading roles in the nationalist movement.[76]

There was likewise competition between the ALM insurgents and the Istiqlal. One ALM leader, influenced by the success of the Algerian National Liberation Front (known by the French acronym FLN) in discrediting other

71. Quoted in Bernard, *Le conflit Franco-Marocain*, p. 216.
72. Ibid., pp. 222–223.
73. John Waterbury, *North for the Trade: The Life and Times of a Berber Merchant* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 127.
74. Waterbury, *Commander of the Faithful*, p. 52.
75. Abderrahim Ouardighi, *L'Itinéraire d'un nationaliste: Mehdi Ben Barka, 1920–1965* (Rabat: Editions Moncho, 1982), p. 48.
76. Bernard, *Le conflit Franco-Marocain*, pp. 194–195.

Algerian nationalist parties, hoped that the ALM would similarly be able to destroy Moroccan political parties and become the sole voice of Moroccan nationalism.[77]

Competition also characterized the relationship between the urban groups and the ALM. Competition in part was a function of regional cleavages. The urban movement began in Casablanca before spreading to other towns. It never carried out activities in the areas where the ALM operated. Although there were discussions of uniting some resistance groups with the ALM, they remained distinctive.

Competition helps explain why the targets of violence tended to be Moroccan, not French.[78] Official accounts acknowledge that Moroccans were the main victims, but claim that they were primarily collaborators.[79] Yet several facts suggest that this claim was a post hoc justification for targeting Moroccans. First, known collaborators who changed sides were usually welcomed by nationalist organizations. Moroccans in the French army, for instance, were encouraged to join the ALM, and key elites who switched sides were pardoned. Second, the main beneficiaries of colonial rule were not the primary targets. Information on targeting is sketchy, but well-known French intermediaries were typically spared. Instead of targeting Moroccans who were publicly linked to the administration, nationalist organizations typically targeted those accused of serving as private informers.[80] Third, it is difficult to see why so many people were targeted for collaboration when there were so few incentives to collaborate. Most of the violence occurred as the French were disengaging. It made little sense for Moroccans to help the French when there was so little likelihood of reward.[81] Finally, and most important for the competitive violence theory, nationalist organizations attacked members of other nationalist organizations. Intragroup violence is overlooked by alternative explanations, which focus solely on explaining the violence directed at the occupying power. The following section provides further examples of intra-movement targeting.

Competition, Intra-Movement Violence, and the Duration of Violence

In 1955 the French began to withdraw from Morocco. France had already granted autonomy to Tunisia and was consumed with the growing conflict in

77. Ouardighi, *Mémoires d'un ancien résistant*, p. 90.
78. Bernard, *Le conflit Franco-Marocain*, p. 193.
79. Essakali, *1953–1983: Dans le concert des nations*, p. 27.
80. Bernard, *Le conflit Franco-Marocain*, p. 193.
81. See Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War.* If the French had been trying to maintain control over Morocco, one might expect Moroccans to be targeted for the purpose Kalyvas lays out: to encourage defections and generate control. This logic makes little sense, however, once the French began opting out of controlling territory.

Algeria. The beginning of the end came in June when Grandval was appointed resident general and tasked with ending the "Moroccan problem."[82] Both Moroccans and the French in Morocco saw his appointment as a major policy change. Settlers protested and spat on him at his arrival, while Moroccans welcomed him and expected that he would restore the sultan.[83]

Grandval met with leading nationalists in late June 1955. On August 22, the French opened negotiations with the nationalist parties, although they worried about the parties' inability to control the new violent nationalist groups. As Ernest Gellner stated, "There was a situation where no one really knew clearly whose authority counted. There had been no election conferring a mandate on this or that man or party, and if there had been, it would not have been very relevant. Very crudely, the weight of a man's, or a party's, voice in the capital was a function of the number of men willing to lay down their arms at his orders in the countryside."[84]

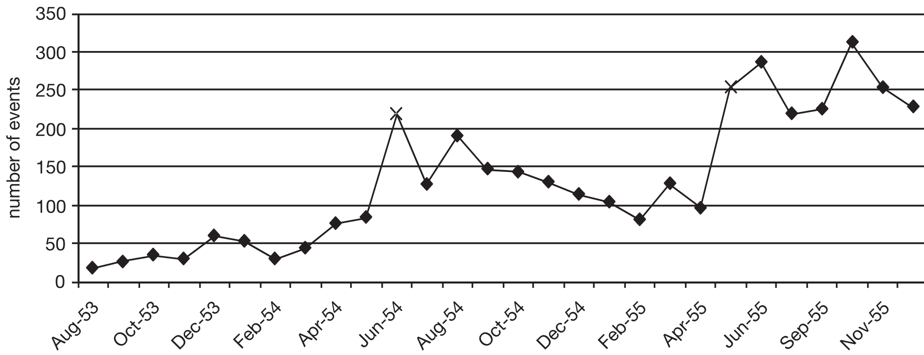
In September 1955, French Gen. George Catroux met with the sultan to discuss his return. At the United Nations on September 29, France announced that Morocco was to become independent. The declaration of La Celle-Saint Cloud on November 6 ended the protectorate. On November 17, the sultan returned to Morocco. The independence treaty was signed on March 2, 1956.

Moroccan independence thus began to seem imminent in June 1955, and was officially announced on November 6, 1955. If violence were driven by anger at the deposition of the sultan, one might reasonably expect to see a reduction as it became clear that he would be restored. Violence should be highest between August 20, 1953, when the sultan was deposed, and June 1955, when Grandval was appointed. At the very least, violence driven by the sultan's removal should drop off after the November announcement. Yet the pattern of violence does not conform to these expectations.

From August 20, 1953, to December 31, 1955, the urban armed resistance involved 3,712 armed attacks.[85] The lowest monthly tally of violent events occurred in September 1953 and the highest in October 1955, when the French had already announced the end of the protectorate at the United Nations. Figure 1 shows the pattern of violence over time. It documents a surprising

82. Grandval, *Ma mission au Maroc.*
83. Charles-André Julien, "Morocco: The End of an Era," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 34, No. 2 (January 1956), pp. 199–211.
84. Ernest Gellner, "Patterns of Rural Rebellion in Morocco during the Early Years of Independence," in Gellner and Charles Micaud, eds., *Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation in North Africa* (London: D.C. Heath, 1972), p. 369.
85. 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 these data. Data are drawn from four newspapers from the era: *Al-sa ada, Al-Umma, le Petit Marocain,* and *Maroc-Presse.*

Figure 1. Urban Violence in Morocco, August 1953–December 1955



trajectory. Violence spikes at the end of the period, after Grandval had begun negotiating with the nationalists, and continues at high levels throughout the summer and fall of 1955, even as the sultan left his place of exile and returned to Morocco.[86] Violence is not at its highest when it might be expected to be: during the most intransigent period of French rule, from the sultan's exile in August 1953 through the appointment of Grandval in June 1955. Instead, it is highest from August to November 1955, when independence was approaching.[87]

Figure 1 refers only to the urban terror campaign, not the insurgency. Although systematic data are unavailable, the timing of the ALM's attacks appears even more puzzling than the urban resistance. The ALM's first major action did not occur until October 1, 1955, when the units of the eastern ALM and the ALM in the Middle Atlas carried out a synchronized attack on French army posts.[88] With the return of the sultan, the ALM's attacks increased. The timing suggests that the ALM was primarily driven by the desire to compete with rivals, not to help restore the sultan, as the ALM claimed.

The sultan ended his exile with a speech about the need for unity. Yet as Morocco's new king, he faced a number of independent players: a rural

86. The two major jumps in June 1954 and May 1955 (indicated by crosses on the time line) occur during Ramadan.
87. Monthly data unfortunately stop in December 1955. Despite missing monthly data from January to March 1956, Zade provides an aggregate figure of 4,520 attacks for the whole period. Subtracting the 3,712 attacks through December 1955 leaves 808 events for the first three months of 1956, suggesting that violence continued at high levels, with more than 250 violent events per month.
88. David M. Hart, *Tribe and Society in Rural Morocco* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 85.

army, small bands of urban and rural terrorists, notables who had backed the protectorate, and an unarmed nationalist party, all maneuvering for a stake in the postcolonial government.[89] *Time* magazine described the situation: "Mohammed V stepped from a life of luxurious discontent into a chaos caused by the abdication of the French and a vying among the Moroccans themselves, some to retain their feudal fiefs, others to spread violence born of ignorance, a few to seek a difficult adjustment between ancient ways, present misery and future progress."[90]

Competition and violence continued in the immediate postcolonial period. After his return, the sultan established a coalition cabinet with twenty members, nine from the Istiqlal, six from the weaker Parti Démocratique de l'Indépendance (PDI), and five independents. Prominent members of the urban resistance and the ALM were left out.[91] Istiqlal leaders retroactively claimed credit for having masterminded the rural and urban campaigns; members of urban terror groups and the ALM scoffed at these claims.[92]

ALM leaders competed with the political parties for influence and sought recognition for their armed struggle. In January 1956, Istiqlal leader Mehdi ben Barka met with ALM leader Bouzar and asked him to join the party. Bouzar responded angrily, "Now that the Rif from the East to the West, the mountains of the Beni Snassen, the Middle Atlas, the High Atlas, the Anti-Atlas and the plains of the Zemmours are practically in our hands, we are not going to give them as a gift to the Istiqlal, who has always denounced direct action."[93] He claimed that politicians had "confiscated the independence of Morocco without having really fought for it."[94] ALM insurgents protested the dominance of the Istiqlal in the new government and described the conflict as one between the bourgeoisie from Fez and the guerrillas who represented ordinary people. In the Rif, former insurgents criticized those who came into power, calling them "women with beards."[95]

In urban areas, violence continued in the spring and summer of 1956. Former collaborators were targeted. Political competition also produced victims. Urban terrorists attacked local leaders of the Istiqlal and the PDI.[96] Violence was also employed in turf disputes, and it became difficult to distinguish be-

89. Waterbury, *Commander of the Faithful*, pp. 54–55.
90. "Return of the Distant Ones," *Time*, November 28, 1955.
91. Blair, *Western Window in the Arab World*, p. 198.
92. Waterbury, *Commander of the Faithful*, p. 55. A journalist for the Istiqlal's newspaper was fired for mentioning that participants in the urban terror campaign did not come from party ranks. See Ouardighi, *L'Itinéraire d'un nationaliste*, p. 44.
93. Quoted in Ouardighi, *Mémoires d'un ancien résistant*, p. 96.
94. Bouzar, *L'armée de libération nationale marocain*, p. 20.
95. David S. Woolman, *Rebels in the Rif: Abd el Krim and the Rif Rebellion* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 226.
96. Abderrahim Ouardighi, interview by author, Rabat, Morocco, May 16, 2006.

tween political violence and criminality. Istiqlal leader Ben Barka set up the Shabab Nizam (the Youth of Order) to engage in urban policing,[97] but agents of the party also targeted political opponents. A combatant attested that the Istiqlal treated members of the ALM like terrorists and assassinated insurgents.[98] For instance, a rumor circulated that Ben Barka had murdered ALM military leader Abbès Messaadi, who had come to Fez to negotiate with Ben Barka.[99] When questioned, Ben Barka said that the death was "the result of the laws of the underground struggle."[100] In another instance, an ALM insurgent and an urban fighter were shot in Casablanca after having been falsely accused by the Istiqlal of being terrorists in the pay of the French.[101]

Extinguishing the rural insurgency proved difficult. At independence, Moroccans in the French army had been transferred to the control of the former sultan, now king, and formed the Forces Armées Royales (FAR). The FAR prepared to deal with the problem of ongoing insurrection. In March and April, the ALM attacked and was attacked by the FAR.[102] In June 1956, some members of the ALM came to Rabat to surrender. Others continued to carry out attacks. Some moved to the south and formed the Army for the Liberation of the Western Sahara. Rural rebellions continued to challenge the government in the years after independence.[103]

The argument that violence was a response to French-imposed grievances does not explain the rise in violence as independence approached or its continuation after independence. It is entirely possible that violence later in the period could have had different causes; the initial trigger of violence need not explain all subsequent violence.[104] Yet following the principle of Occam's razor, one ought to prefer the simpler explanation, particularly if it is capable of explaining more of the observed variation. The competitive violence argument accounts for violence late in the colonial period; violence escalated as the

97. C.R. Pennell, *Morocco since 1830: A History* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p. 300.
98. Ouardighi, interview by author.
99. Hart, *The Aith Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif,* p. 425.
100. Quoted in Pennell, *Morocco since 1830,* p. 304.
101. Ouardighi, *Mémoires d'un ancien résistant,* p. 100.
102. Zade, "Résistance et Armée de Libération au Maroc (1947–1956)," p. 215.
103. For an account of tribal uprisings between 1957 and 1960, see Hart, *Tribe and Society in Rural Morocco.* See also I. William Zartman, *Morocco: Problems of New Power* (New York: Atherton, 1964).
104. One possibility is that both arguments are operating: violence is triggered by anger at the French, whereas later violence is explained by competitive dynamics. According to this logic, nationalist movements may tend to fight among themselves once they have succeeded in their aims, fragmenting when they no longer confront a common enemy. If this theory were correct, one might expect to see initial cooperation that degenerates into fragmentation when independence is achieved. That competition in Morocco began immediately after leadership repression and continued unabated supports the view that competitive dynamics were not limited to the final stages of the colonial period.

French withdrawal exacerbated competitive dynamics among nationalist actors. As colonial rule ended, Moroccans continued to compete with one another, claiming responsibility for the achievement of independence and using violence against other nationalists.

The competitive violence theory provides an explanation for the initial eruption of violence, ongoing violence, and intragroup violence. The conventional grievance-based account can, at best, explain only the initial outburst; it does not account for fragmentation, competition, in-group targeting, or the escalation of violence. The claim that violence in Morocco was a reaction to the French deposition of the sultan is more a sign of the postcolonial power of the monarchy and its ability to shape how history is written than an accurate portrayal of the violent dynamics. Furthermore, the conventional account has fewer observable implications, which suggests its limited explanatory power.

Additional Empirical Evidence

Morocco is only one place where nationalist violence followed peaceful mobilization. I used this case to evaluate the observable implications of the competitive violence theory, which require fine-grained data about violent actors and their behavior. This section provides additional empirical support from other cases in the French Empire. Opposition to colonial rule was widespread; nationalists opposed colonial rule through protests, appeals to the United Nations, and alliances with French anticolonialists. Only some organizations in some places used violence, and violence erupted only after nonviolent mobilization had already begun. Analysis of these cases, though necessarily briefer, serves three functions: to consider whether leadership repression prompted similar dynamics in other places, to better understand why neither leadership repression nor violent nationalism occurred in peaceful cases, and to assess the interdependence of these cases. The section concludes by considering cases outside the European colonies that point to the theory's potential to explain violent dynamics elsewhere.

VIOLENT AND NONVIOLENT NATIONALISM IN THE FRENCH EMPIRE

Throughout the French Empire, the onset of anticolonial violence proceeded in a similar way: leadership repression emboldened new or less influential actors, prompted competition, and provided incentives for violence.[105] In Algeria the previously unknown FLN was founded following repressive actions against

105. For a more extensive treatment of these cases, see Lawrence, "Imperial Rule and Politics of Nationalism."

the nationalist leadership. The FLN fought Algerian rivals; many of the war's atrocities stemmed from the "café wars" waged in Algeria and France between the FLN and the Algerian National Movement. The FLN fought hard before it eliminated its rivals to become the dominant voice of Algerian nationalism.[106]

In Madagascar, violence followed the French repression of the leading nationalist party, the Democratic Movement for Malagasy Renewal (known by the French acronym MDRM). The French first tried to undermine the MDRM by creating the pro-French Party of the Disinherited of Madagascar. When the MDRM won three-quarters of the vote in provincial elections in June 1946, French fears of its popularity grew.[107] Facing a likely second electoral victory in January 1947, the French decided to dismantle the party.[108] The MDRM was thus decapitated for mobilizing successfully, not because violence was anticipated. After decapitation, MDRM members at large, like the Istiqlal in Morocco, did not turn violent. Instead, previously underground organizations—namely, the Jeunesse Nationalist Malgache and the Parti Nationaliste Malgache—committed most of the violence.[109]

In Cameroon, violence followed the French decision to eradicate the formerly peaceful Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC).[110] The UPC was founded in April 1948 to bring about "the consolidation of the Cameroun people into a federation by the implementation of a policy of rapid democratization and the emancipation of the people exploited by colonial firms."[111] UPC leaders explictly opposed violence. Indeed, UPC leader Um Nyobé feared that

106. Algerian leaders were subjected to severe repression during the colonial period. For more on competition in Algeria, see Horne, *A Savage War of Peace;* John P. Entelis, *Algeria: The Revolution Institutionalized* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1986), p. 49; Tayeb Chentouf, "Pluralisme et unité pendant la guerre d'indépendance (1954–1962): Contrepoints maghrébins," in *La guerre d'Algérie au miroir des décolonisations françaises: En l'honneur de Charles-Robert Ageron: Actes du colloque international, Paris, Sorbonne, 23–25 Novembre 2000* (Paris: Société Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer, 2000), pp. 283–304; and Benjamin Stora, *Algeria, 1830–2000: A Short History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001).

107. Jennifer Cole, *Forget Colonialism? Sacrifice and the Art of Memory in Madagascar* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001), p. 229.

108. Jacques Tronchon, *L'insurrection malgache de 1947* (Paris: Librairie François Maspero, 1974), p. 33.

109. Cole, *Forget Colonialism?* p. 268, notes that although the MDRM was the dominant political force leading up to the rebellion, in the months that followed, rebel generals from a different ethnic group held positions of leadership in the revolt and operated with considerable autonomy. By weakening the MDRM, the French strengthened radical, covert alternatives.

110. The violent uprising in Cameroon has received far less scholarly attention than violence in Vietnam and North Africa. The UPC failed to vanquish its rivals for power, and in the postcolonial period, writing about the UPC's struggle was considered an act of opposition under the dictatorship of Cameroon's first president, Ahmadou Ahidjo. Research on the topic was severely impeded until 1991, when the ban on the UPC was lifted. See Richard A. Joseph, *Radical Nationalism in Cameroun: Social Origins of the U.P.C. Rebellion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

111. Quoted in ibid., p. 92.

the repressive activities of the administration would provoke a violent reaction among party militants, which would give the French the opportunity to "drown the Cameroun national movement in blood," as they had done in Madagascar in 1947.[112] The UPC was legally recognized in June 1948 and avoided leadership repression until 1955. By then, the party had expanded its organization and set up branches in all but two regions of the country, which the French deemed unacceptable. A February 19, 1955, decree authorized the use of armed force to prevent or disperse public meetings, and in March Nyobé was arrested.[113] Leadership repression encouraged other actors to challenge the UPC. Fights broke out between the French and the UPC, and between UPC and anti-UPC elements.[114] The competitive nature of the violence was evident; the UPC explicitly avoided attacking French personnel, fearing that such attacks would incite the government to send more troops against the insurgency. Instead, violence was aimed at anti-UPC groups and French-appointed chiefs. Violence continued after independence; rivalry between the Bamileke and the Bassa occurred under the umbrella of the UPC insurgency.[115]

Only in Vietnam does the story differ; nationalist violence in Vietnam conforms neither to the theory of competitive violence nor to explanations based on colonial intransigence. In Vietnam, violence began when outside actors armed and aided the Viet Minh during World War II. China decided that Ho Chi Minh could serve as a force against the Japanese and Vichy French in Vietnam. By February 1943, Ho was leading a nationalist resistance movement with U.S. and Chinese support.[116] The United States provided some equipment and weapons, and Ho set up a guerrilla army in the north of the country.[117] By September 1944, the Viet Minh had an army of 5,000 and controlled three provinces in northern Vietnam.[118] Outside actors thus proved crucial for the turn to violent resistance in Vietnam.[119] Without the support of China and the United

112. Quoted in ibid., p. 173.
113. The colonial administration's white paper, written just after leadership repression, stated, "It was necessary at all costs that this party, which had not encountered until now any concerted opposition, did not continue to spread like an oil stain, intensifying its recruitment of adherents, developing the establishment of its local organizations, discrediting by determined propaganda the totality of French work in Cameroun." Quoted in ibid., p. 273.
114. Ibid., p. 286.
115. Clayton, *The Wars of French Decolonization*, p. 180; and Joseph, *Radical Nationalism in Cameroun*, p. 348.
116. Franz Ansprenger, *The Dissolution of the Colonial Empires* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 149.
117. Clayton, *The Wars of French Decolonization*, p. 20.
118. John Springhall, *Decolonization since 1945: The Collapse of European Overseas Empires* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p. 39.
119. Violent resistance was initially aimed at the Japanese, not the French. The war against the French, which got under way in the postwar period, was essentially a war against reconquest; after the war, the French attempted to retake Vietnam after having been driven from it during the war.

States, the Viet Minh might not have formed an armed organization; indeed Ho Chi Minh might have spent the war years in the Chinese prison where he was previously incarcerated. Although competition did not prompt violence, during the conflict, the Viet Minh opposed not only the French but also other rivals for power. Its outside support, however, gave it an edge over competitors.[120]

In their peaceful colonies, the French also sought to limit the power of indigenous leaders, but they did not decapitate nationalist organizations. The failure to repress the leadership does not imply that the French had no fear of nationalism in those places. Colonial administrators limited the powers of assemblies; they supported some leaders over others; they manipulated electoral rules; and they engaged in periodic censorship. The absence of leadership repression resulted in part from the successful maneuverings of indigenous politicians, who operated under the shadow of repression. The decision to use leadership repression was also contingent upon the choices of administrators who disagreed about the effectiveness of the strategy. Decisions to decapitate nationalist leaders were not always made by a central authority, but by territorial administrators with significant capacity to act autonomously.[121] Administrators facing peaceful movements debated the effects of leadership repression and sometimes came close to enacting such a policy.

Côte d'Ivoire provides a case in point; here the French briefly pursued a policy of leadership repression that they quickly reversed after seeing its effects. Felix Houphouet-Boigny was the most influential political leader in Côte d'Ivoire, serving as its representative to the National Assembly in Paris as a member of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA). He allied his RDA branch with the French Communist Party (known by the French acronym PCF). In 1947 the PCF was forced out of government, and the French decided to repress the RDA branch in Côte d'Ivoire because of its communist affiliation. In late 1948, the minister for Overseas France appointed Laurent Péchoux as governor of Côte d'Ivoire with instructions to "break" the party.[122] Party leaders were arrested and meetings outlawed. At this point, Houphouet-Boigny considered armed resistance but worried about its consequences.[123]

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120. For a discussion of internal divisions within the Indochines nationalist movement, see Stein Tønnesson, "National Divisions in Indochina's Decolonization," in Pransenjit Duara, ed., *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 253–277.
121. See Julien, *L'Afrique du Nord en marche,* p. 584, who documents divisions among the French about leadership repression. For Morocco, politicians in Paris were divided over whether to repress the sultan and the Istiqlal; the colonial administration eventually went forward with it anyway.
122. Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), pp. 104–105.
123. Georges Chaffard, *Les carnets secrets de la décolonisation* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1965), p. 115.

Still, violent incidents began to occur, and by the end of the year, some fifty Africans had been killed.[124] Among the perpetrators were Africans hostile to the RDA.[125] Following this violence, the new minister for Overseas France, François Mitterand, lifted some of the repressive measures against the party and began talks with Houphouet-Boigny, who agreed to sever his alliance with the PCF. The disaffiliation smoothed the relationship between France and the RDA, repressive measures were lifted, and order was restored.

The case of Côte d'Ivoire is instructive in several respects. First, it was the communist affiliation that inspired leadership repression, not an anticipation of violence. When violence erupted, the French quickly reversed their decision. Second, this brief violent episode suggests that leadership repression operates as I claim: it prompted previously peaceful actors to consider violence, and it provided an opportunity for lesser parties to use violence against the dominant party. Yet because the principal leader retained his position, violence was short-lived, and Houphouet-Boigny continued leading a unified, peaceful organization through independence in 1960.

In other peaceful territories, leaders were likewise able to build centralized movements that employed primarily peaceful methods. In French Guinea, French Sudan, Mauritania, and Senegal, nationalist leaders enjoyed fairly stable political dominance. Nationalist organizations benefited from the democratic institutions available to them, organized openly, and often sought French support in their quest for local dominance. Without leadership repression, there were fewer immediate reasons to adopt violent strategies, which were risky and had destroyed leaders and organizations in other places.

DIFFUSION OF VIOLENCE

The above review discusses each case independently, but one potential explanation for violence in the French Empire is that violence in one place influenced its adoption elsewhere. If violence diffused across the empire, an approach that focuses on internal conditions in the colonies would miss this dynamic.

This argument is an unpersuasive alternative for four reasons. The first stems from the difficulty of positing a plausible model of diffusion. One reasonable hypothesis is that nationalist movements were influenced by the

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124. Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa*, p. 105. The administration claimed that the violence was part of an anti-French rebellion that had to be put down, but this account was questioned in the French National Assembly on the grounds that there was not a single European victim. All of the victims were African, and the majority comprised RDA militants. Chaffard, *Les carnets secrets de la décolonisation*, p. 99.
125. Chaffard, *Les carnets secrets de la décolonisation*, p. 117.

Table 1. Violent Nationalist Movements in the French Empire

Violent Cases	Year of Onset	Independence from France
Syria	1925	1946
Vietnam	1944	1954
Madagascar	1947	1960
Tunisia	1952	1956
Morocco	1953	1956
Algeria	1954	1962
Cameroon	1955	1960

efficacy of violence in other parts of the empire. Table 1 lists the violent cases and includes the year violence began and the year independence was attained. The table shows that there were few successful models for those considering violence. Violence in Syria was brutally repressed within a year; independence was not achieved until twenty years later.[126] The rebellion in Madagascar was crushed.[127] The first successful case was Vietnam in 1954, although it took years and cost many lives. Moreover, violence had already begun in five of the seven cases when the French lost in Vietnam. For a Moroccan contemplating violence in late 1952, there were no successful examples to recommend the strategy. The effectiveness of violence in one place does not appear to explain its adoption elsewhere.

The second problem comes from considering whether violence may have diffused to nearby places, regardless of its effectiveness. The dates of onset in North Africa support the view that diffusion happens spatially. It is plausible that violence in Tunisia made violence more appealing to some actors in Morocco and that both influenced the FLN in Algeria. I expect that violent actors in Morocco and Algeria were affected by the use of violence in the region. Yet as a full explanation for onset, this claim leaves several questions unanswered. Why did some actors in Morocco and Algeria denounce violence and refuse to use it? Do demonstration effects work only on some actors and not on others? Why did diffusion fail to occur in other regions? Lebanon is right next door to Syria, yet violence did not erupt in 1925; nor did Oubangui-Chari or French Guinea turn violent when Cameroon did. Similarly, Laos and Cambodia remained peaceful throughout the French-Indochina War.

The third, related, challenge for diffusion is its inability to account for peace. In the French Empire, there were eighteen cases of nonviolent nationalism; it is

126. Lebanon became independent at the same time as Syria, without using violence.
127. Violence in Setif, Algeria, in 1945 was also brutally repressed, and no further violence occurred until the war in 1954.

not clear why these cases would be immune from diffusion.[128] Alternatively, nonviolent strategies might also be prone to diffusion. Relying on diffusion to explain the use of both violent and nonviolent tactics is problematic.

Finally, diffusion, like other theories of onset, has difficulty accounting for the timing of violence. It is theoretically possible that demonstration effects have an immediate impact, but it is also possible that they resonate only when local conditions are conducive to violence. The argument I propose here accounts for the variation better than diffusion does; it explains both the violent and the nonviolent cases and provides predictions about timing. Demonstration effects may still contribute to the outcome, but I suggest that outside examples matter only when competitive dynamics have been triggered by a power vacuum in local leadership.

NATIONALIST VIOLENCE BEYOND THE COLONIAL WORLD

In the French Empire, leadership repression, subsequent fragmentation of nationalist groups, and intragroup competition explain where and when some places erupted in violence. The theory's potential to account for nationalist violence more broadly lies in its focus on the role that competition can play in fueling violence. As Tilly suggests, similar causal mechanisms often appear in disparate types of violence;[129] in-group competition is one such mechanism. Outside the French Empire, other shocks besides leadership repression have prompted fragmentation; a focus on the competitive dynamics of nationalist movements can help illuminate the onset of violence in other settings.

Recent work on violence points to competitive dynamics within a variety of nationalist conflicts. Using a cross-national sample, Andreas Wimmer and Brian Min find that violence often follows nation-state formation.[130] They posit that it results from interethnic competition in the new state; yet as the examples from the French Empire suggest, competition may also be intraethnic. Wendy Pearlman has found that intra-movement fragmentation led to violence in Palestine.[131] In Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were initially one of many Tamil organizations; the LTTE targeted moderate Tamil groups and used violence to outcompete rivals.[132] In Chechnya, conflict between Dzhokhar Dudayev and other nationalist players led to violence in 1993, and the Chechen conflict is beset with internal power struggles.[133]

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128. See footnote 9.
129. Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 7.
130. Wimmer and Min, "From Empire to Nation-State."
131. Wendy Pearlman, "Fragmentation and Violence: Internal Influences on Tactics in the Cast of the Palestinian National Movement, 1918–2006," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2007.
132. Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, pp. 51–75.
133. Kristin M. Bakke, "The Turn to Violence in Separatist Struggles in Chechnya and Punjab," in Chenoweth and Lawrence, *Rethinking Violence*, chap. 9.

Donatella Della Porta points to competitive dynamics among leftist groups in Italy in the 1970s, arguing that violence was one way groups distinguished themselves from the old Left.[134]

These illustrations point to the competitive violence theory's potential to account for the outbreak of violence in other settings. Intragroup fragmentation characterizes a number of conflicts.[135] Indeed, it is likely to occur more often than commonly thought: there is a bias against observing it because most nationalist movements try to conceal internal divisions and present a united front to the outside world. As scholars amass data on armed organizations, we will be better able to understand the general impact of competition on violence.[136]

Conclusion

The competitive violence theory provides an explanation for the onset of violence in time and place. Leading theories of onset are incomplete because they lack an account of the political opportunities that prompt outbreaks of violence. Explanations for onset that rely on stable characteristics cannot answer important questions about the causes of violence; they fail to explain when violence will erupt or why nonviolent strategies are abandoned. The strength of my argument—that leadership repression triggered the fragmentation of nationalist groups, prompted competition, and provided incentives for violence—lies in its ability to address these questions and provide a causal account of onset.

The argument also accounts for common features of nationalist conflicts: fragmentation, competition among nationalists, in-group fighting, and violence that lasts after goals have been achieved. Such characteristics are not unique to conflicts in the French Empire. Indeed, one might expect intra-movement divisions to have been less prevalent in these conflicts than other conflicts, because in these cases, the enemy was a foreign power widely viewed as illegitimate, and nationalists typically called for unity against the nation's en-

134. Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State,* p. 207.
135. Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, Kristin M. Bakke, and Lee Seymour, "Shirts Today, Skins Tomorrow: The Effects of Fragmentation on Conflict Processes in Self-Determination Disputes," paper presented at the annual convention of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 18, 2010. They show that most self-determination movements are fragmented. See also David E. Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "It Takes Two: A Dyadic Analysis of Civil War Duration and Outcome," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (August 2009), pp. 570–597. They code insurgent groups according to their level of centralization.
136. See also Paul Staniland, "Explaining Cohesion, Fragmentation, and Control in Insurgent Groups," Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2010.

emy. Other explanations assume that violence was caused by the divide between rulers and ruled. I argue that French actions brought about violence, but in a less obvious way than is often assumed. Instead of directly provoking violence, French actions encouraged local groups not only to use violence against the French, but also to compete with one another. The existing literature tends to neglect movement fragmentation, typically seeing it as the result of personality conflicts, ideological differences, or organizational problems. I argue that competition is not epiphenomenal, but can explain the shift from peaceful to violent strategies.

To evaluate the argument at the subnational level, I considered a case that ought to be a tough test of the theory. Moroccans do not appear exceptionally susceptible to competition; Moroccan nationalists engaged in concerted opposition to French rule for years prior to the decapitation of the movement. If competitive dynamics are observed here, one ought to see them elsewhere.

Decapitation is not the only trigger of competitive violence. I focused on this shock to nationalist movements because it was prevalent in the French Empire and because of the need to specify clear, testable opportunities. Other shocks can prompt similar dynamics. Yet the connection between leadership repression and violence does suggest perverse lessons for policymakers. On the one hand, targeting the leadership of a peaceful movement may be counterproductive because it produces violence. On the other hand, peaceful movements can also topple regimes, as they did in colonial India and the Soviet Union, as well as in the "color revolutions" in postcommunist Eurasia. States opposed by mass nationalist movements may not have policy choices they like. The best option may be one that takes nationalist demands seriously.

Any approach to understanding the onset of violence involves trade-offs. Large-*N* studies do not explain when onset will happen, but they are able to identify general features that characterize many cases of violence. They are poorly suited to testing arguments such as the one proposed here, which requires subnational data about violent groups and their rivals. My approach likewise involves a trade-off; the argument is capable of explaining the outcome of interest, but testing its generalizability requires further empirical analysis. Such a trade-off is reasonable given the critical need for theories that address why violence erupts, when and where it does. There are likely to be multiple causal pathways to onset; this article provides one explanation for the outcome. Future research is needed both to identify the triggers of fragmentation and violence and to address whether and why unified movements turn violent. Theories that can account for both the dynamics and modes of conflict simultaneously offer the most promising avenue to scholarly progress.