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Surviving Elections: Election Violence, Incumbent Victory and Post-Election Repercussions

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It is often assumed that government-sponsored election violence increases the probability that incumbent leaders remain in power. Using cross-national data, this article shows that election violence increases the probability of incumbent victory, but can generate risky post-election dynamics. These differences in the consequences of election violence reflect changes in the strategic setting over the course of the election cycle. In the pre-election period, anti-incumbent collective action tends to be focused on the election itself, either through voter mobilization or opposition-organized election boycotts. In the post-election period, by contrast, when a favorable electoral outcome is no longer a possibility, anti-government collective action more often takes the form of mass political protest, which in turn can lead to costly repercussions for incumbent leaders.

Keywords: Electoral violence; election protests; election boycotts.

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 the incumbent Cambodian People's Party has used to remain in power.[1] 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'.[2] 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.[3] He has been in power since 1994. Sen and Lukashenko are just two of dozens of incumbent leaders who have used election violence–including physical harassment of the opposition and significant violence involving civilian deaths–before, during or after elections.[4]

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[1] Human Rights Watch 2003; McCargo 2005.

[2] Adams 2012.

[3] Agence France Presse 2006; *The Guardian* 2008.

[4] We define government-sponsored election violence as 'events in which incumbent leaders and ruling party agents employ or threaten violence against the political opposition or potential voters before, during or after elections' (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014, 150). We focus on government-sponsored election violence because the government has a disproportionate ability to employ the forms of election violence that we measure, and because we are interested in whether an incumbent's use of violence influences their ability to stay in power. Our work complements existing research on general election violence, violence perpetrated by opposition groups or elections as a substitute for civil war. See, for example Brancati and Snyder 2011, 2012; Collier and Vicente 2012; Dunning 2011; Flores and Nooruddin 2012; Gandhi and Przeworski 2009; Höglund 2009; Höglund, Jarstad, and Kovacs 2009; Straus and Taylor 2012. Bhasin and Gandhi focus on government-sponsored election repression, but restrict their analysis to authoritarian regimes (2013).

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Election violence is often discussed in the context of other methods to manipulate elections, such as fraud, or as a subtype of political repression more generally.[5] Although governments seeking to rig elections often mix methods of manipulation, we focus in this article on government-sponsored election violence because it is a form of election manipulation that is distinct from–and has generally received less attention than–election fraud, corruption and vote buying.[6] As our data show, not all governments that use election violence also use fraud, and vice versa. Among methods of election manipulation, violence poses the greatest threat to the personal safety of the opposition and voters, and it may have distinct causes and consequences from political repression more generally. Moreover, government-sponsored election violence and intimidation are widespread and occur across nearly all regime types.[7]

It is often assumed that election violence is used precisely because it works in favor of those who use it.[8] Although research on election violence is growing rapidly, it is not known whether election violence–like election fraud–actually helps incumbent governments to stay in power, either in terms of their ability to win elections or to withstand post-election challenges.[9] We explore whether election violence actually 'works' for incumbents by focusing on the effects of pre-election violence during two points of the election cycle when an incumbent's hold on power is most likely to be threatened: (1) the election itself, which they could lose outright and (2) the post-election period, when protest movements can lead incumbents to resign, hold new elections or otherwise make significant concessions.

The historical record reveals that election violence is not a guaranteed strategy for maintaining power. Panel A of Figure 1 plots all instances of government-sponsored pre-election violence between 1950 and 2010 and shows that government-sponsored election violence is not always followed by incumbent victory. Leaders can also face challenges to their rule in the immediate post-election period, in part because elections (especially manipulated or violent elections) can facilitate post-election protests against the government. Panel B shows that when post-election protests occur, they have often been followed by significant costs to the incumbent (which we label 'government concessions'), including the annulment of election results, incumbent resignation or, in a few cases, a military coup. In short, leaders may use election violence because they believe it will work in the short term, but violence does not guarantee that incumbents will win elections—and even when incumbents win, the use of violence as a tactic of manipulation can increase post-election challenges to their rule.

[5] For more historic work on election fraud and violence, see Bensel (2004), Barnes (1998), Hermet, Rouquie, and Rose (1978), Posada-Carbó (2000), Little and Posada-Carbo (1996), Hoppen (1984), and Zeldin (1958). For examples of work that discusses election violence as a subtype of election manipulation, see Birch (2011), Hermet, Rouquie, and Rose (1978), Huntington (1991), Lehoucq (2003), Schedler (2002a, 2002b, 2009). There are excellent relevant new and working papers. See, for example, Arriola and Johnson 2011; Bekoe 2013; Bhasin and Gandhi 2013; Borzyskowski 2013; Daxecker 2014; Kuhn 2010, 2013; Norris 2012; Pevehouse, Straus, and Taylor 2012; Straus and Taylor 2012.

[6] A full analysis of whether fraud and violence are compliments or substitutes is beyond the scope of this article.

[7] Excepting autocratic regimes that do not hold elections and the most democratic regimes.

[8] Kristine Höglund states that the 'overall objective of election violence is to influence the election process' (2009, 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, 104). The assumption that election violence is used because it works is also referenced in a number of other pieces on election violence and election manipulation more generally (Collier 2009, 33; Collier and Vicente 2012; Robinson and Torvik 2009). Steven Wilkinson's work illustrates how ethnic riots are allowed strategically when violence benefits politicians at the ballot box (2006). Other examples of election violence 'working' for incumbents are discussed in Boone (2011), Bratton (2008), LeBas (2006), and Teshome-Bahiru (2009).

[9] See Simpser for a comprehensive treatment of the benefits of election fraud (2012). For other examinations of the relationship between fraud and protest, see Little, Tucker, and LaGatta (2015).

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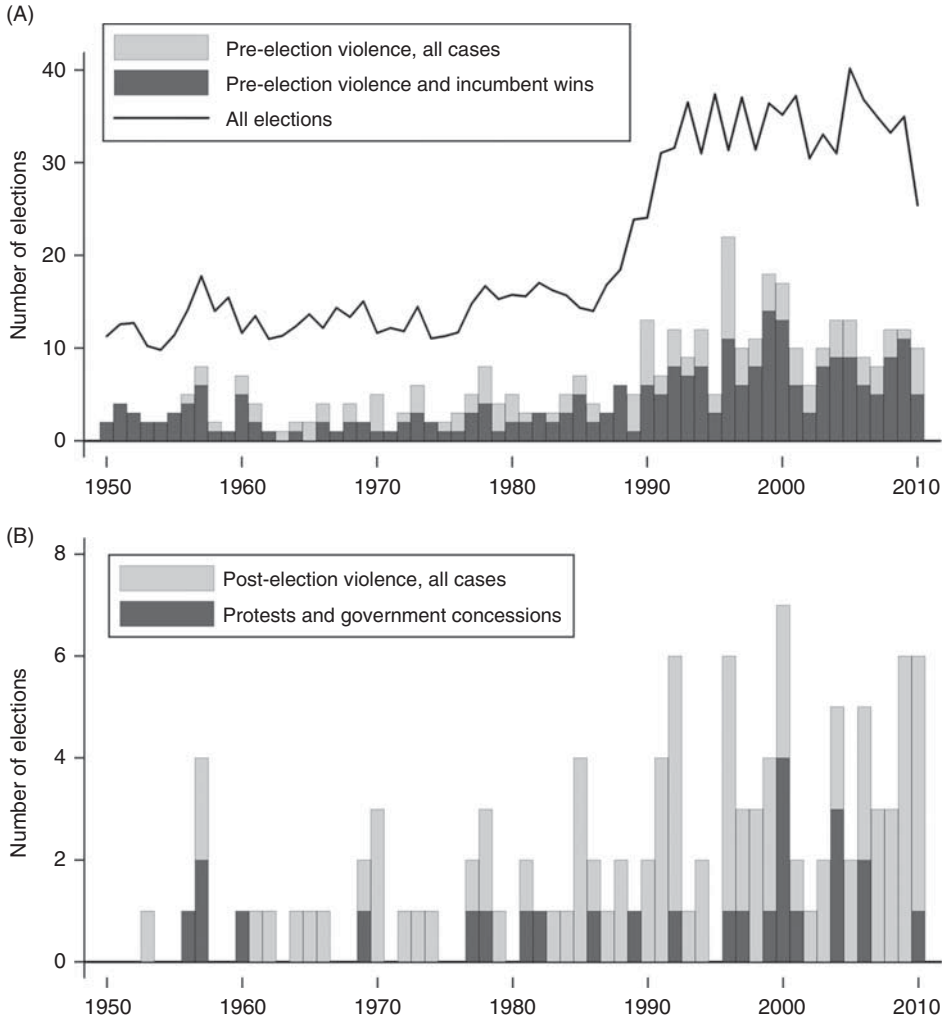

Fig. 1. Trends in election violence and its consequences over time
Note: based on data from the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy dataset (Hyde and Marinov 2012). Elections with pre-election violence (Panel A) are those in which the government harassed the opposition or used violence against civilians. Elections with post-election concessions (Panel B) are those which are followed by election annulment, incumbent resignation or a coup. We explain these data in more detail in the empirical section of the article.

We evaluate the relationship between an incumbent government's decision to use election violence and its ability to withstand challenges to its rule using a unique election-event dataset that measures pre-election violence, post-election protest and post-election concessions of incumbent power. The full dataset illustrated in Figure 1 contains 1,322 potentially competitive elections in 122 countries, including 339 elections in which the incumbent government used pre-election violence.[10]

[10] Data availability for control variables limits the sample to 458 elections, 1981–2004. We exclude twenty-one long-term consolidated democracies where the probability of election violence is extremely low (Australia,

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Drawing on these data, we show that a government's decision to use election violence in the pre-election period–much like the decision to use fraud–increases the probability that the incumbent wins the election. We also show that incumbents who use pre-election violence are more likely to face post-election protests. These protests, in turn, increase the risk of costly power concessions. In fact, incumbents who face post-election protests are more than three times as likely to be forced to resign or hold new elections. Moreover, government-sponsored violence against protestors does not improve an incumbent's chances of surviving these post-election challenges. In short, even though election violence has historically increased an incumbent's chances of winning an election, the longer-term consequences of using violence include an increased risk of post-election protests, which can result in serious post-election repercussions.

These differences in the short- and medium-term effects of election violence reflect the changing options available to citizens and opposition parties over the course of an election cycle. Within electoral regimes, at least in theory, elections represent a legitimate and institutionalized mechanism through which individuals and parties can compete for power. Opposition parties and individual voters who are dissatisfied with the regime have numerous options in the pre-electoral period, most obviously supporting an opposition party or candidate and trying to gain elected office through legitimate means. Incumbent-sponsored election violence can be used to coerce would-be opposition supporters into staying home or intimidate them into voting for the regime. Additionally, election violence (like fraud) may increase the probability of incumbent victory through another mechanism: by provoking opposition parties to boycott. Although winning a boycotted election may carry significant reputational consequences for the government, a well-executed election boycott also makes an incumbent victory a near certainty.[11]

Thus violence makes incumbent victory more likely by provoking election boycotts and biasing voter turnout in favor of the incumbent.[12] If the incumbent wins the election, individuals wishing to challenge the incumbent's hold on power must either accept defeat or take to the streets in protest. But using pre-election violence can make post-election protest more likely, and post-election protest, in turn, increases the likelihood that the incumbent will be forced to make power concessions.[13]

This seemingly inconsistent behavior of the opposition–manipulated into conceding the election yet willing to engage in risky post-election anti-regime protest–makes sense when one considers that the pre- and post-election periods have different focal points for collective action.[14] Even when the government blatantly employs pre-election violence, pre-election protest aimed at ousting the government is rare for many of the same reasons that collective action against repressive governments is rare in general. In the absence of a clear focal point or knowledge about how many other citizens are willing to challenge a repressive government, any individual effort to challenge the regime is likely to come with 'high costs coupled with very low chances of

(F'note continued)

Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Britain and the United States).

[11] Note that other research has shown that opposition party election boycotts can result in longer-term movement toward political liberalization (Beaulieu 2014; Smith 2014), but at least in the short term, pre-election collective action against the government can make it more likely that the government wins.

[12] Collier (2009, 34) also mentions this possibility.

[13] While post-election protests increase the risk that the incumbent incurs costly consequences, pre-election violence is but one potential motivator for these protests. On the causes of post-election protest more generally, see Beaulieu (2014), Svolik and Chernykh (2012), Daxecker (2012), and Hyde and Marinov (2014).

[14] For more sophisticated theoretical treatments of the strategic dynamics of collective action surrounding elections, see Fearon (2011), Little, Tucker, and LaGatta (2015), Little (2012), Gandhi and Przeworski (2009), and Svolik and Chernykh (2012).

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success'.[15] Additionally, before elections, opponents of the government still have the ability to challenge the incumbent using formal and proximate institutional means, either by winning votes or by attempting to undermine the election's legitimacy with a boycott. Citizens may prefer to wait and see whether other people vote, how many others participate in a boycott, whether the incumbent wins (and by how much), or how much violence (and fraud) is ultimately used.

Pre-election protest is rare, and when it does occur, it is usually in an effort to pressure the government to improve the quality of the electoral process rather than to fundamentally challenge the regime. In the post-election period, however, citizens and parties have gained information about the incumbent's behavior and popularity. The range of potential options has also narrowed considerably, and protest is often the only remaining option when elections have failed to unseat a corrupt, fraudulent or violent incumbent government.

This article builds on recent work on election manipulation and authoritarianism as well as 'democratization by elections' in authoritarian regimes.[16] These literatures debate the role that elections play in political transitions, including whether election manipulation 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 contributes to related research agendas that focus on the relationship between violent strategies and regime type or the role of violence in explaining political transitions. Our central contribution is to show that, although government-sponsored election violence increases the chances that incumbents win the election, violence can undermine the longer-term benefits of election victory by generating risky post-election dynamics such as mass protest.

The article presents the argument in greater detail, focusing on the different dynamics in pre- and post-election periods. We evaluate the empirical implications of our argument in both periods of the election cycle using global data on all potentially competitive elections from 1981 to 2004. We conclude with a discussion of the study's broader implications and potential limitations.

THE ARGUMENT

Although most incumbents facing re-election would prefer to win outright and avoid paying the costs of manipulating an election, some governments nevertheless resort to illicit tactics like election violence. Recent research shows that government-sponsored election violence is particularly likely when incumbents think they might lose or are uncertain about their own popularity.[17] However, existing studies of election violence do not make clear whether violence is an effective strategy for manipulating elections. Is violence a surefire tactic for incumbents wishing to avoid a serious electoral challenge? Or is the use of violence akin to gambling for resurrection, with a very low probability of success? The answer to these questions hinges in part on how opposition groups and voters respond to election violence, in both the pre- and post-election periods.

How Pre-Election Violence Can Help Incumbents Win Elections

We argue that election violence makes incumbent victory more likely through at least two mechanisms: by making opposition party boycotts more likely and (relatedly) by manipulating

[15] Tucker 2007, 536. See also Beaulieu (2014), Kuran (1995).

[16] For a sample of relevant work, see Bhasin and Gandhi (2013), Blaydes (2011), Brownlee (2009), Bunce and Wolchik (2010, 2011), Lust (2009), Gandhi (2010), Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009), Greene (2007, 2008), Howard and Roessler (2006), Levitsky and Way (2002, 2010), Lindberg (2006a), Lust-Okar (2004, 2006), Magaloni (2010), McCoy and Hartlyn (2009), Morse (2012), Roessler and Howard (2009), Schedler (2002b, 2006, 2009).

[17] Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014.

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who turns out to vote in a manner that benefits the incumbent. Opposition-organized election boycotts can occur for many reasons.[18] Some parties boycott to save face when they realize they are unlikely to win. More commonly, boycotts are a costly signal aimed at discrediting the electoral process, drawing international attention to the manipulation of an election, or signaling opposition to a violent or illegitimate regime.[19]

Government use of election violence in the pre-election period also signals that the election is unlikely to be free and fair. Under some conditions, a boycott can allow opposition parties to minimize additional physical harm to their supporters while drawing public attention to the manipulation of the election process. As Emily Beaulieu explains:

> Opposition leaders hope to force the incumbent into holding fairer elections in the future by [boycotting]. Furthermore, if the kind of manipulation the incumbent is using contains elements of violent repression–or if the opposition suspects that Election Day manipulation will include violence on the part of the incumbent–a boycott may be an attractive option for reducing harm to opposition supporters.[20]

Several accounts suggest that government persecution of opposition candidates is a significant driver of election boycotts, although this relationship has not been formally tested. As Staffan Lindberg argues, 'opposition parties tend to stay out of presidential elections where politically motivated violence is systematic and/or widespread'.[21] 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.[22] We expect that violence increases the likelihood that opposition groups boycott elections, and that boycotts, in turn, increase the likelihood that the incumbent government 'wins' the election.

Opposition boycotts may undermine the government's legitimacy in the long term and even result in higher-quality elections in the next cycle.[23] This is why boycotts can be a rational strategy for opposition parties. However, in the short term, boycotts increase the probability that the incumbent will win the election. By asking their supporters to stay home, boycotting parties reduce their potential for representation, and in so doing reduce electoral competition.[24] Boycotts are more likely in the presence of election violence or fraud, though in theory, governments could react to an election boycott (or any other form of opposition-organized collective action) with additional fraud and violence.[25] Although in practice, boycotts should diminish the need to use illegitimate means to win an election, our argument does not rule out the possibility that violence and the decision to boycott are iterated throughout the election cycle.[26]

[18] For a more comprehensive treatment of election boycotts see Beaulieu (2006, 2014), Lindberg (2006b), and Smith (2014).

[19] Boycotts may be associated with other reputational costs or lead to longer-term institutional reform. See Beaulieu 2014; Smith 2014.

[20] Beaulieu 2014, 37.

[21] Lindberg 2006b, 160.

[22] Beaulieu 2014.

[23] Beaulieu 2014; Smith 2014.

[24] This research has led several scholars to conclude that opposition party election boycotts should be avoided. See Huntington 1991; Schedler 2009.

[25] Beaulieu (2014) argues that boycotts should reduce election violence because they reduce competition, but finds no consistent support for this hypothesis. This could be because violence causes boycotts, as we suggest.

[26] Even if a boycott were called first and the government-initiated violence against the opposition afterwards (which we think is rare), government-sponsored violence could still reinforce the decision to boycott. Because boycotts are not carried out automatically and require significant effort to implement successfully (Beaulieu

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A second way in which pre-election violence can increase the probability of incumbent victory is through voter intimidation aimed at influencing who turns out to vote on election day and who they ultimately vote for. While ballot box stuffing and similar forms of election fraud distort official turnout figures, violence can also change voting behavior in a variety of ways that advantage the incumbent. Violence can convince opposition voters to stay home on election day, reducing turnout in favor of the opposition.[27] It can also coerce would-be opposition voters into voting for the incumbent out of fear of reprisal for supporting the opposition. And it can threaten voters who would otherwise prefer to abstain, and convince them to turn out to vote for the incumbent. These methods of intimidation are not mutually exclusive and may require violations of ballot secrecy, or at least knowledge of who is likely to vote for an opposition candidate.[28] 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'.[29] 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 election 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 […]'.[30]

We expect that pre-election violence has historically biased elections by increasing voter turnout in support of the incumbent through intimidation and/or decreasing turnout in favor of the opposition through voter suppression. Both outcomes, which are not mutually exclusive, increase the likelihood that the incumbent wins the election.[31]

How Pre-Election Violence Increases the Risk of Post-Election Protests

Even if a strategy of election violence helps a threatened government 'win' an election, we argue that such a strategy may be myopic and can trigger significant consequences in the

(F'note continued)

2014), and because pre-election violence can be used throughout the pre-election period, we do not argue that violence causes boycotts in a one-shot iteration. Even so, we argue that a government's decision to use election violence increases the probability that a boycott will be carried out. For recent work on the iterative nature of political repression and dissent, see Ritter (2014). Other work explores the sequencing of strategic decisions related to protest. See Frank 2014.

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

[28] On voter perceptions of ballot secrecy, see IFES' surveys (available at www.ifes.org). See also Blaydes 2011; Chandra 2007; Gerber et al. 2013; Magaloni 2006; Nichter 2008; Stokes 2005.

[29] Blaydes 2011, 105.

[30] Human Rights Watch 2010.

[31] Some formal models also suggest that violence may suppress turnout: Robinson and Torvik (2009) argue that violent incumbents may attempt to suppress voting among swing groups in an attempt to retain resources. Collier and Vicente's (2012) argument suggest that violence is used to suppress voting among the 'soft' opposition.

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post-election period that can undermine some or all of the benefits of winning. Specifically, the use of violence in the pre-election period makes post-election protest more likely, which in turn can bring about significant political costs to the incumbent government.

Citizens sometimes respond to the state's attempts at election manipulation through fraud and violence by expressing their dissent through non-institutional means, frequently by protesting in the streets.[32] Although there are some cases in which citizens amass in the streets to challenge a regime prior to an election, anti-government post-election protests are much more common.[33] Prominent examples of protest include the 'color revolutions', and the 2009 Iranian elections.[34] We anticipate that the opposition's motivation to engage in election-related mass 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.[35] 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 election process can engage in an election boycott. Once the election has taken place, however, public protest is one of the few remaining forms of dissent; post-election protest becomes the most likely avenue for anti-government mobilization. Many protesters acknowledge this difference between the pre- and post-election periods explicitly. For instance, several participants in the opposition protests and violence following the 2007 Kenyan elections noted to Human Rights Watch interviewers that they 'were merely doing by force what they had been denied a chance to do through the ballot box'.[36]

Of course, protest does not automatically follow elections that are corrupted or violent. For protests to emerge as a challenge to the incumbent government's hold on power in the post-election period, citizens must solve a collective action problem. This is particularly difficult in repressive regimes.[37] 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.[38]

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.[39] 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.[40] As the number of protestors grows, each individual protester is less likely to be punished, while the probability of successful protest

[32] Carey 2006; Gupta, Singh, and Sprague 1993; Moore 1998.

[33] Hyde and Marinov 2012. Additionally, many pre-election protests are aimed at improving the election process rather than challenging the incumbent's hold on power. 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.

[34] Bunce and Wolchik 2011.

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

[36] Human Rights Watch 2008.

[37] Kuran 1995; Lohmann 1994; Tucker 2007; Weingast 1997.

[38] Tucker 2007, 540.

[39] Weingast 1997.

[40] Tucker 2007, 540–1.

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(that is, bringing down the government or forcing political concessions) increases.[41] This logic is consistent with other work that implicitly or explicitly employs the same model in which elections marred by fraud or violence provide a focal point allowing citizens to solve a collective action problem and protest against the regime.[42] These arguments are consistent with our prediction that pre-election violence is one factor that will increase the likelihood of post-election protests.

Post-election protests occur in about 15 per cent of the elections in our study and, if we are correct, should increase the probability that the newly re-elected incumbent will eventually make substantial power concessions, including the annulment of election results, the holding of new elections, resignation or removal by force. 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'.[43] People took to the streets to protest Rhee's election, steadfast in the face of a violent government response. After six weeks of protest and at least 145 deaths, Rhee stepped down.[44]

Protests can lead to significant costs for the incumbent–including resignation, annulment of the election results, military coup or new elections–for several reasons.[45] Unlike most elections, protests represent a publicly 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–inside or outside the government–to take advantage of the incumbent's unpopularity and any public 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, especially of the pro-democracy variety, 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 Ukraine in 2004 and Ethiopia in 2005.[46]

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 in an effort to suppress dissent. 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.[47] 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 fifty-eight. Meanwhile, in the capital city, protesters occupied the communist party headquarters and the police threatened to blow up the building with the activists inside.[48] Protesters amassed outside. Army troops and tanks were

[41] Tucker 2007.

[42] Borzyskowski 2013; Daxecker 2012, 2014; Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014; Hyde and Marinov 2014; Little, Tucker, and LaGatta 2015; Tucker 2007.

[43] Beech 1960.

[44] *Los Angeles Times* 1960a, 1960b.

[45] Non-violent civil resistance may also be more effective. See Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Stephan and Chenoweth 2008.

[46] Malone 2010.

[47] National Republic Institute for International Affairs 1991.

[48] Williams 1991.

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sent out to disburse the crowd and threatened to open fire if protesters did not leave. Several people were shot; three were killed.[49]

Though governments use violence against post-election demonstrators in an effort to crush public opposition to the regime, we expect violence at this stage in the election cycle to be less incumbent sustaining than pre-election violence. Before elections, government violence seeks to manipulate an election outcome in the incumbent's favor by reducing election competition, provoking actions that reduce the immediate election competition. The objective of post-election violence, by contrast, is frequently to undermine an already mobilized mass movement protesting the regime. 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 anti-regime 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, fraud 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 and likely abuse in prison:

> They've attacked my house twice and broke all the windows. They've 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. They've arrested many people who were close to me. Any member of the Parliament who comes to visit me is chased and attacked. I'm not sure whether they're going to arrest me or not, but […] we are all ready to pay any price for our struggle for the people of Iran.[50]

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. Table 1 summarizes the argument and its observable implications.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Data

To evaluate the argument we use the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) dataset on the characteristics of national elections all over the world.[51] The NELDA data cover all election events, including more specific measures of election violence, incumbent victory and the dynamics of election protest than have previously been available for all regions.[52] These data contain information on competitive elections for national office for all

[49] 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 twenty protesters, arresting hundreds and declaring a state of siege. 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).

[50] Bahari and Alinejad 2010.

[51] Hyde and Marinov 2012.

[52] The NELDA data and codebook are available at http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda. Appendix A includes a full list of countries included in the sample.

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TABLE 1 *The Argument*

(Hypothesis 1) Pre-election violence increases the likelihood that the incumbent wins the election: (A) By increasing the likelihood of opposition boycotts. (B) By manipulating voter turnout.
(Hypothesis 2) Pre-election violence also increases the likelihood that the incumbent will face post-election consequences: (A) By increasing the likelihood of mobilizing post-election protesters. (B) Post-election protest, in turn, will increase the risk of power concessions.

sovereign states with a population greater than 500,000, including information on election protest and the existence of several types of election violence.[53] Temporal limitations of other data used in our model limit the sample to 1981–2004.

NELDA data sources include news wire reports, newspaper archives, academic research including the data handbooks on elections edited by Dieter Nohlen,[54] archives for specific countries and from intergovernmental organizations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and other sources that are listed in the dataset's codebook.[55] 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 as a separate observation.[56] For all estimates (below), we exclude the long-term developed democracies (eleven), which are outside the scope of our theory, and elections in which competition is not permitted.[57]

These data are more fine-grained than studies that rely on nationwide aggregate measures of repression or protest that are unable to disaggregate types or targets of 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).[58] 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 also distinguish empirically between election fraud and violence.

The Effect of Pre-Election Violence on Election Victory

This section shows that pre-election violence against opposition supporters, candidates and the citizenry is strongly associated with an increased probability that the incumbent wins the election. For each election round, we use the NELDA data to code a binary measure of whether the *Incumbent Wins*,[59] 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

[53] A complete list of the countries in our sample is available in the Appendix.

[54] Nohlen 2005; Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 2001; Nohlen, Krennerich, and Thibaut 1999.

[55] Hyde and Marinov 2011.

[56] We also re-estimate our results using only the final round of all elections. The results are consistent.

[57] 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? See Hyde and Marinov 2012.

[58] Exceptions include: Bhasin and Gandhi 2013; Straus and Taylor 2012.

[59] *Incumbent Wins* is from *Nelda40*: 'Did the leader step down because the vote count gave victory to some other actor?' It equals 1 if no and 0 otherwise.

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use *Pre-Election Violence*,[60] from Hafner-Burton, Hyde and Jablonski,[61] which equals 1 if an incumbent harassed or used violence against opposition members or civilians prior to or during the election, and 0 otherwise.[62] Although opposition harassment (which often includes acts of violence) and civilian violence may sometimes be used separately, our hypotheses make predictions about both violence against voters and opposition groups, so we combine the two in our analysis. In practice, incumbents often target both opposition groups and voters with violence in an effort to suppress competition.[63] The combination of these two categories of violence is consistent with other published work.[64] In the Appendix, we also show separate estimates for opposition harassment and civilian violence.[65]

In order to account for the possibility that governments may use violence in response to expected political competition, we include *Victory Uncertain* if the incumbent made statements prior to the election that suggested she was not confident of victory, or if pre-election polls were unfavorable for the incumbent.[66]

Even after accounting for election competition, it is plausible that more democratic leaders will face a more mobilized opposition and stronger constraints on the use of repression.[67] To address this source of bias, we include a control for a country's political institutions.[68] 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 a government's pre-existing propensity to engage in political repression.

To measure political institutions, we include the *Polity2* variable from the Polity IV project.[69] *Polity2* is a twenty-one-point index that ranges from the most autocratic (−10) to the most democratic (10) political institutions. Pre-existing levels of government repression are measured

[60] *Pre-Election Violence* is coded from *Nelda15:* 'Is there evidence that the government harassed the opposition?' and *Nelda33*: 'Was there significant violence involving civilian deaths immediately before, during, or after the election?' If either *Nelda15* or *Nelda33* is 'yes', then *Pre-Election Violence* is coded as 'yes'. Although *Nelda15* and *Nelda33* could technically involve some post-election violence, research assistants were instructed to focus primarily on harassment and deaths in the period leading up to and including election day (personal correspondence with authors). As an additional check, we asked our own researchers to recode a random subset of *Nelda33* with reference to when violence occurred in the electoral cycle. Less than 3 per cent of cases (4/141 coded so far) reference only post-election violence involving civilian deaths. *Post-Election Violence* is focused explicitly on violence against demonstrators, and is coded from *Nelda31*. *Nelda31* is only coded if there were riots and protests after the election, and indicates whether 'the government used violence against demonstrators'.

[61] Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014.

[62] Hyde and Marinov 2011. Consistent with our argument, incumbents win 66 per cent of the cases of violence in our sample, compared with 49 per cent of elections without violence. Detailed summary information is available in the Appendix.

[63] Makumbe 2002; Throup and Hornsby 1998; Tripp 2010. In our data, civilian violence and opposition harassment are correlated at 0.25.

[64] Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014.

[65] Frank (2014) distinguishes between threats of violence and actual violence. This is a potentially fruitful distinction, but is not central to our focus on whether violence helps incumbents stay in power.

[66] Again following Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski (2014), *Victory Uncertain* is coded from *Nelda12* and *Nelda26*. *Nelda12*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'. *Nelda26* equals 'yes' if there were 'reliable polls that indicated popularity of ruling political party or of the candidates before elections' and 'they were favorable for the incumbent'. *Victory Uncertain* equals 1 when either variable equals 'no', 0 when both equal 0, and is coded as missing when both are '*unclear*' or '*N/A*'.

[67] Poe and Tate 1994.

[68] Note that a negative correlation between democracy and violence should bias us against seeing a positive effect of violence on election outcomes.

[69] Marshall and Jaggers 2008.

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with *Physical Integrity*, from the CIRI dataset,[70] 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 of these variables, we use the average value from the three years prior to the election in order to ensure that these measures are not themselves determined by election violence.[71] Summary statistics for all variables are shown in the 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)*:

$$P(Incumbent\ Wins_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta\, Election\ Violence_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}), \tag{1}$$

where *Incumbent Wins* indicates whether the incumbent wins in country i in election j, and φX_{ij} is a vector of control variables. In the Appendix we also re-estimate all models with country fixed and random effects.

Except where noted, 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 election strategies.[72] Leader-specific factors like time in office and experience may also influence an incumbent's strategy. All models include *Leader Tenure*, which is the incumbent leader's number of days in office, and *Leader Age*, from the Archigos dataset.[73] *Civil War* is included from the Major Episodes of Political Violence dataset[74] because internal conflict is correlated with human rights violations.[75]

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 election violence, and not inadvertently using election violence as a proxy for other related events. *Fraud* measures whether there were concerns, before the election, that it would not be free and fair, and allows us to evaluate the relative effects of fraud compared to, and in conjunction with, violence.[76] 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.[77] 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 that may influence the dynamics of election behavior.

One potential alternative to our argument (that violence provokes boycotts that reduce competition) is that governments are more likely to use election violence against a weak opposition. 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,

[70] Cingranelli and Richards 2010.
[71] Both *Polity* and *Physical Integrity* are likely to change based on election events.
[72] World Bank 2013.
[73] Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009.
[74] Marshall 2007.
[75] Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999.
[76] 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-election expectations of fraud rather than post-election accusations of fraud.
[77] Banks 1975, 2005.

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TABLE 2 *The Effect of* Pre-Election Violence *on* Incumbent Victory

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Incumbent Wins	Incumbent Wins	Incumbent Wins
Pre-Election Violence	0.76**	0.74*	0.88**
	(0.28)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Fraud	0.76*	0.75*	
	(0.33)	(0.33)	
Pre-Election Protest		0.14	0.23
		(0.52)	(0.50)
Physical Integrity	0.28**	0.28**	0.25**
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Leader Age	0.035	0.03	0.01
	(0.77)	(0.13)	(0.14)
Leader Tenure	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Civil War	−0.10	−0.10	−0.09
	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.16)
GDP (log)	−0.05	−0.05	−0.08
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Population (log)	0.06	0.05	0.08
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.16)
Victory Uncertain	−1.48**	−1.48**	−1.54**
	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.25)
Polity2	−0.08**	−0.08**	−0.09**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Demonstrations	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.04)	0.04	(0.03)
Constant	−2.30	−2.27	−2.12
	(2.81)	(2.85)	(2.98)
Observations	458	458	458
Log Likelihood	−246.8	−250.9	−250.9

Note: robust clustered standard errors in parentheses. **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05.

Model 2 includes *Pre-Election Protest*, which takes a value of 1 if there were any election-related anti-government protests in the period before an election took place.[78] This allows us to account for the extent to which the opposition is mobilized against the government prior to the election.[79]

The results presented in Model 1, Table 2 indicate that pre-election violence, on average, increases an incumbent's likelihood of winning the election. When she uses election violence,

[78] Variable coded by merging the Banks protest data and NELDA (Banks 2005; Hyde and Marinov 2012). For all election years in which anti-government demonstrations occurred, researchers 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.

[79] 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 and 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.

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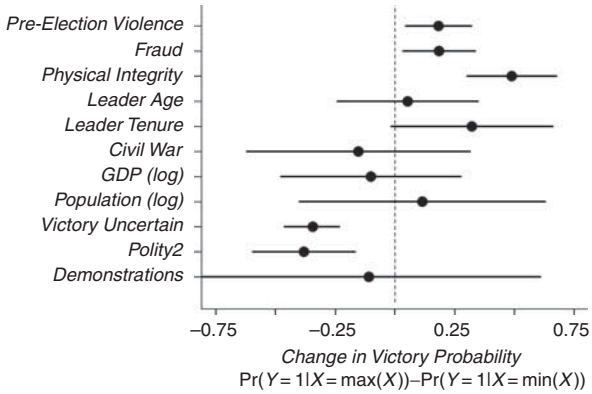

Fig. 2. Estimated effects of explanatory variables on incumbent victory
Note: points indicate the simulated increase in the probability of *Incumbent Wins* given a change in each independent variable from its minimum to its maximum level, holding all other variables at their mean. Lines indicate the 95 per cent confidence intervals for predictions. Estimated using a logit model with robust clustered standard errors.

the incumbent has a 50.9 per cent greater predicted probability of winning the election (from 0.37 to 0.55). This is similar to the predicted effect of fraud, which results in a 51.3 per cent increase in the probability of victory. Our results remain nearly identical in Model 2, suggesting that the effect of fraud and violence on the election outcome is not explained by levels of opposition strength. Because fraud and violence are at times used together (correlation = 0.36), we exclude fraud in Model 3 and find consistent effects of violence. 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 (based on Model 1). It illustrates graphically that pre-election violence is associated with election victory for the incumbent at about the same rate as fraud.

Next, we evaluate whether the data are consistent with our argument that the success of *Pre-Election Violence* results in part because violence increases the probability of boycotts. We create *Boycott*, which equals 1 if some opposition leaders boycotted the election and 0 otherwise,[80] and estimate a logit model:

$$P(Boycott_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta\, Election\ Violence_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}), \tag{2}$$

where *Boycott* indicates if there was a boycott in country i and election j, and φX_{ij} is a vector of control variables. Since boycotts usually occur before instances of fraud, we exclude fraud as a control from this model to avoid post-treatment bias. To confirm that boycotts favor the incumbent at the polls, we also 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 estimates consistent with the hypothesis that boycotts are part of the reason election violence works in the short term. In Column 1, we estimate that *Pre-Election Violence* increases the probability of *Boycotts* by about 80 per cent (from 0.05 to 0.09). In Column 2, we confirm that boycotts in turn increase the likelihood of incumbent victory by about 45 per cent (from 0.38 to 0.55). By comparing these predictions with those from Table 2, we conclude that

[80] Coded from *Nelda14*.

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TABLE 3 *The Effect of* Pre-Election Violence *on* Boycott *and* Victory

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Boycott	Incumbent Wins	Incumbent Wins
Pre-Election Violence	0.76*	0.71*	0.79**
	(0.35)	(0.28)	(0.30)
Boycott		1.66**	2.41**
		(0.49)	(0.75)
Boycott × Pre-Election Violence			−1.17
			(0.73)
Fraud		0.57 +	0.53
		(0.33)	(0.34)
Physical Integrity	−0.25 +	0.31**	0.31**
	(0.15)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Leader Age	0.14	0.01	0.01
	(0.19)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Leader Tenure	0.00	0.01 +	0.01 +
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Civil War	0.37 +	−0.25	−0.21
	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.19)
GDP (log)	−0.11	−0.05	−0.04
	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Population (log)	0.03	0.09	0.08
	(0.22)	(0.19)	(0.18)
Victory Uncertain	−1.77**	−1.39**	−1.38**
	(0.46)	(0.26)	(0.26)
Polity2	−0.09**	−0.08*	−0.08*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Demonstrations	−0.00	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	−1.89	−3.05	−2.94
	(3.75)	(3.03)	(3.03)
Observations	457	457	457
Log Likelihood	−127.9	−238.9	−238.3

Note: robust clustered standard errors in parentheses. **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, + p < 0.1.

the effect of *Pre-Election Violence* on *Boycotts* explains about 18 per cent of the effect of *Pre-Election Violence* on *Incumbent Wins*.[81]

One might be concerned that these estimates are driven by the effect of boycotts in non-violent elections. Boycott strategies might be different in violent versus non-violent elections. In non-violent elections, candidates may boycott in order to avoid an obvious election defeat, particularly when there are expectations of widespread fraud.[82] However in violent elections, opposition candidates often boycott despite facing an electorally threatened incumbent.[83] To assess whether boycotts are effective in both violent and non-violent elections, in Column 3 of Table 3 we include an interaction between *Boycott* and *Pre-Election Violence*. The results confirm that boycotts increase *Incumbent Victory* in both violent and non-violent elections. We plot these predictions in Figure 3.

[81] For a discussion of the assumptions required for accurate estimates of mediation effects, see Imai et al. (2011).
[82] Lindberg 2006b.
[83] Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014.

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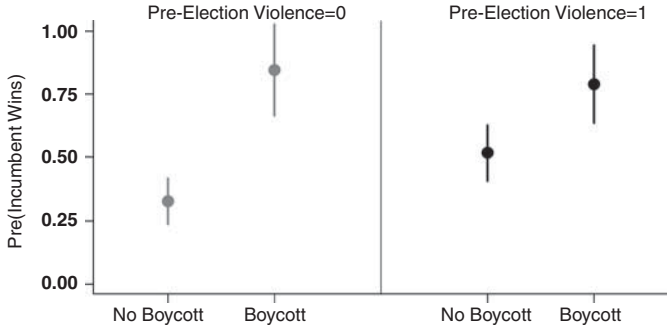

Fig. 3. Probability of incumbent victory in violent and boycotted elections
Note: predicted probability of incumbent victory for all values of *Boycott* and *Pre-Election Violence* with 95 per cent confidence intervals. Predicted from Column 3 in Table 3. All control variables set at mean.

We next evaluate the relationship between pre-election violence and turnout to determine whether violence is changing voter behavior to the advantage of the incumbent. We argue that government-sponsored violence in the pre-election period should alter voter turnout in a manner that benefits the incumbent, decreasing votes by the opposition and/or increasing votes by regime supporters. It is easy to find anecdotal reports of electoral violence and intimidation influencing turnout, though the effect of violence on turnout can be positive or negative. For example, as one opposition member in Ethiopia was quoted during the 2010 elections amid predictions of high turnout, 'A lot of soldiers are around. It's a sign of intimidation of the local population to vote for the government.'[84] In contrast, during the 2015 Sri Lankan presidential elections, the Centre for Monitoring Electoral Violence predicted low turnout in some regions due to 'the government instilling fear among the electorate by deploying the army in the guise of providing security'.[85]

Evaluating whether the effect of violence on turnout benefits the incumbent is challenging for several reasons, including the fact that cross-national data cannot document turnout by individual vote choice, which is really what our ideal test would include. Moreover, there are weaknesses in existing data since violent regimes may also be more likely to falsify official turnout results.[86]

Recognizing these limitations, we use two approaches to evaluate this hypothesis. First, we evaluate the effect of *Pre-Election Violence* on turnout using cross-national data to see if we can observe aggregate effects of violence on turnout. In order to evaluate the effects of *Pre-Election Violence* on turnout levels, we create *Voter Turnout*, which equals the percentage of registered voters that casts a ballot.[87] We estimate a linear model of *Turnout* and a logit model of *Incumbent Wins* which are identical to Equation 1 but add *Turnout:*

$$Turnout_{ij} = f(\alpha + \beta\, Election\ Violence_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}), \tag{3}$$

where $Turnout_{ij}$ indicates the rate of voter turnout in country i and election j, and φX_{ij} is a vector of control variables. In addition, we control for institutional variables that are likely to affect voter turnout. We include *Compulsory Voting*, which equals 1 if there was a law requiring

[84] Malone and Clarke 2010.
[85] *The Island*–Sri Lanka 2015.
[86] This would likely mean that errors would not be independent or normally distributed. Although a majority of turnout data is likely to accurately reflect 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.
[87] International IDEA Voter Turnout website, http://www.idea.int/vt/, accessed July 2015.

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citizens to vote and 0 otherwise.[88] We also control for *Multiple Rounds*, which equals 1 if there were multiple rounds of voting.[89] To account for additional institutional confounds, we also include fixed effects estimates in the Appendix, which are consistent.

Column 1 of Table 4 shows the relationship between *Pre-Election Violence* and *Turnout*. The estimates provide some limited support for our argument about violence being used to coerce support. Column 1 shows that when incumbents use violence, there is a positive effect on voter turnout, though this effect is only significant at the 10 per cent level. These results provide suggestive evidence that violence can increase turnout in favor of the incumbent. We recognize, however, that interpreting this result is challenging given the fact that the effect of violence may also be to lower turnout among opposition supporters.[90]

Column 2 indicates that higher turnout 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 0.75 compared to the probability (0.32) that the incumbent wins without the use of pre-election violence (but maximum turnout).[91] This result is consistent with the argument that pre-election violence results in changes in voter turnout that benefit the incumbent.[92] Figure 4 shows the effect of turnout on the probability that *Incumbent Wins* by whether or not there was *Pre-Election Violence*, with all other variables held constant at mean values.

These results imply that when pre-election violence occurs, higher turnout is associated with an increased probability of incumbent victory. Combined with the survey-level data in the Appendix, this suggests that incumbents are often successful at using violence and intimidation to 'persuade' voters to turn out and vote in their favor. The results also suggest that this strategy works for incumbents: when the government does not use pre-election violence, increasing turnout has no effect on incumbent victory. However, when the government employs pre-election violence, higher turnout is associated with a higher probability of incumbent victory. This is consistent with our hypothesis that violence shifts turnout among opposition and incumbent supporters in ways that increase vote totals for the incumbent.

As a complementary approach, we include a separate set of regressions using individual survey data. Using Afrobarometer and Latin America Barometer survey results, we estimate whether reported turnout differs between respondents who claim to support opposition parties and those who claim to support incumbent parties. The results show that respondents in violent elections who support opposition parties are less likely to report having voted than citizens who support incumbent parties. We discuss these results in more detail alongside the estimates in the Appendix.

The Effect of Post-Election Protests on Power Concessions

This section explores whether pre-election violence drives mass protests, and whether such protests increase the likelihood that the incumbent will make power concessions.

[88] International IDEA Voter Turnout website, http://www.idea.int/vt/, accessed July 2015.

[89] Hyde and Marinov 2011. We only have turnout data for the final round of voting, which is often lower than earlier rounds of voting in multi-round elections.

[90] Note that if turnout differs between opposition and incumbent supporters, this will bias us against seeing a significant effect.

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

[92] This 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.

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TABLE 4 *The Effect of* Pre-Election Violence *on* Turnout

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Voter Turnout	Incumbent Wins	Incumbent Wins
Pre-Election Violence	4.67 +	0.76*	−2.30
	(2.73)	(0.35)	(1.60)
Pre-Election Violence × Voter Turnout			0.04*
			(0.02)
Victory Uncertain	−1.43	−1.99**	−1.95**
	(1.71)	(0.36)	(0.36)
Voter Turnout		0.01	0.00
		(0.01)	(0.01)
Fraud	−5.71*	0.31	0.24
	(2.54)	(0.39)	(0.39)
Physical Integrity	−0.44	0.16	0.12
	(0.80)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Leader Age	1.31	0.06	0.08
	(0.88)	(0.16)	(0.17)
Leader Tenure	0.01	0.01 +	0.01 +
	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Civil War	−0.16	0.03	0.02
	(1.62)	(0.19)	(0.19)
GDP (log)	1.16	0.10	0.10
	(1.04)	(0.14)	(0.13)
Population (log)	−3.70*	−0.14	−0.16
	(1.56)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Polity2	−0.23	−0.07 +	−0.07 +
	(0.22)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Demonstrations	0.22	0.03	0.03
	(0.19)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Compulsory Voting	7.49**	−1.42**	−1.40**
	(2.34)	(0.36)	(0.35)
Multi-Round Voting	−3.09	−1.01*	−1.08*
	(2.88)	(0.42)	(0.42)
Constant	121.81**	0.62	1.99
	(25.68)	(3.04)	(3.11)
Observations	300	300	300
R^2	0.20		
Log Likelihood		−141.4	−139.7

Note: robust clustered standard errors in parentheses. Excludes cases where the incumbent lost the election and exited office. **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, + p < 0.1.

Election Protests equals 1 if there were election-related riots and protests after the election, and 0 otherwise.[93] We estimate the effect of *Pre-Election Violence* on *Election Protests* in country *i* and election *j* using a logit model with clustered standard errors and the same set of control variables described above:

$$P(Election\ Protests_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta\, Election\ Violence_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}), \tag{4}$$

[93] 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'.

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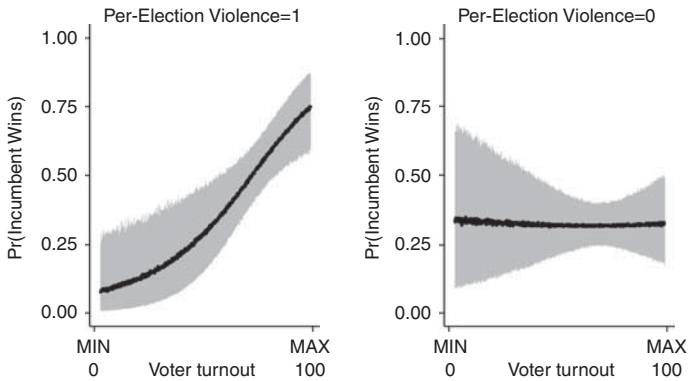

Fig. 4. The effect of Turnout *on* Incumbent Wins
Note: estimated effect of *Pre-Election Violence* on the probability of *Incumbent Wins* at various levels of turnout. Vertical lines indicate the 95 per cent confidence interval.

where φX_{ij} is a vector of control variables. Since our primary interest is in how violence affects incumbent behavior, we exclude cases where the incumbent lost the election and exited office.[94]

The estimates in Column 1 of Table 5 confirm that pre-election violence–like fraud–significantly predicts the outbreak of post-election protests. Violence increases the estimated probability of protests by 0.21.[95] For comparison, the use of fraud increases the probability of protests by 0.10.

In Columns 2 through 5 we evaluate the relationship between protest and the probability that the newly re-elected incumbent makes concessions after the election. *Power Concessions* equals 1 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 if the initial election results were annulled and new elections held.[96]

$$P(Power\ Concessions_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta\, Election\ Protest_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}), \tag{5}$$

where φX_{ij} is a vector of control variables. Again we exclude cases where the incumbent lost the election and exited office. We again account for the possibility that governments are more likely to use violence against a strong opposition by including *Pre-Election Protest* as a proxy for how mobilized the opposition was against the government prior to the election.

Column 2 of Table 5 reveals an interesting story. Protests increase the probability that an incumbent will make power concessions in the post-election period by more than 500 per cent.[97]

[94] In Appendix A we re-estimate these models including elections where the incumbent lost. The results are consistent.

[95] Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014.

[96] This variable was coded from *Nelda34:* Were results that were favorable to the incumbent canceled?, *Nelda39:* Was the incumbent replaced? and *Nelda40:* If yes (Nelda39), did the leader step down because the vote count gave victory to some other political actor? *Power Concessions* equals 1 if *Nelda34* = 'yes' or *Nelda39* = '*yes*'. Cases in which *Nelda40* = 'yes' are coded as 0 to exclude cases in which the incumbent lost the election and stepped down.

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

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TABLE 5 *The Effect of* Protests *on* Power Concessions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Protest	Power Concessions	Power Concessions	Power Concessions
Protest		2.28**	2.58**	2.61**
		(0.85)	(0.86)	(0.85)
Violence Against Protesters			−0.64	−0.87
			(0.91)	(0.97)
Pre-Election Violence × Violence Against Protesters				0.30
				(1.04)
Pre-Election Violence	1.85**	−0.76	−0.72	−0.78
	(0.48)	(0.83)	(0.76)	(0.74)
Fraud	1.16 +	1.95	1.90	1.91
	(0.63)	(1.56)	(1.47)	(1.46)
Physical Integrity	−0.12	−0.13	−0.17	−0.17
	(0.12)	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.31)
Leader Age	0.15	0.14	0.18	0.17
	(0.30)	(0.25)	(0.28)	(0.28)
Leader Tenure	−0.02*	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Civil War	0.32 +	0.05	0.10	0.09
	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.24)	(0.24)
GDP (log)	−0.28	0.68	0.66	0.67
	(0.22)	(0.47)	(0.44)	(0.45)
Population (log)	0.09	−0.11	−0.12	−0.12
	(0.22)	(0.40)	(0.38)	(0.37)
Polity2	0.04	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Demonstrations		0.09**	0.10**	0.10**
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Pre-Election Protest	1.08 +	−0.85	−0.92	−0.92
	(0.61)	(0.75)	(0.74)	(0.74)
Constant	−3.60	−4.80	−4.59	−4.56
	(3.28)	(5.87)	(5.57)	(5.57)
Observations	206	203	203	203
Log Likelihood	−87.81	−38.36	−38.07	−38.06

Note: robust clustered standard errors in parentheses. Excludes cases where the incumbent lost the election and exited office. **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, + p < 0.1.

Moreover, Column 3 suggests that using violence against protesters does not change the likelihood of concessions. *Violence Against Protesters* equals 1 if an incumbent used violence against demonstrators protesting the election, and 0 otherwise. The coefficient is statistically insignificant from 0. 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 crack down on threats to her hold on power once post-election protests have begun. In Column 4, we include an interaction between *Pre-Election Violence* and *Violence Against Protestors* to investigate whether violence against post-election protestors counteracts concession demands against governments that have engaged in pre-election violence. The interaction coefficient is not significantly different

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from 0, suggesting that violence against protestors may not be a successful way to thwart concessions.[98]

Together, these findings lend support to our argument that pre-election violence can help incumbents win elections but may also increase the risk that leaders will eventually face mass protests, which may oust them from power after the election, or annul election results that were favorable to the incumbent and call new elections.

CAVEATS

Why do 'Rational' Leaders Choose a Risky Strategy?

We have shown that pre-election violence–like fraud–increases the chances that leaders win elections as well as the chances they will face post-election protests, which are costly in their own right and can lead to power concessions. Rational leaders who aim to stay in power should seek to avoid these potentially negative consequences of using violence. Why, then, do the repercussions of violence in the post-election period not deter all violence in the pre-election period? If voters and opposition leaders are acting rationally given their available options, are leaders irrational?

While a definitive answer is beyond the scope of this article, we offer some tentative speculations. Our argument is not that leaders are irrational. To the contrary, much like the opposition they face, leaders running for re-election may be operating with short-term discount rates focused on the immediate goal of winning at the expense of longer-term strategy. They may be aware of the eventual possibility of protest and its consequences, but weigh the probability or longer-run costs associated with this strategy as lower than the immediate benefits of election victory. Some may also underestimate the strength or resolve of the general public once mobilized. And it is likely that many repressive incumbents have difficulty perfectly accessing or evaluating information about their own popularity–indeed, it is precisely in these circumstances of uncertainty that incumbents are most likely to engage in election violence, and thus may be prone to miscalculating the public's reaction.[99]

Endogeneity

The decision to use election violence is itself a strategic decision driven by factors such as election uncertainty, executive constraints and capacity. This raises the question of whether we are identifying an effect of election violence, or whether our results are biased by some unobserved characteristic of violent elections. One important concern is that both the use of violence and incumbent victory might be determined by the election threat faced by the incumbent. Other empirical work has shown that violence is most likely when incumbents are uncertain about the election outcome.[100] To the extent this is a problem, it should result in an underestimation of the effect of election violence on winning, since this logic suggests that the incumbents most likely to lose elections are also the most likely to use violence. We thus included several control variables that measure pre-election expectations of victory, including opposition mobilization, level of democracy and expectations of victory (*Victory Uncertain*).

[98] Since some coups are initiated within regimes, rather than by opposition groups, we re-estimate the model after excluding the only case in which concessions resulted from a coup (after the 1982 election in Guatemala). The results remain consistent.

[99] Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014.

[100] Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014.

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We also include fixed-effect estimates in the Appendix. Since many of these potential confounds vary little between elections (such as the level of executive constraints or democracy), they are unlikely to confound estimates from a fixed-effects model.

Reverse Causation

Relatedly, one might worry about reverse causation. If more electorally successful leaders are more likely to rely on election violence, then this relationship between violence and incumbent victory might be spurious. This seems unlikely. First, as we note above, leaders who are confident of victory rarely use election violence. Secondly, we include several control variables to account for expectations of victory and the incumbent's tenure in office. Such an explanation does not align with our findings on the post-election consequences of election violence: if more successful leaders are using violence, we would not expect to see violence trigger protest and undermine leader tenure in the post-election period and over the longer term.

Other Manipulation Tactics

It is also possible that the choice to use violence is not independent of the choice to engage in other forms of election manipulation, such as distorting vote counts, manipulating election timing, vote buying or rigging registration processes. If these strategies complement or substitute for one another in ways that are related to incumbents' election prospects, we run the risk of obtaining biased estimates of the effect of election violence.[101] A full exploration of these alternative strategies is an important area for future research and well beyond the scope of this article; however, we take several steps to address this inferential challenge.[102] First, we include controls for expectations of fraud in our models where feasible. This ensures that we are not substantially overestimating the effects of violence due to complementarities between fraud and violence. Controlling for other strategies–such as vote buying or abuse of public spending–is more difficult, yet we take steps to account for factors that others have suggested might make violence cheaper than other strategies, such as the presence of election monitors, the size of the government budget and media transparency. We describe and show these alternative estimates in the Appendix. Our results remain consistent.

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'.[103] Does this also imply that election violence is incompatible with democratization and greater political liberalization? Scholars have long recognized that most governments around the world hold elections, but the majority of election-holding countries are not full democracies.[104] Yet debate continues about the role political violence plays in political transitions, and what violent

[101] The data suggest that violence may be both a complement to and substitute for fraud. For instance, both fraud and violence are often used alone; however incumbents are about 30 per cent more likely to use fraud in violent elections than in non-violent elections.

[102] Several scholars have proposed theories about when incumbents might choose one strategy over another. See Birch 2011; Collier and Vicente 2012; Daxecker 2014; Hyde and O'Mahony 2010; Kelley 2012; Simpser 2012.

[103] Huntington 1991, 8.

[104] Hermet, Rouquie, and Rose 1978, vii.

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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. Much more attention has been given to fraud.

This article contributes to the debate about whether election violence is a 'harbinger of democracy'[105] 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 anecdotally to when and why violent elections should lead to democratic transitions and regime turnover. On the one hand, election violence helps unpopular incumbents win competitive elections in part because it mobilizes political parties to protest the regime–and the election process–by boycotting elections, and may also intimidate voters into increasing the incumbent's vote share. On the other hand, violence can embolden opposition movements in the post-election period, which at times turn to non-election means such as protests that increase the risk that the incumbent will make concessions of power. This makes election violence risky as a long-term strategy for incumbents. The United Democratic Action Organization 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 Benigo Aquino.[106] 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.[107]

One possible implication is that election violence may actually–and inadvertently–promote political liberalization in some cases over the long term. This is not to say that repression cannot quell these movements. The people power movement in 1988 Burma, the so-called 8888 movement, obtained significant concessions from the governing junta, only to be violently repressed following the movement's victory in the 1990 parliamentary elections.[108] Even so, incumbents who use election violence are more likely to face protests that eventually force them out of power and are more likely to face some form of democratization event during their tenure.[109] 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 it can motivate powerful opposition movements to take to the streets and demand reform.

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[105] Brownlee 2009.
[106] Thompson 1995.
[107] *AAP Reuter* 1977; *Los Angeles Times* 1960a, 1960b; Trumbull 1960.
[108] Schock 1999.
[109] Violent leaders have a 25 per cent chance of an increase in their regime's democracy score during their tenure, compared to 8 per cent for non-violent leaders. Authors' calculation.

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