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Authors

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M

Hyde, Susan D

Jablonski, Ryan S

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**Surviving Elections:
Government-Sponsored Election Violence and Leader Tenure**

Emilie M. Hafner-Burton
Associate Professor
School of International Relations and Pacific Studies
University of California, San Diego
ehafner@ucsd.edu

Susan D. Hyde
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Yale University
susan.hyde@yale.edu

Ryan S. Jablonski
Lecturer
Department of Government
London School of Economics and Political Science
r.s.jablonski@lse.ac.uk

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Abstract

When governments use election violence against their own citizens, are they more likely to remain in power? Using the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) data for the period 1981-2004, we demonstrate that using election violence produces a costly tradeoff for governments. When used in the pre-election period, up to and including election day, government-sponsored election violence against opposition supporters, candidates, and the citizenry increases the probability that opposition political parties boycott the election and the incumbent wins. Yet pre-election violence also increases the probability of mass post-election protests by the opposition, which in turn makes it more likely that the incumbent will face significant costs in the post-election period, including resignation, coup, or new elections. Government violence against protesters does not decrease these odds. Overall, an incumbent's use of election violence can inadvertently undermine the benefits of electoral victory and potentially lead to greater political liberalization.

Surviving Elections: Government-Sponsored Election Violence and Leader Tenure¹

In some countries, political participation is a dangerous business. In Hun Sen's Cambodia, where he has been in power for most of the past three decades, government sponsored election violence and intimidation are among the tools by which the incumbent Cambodian People's Party has remained in power (Human Rights Watch, 2003; McCargo, 2005). As Sen himself threatened: "I not only weaken the opposition, I'm going to make them dead . . . and if anyone is strong enough to try to hold a demonstration, I will beat all those dogs and put them in a cage" (Adams, 2012). In Belarus, facing protests after the corrupt 2006 elections, President Alexander Lukashenko openly vowed to "break the neck immediately—like a duckling" of any demonstrators (Agence France Presse, 2006; The Guardian, 2008). He has been in power since 1994. Sen and Lukashenko are just two of dozens of incumbent leaders who have used electoral violence before, during, or after elections.

Election violence is one tactic available to leaders who allow multiparty electoral competition but wish to remain in power. Government-sponsored election violence includes events in which incumbent leaders and their ruling party agents employ or threaten violence immediately before, during, or after elections.² Such violence occurs across nearly all regime types.³ A number of governments engage in some combination of both pre- and post-election violence.

¹ Replication data are available at ____.

² We focus on government-sponsored election violence in both the pre- and post-election periods because the government has a disproportionate ability to employ the forms of election violence that we measure. Other work focuses on general election violence, violence perpetrated by opposition groups, or elections as a substitute for civil war. Our focus on government-sponsored election violence complements these literatures. See, for example: (Brancati & Snyder, 2011, 2012; Dunning, 2011; Flores & Nooruddin, 2011; Gandhi & Przeworski, 2009; Höglund, Jarstad, & Kovacs, 2009; Höglund, 2009; Straus & Taylor, 2012) Bhasin and Gandhi focus on government-sponsored electoral repression, but restrict their analysis to authoritarian regimes (Bhasin & Gandhi, 2013).

³ Except the most autocratic regimes that do not hold elections and the most democratic regimes.

Although research on election violence is growing rapidly, a fundamental question remains: does election violence actually help incumbent governments stay in power? It has often been assumed that electoral violence is used precisely because it works in favor of the incumbent.⁴ The historical record, however, reveals that election violence is not a guaranteed strategy for leaders to remain in power. Figure 1 plots instances of pre- and post-election violence between 1950 and 2010. Panel A shows that government-sponsored pre-election violence has at times resulted in opposition victory. Panel B shows that when post-election protests occur, government-sponsored violence against protestors has often been followed by significant costs to the incumbent, including the annulment of election results, incumbent resignation, or military coup. In short, leaders may use election violence because they believe it will ‘work’, but violence is not always associated with incumbent victory. Additionally, even after surviving electoral challenges, some incumbents make significant concessions in the post-election period.⁵

We evaluate the relationship between election violence and leader tenure using an election-event dataset that measures pre-election violence, post-election protest, and government violence against post-election protesters. The full dataset illustrated in Figure 1 contains nearly 1,200 potentially competitive elections in 122 countries, including nearly 400 elections in which

⁴ Kristine Höglund states that the “overall objective of electoral violence is to influence the electoral process” (2009, p. 416) Andreas Schedler lists election violence and political repression as one instrument that “ruling parties may deploy to contain the democratic uncertainty of political elections” (Schedler, 2002b, p. 104) The assumption that election violence is used because it works is also referenced in a number of other pieces on election violence and electoral manipulation more generally (Collier & Vicente, 2012; Collier, 2009, p. 33; Robinson & Torvik, 2009) Steven Wilkinson’s work illustrates how ethnic riots are allowed strategically when violence benefits politicians at the ballot box (Wilkinson, 2006) Other examples of election violence “working” for incumbents include (Boone, 2011; Bratton, 2008; LeBas, 2006; Teshome-Bahiru, 2009)

⁵ Author () explains the conditions under which governments are most likely to use election violence.

pre- or post-election violence occurred.⁶ Drawing on these data, we show that the decision to use election violence can produce a costly tradeoff for governments, triggering different forms of collective action that have contradictory effects on the incumbent's ability to stay in power.⁷ Pre-election violence can trigger opposition-organized election boycotts, which are a form of anti-government collective action that increase the probability that the incumbent wins the election.⁸ However, pre-election violence can also prompt opposition-led post-election protests that generate negative repercussions for the incumbent in the immediate post-election period, such as incumbent resignation, new elections, or military coup. In short, incumbents who engage in pre-election violence are more likely to win elections, but they are also more likely to face post-election protests, which in turn can lead to serious post-election power concessions. In fact, incumbents who use election violence during their tenure are more than twice as likely to be forced out of power through a coup, revolutions or assassination.⁹ Their regimes are also about three-times as likely to move toward democratization, as measured by change in Polity, during their tenure.¹⁰

⁶Data availability for some of the control variables limits the sample to 503 elections between 1981 and 2004. Our analysis applies to countries that do not already have highly stable democratic political institutions: we exclude twenty-one long-term consolidated democracies where the probability of election violence is extremely low (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States).

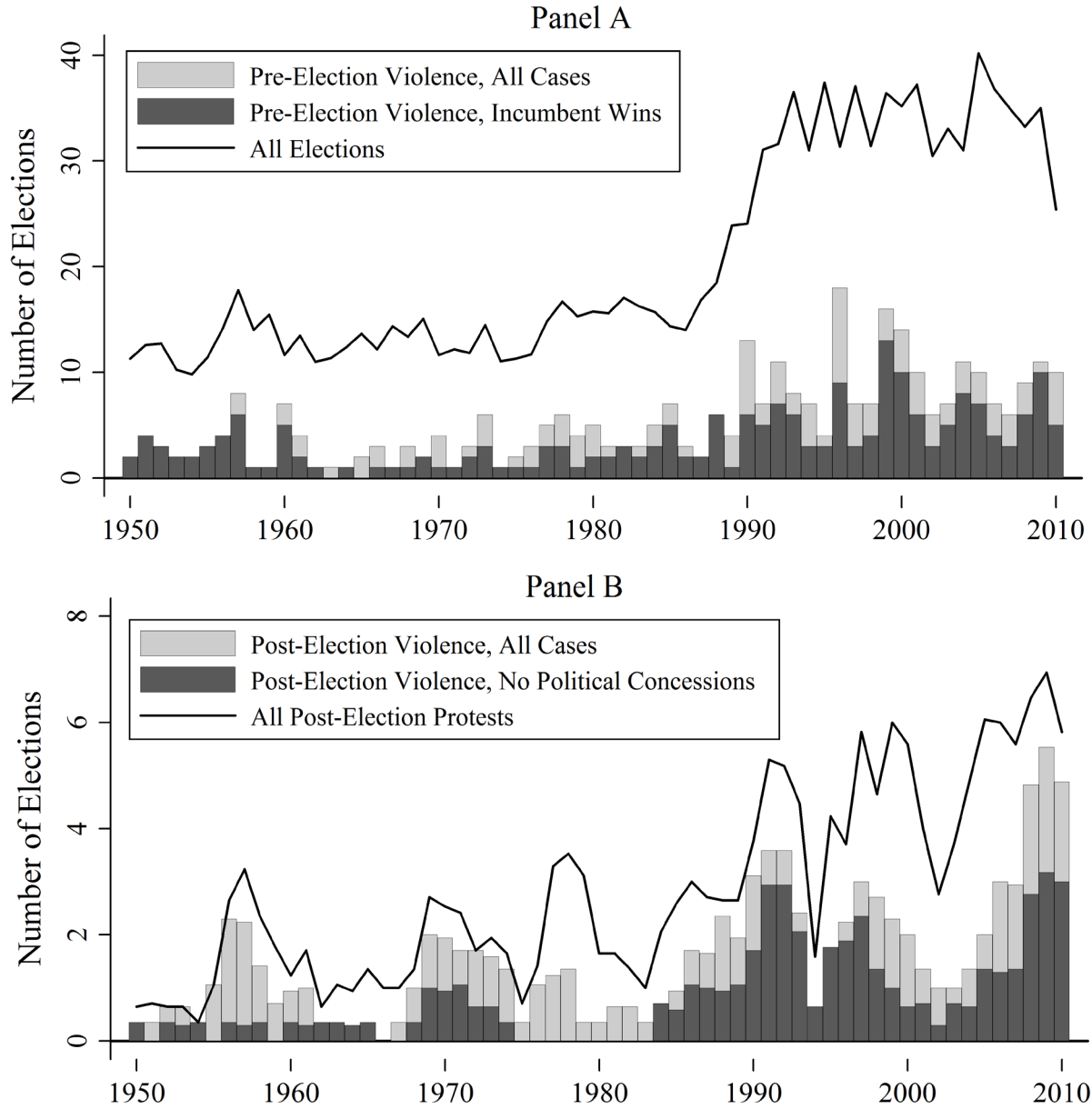
⁷ This possibility is also referenced by Collier (2009, p. 34)

⁸ Boycotts may be associated with other reputational costs or lead to longer term institutional reform. See (Beaulieu, 2006, 2014)

⁹ Authors calculations. Violent leaders have 23% chance of losing power by irregular means. Non-violent leaders have a 9% chance. Exit data from Goemans, Gleditsch, & Chiozza (2009)

¹⁰ Violent leaders have a 25% chance of an increase in their regime's Polity score during their tenure compared with 8% of non-violent leaders (Marshall & Jaggers, 2002).

Figure 1: Pre- and Post-Election Violence over Time



Note: Figure 1 is based upon data from the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy dataset (Hyde & Marinov, 2012). Elections with pre-election violence (Panel A) are those in which the government harassed the opposition or used violence against civilians. Elections with post-election violence (Panel B) are those in which the government used violence against election protesters. We explain these data in more detail in the empirical section of the article.

This research builds on recent work on electoral authoritarianism and work on

“democratization by elections” that evaluate election in authoritarian regimes.¹¹ These literatures include debates about the role that elections play in political transitions, including whether election violence is a sign of democratization or a tool that electoral autocrats use to stay in power.

By examining the consequences of election violence for the governments that use it, our study differs from related research, much of which focuses on the relationship between violent strategies and regime type or the role of violence in explaining political transitions. Violence is often discussed as one of many methods to manipulate elections or as a subtype of political repression more generally.¹² We examine election violence as a phenomenon separate from election fraud, corruption, and vote-buying and distinct from political repression or human rights abuses more generally.¹³ This study makes empirical advances by measuring election violence specifically rather than using country-wide human rights measures as a proxy, and by differentiating between strategies of violence in the pre- and post-election periods.

The article proceeds in three parts. First, we begin by explaining why election violence can cut both ways, helping incumbents to win elections while also prompting mass post-election protests that can force costly actions on the government in the post-election period. Second, we evaluate the empirical implications of our argument in both periods of the electoral cycle using

¹¹ For relevant works in these fields, see Bhasin & Gandhi, 2013; Blaydes, 2010; Brownlee, 2009; Bunce & Wolchik, 2010, 2011; Gandhi & Lust-Okar, 2009; Gandhi, 2010; Greene, 2007, 2008; Howard & Roessler, 2006; Levitsky & Way, 2002, 2010; S. I. Lindberg, 2006a, 2009; Lust-Okar, 2004, 2006, 2009; Magaloni, 2010; McCoy & Hartlyn, 2009; Morse, 2012; Roessler & Howard, 2009; Schedler, 2002b, 2006, 2009a

¹² For work on electoral fraud and violence occurring prior to the “third wave of democratization,” see (Barnes, 1998; Bense, 2004; Hermet, Rouquie, & Rose, 1978; Hoppen, 1984; Little & Posada-Carbo, 1996; Posada-Carbo, 2000; Zeldin, 1958) For examples of work that discusses election violence as a subtype of election manipulation, see (Birch, 2012; Hermet et al., 1978; Huntington, 1991; Lehoucq, 2003; Schedler, 2002a, 2002b, 2009b)

¹³ There are a number of excellent new and working papers on election violence. See, for example, (Arriola & Johnson, 2012; Bhasin & Gandhi, 2013; Norris, 2012; Pevehouse, Straus, & Taylor, 2012; Straus & Taylor, 2012) Also relevant are dissertations by Inken von Borzyskowski, Patrick Kuhn, and Megan Reif.

global data on all potentially competitive elections from 1981-2004. We conclude with a discussion of the broader implications.

Why Election Violence Cuts Both Ways: A Theory

Some governments use election violence believing that it will help them win an election and stay in power. However, we argue that there are important differences in the effect of election violence on incumbents based on how political opposition groups react. Although violence in the period leading up to an election is likely to serve the immediate interests of an incumbent government by increasing her likelihood of winning the election, violence also increases the risk of post-election protests against the regime, which can result in the incumbent stepping down, being removed, or calling for new elections. Once mass post-election protests begin, government violence against protesters does not change the probability that the incumbent will face significant power concessions.

Pre-Election Violence Can Help Incumbents ‘Win’ Elections

Pre-election violence can help to further a government’s most immediate election goal: to officially ‘win’ an election. Specifically, pre-election violence can increase the probability of incumbent victory by provoking an opposition party election boycott, or by manipulating voter turnout in the incumbent’s favor.¹⁴

Election Boycotts

Government efforts to manipulate elections through the use of violence can provoke opposition parties to boycott elections in an effort to discredit the electoral process (Beaulieu, 2014). An opposition-led election boycott is a form of organized electoral protest that actually

¹⁴ It is also possible that pre-election protest occurs. In our sample, pre-election protests are half as likely to occur as election boycotts. Post-election protests are twice as likely to occur as pre-election protests.

increases the probability that the incumbent will win the election. Thus, one mechanism by which election violence ‘works’ for the incumbent is that pre-election violence increases the probability of an election boycott.¹⁵

Election boycotts are relatively common, and they are often more than the work of sore losers (Beaulieu & Hyde, 2009; Beaulieu, 2014; Lindberg, 2006b; Schedler, 2009a). Opposition parties that boycott an election reduce their potential for any representation;¹⁶ often, they do so in an effort to discredit elections to domestic and international audiences. Ample evidence suggests that government persecution of opposition candidates is a significant driver of election boycotts. As Staffan Lindberg argues, “opposition parties tend to stay out of presidential elections where politically motivated violence is systematic and/or widespread” (Lindberg, 2006b, p. 160). Emily Beaulieu shows that opposition-initiated pre-election boycotts have been more likely when civil liberties have been curtailed, election fraud was anticipated and the opposition was harassed (2014).

We argue that violence increases the likelihood that opposition groups will boycott an election (hypothesis 1.1), and boycotts, in turn, increase the likelihood that the incumbent government ‘wins’ the election (hypothesis 1.2).

Voter Turnout

A second way in which pre-election violence can increase the probability of incumbent victory is through voter intimidation. It can convince opposition voters to stay home on election

¹⁵ Harassment of the opposition may also make deter candidate entry in the first place. This mechanism is difficult to test.

¹⁶ This research has led several scholars to conclude that opposition party election boycotts should be avoided. See (Huntington, 1991; Schedler, 2009b)

day, reducing turnout in favor of the opposition.¹⁷ It can coerce would-be opposition voters into voting for the incumbent. And it also can threaten voters who would otherwise prefer to abstain into turning out to vote for the incumbent. These methods of intimidation are not mutually exclusive and may require violations of ballot secrecy.¹⁸

For example, Lisa Blaydes notes in reference to Egyptian elections, “in addition to positive inducements for voting, there are also reports of the use of hired thugs to force voters to choose particular candidates ...[and] they are also used to prevent supporters of other candidates from voting at all.” (Blaydes, 2010, p. 105). An international human rights group reported similar efforts in advance of the 2010 elections in Ethiopia:

In the weeks leading up to the polls... new methods [were] used by the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to intimidate voters in the capital... apparently because of government concerns of a low electoral turnout... officials and militia... went house to house telling citizens to register to vote and to vote for the ruling party or face reprisals... [As one voter said], “Intimidation to register and to vote for the ruling party is everywhere...” (Human Rights Watch, 2010)

Alongside boycotts, another mechanism by which pre-election violence can bias elections is that violence may increase voter turnout in support of the incumbent through intimidation and/or decrease turnout in favor of the opposition through voter suppression (hypothesis 1.3). Both outcomes increase the likelihood that the incumbent wins the election (hypothesis 1.4). We are mindful, however, that untangling these hypotheses for empirical testing is difficult because the various mechanisms of voter intimidation could confound each other: in a single election, violence could simultaneously boost turnout for the incumbent while also suppressing turnout for

¹⁷ This line of reasoning is similar to Simpson's argument that election fraud can decrease voter engagement and result in lower voter turnout (Simpson, 2012). Patrick Kuhn shows that voters who fear election violence are less likely to turn out to vote (Kuhn, 2013).

¹⁸ On voter perceptions of ballot secrecy, see IFES' surveys available at www.ifes.org and by the International Republican Institute, available at www.iri.org. See also (Afrobarometer, 2009; Blaydes, 2010; Chandra, 2007; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, & Dowling, 2013; Magaloni, 2006; Nichter, 2008; Stokes, 2005)

the opposition.

Pre-Election Violence Can Prompt Power Concessions in the Post-Election Period

Here, we explain how these efforts to win elections through violence can provoke a form of collective action that can lead the newly re-elected incumbent to make substantial power concessions in the post-election period that undermine the benefits of electoral victory.

Pre-Election Violence Can Spark Post-Election Protests

Citizens sometimes respond to the state's attempts at electoral manipulation and violence by expressing their dissent through non-institutional means, frequently by protesting in the streets (Carey, 2006; Gupta, Singh, & Sprague, 1993; Moore, 1998). People protest for many reasons. Elections—especially when fraud and violence mar the process—provide a focal point for citizens to solve a collective action problem and protest against the regime.

Although there are examples where citizens amass in the streets to challenge a regime prior to an election, post-election protests are much more common. Prominent examples include the “color revolutions,” and the 2009 Iranian elections (Bunce & Wolchik, 2011). From 1960 to 2010, there were over 300 unique cases of post-election protest, and post-election protest is more than twice as likely as pre-election protest. We speculate that the motivation to engage in election-related protest is much stronger in the post-election period in part because several options that are available in the pre-election period are no longer on the table.¹⁹ Prior to the election, citizens or parties unhappy with the government can work to mobilize voters to support opposition candidates on election day. Or, opposition parties dissatisfied with the electoral process can engage in an election boycott. Once the election has taken place, public protest is one of the few remaining forms of dissent.

¹⁹ Additionally, our data suggest that pre-election protests are not only rarer, but significantly more likely to be met with government-sponsored violence.

Of course, protest does not automatically follow elections that are corrupted by violence. For protests to emerge as a challenge to the incumbent government's hold on power, citizens must solve a collective action problem, which may be particularly difficult in repressive regimes (Kuran, 1995; Lohmann, 1994; Tucker, 2007; Weingast, 1997). Josh Tucker describes the problem:

Most members of society would likely agree that society as a whole would be better off with a less abusive and appropriately restrained state.... Achieving this goal in states where such abusive actions regularly take place, however, requires confronting these abuses and attempting to stop them ¹(Tucker, 2007, p. 540).

Because protesters—and especially those citizens who initiate protest—face significant risk of bodily harm, many cases in which citizens are unhappy with their government do not result in protest because it is individually rational to stay home (Weingast, 1997). Tucker goes on to argue that elections with major election fraud can help solve collective action problems by “lowering the costs of participating in anti-regime actions” after elections, making protests more likely to be successful in bringing down the incumbent government (Tucker, 2007, pp. 540–541). As the number of protestors grows, each individual protester is less likely to be punished while the probability of successful protest (i.e. bringing down the government or forcing political concessions) increases (Tucker, 2007).

Election violence can be a complement or substitute for election fraud, both of which can trigger post-election protest. Pre-election violence, election fraud, and other tactics aimed at manipulating the outcome of elections are grievances experienced simultaneously by many citizens. Elections, in general, can serve as a focal point for anti-government collective action. In the pre-election period, opposition organizers have several options, and can focus on political campaigning against the incumbent, mobilizing voters, or organizing an election boycott. After election day, these options shrink, and post-election protest becomes the most likely avenue for

anti-government mobilization. These arguments add up to the hypothesis that pre-election violence against civilians and political opposition should increase the likelihood of post-election protests (hypothesis 2.1).

Post-Election Protests Can Prompt Major Power Concessions from the Incumbent

Post-election protests occur in about 15% of the elections in our study and are frequently repressed, as Figure 1 illustrates. These protests increase the probability that the newly re-elected incumbent will eventually make substantial power concessions by annulling the election results, holding new elections, resigning or removal by force (hypothesis 2.2). Though the incumbent may win the officially announced vote tally, the election process (and the strategy of election violence) can ultimately increase the probability that she faces one of these costly post-election outcomes.

For example, in South Korea in 1960, President Syngman Rhee ran unopposed following the unexpected death of his challenger. Widespread fraud was documented during the election process, including the discovery of a document announcing that “police will use force if necessary to see that the voters vote right.” (Keyes, 1960). People took to the streets to protest Rhee’s election, continuing in the face of a violent government response. After six weeks of protest and at least 145 deaths, Rhee stepped down (Los Angeles Times, 1960).

Protests can lead to significant costs for the incumbent—including resignation, annulment of the election results, military coup, or new elections—for several reasons.²⁰ Protests represent a coordinated challenge to the regime; they can signal a government’s vulnerability or weakness while also demonstrating the potential strength or resolve of political opponents; and protests of sufficient size and strength can also provoke other challengers to take advantage of

²⁰ Non-violent civil resistance may also be more effective (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008).

the incumbent's unpopularity and moment of weakness.

In some cases, protests can also send a signal to external pro-democracy advocates, such as powerful states or international organizations. Because post-election protests tend to attract global media attention, they can increase the chances that outside actors will pressure the government to change its behavior, support protestors directly, or otherwise damage the international reputation of the incumbent government, as happened in the Ukraine in 2004 and Ethiopia in 2005 (Malone, 2010).

Leaders who aim to stay in power understandably seek to avoid these potentially negative consequences of protest. Some may underestimate the strength and resolve of the public, and it is possible that repressive incumbents have difficulty accessing or evaluating information about their own popularity. Some incumbents respond to protestors with violence in an effort to put an end to mass public mobilization against the regime before protestors are successful in achieving their aims.

Violence Against Protesters

Because mass public protests can threaten to bring down governments after elections, it is not surprising that governments sometimes decide to respond to election protests with violence. The literature on government repression in response to citizen dissent does not address election-related protest specifically. However, the decision by governments to respond to post-election protests with violence fits squarely with the more general literature on protests and repression, which has shown that governments often employ repressive tactics in response to citizen uprisings like rebellion (Davis & Ward, 1990) and protest (Davenport, 1995). The degree of government reaction often increases as the frequency and intensity of public dissent increases

(Carey, 2010; Davenport, 1995; Regan & Henderson, 2002).²¹ Developing country governments, in particular, have tended to respond with disproportionate violence in the face of non-violent protests (Mason, 2004).

In Albania, for example, the 1991 legislative election sparked protests against the government, as thousands of people gathered to protest the government's monopolization of state resources, and the media, to disadvantage the opposition (National Republic Institute for International Affairs, 1991). Violence broke out in President Aila's hometown of Shkoder when police shot to death Arben Broxi, an opposition activist, killed two other protesters and injured 58. Meanwhile, in the capital city, protesters occupied the communist party headquarters and the police threatened to blow up the building with the activists inside (Williams, 1991). Protesters amassed outside. Army troops and tanks were sent out to disburse the crowd and threatened to open fire if protesters did not leave. Several people were shot; three were killed (Binder, 1991). Similarly, in El Salvador, the day after the 1977 presidential election, an estimated 75,000 to 100,000 opposition supporters joined non-violent protests against election fraud and intimidation. The government responded with violence, killing as many as 20 protesters, arresting hundreds, and declaring a state of siege that curbed the right to freedom of assembly. The opposition party vice-presidential candidate fled into exile (Organization of American States, 1978; United States Congress House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Relations, 1977).

Though governments use violence against post-election demonstrators in an effort to crush public opposition to the regime, violence at this stage in the election cycle is less incumbent-sustaining than pre-election violence. Before elections, government violence seeks to

²¹ See also Gartner and Regan(1996) on the nature of the relationship between demands from protests and violent government response.

manipulate an election outcome in the incumbent's favor by reducing competition. The objective of post-election violence, by contrast, is frequently to undermine an already mobilized mass protest movement. Breaking the opposition's resolve at this stage is likely to be a more difficult task. Post-election violence against demonstrators is inherently very public, and may be as likely to increase the resolve of protesters as to deter them. Once protests are in motion, the opposition has, by definition, already overcome the initial collective action problem that is most likely to limit their success. Moreover, since protests are often a response to pre-election violence and other forms of election manipulation, protesters may have already factored the threat of violence into their decision to protest.

Anecdotal reports suggest that many protesters acknowledge this risk. For example, Mehdi Karrubi, an opposition leader and participant in the 2009 Iranian post-election protests, explained his decision to continue protesting despite the risk of arrest likely abuse in prison:

Theyve attacked my house twice and broke all the windows. Theyve shut down my office, my newspaper, and my party. They beat up one of my children. Two of my children are banned from leaving the country. Theyve arrested many people who were close to me. Any member of the Parliament who comes to visit me is chased and attacked. Im not sure whether theyre going to arrest me or not, but...we are all ready to pay any price for our struggle for the people of Iran. (Bahari & Alinejad, 2010)

If individuals within a country are able to overcome the collective action problems associated with organizing against a repressive government, and are resolved enough to protest despite significant risk of personal harm, dispersing them is not trivial. Given these factors, we expect that once post-election protests occur, violence against demonstrators is not likely to increase, and may decrease, the likelihood that the incumbent stays in power (hypothesis 2.3).

In sum, we argue that violence in the pre-election period increases the likelihood that an incumbent leader will win an election because violence prompts opposition parties to boycott the

election and intimidates voters into pro-government voting behavior. However, civilian-targeted violence and opposition party intimidation in the pre-election period could also make post-election protests more likely, and such protests increase the likelihood that the incumbent will ultimately make major power concessions—including the holding of new elections and removal from office—that undermine the benefits of electoral victory. At that stage in the election process, violence against demonstrators is often a last resort that will not ensure that the incumbent can avoid significant power concessions. Table 1 summarizes our two core arguments and the hypotheses that support them.

Table 1: The Argument

(1) Government-sponsored election violence in the pre-election period increases the likelihood that the incumbent politician will win the election.

Hypothesis 1.1: Government-sponsored pre-election violence increases the likelihood that opposition parties will boycott the election.

Hypothesis 1.2: Opposition boycotts increase the likelihood of an incumbent election victory.

Hypothesis 1.3: Government-sponsored pre-election violence influences voter turnout through voter suppression and/or coercion.

Hypothesis 1.4: Voter suppression and/or coercion favor the incumbent, increasing the likelihood that she wins the election.

(2) Government-sponsored election violence in the pre-election period also increases the likelihood that the incumbent politician will make significant power concessions after the election, including resignation, forcible removal from power, or the calling of new elections.

Hypothesis 2.1: Government-sponsored pre-election violence increases the likelihood of mass post-election protests against the incumbent regime.

Hypothesis 2.2: Post-election protests increase the incumbent's likelihood of making significant power concessions.

Hypothesis 2.3: Violence against post-election protesters does not increase and may reduce the likelihood that the incumbent stays in power after the election.

Empirical Evaluation

To evaluate these hypotheses we use the newly available NELDA dataset on the

characteristics of national elections throughout the world.²² The NELDA dataset covers all election events, including more specific measures of election violence, incumbent victory, and the dynamics of election protest than have previously been available.²³ These data contain information on competitive elections for national office for all sovereign states with a population greater than 500,000, including information on the existence of several types of election violence and on election protest.²⁴ Temporal limitations of other data used in our model limit the sample to elections from 1981 to 2004.

NELDA data sources include news wire reports, newspaper archives, academic research including the data handbooks on elections edited by Dieter Nohlen (Nohlen, Grotz, & Hartmann, 2001; Nohlen, Krennerich, & Thibaut, 1999; Nohlen, 2005), archives for specific countries and from intergovernmental organizations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and other sources which are listed in the dataset's codebook (Hyde & Marinov, 2011). Each round of a multi-round election is coded separately. Because post-election protest could follow any round in an election, we treat each round of an election as a separate observation.²⁵ For all estimates (below), we exclude the long-term developed democracies (footnote 6), which are outside the scope of our theory, and exclude elections in which electoral competition is not permitted.²⁶

These data are more fine grained than studies that rely on nation-wide aggregate measures of repression or protest and thus are unable to disaggregate types or targets of

²² Hyde and Marinov 2012.

²³ NELDA data and codebook are available at <http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda>. In the online appendix, we include a full list of countries included in the sample.

²⁴ A complete list of the countries in our sample is available in the appendix.

²⁵ In the supplementary information, we re-estimate our results using only the final round of all elections. The results are consistent.

²⁶ This rule excludes elections in which any of the following are not "yes": Nelda3: Was opposition allowed?; Nelda4: Was more than one party legal?; Nelda5: Was there a choice of candidates on the ballot? It is described in greater detail in Hyde and Marinov (2012)

repression, or distinguish whether protests or violence are related to an election (as opposed to simply taking place during the calendar year of an election).²⁷ In contrast, we measure election-related violence that is targeted at opposition groups and civilians in the pre-election period, and distinguish it from the use of violence by the government against post-election protesters. We begin with an analysis of our argument for the pre-election period and then turn to the post-election period.

Modeling Pre-Election Violence

This section establishes that pre-election violence against opposition supporters, candidates, and the citizenry increases the probability that the incumbent wins the election and then evaluates our explanation. For each election round, we use the NELDA data to code a binary measure of whether the *Incumbent Wins*,²⁸ limiting the sample to elections in which the incumbent runs. This rule includes elections in which the incumbent prime minister or president runs for re-election. In order to measure whether an incumbent used violence prior to an election we create *Pre-Election Violence*, which equals one if an incumbent harassed or used violence against opposition members or civilians prior to or during the election and zero otherwise (Hyde & Marinov, 2011).²⁹

In order to account for the possibility that governments may use violence in response to expected political competition, we include a pre-election measure of whether the incumbent expected the election to be competitive. We use *Victory Uncertain*, which equals one if pre-

²⁷ Exceptions include (Bhasin & Gandhi, 2013; Straus & Taylor, 2012)

²⁸*Incumbent Wins* is from *Nelda 40*: "Did the leader step down because the vote count gave victory to some other actor?" It equals one if no and zero otherwise. Data on the intensity of violence are not currently available.

²⁹Consistent with our argument, incumbents win 66% of the cases of violence in our sample, compared with 49% of elections without violence. Detailed summary information is available in the supplementary information.

election polls were negative for the incumbent or suggested a close race (Author)³⁰ or if the incumbent made statements prior to the election that suggested she was not confident of victory before elections.³¹

Even after accounting for electoral competition, it is plausible that more democratic leaders will face a more mobilized opposition and may face stronger constraints on the use of repression (Poe & Tate, 1994). To address this source of bias, we include a control for a country's political institutions.³² An additional concern is that election violence is more likely in repressive regimes, and our models estimate the effect of overall repression, rather than election-specific violence. To address this issue, we control for the pre-existing propensity of a government to engage in political repression.

To measure political institutions, we include the *Polity2* variable from the Polity IV project (Marshall & Jaggers, 2002). *Polity2* is a twenty-one point index that measures a country's political institutions, ranging from the most autocratic (-10) to the most democratic (10). Pre-existing level of government repression are measured with *Physical Integrity*, from the CIRI dataset (Cingranelli & Richards, 2010), which is an additive index of government sponsored repressive activity, including murder, torture, political imprisonment and forced disappearance. It ranges from 0 (no government respect for these four rights) to 8 (full government respect for these four rights). For both these variables, we use the average value from the three years prior to the election in order to ensure that these measures are not

³⁰ Coded from *Nelda26*: if there "were there reliable polls that indicated popularity of ruling political party or of the candidates for office before elections. . . were they favorable for the incumbent?"

³¹ Coded from *Nelda 12*, which equals "yes" in cases in which the incumbent made "public statements expressing confidence" of victory, the opposition indicated that they were "not likely to win," or there were cases in which the "incumbent or ruling party has been dominant for a number of years and is projected to win in a landslide."

³² Note that a negative correlation between democracy and violence would bias us against seeing a positive effect of violence on election outcomes.

themselves determined by electoral violence.³³ Summary statistics are shown in the online appendix.

We first estimate a logit model in which the dependent variable is a binary measure of whether or not the incumbent wins the election (*Incumbent Wins*):

$$\text{Equation 1: } P(\text{Incumbent Wins}_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta \text{ElectionViolence}_{ij} + \phi X_{ij}),$$

where *Incumbent Wins* indicates the probability the incumbent wins in country *i* in election *j*, and ϕX_{ij} is a vector of control variables.

In all models, standard errors are clustered by country to account for within-country correlation of errors. Additional control variables include *GDP (log)* and *Population (log)* from the World Development Indicators as additional controls, because a country's population and wealth may influence an incumbent's electoral strategies (World Bank, 2006).³⁴ Leader-specific factors that may influence strategy, like time in office and experience, so all models include *Leader Tenure*, which is the incumbent leader's number of years in office, and *Leader Age*, from the Archigos dataset (Goemans, Gleditsch, & Chiozza, 2009). *Civil War* is included from the Major Episodes of Political Violence dataset (Marshall, 2007) because internal conflict is correlated with human rights violations (Poe, Tate, & Keith, 1999).

Where appropriate, models include measures of pre-election expectations of *Fraud* and an aggregate annual measure of *Demonstrations*. We include controls for these variables to ensure that we are capturing electoral violence, and not inadvertently using election violence as a proxy for other related events. *Fraud* measures whether there were concerns, before the election,

³³ Both *Polity* and *Physical Integrity* are likely to change based on election events.

³⁴ For related empirical work, see (Author).

that it would not be free and fair.³⁵ As a proxy for the overall likelihood of any kind of *Demonstrations* in a given country, we include the total number of any type of anti-government demonstrations, anti-government strikes and riots during the year based on Banks CNTS coding (Banks, 1975, 2005).

Unless otherwise noted, these country and election-specific control variables are used in models across several dependent variables, in part for simplicity, and in part because they are intended to capture background characteristics of elections that may influence the dynamics of electoral behavior.

One potential alternative to our explanation—that violence provokes boycotts and voter intimidation that reduce political competition—is that governments are more likely to use election violence against a weak opposition.³⁶ If this is the case, then a positive relationship between pre-election violence and incumbent victory could be spurious. In our model *Demonstrations* is a proxy for the propensity of citizens to protest. However, to measure pre-election mobilization more precisely, Table 2, Model 2 includes *Pre-Election Protest*. *Pre-Election Protest* takes the value of one if there were any election-related anti-government protests in the period before an election took place.³⁷ This allows us to account for the extent to

³⁵ Coded from *Nelda11*. This measure relates to “domestic or international concern” about the quality of the election, including whether “elections were widely perceived to lack basic criteria for competitive elections, such as more than one political party.” We use pre-electoral perceptions of fraud rather than post-election accusations of fraud.

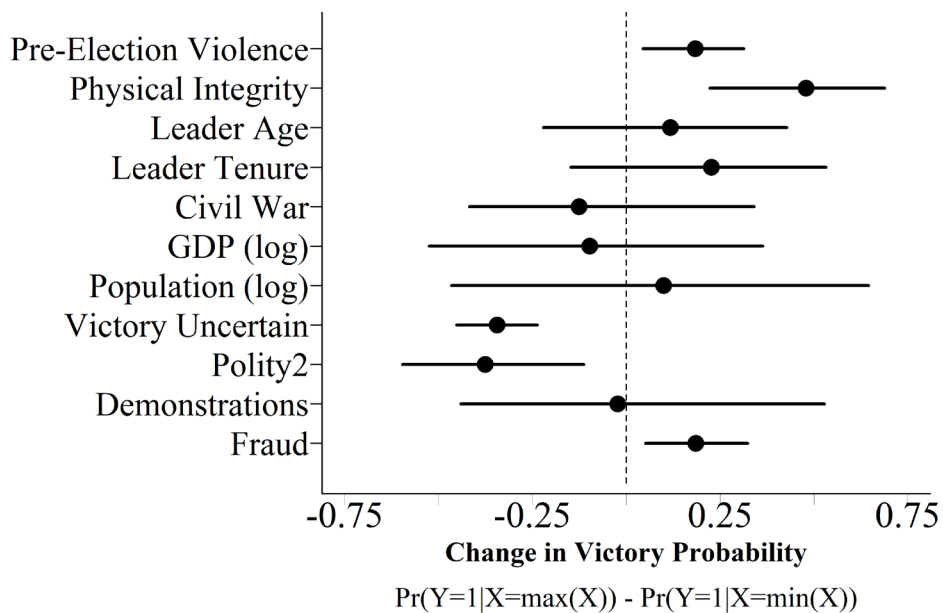
³⁶ This is rare. Election violence is most often a response to a mobilized opposition that could threaten an incumbent’s chances of remaining in power (Author).

³⁷ Variable coded by merging the Banks protest data and NELDA (Banks, 2005; Hyde & Marinov, 2012). For all election years in which anti-government demonstrations occurred, RAs coded whether anti-government demonstration(s) were election-related. Pre-election rallies in favor of one party or candidate were not considered protest. Coders also indicated whether the government responded to pre-election protests with violence.

which the opposition is mobilized against the government prior to the election.³⁸

The results presented in Model 1, Table 2 and represented graphically in Figure 2 indicate that pre-election violence, on average, increases an incumbent’s likelihood of winning the election. When she targets opposition candidates or voters, the incumbent has an 18% greater predicted probability of winning the election. Our results remain nearly identical in Model 2, suggesting that the effect of violence on the election outcome is not explained by levels of opposition strength.

Figure 2: Estimated Effects of Explanatory Variables on *Incumbent Wins*



Points indicate the simulated increase in the probability of *Incumbent Wins* given a change in each independent variable from its minimum to its maximum level, holding all other variables at their mean. Lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals for predictions. Estimated using a logit model with robust standard errors.

³⁸ Alternatively, we have examined this relationship within “competitive authoritarian” regimes only. We use a measure of whether the opposition has formed a pre-election coalition, introduced by Howard and Roessler (2006). Opposition coalitions are present “when multiple opposition groupings, parties, or candidates joined together to create a broad movement in opposition to the incumbent leader or party in power,” with a slightly larger sample of elections obtained from (Hyde & Marinov, 2012), who use Howard and Roessler’s definition to code a larger sample (N=109) of elections in competitive authoritarian regimes. The results hold within this subsample, shown in the online appendix.

Table 2: The Effect of Pre-Election Violence on Election Victory

	(1) <i>Incumbent Wins</i>	(2) <i>Incumbent Wins</i>
<i>Pre-Election Violence</i>	0.76** (0.28)	0.74* (0.30)
<i>Pre-Election Protest</i>		0.08 (0.44)
<i>Physical Integrity</i>	0.28** (0.09)	0.28** (0.09)
<i>Leader Age</i>	0.09 (0.12)	0.09 (0.12)
<i>Leader Tenure</i>	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Civil War</i>	-0.10 (0.17)	-0.10 (0.17)
<i>GDP (log)</i>	-0.05 (0.13)	-0.10 (0.13)
<i>Population (log)</i>	0.05 (0.18)	0.05 (0.18)
<i>Victory Uncertain</i>	-1.48** (0.26)	-1.50** (0.26)
<i>Polity2</i>	-0.08** (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)
<i>Demonstrations</i>	-0.01 (0.04)	
<i>Fraud</i>	0.76* (0.33)	0.78* (0.33)
Constant	-2.49 (2.78)	-2.37 (2.80)
Observations	458	458
Log Likelihood	-246.6	-247.6

Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Figure 2 shows the simulated increase in the probability of *Incumbent Wins* given a change in each independent variable from its minimum to its maximum level holding all other variables at the mean. It illustrates that pre-election violence is associated with election victory for the incumbent. Next, we evaluate our explanation for this relationship: that violence increases the probability of boycotts and influences voter turnout in ways that favor the incumbent (hypotheses 1.1-1.4).

In order to evaluate our hypotheses on boycotts, we create *Boycott*, which equals one if

some opposition leaders boycotted the election and zero otherwise,³⁹ and estimate a logit model:

$$\text{Equation 2: } P(\text{Boycott}_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta \text{ElectionViolence}_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}),$$

where *Boycott* indicates the probability of a *Boycott* in country *i* and election *j*, and φX_{ij} is a vector of control variables. To determine whether boycotts favor the incumbent at the polls, we estimate a logit model of *Incumbent Wins*, with the addition of *Boycott* as an explanatory variable to the model shown in Equation 1.

Table 3 presents the results for the models related to election boycotts. In Column 1, violence is associated with a significant increase in the probability that an opposition candidate boycotts the election. The predicted probability of a boycott (when all other variables in Column 1 are set at their mean) is .06.⁴⁰ We also evaluate the effect of *Boycotts* on the likelihood of victory for the incumbent in Column 2. *Boycott* is positively associated with *Incumbent Wins*.

In Column 3 we evaluate whether *Boycotts* increase the probability that violence will lead to an election victory by including an interaction between *Boycott* and *Pre-Election Violence*. We interpret the predictions from this interaction in Table 4. When violence is associated with *Boycotts*, the incumbent is 50% more likely to win the election than when violence is not associated with *Boycotts*.⁴¹

³⁹ Coded from Nelda14.

⁴⁰ The predicted probability of a *Boycott* when both *Fraud* and *Pre-Election Violence* occur is .18, compared to .03 when neither occur. For ease of interpretation, *Fraud* is excluded from the models presented in Table 4 because *Fraud* is highly correlated with both *Boycott* and *Pre-election Violence*.

⁴¹ *Boycotts* are slightly more likely to lead to an incumbent victory when they are not associated with violence. This is not surprising: opposition groups that boycott under violence do so despite facing threatened incumbents; however opposition groups that boycott for other reasons (often due to expectations of fraud or because they are unpopular) often do so in order to avoid obvious electoral defeat.

Table 3: The Effect of Pre-Election Violence on Boycott and Victory

	(1) <i>Boycott</i>	(2) <i>Incumbent Wins</i>	(3) <i>Incumbent Wins</i>
<i>Boycott</i>		1.80** (0.49)	2.68** (0.73)
<i>Pre-Election Violence</i>	0.77* (0.35)	0.82** (0.29)	0.91** (0.30)
<i>Boycott*Pre-Election Violence</i>			-1.40* (0.71)
<i>Physical Integrity</i>	-0.24+ (0.15)	0.30** (0.10)	0.30** (0.10)
<i>Leader Age</i>	0.16 (0.18)	0.05 (0.13)	0.06 (0.13)
<i>Leader Tenure</i>	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01+ (0.01)
<i>Civil War</i>	0.37+ (0.22)	-0.27 (0.20)	-0.21 (0.19)
<i>GDP (log)</i>	-0.12 (0.15)	-0.08 (0.12)	-0.06 (0.12)
<i>Population (log)</i>	0.04 (0.22)	0.12 (0.18)	0.10 (0.18)
<i>Victory Uncertain</i>	-1.76** (0.46)	-1.42** (0.25)	-1.40** (0.25)
<i>Polity2</i>	-0.10** (0.03)	-0.09** (0.03)	-0.09** (0.03)
<i>Demonstrations</i>	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Constant	-2.03 (3.79)	-3.29 (3.10)	-3.17 (3.09)
Observations	457	457	457
Log Likelihood	-127.8	-241.0	-239.9

Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 4: Predicted Probability of Election Victory in Violent and Boycotted Elections

		Pre-Election Violence	
		Yes	No
Boycott	Yes	0.80 (0.07)	0.87 (0.08)
	No	0.53 (0.06)	0.31 (0.04)

Predicted probability of election victory for all values of *Boycott* and *Pre-Election Violence* with standard errors in parentheses. All control variables set at mean.

We also argued that government sponsored violence in the pre-election period could alter voter turnout in a manner that benefits the incumbent, decreasing votes by the opposition and/or increasing votes by regime supporters. We cannot directly test this argument in the context of our study; these effects may happen simultaneously and thus could be observationally equivalent to no change turnout. Additionally, it is possible that turnout data are more likely to be falsified in precisely those regimes that are more likely to use election violence.⁴² Understanding these limitations, we look tentatively at available data on voter turnout. *Turnout* equals the percentage of registered voters who were recorded as having voted.⁴³ We estimate an ordinary least squares model of *Turnout* (Equation 3) and a logit model of *Incumbent Wins* which are identical to Equation 1 but add *Turnout* (Column 2). Column 3 adds the interaction between *Turnout* and *Pre-Election Violence*:

$$\text{Equation 3: } \mathbf{Turnout}_{ij} = f(\alpha + \beta \mathbf{ElectionViolence}_{ij} + \mathbf{Turnout}_{ij-1} + \phi \mathbf{X}_{ij}),$$

where $\mathbf{Turnout}_{ij}$ indicates the rate of voter turnout in country i and election j , $\mathbf{Turnout}_{ij-1}$ indicates the prior election's turnout, and $\phi \mathbf{X}_{ij}$ is a vector of control variables.

Column 1 of Table 5 shows the relationship between *Pre-Election Violence* and *Turnout*. The estimates do not provide direct support for our argument concerning voter intimidation. Column 1 shows that when incumbents use violence, there is no average effect on voter turnout during an election. These results could indicate no effect on voter behavior. Or, they could indicate that violence simultaneously increases voter turnout in favor of the incumbent and

⁴² This would likely mean that errors would not be independent or normally distributed. A majority of turnout data is likely to be an accurate reflection of actual voter turnout. It is likely that some turnout data is falsified, and not reflective of actual voter turnout. Such falsification is often covert. We do not know when the measure is most likely to be inaccurate, and suspect that measurement error and election violence may be correlated.

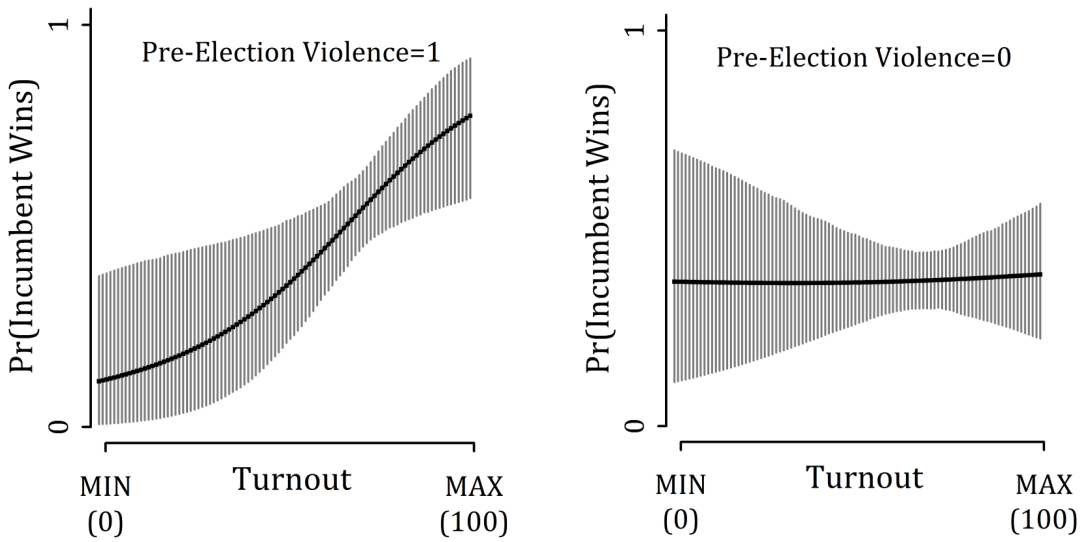
⁴³ International IDEA Voter Turnout Website. <http://www.idea.int/vt/> (Accessed September 2011). In countries with significant election fraud, this information could be falsified, and the numbers should be interpreted in light of this possibility.

suppresses turnout by would-be opposition voters, which could favor the incumbent but would not be observable in the model shown. These two processes are empirically indistinguishable at the aggregate level in the turnout data that is currently available.

Column 2 indicates that higher turnout—whether legitimately obtained or not—is associated with a higher probability that the incumbent government wins the election. Column 3 includes the interaction between *Voter Turnout* and *Pre-Election Violence*. The probability that the *Incumbent Wins* when *Voter Turnout* and *Pre-Election Violence* are set at their maximums is over 0.8 compared to the probability (0.4) that the incumbent wins without the use of pre-election violence (but maximum turnout).⁴⁴ This result could be consistent with the argument that pre-election violence results in changes in voter turnout that benefit the incumbent, but could also be consistent with an alternative explanation in which governments that resort to pre-election violence are also more likely to falsify high voter turnout. Figure 3 shows the effect of turnout on the probability that *Incumbent Wins* for values of *Pre-Election Violence*, with all other variables held constant at their means.

⁴⁴ For reference, under conditions of minimum *Voter Turnout* and the use of *Pre-Election Violence*, the probability the incumbent wins is 0.3.

Figure 3: The Effect of Turnout on Victory Probability



Note: Vertical lines indicate the 95% confidence interval.

Overall, these results are not conclusive, and may reflect the weakness of turnout data, which likely includes real voter turnout data and data created from the falsification of official election results. When the government does not use pre-election violence, increasing turnout has no effect on incumbent victory. When the government employs pre-election violence, higher turnout is associated with higher probability of incumbent victory. Given that boycotts should be associated with lower turnout and higher probability of incumbent victory, these results are suggestive that voter manipulation is a second mechanism linking pre-election violence to incumbent victory.

Table 5: The Effect of Pre-Election Violence on Turnout and Victory

	(1) <i>Turnout</i>	(2) <i>Incumbent Wins</i>	(3) <i>Incumbent Wins</i>
<i>Turnout</i>		0.02+ (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Pre-Election Violence</i>	3.17 (3.34)	0.65* (0.31)	-2.16+ (1.27)
<i>Turnout*Pre-Election Violence</i>			0.04* (0.02)
<i>Physical Integrity</i>	-0.56 (0.88)	0.22* (0.10)	0.19* (0.09)
<i>Leader Age</i>	1.33 (0.92)	0.03 (0.13)	0.05 (0.14)
<i>Leader Tenure</i>	0.05 (0.05)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Civil War</i>	-0.16 (1.62)	0.02 (0.19)	-0.00 (0.20)
<i>GDP (log)</i>	2.83* (1.15)	-0.02 (0.13)	-0.01 (0.13)
<i>Population (log)</i>	-5.14** (1.55)	0.02 (0.18)	0.00 (0.17)
<i>Victory Uncertain</i>	-2.72 (1.79)	-1.57** (0.30)	-1.54** (0.30)
<i>Polity2</i>	-0.20 (0.25)	-0.07* (0.03)	-0.07* (0.03)
<i>Demonstrations</i>	0.37* (0.18)	0.01 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)
<i>Fraud</i>	-3.80 (2.62)	0.76* (0.36)	0.69+ (0.36)
Constant	141.90** (26.05)	-2.48 (3.16)	-1.48 (3.00)
Observations	392	392	392
R-Squared or Pseudo R-Squared	0.14	0.21	0.22
Log Likelihood		-211.3	-209.2

Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

These results suggest that violence increases the probability of incumbent election victory and alters the behavior of the opposition. Although we cannot say that violence affects voter turnout, higher reported voter turnout is associated with an increased likelihood that the incumbent will win.

Modeling Post-Election Violence

Finally, we show that pre-election violence can lead to significant post-election costs for the incumbent. We focus on a specific but high-profile form of election violence in which governments respond to mass post-election protests by using violence against demonstrators.

The variable *Election Protests* measures post-election protests and equals one if there were election-related riots and protests after the election and zero otherwise.⁴⁵ We estimate the effect of *Pre-Election Violence* on *Election Protests* using a logit model with clustered standard errors and the same set of control variables described above:

$$\text{Equation 4: } P(\text{Election Protests}_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta \text{ElectionViolence}_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}),$$

where *Election Protests* indicates the probability of a post-election protest in country *i* and election *j*.

The estimates in Column 1 of Table 6 show that pre-election violence significantly predicts post-election protests. Although pre-election violence increases the probability that the incumbent wins the election, it also correlates strongly with post-election protests—*Pre-Election Violence* increases the estimated probability of *Election Protests* by 0.22.⁴⁶

Next, we evaluate the relationship between post-election protest and the probability that the incumbent makes *Power Concessions*, equal to one if the incumbent is removed from power by means other than the loss of the election—including through resignation, coup, or other non-electoral means—or the initial election results were annulled (and new elections followed).⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Coded from *Nelda29*, which indicates whether there were “riots or protests after the election” that were “at least somewhat related to the outcome or handling of the election.”

⁴⁶ 95% confidence interval is (.12 to .34). Estimated first difference computed using Clarify (King, Tomz, & Wittenberg, 2000).

⁴⁷ This variable was coded from *Nelda34: Were results that were favorable to the incumbent canceled?*, *Nelda 39: Was the incumbent replaced?*, and *Nelda 40: If yes(Nelda39), did the leader step down because the vote count gave victory to some other political actor?* *Power Concessions* equals one if *Nelda34* = “yes” and *Nelda39*

$$\text{Equation 5: } P(\text{Power Concessions}_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta \text{ElectionViolence}_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}),$$

Power Concessions indicates whether the incumbent faces such significant post-election costs in country *i* and election *j*. φX_{ij} is a vector of control variables.

Table 6: The Effect of Protests on Election Outcomes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<i>Protest</i>	<i>Power Concessions</i>	<i>Power Concessions</i>	<i>Protest</i>
<i>Protest</i>		2.01** (0.66)	2.19** (0.68)	
<i>Violence Against Protesters</i>			-0.39 (0.93)	
<i>Pre-Election Violence</i>	1.71** (0.36)	-0.02 (0.74)	-0.00 (0.73)	1.56** (0.35)
<i>Physical Integrity</i>	0.19* (0.09)	-0.11 (0.27)	-0.12 (0.28)	0.20* (0.09)
<i>Leader Age</i>	0.08 (0.17)	0.40* (0.18)	0.42* (0.20)	0.04 (0.18)
<i>Leader Tenure</i>	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)
<i>Civil War</i>	0.01 (0.15)	0.06 (0.23)	0.08 (0.22)	0.06 (0.15)
<i>GDP (log)</i>	-0.28+ (0.15)	0.20 (0.27)	0.19 (0.26)	-0.26+ (0.15)
<i>Population (log)</i>	0.60** (0.17)	-0.05 (0.33)	-0.07 (0.33)	0.55** (0.17)
<i>Polity2</i>	-0.07* (0.03)	-0.00 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.08)	-0.06* (0.03)
<i>Demonstrations</i>		0.04 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	
<i>Fraud</i>	1.15** (0.41)	1.52 (0.99)	1.52 (0.99)	1.10** (0.42)
<i>Pre-Election Protest</i>				0.89* (0.44)
Constant	-12.65** (2.80)	-6.75 (5.82)	-6.50 (5.77)	-11.78** (2.69)
Observations	461	458	458	461
Log Likelihood	-167.4	-49.61	-49.48	-164.5

Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Column 2 of Table 6 provides estimates of *Power Concessions*. *Election Protests*

= "yes". Cases in which *Nelda40* = "yes" are coded as zero to exclude cases in which the incumbent lost the election and stepped down.

increase the probability that an incumbent will make power concessions in the post-election period, including resignation, new elections, or military coup.⁴⁸ The estimated probability of *Power Concessions* increases by 0.07 when *Election Protests* are present.

To measure whether post-election protests are met with government-sponsored violence, we create *Violence Against Protesters*, which equals one if an incumbent used violence against demonstrators protesting the election and zero otherwise.⁴⁹ Column 3 shows that *Violence Against Protesters* does not reduce the likelihood that protests are followed by power concessions: the coefficient on *Violence Against Protesters* is positive with a large standard error, suggesting little or no effect of post-election violence on the effectiveness of protests in removing leaders from power or annulling elections. Although we cannot rule out the possibility that the more virulent protests are being repressed, this lack of a relationship suggests that post-election violence may not be an especially successful way for the incumbent to avoid threats to his or her hold on power once post-election protests have begun. It is clear that the findings in Table 6, Column 3 are inconsistent with the argument that election violence is always an effective tool for the incumbent government.

An alternative explanation for the link between protest and violence is that governments are more likely to use violence against a strong opposition. If a more mobilized opposition is more likely to be repressed, and is also more likely to engage in protests, then the correlation between post-election protests and violence against protestors may be due to the unobserved

⁴⁸ This relationship holds when we exclude cases in which the incumbent lost the election and exited power.

⁴⁹ Pre-Election Violence is coded from *Nelda 15*: "Is there evidence that the government harassed the opposition?" and *Nelda 33*, "Was there significant violence involving civilian deaths immediately before, during, or after the election?" If either *Nelda 15* or *Nelda 33* is "yes," then *Pre-Election Violence* is coded as "yes." Although *Nelda15* and *Nelda33* could technically involve some post-election violence, RAs were instructed to focus primarily on harassment and deaths in the period leading up to and including election day (personal correspondence with authors). *Post-Election Violence* is focused explicitly on violence against demonstrators, and is coded from *Nelda 31*. *Nelda 31* is only coded if there were riots and protests after the election, and indicates whether "the government used violence against demonstrators."

level of opposition mobilization, rather than a causal link between violence and protests. To evaluate this alternative explanation, in Model 4, we *Pre-Election Protest*, a measure of whether the opposition engaged in anti-government protests prior to the election. This is a proxy for how mobilized the opposition was against the government prior to the election. Consistent with our explanation, the coefficients change very little, suggesting that opposition mobilization does not explain the relationship between protests and violence.

Together, these findings lend support to our argument that pre-election violence can backfire on sitting governments in the post-election period by increasing the probability that leaders are ousted from power or election results that are favorable to the incumbent are annulled and new elections are called. These effects are illustrated by the 1977 Pakistani elections. In the lead-up to the elections, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali-Bhutto's government used harsh measures against the opposition, including beatings of opposition campaign workers and ransacking of campaign headquarters (Weinbaum, 1977). Following fraudulent elections, election protest was met with force by police officers, yet protests continued. In the end, the military ousted Bhutto from power (New York Times, 1977).

Implications

Writing in the early 1990s, Samuel Huntington observed that “[w]e all know that military coups, censorship, rigged elections, coercion and harassment of the opposition, jailing of political opponents, and prohibition of political meetings are incompatible with democracy” (Huntington, 1991, p. 8). Does this also imply that election violence is incompatible with democratization and greater political liberalization? Scholars have also long recognized that most governments in the world hold elections, but the majority of election-holding countries are not full democracies (Hermet, Rouquie, & Rose, 1978, p. vii). Yet debate continues about the role

political violence plays in political transitions, and what violent elections might mean for a country's prospects for democratization. Despite the widespread recognition that many countries experience election violence, and the generally accepted tension between state-sponsored political violence and democracy, there has been little research investigating how the timing of election violence relates to its consequences.

This article contributes to the debate about whether election violence is (or is not) a “harbinger of democracy” (Brownlee, 2009) by examining the consequences of government sponsored election violence across regime types, while also avoiding the assumption that annual measures of repression are accurate proxies for election violence. Our results point to when and why violent elections should lead to democratic transitions and regime turnover. On one hand, election violence helps unpopular incumbents to hold onto power, even when facing competitive elections. On the other, violence emboldens opposition movements, who often turn to non-electoral means such as protests, to force the government to accept power concessions. This makes election violence risky for incumbents. For instance, the United Democratic Action Organization (UNIDO) in the Philippines was able to mobilize support for overthrowing the Marcos regime, in part by organizing rallies against the government's purported assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino (Thompson, 1995). Similar links between election violence and opposition mobilization can be seen in the rise of opposition to Syngman Rhee in South Korea and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan (AAP Reuter, 1977; Los Angeles Times, 1960; Trumbull, 1960).

One implication is that election violence may actually—and inadvertently—promote political liberalization. This is not to say that repression cannot quell these movements. As in the people power movement in 1988 Burma, the so-called 8888 movement obtained significant

concessions from the governing junta, only to be violently – and successfully – repressed following the movement’s victory in the 1990 Parliamentary elections (Schock, 1999). Even so, incumbents who use election violence are more likely to be forced out of power through a coup, revolutions or assassination and are more likely to face some form of democratization event during their tenure.⁵⁰ Exploring all conditions under which election violence leads to political liberalization is beyond the scope of this article; however our results suggest that, while election violence may provide short-term gains for the incumbent, in the long-run election violence can encourage the formation of powerful opposition movements, many of which are in favor of institutional reform and democratic consolidation.

⁵⁰ Violent leaders have a 25% of an increase in their regime’s democracy score during their tenure compared to 8% of non-violent leaders. Authors’ calculation.

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