Surviving Elections:
Violence and Leader Tenure[1]

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Abstract

This article examines how government-sponsored election violence influences the ability of incumbent leaders to win elections and remain in power. We argue that election violence is 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 raise the odds that the incumbent will be forced to make political concessions in the post-election period by stepping down or holding new elections. Violence against protesters does not change these odds.

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[1] Replication data are available at ___.

"Rwanda; 'Climate of Repression' as Voting Concludes"
"Venezuelan Analysts Predict Increased Repression as Chavez Support Wanes"
"Two Killed, Scores Injured as Violence Mars Bangladesh Campaign"
"Its Opposition Hushed, Weary Armenia Accepts Vote Results."[2]

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 ruling party agents employ or threaten violence against the political opposition or potential voters immediately before, during, or after elections.[3] To manipulate election results, some governments use violence in an effort to weaken electoral challengers and win office. After an election, some use violence in an effort to dampen post-election protests against the regime. A number of governments engage in some combination of both pre- and post-election violence, which occurs in all regime types except the most autocratic regimes that do not hold elections and the most democratic regimes.

Election violence is not a new phenomenon, and although academic references to it are widespread, violence is usually discussed as one of many methods to manipulate elections or as a subtype of political repression more generally.[4] Few studies have

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[2] Headlines drawn from the following publications, in respective order: *Inter-Press Service* (Johannesburg), August 9, 2010; *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, December 25, 2010; *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* (Dhaka), June 1, 1996; *Christian Science Monitor* (Yerevan, Armenia), October 2, 1996.

[3] We focus on incumbent violence in both the pre- and post-election periods because the government often has a disproportionate ability to employ many forms of election violence that we measure. Much has been written about more general forms of election violence, violence perpetrated by opposition groups, or elections as a substitute for civil war. Our focus on government sponsored election violence is a complement to that literature. See, for example: (Brancati and Snyder 2011, 2012; Dunning 2011; Flores and Nooruddin 2011; Gandhi and Przeworski 2009; Höglund, Jarstad, and Kovacs 2009; Höglund 2009; Straus and Taylor 2012)

[4] For work on electoral fraud and violence occurring prior to the "third wave of democratization," see (Barnes 1998; Bensel 2004; Hermet, Rouquie, and Rose 1978; Hoppen 1984; Little and Posada-Carbo 1996; Posada-Carbó 2000; Zeldin 1958) For examples of work that discusses election violence as a subtype of election manipulation (also known as malpractice, fraud, corruption, or malfeasance), see (Birch 2012; Hermet, Rouquie, and Rose 1978; Huntington 1991; Lehoucq 2003; Schedler 2002a, 2002b, 2009b)

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explored the causes and consequences of election violence in its own right, as a phenomenon separate from election fraud, corruption, and vote-buying and distinct from political repression or human rights abuses more generally.[5]

This article focuses specifically on government-sponsored election violence and addresses a simple but important question: does government-sponsored election violence help incumbent governments stay in power? The answer to this question is typically assumed to be yes, and some leaders guilty of using election violence make their strategy transparent.[6] When Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia threatened potential protesters in his country, he explained: "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). Similarly, Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko, facing protest after the 2006 elections vowed to "break the neck immediately—like a duckling" of any demonstrators (Agence France-Presse -- English 2006).

The historical record, however, reveals that election violence is not a guaranteed strategy for staying in power. Figure 1, Panel A shows that government-sponsored pre-election violence against the opposition has at times resulted in opposition victory. And,

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[5] There are a number of excellent working papers on election violence. See, for example, (Arriola and Johnson 2012; Bhasin and Gandhi 2012; Norris 2012; Pevehouse, Straus, and Taylor 2012). Also relevant are dissertations by Megan Reif and Patrick Kuhn, which are not yet publicly available.

[6] This idea is implicitly assumed in a number of scholarly works that reference election violence. Kristine Höglund states that the "overall objective of electoral violence is to influence the electoral process" (2009, 416) Andreas Schedler, for example, lists election violence and political repression as one tool in the "menu of electoral manipulation" and one of the instruments that "ruling parties may deploy to contain the democratic uncertainty of political elections." (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 electoral manipulation more generally (Collier and Vicente 2012; Collier 2009, 33; Robinson and Torvik 2009). Steven Wilkinson's work illustrates how one specific type of violence—ethnic riots—can be allowed strategically because violence benefits politicians at the ballot box (2006) Other examples of election violence "working" for incumbents include (Boone 2011; Bratton 2008; LeBas 2006; Teshome-Bahiru 2009)

when opposition-led protests occur in the post-election period, government-sponsored violence against protesters has often been followed by significant political concessions on the part of the incumbent, including the annulment of election results that favored the incumbent, incumbent resignation, or military coup (Figure 1, Panel B). In short, leaders may use election violence because they believe it will 'work', but violence does not always help the incumbent win the election or remain in power in the post-election period.[7]

This article evaluates the relationship between election violence and leader tenure using a newly available data source on elections, 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 pre- or post-election violence occurred.[8] We conclude that the decision to use election violence can produce a costly tradeoff for governments, triggering different forms of collective action against the government that have contradictory effects on the incumbent's ability to stay in power.[9] 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

[7] In other published work we have explained the conditions under which governments are most likely to use election violence. Incumbents are most likely to use violence against opposition supporters, candidates, and voters when they believe they are at risk of an unfavorable election outcome, such as when public opinion polls reveal that the incumbent is unpopular. Incumbents are most likely to act on these incentives when they anticipate little accountability for using violence, such as when there are few institutionalized constraints on their decision making power. See, Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski (*n.d.*)..

[8] In the statistical analysis, data availability for some of the control variables limits the sample to 503 competitive elections between 1981 and 2004. Our analysis applies to countries that do not already have highly stable democratic political institutions: we therefore exclude twenty-one developed and long-term consolidated democracies where the probability of election violence is extremely low. Excluded democracies are 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.

[9] This possibility is also referenced by Collier (2009, 34)

election.[10] However, pre-election violence can also prompt another form of collective action against the government—opposition-led post-election protests—that increase the probability of political concessions in the immediate post-election period, often leading the incumbent to step down or allow new elections. In short, the near-term incentive to use violence to win may be at odds with the long-term consequences: governments that resort to election violence tend to win elections but they do not necessarily remain in power because the use of election violence can eventually force political concessions.

Our research builds on recent work focused on electoral authoritarianism, as well as work on "democratization by elections" that evaluates the consequences of elections for authoritarian regimes.[11] These literatures include ongoing 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. More broadly, this article's focus on the consequences of government-sponsored election violence speaks to theories of democratization, including Robert Dahl's famous tradeoff between the "costs of repression" and the "costs of toleration" (1971, chap. 1) and Samuel Huntington's observation that "major political change almost always involves violence" (1991, 191). Whereas the bulk of existing research concerns itself primarily with the relationship between violent strategies and regime type or the role of violence in explaining political transitions, we focus on the consequences of election violence for the incumbent governments that use it.

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[10] Boycotts may be associated with other reputational costs or lead to longer term institutional reform. See (Beaulieu 2006)

[11] For relevant works in these fields, see (Blaydes 2010; Brownlee 2009; Bunce and Wolchik 2010, 2011; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Gandhi 2010; Greene 2007, 2008; Howard and Roessler 2006; Levitsky and Way 2010, 2002; Lindberg 2006a, 2009; Lust-Okar 2004, 2006, 2009; Magaloni 2010; McCoy and Hartlyn 2009; Morse 2012; Roessler and Howard 2009; Schedler 2002b, 2006, 2009a)

In contrast to other work, we measure election violence specifically rather than use country-wide human rights measures as a proxy, and we differentiate empirically between strategies of violence in the pre- and post-election periods. This is, as far as we know, the first cross-national study to systematically investigate how government-sponsored election violence affects the probability that repressive incumbents remain in power throughout the election cycle, not only on election day, but also throughout the immediate post-election period.

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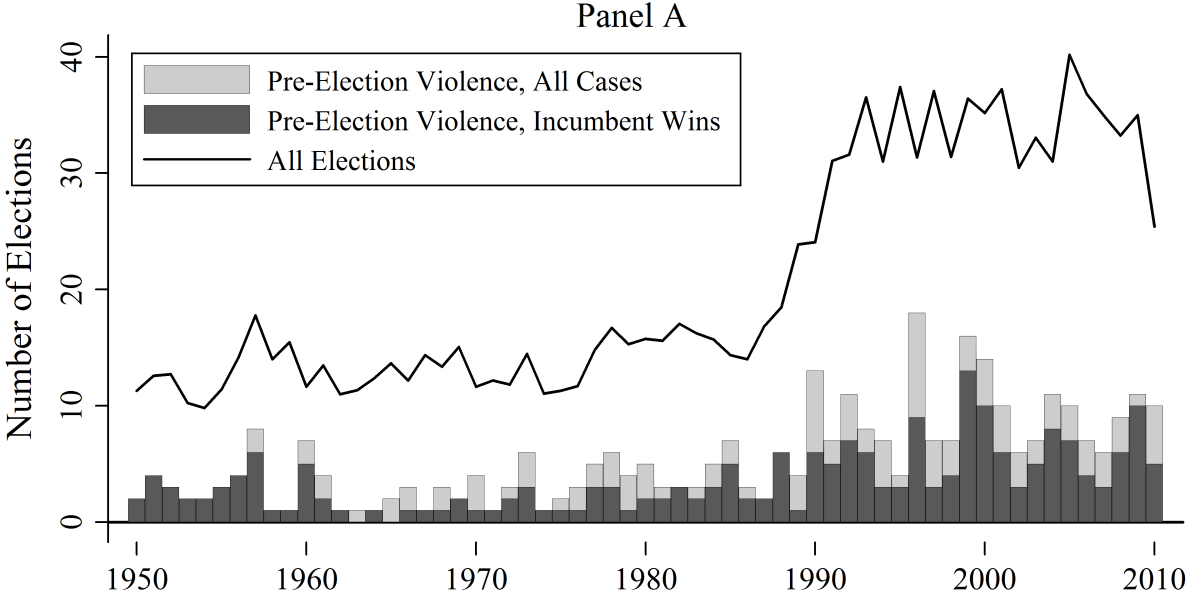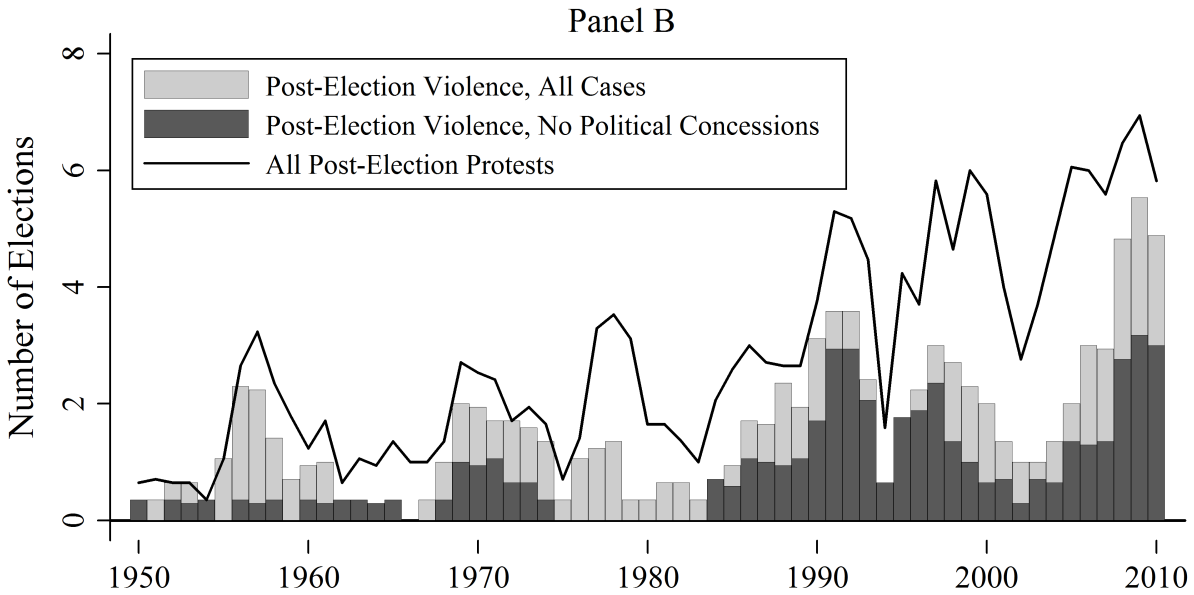
Panel A

Panel B

Note: Figure 1 is based upon 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 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.

Election Violence Cuts Both Ways

It is clear from dozens of cases that some governments use election violence

because they calculate that it will help them win an election and stay in power. However, it

is also clear that not all incumbent leaders who resort to election violence manage to stay

in power. As we argue, there are important differences in the effect of election violence on

incumbent survival in office based on when a government employs violence in the electoral

process and 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 that can eventually bring down the government or lead

to new, and potentially more democratic, elections. Once mass public protests begin,

government violence against protesters does not increase the probability that the

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incumbent survives in office. We develop this argument and evaluate the empirical implications in the sections that follow.

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. Pre-election violence can increase the probability of incumbent victory if it successfully intimidates the opposition into changing their electoral behavior, demobilizes opposition candidates and supporters, or manipulates voter turnout in the incumbent's favor.

Election Boycotts

Government efforts to manipulate elections through the use of violence can provoke opposition parties to boycott elections in an effort to publically discredit the electoral process. An opposition-led election boycott is a form of electoral protest that increases the probability that the incumbent will win the election because boycotts reduce the incumbent's electoral competition. Thus, one reason why election violence tends to 'work' for the incumbent at election time is that violence increases the probability of an election boycott by the opposition, thereby increasing the probability that the incumbent wins.[12]

Existing research supports this explanation. Election boycotts are relatively common, and they are often more than the work of sore losers (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009; Beaulieu 2006; Lindberg 2006b; Schedler 2009). Opposition parties that boycott an election reduce their potential for any representation;[13] often, they do so in an effort to

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[12] Less visibly, harassment of the opposition may also make it less likely that opposition candidates choose to run for office in the first place. This mechanism cannot be tested in the context of this study.
[13] This research has lead several scholars to conclude that opposition party election boycotts should be avoided. See (Huntington 1991; Schedler 2009b)

send a credible signal to domestic and international audiences that elections are not free or fair. There is ample evidence that government persecution of opposition candidates is a significant driver of election boycotts. Election violence correlates positively (and significantly) with election boycotts in presidential elections, according to Staffan Lindberg, who argues that "opposition parties tend to stay out of presidential elections where politically motivated violence is systematic and/or widespread" (2006b, 160). Emily Beaulieu (2011) also demonstrates 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. Thus, we speculate that one reason that pre-election violence tends to bias elections in the incumbent government's favor is 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 intimidation of voters. Pre-election violence can influence voters in at least three ways that benefit the incumbent. Violence can convince opposition voters to stay home on election day, reducing turnout in favor of the opposition. Violence can coerce would-be opposition voters into voting for the incumbent. Violence also can threaten voters who would otherwise prefer to abstain into turning out to vote for the incumbent, boosting turnout rates in her favor. These methods of intimidation are not mutually exclusive—making them difficult to test empirically—and often they are combined with methods to compromise the (real or perceived) secrecy of the ballot.

This argument also finds anecdotal support in the existing literature. In an era of the secret ballot, which is nearly universal in the period that we study, it is easier for a political machine to monitor whether a voter cast a ballot than to monitor how each vote is cast (Stokes 2005). However, there is abundant survey data suggesting that even in democracies, a high percentage of voters do not believe their vote is secret (Gerber et al. 2012), and that in some countries, groups anticipate punishment if their village or neighborhood does not support the proper candidate.[14] For example, as 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" (2010, 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)

Thus, another explanation for why pre-election violence tends to bias elections toward the incumbent government 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

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[14] On cross-national voter perceptions of ballot secrecy, see surveys conducted by IFES 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 et al. 2012; Magaloni 2006; Nichter 2008; Stokes 2005)

these hypotheses for empirical testing is difficult because voter intimidation could simultaneously boost turnout for the incumbent while also suppressing turnout for the opposition.

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

So far, we have argued that pre-election violence can help incumbent candidates win an election because the opposition's effort to discredit the election through boycotts, alongside voter and candidate intimidation, reduce electoral competition and thereby increase the probability that the incumbent wins the election. Here, we explain how these efforts to win elections through violence can also lead the newly re-elected incumbent to make political concessions to the opposition in the post-election period. Pre-election violence increases the risk of mass post-election protests that openly challenge the government's political authority. Election protests increase the probability that the incumbent will eventually resign or agree to hold new elections, and violent suppression of the opposition at this stage does little to improve the government's odds of staying in power.

Pre-Election Violence Can Spark Post-Election Protests

Although there is a rich literature on the relationship between citizen uprisings and government repression, and a separate literature on elections and post-election protest, we are not aware of research that addresses the role that election violence and post-election protest play in determining whether leaders remain in office after elections. Nevertheless, our argument builds on these separate but related literatures. One discussion concerns why citizens ever protest and whether or not government repression deters or incites public dissent, although this research has not focused on violence or dissent related

specifically to elections. A number of studies have shown that government repression can provoke various forms of public dissent, including protests, strikes, demonstrations and rebellions (Carey 2006; Gupta, Singh, and Sprague 1993; Moore 1998).[15]

Citizens, if convinced that the government regime is illegitimate, sometimes respond to the state's attempts at electoral manipulation by expressing their dissent through non-institutional means, frequently by protesting in the streets (Carey 2006; Gupta, Singh, and 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.

While there are examples of mass pre-election protests 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 after which protesters attempted to challenge newly re-elected incumbents by protesting election results (Bunce and Wolchik 2011). From 1960 to 2010, there were over 300 unique cases of post-election protest (Hyde and Marinov 2012). The motivation to engage in election-related protest is much stronger in the post-election period in part, perhaps, because people can no longer express dissent through voting. 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 sources of dissent. Yet protest does not automatically follow

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[15] In a study of Chile, however, Davis and Ward (1990) found no evidence that government violence incited violent rebellion. See also Machado, Scartascini, and Tommasi (2011)

elections that citizens judge to be 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 (2007, 540).

Because protesters—and especially those citizens who initiate protest—face significant risk of bodily harm, and because of collective action problems that deter protests, 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). Yet Tucker goes on to argue that elections and 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 (2007, 540-541).

This logic also applies to state-sponsored violence, which can be a compliment or substitute for election fraud. Pre-election violence, election fraud, and other tactics aimed at manipulating the outcome of elections are grievances experienced simultaneously by many citizens. The election serves as a focal point for the organization of anti-government action—through voting and boycotts in the pre-election period and through public protest in the post-election period. As the size of a public protest 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). These arguments lead us to expect that pre-election violence against civilians and political opposition increase the likelihood of post-election protests (hypothesis 2.1).

Post-Election Protests Can Prompt Political 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 can be triggered by the use of pre-election violence, as we show below. In turn, these protests increase the probability that the newly re-elected incumbent will eventually make political concessions, such as the annulment of the election results, holding of new elections or resignation (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 an unfavorable post-election outcome.

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 despite a violent government response. After six weeks of protest resulting in at least 145 deaths, Rhee stepped down (Los Angeles Times 1960).

Protests can provoke the incumbent to make political concessions—such as resigning from office—for several reasons. 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. Protests of sufficient size and strength can also provoke other challengers to take advantage of the incumbent's unpopularity and moment of weakness, sometimes leading to judicial annulment of the election results, military coup, or new elections. The 1986 elections in the Philippines, which were followed by a "people power" revolution, are one example—

non-violent public protests against the violent regime of General Ferdinand Marcos contributed to his fall from power after his own military commanders sided with the opposition, some of whom were beaten and shot on election day (Branigin 1986).

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).[16]

Leaders that aim to stay in power understandably seek to avoid these potentially negative consequences of protest, and some try to do so by using violence against protesters in an effort to put an end to mass public mobilization against the regime before protesters 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 often decide to respond to election protests with violence. The literature on government repression in response to expressions of dissent among citizens 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

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[16] For an excellent discussion of post-election protest movements, including the marginal but sometimes important role of external actors, see (Bunce and Wolchik 2006, 2010, 2011)

(Davis and 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 and Henderson 2002).[17] 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). Outside the building, protesters amassed. Army troops

and tanks were sent out to disburse the crowd and threated 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; U.S. Congress 1977).

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

Though governments may 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 successful (from the perspective of the incumbent) than pre-election violence. In the pre-election period, the objective of government violence is to 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.

Case studies and anecdotal reporting on protests suggest that many protesters acknowledge this risk explicitly. 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 the likelihood of 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 (Bahari and 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 in the streets 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 could 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 voting for the incumbent leader and/or not voting in favor of the opposition. However, civilian-targeted violence and opposition party intimidation in the pre-election period make mass post-election protests more likely, which in turn increase the likelihood that the incumbent will ultimately make political concessions. At that stage in the election process, cracking down on election demonstrators is often a last resort that will not improve the chances that the incumbent can avoid significant political concessions. Table 1 summarizes our core argument and hypotheses.

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 though 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 political 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 significant political 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 our claim that election violence cuts both ways—it helps incumbent governments win elections but also increases the chances they will make political concessions after the election, we use the newly available NELDA dataset on the characteristics of national elections throughout the world (Hyde and Marinov 2012). The NELDA dataset provides detailed information on all election events, including more specific measures of election violence, incumbent victory, and the dynamics of election protest than have previously been available.[18] These data contain information on competitive elections for national office for all sovereign states with a population greater than 500,000, including detailed information on the existence of several types of election violence and

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[18] 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.

on election protest.[19]

Sources for the NELDA data are diverse, and rely primarily on news wire reports, newspaper archives, academic research including the data handbooks on elections edited by Dieter Nohlen (Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 2001; Nohlen, Krennerich, and 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 and Marinov 2011a). 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. For all estimates (which we describe below), we exclude the long-term developed democracies (listed in footnote 8), which are outside the scope of our theory. Finally, we exclude elections in which electoral competition is not permitted.[20]

These data offer potential improvements over existing cross-national studies of state-sponsored political violence which mostly rely on yearly, nation-wide aggregate measures of repression or protest and thus 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). In contrast, we measure election-related violence that is targeted specifically 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.

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[19] A complete list of the countries in our sample is available in our appendix, which we will make available on line and have provided to the editor with this resubmission.
[20] This rule excludes elections in which any of the following are "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)

Modeling Pre-Election Violence

This section evaluates the claim that pre-election violence against opposition supporters, candidates, and the citizenry increases the 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*.[21] We limit the sample to elections in which the incumbent runs. This rule includes parliamentary elections in which the incumbent prime minister runs and presidential elections in which the incumbent runs for re-election. In order to measure whether an incumbent used election-specific 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 and Marinov 2011b).[22]

In order to account for the possibility that governments may use violence in response to the expectation of political competition, we control for pre-election measures of whether the incumbent expected the election to be competitive. As in our other work (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski *n.d.*), we use *Victory Uncertain*, which equals one if pre-election polls were negative for the incumbent or suggested a close race[23] or if the incumbent made statements prior to the election that suggested she was not confident of victory before elections.[24]

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[21] *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.

[22] Consistent 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.

[23] 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?"

[24] 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

In addition to controlling for pre-electoral uncertainty about the election outcome, we also control for the type of political institutions and the pre-existing propensity of a government to engage in political repression. To proxy for political institutions, we include the *Polity2* variable from the Polity IV project (Marshall and 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)*.* We control for the pre-existing level of government repression by including a measure of *Physical Integrity*, from the CIRI dataset (Cingranelli and Richards 2010). This variable is an index (0 to 8) that measures the annual level of government sponsored repressive activity, including murder, torture, political imprisonment and forced disappearance, coded mainly from Amnesty International reports. 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 themselves determined by electoral violence.[25] Summary statistics are shown in the online appendix.

We estimate a logit model in which the dependent variable is a binary measure of whether or not the incumbent wins the election (*Incumbent Wins)*, shown in Equation 1:

Equation 1

$$P(Incumbent\ Wins_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta ElectionViolence_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}),$$

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 in order to account for

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cases in which the "incumbent or ruling party has been dominant for a number of years and is projected to win in a landslide*."*

[25] *Polity* responds to electoral changes. Therefore, including a measure of *Polity2* from the year of the election would be problematic. Similarly *Physical Integrity* often increases when election violence occurs, potentially biasing our result.

within-country correlation of errors. Because wealth and population may influence the

probability of election victory, we include *GDP (log)* and *Population (log)*, from the World

Development Indicators (World Bank 2006). To account for leader-specific factors that

may influence the election outcome, like time in office and experience, 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, and 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, and 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, that it would not be free and fair.[26] We use a common

measure of *Demonstrations* found in other models of protest, which is a count of the total

number of any type of anti-government demonstrations, anti-government strikes and riots

during a year based on Banks CNTS coding (Banks 1975, 2005).

The results presented in 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.

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[26] 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.

Figure 2: Estimated Effects of Explanatory Variables on *Incumbent Wins*
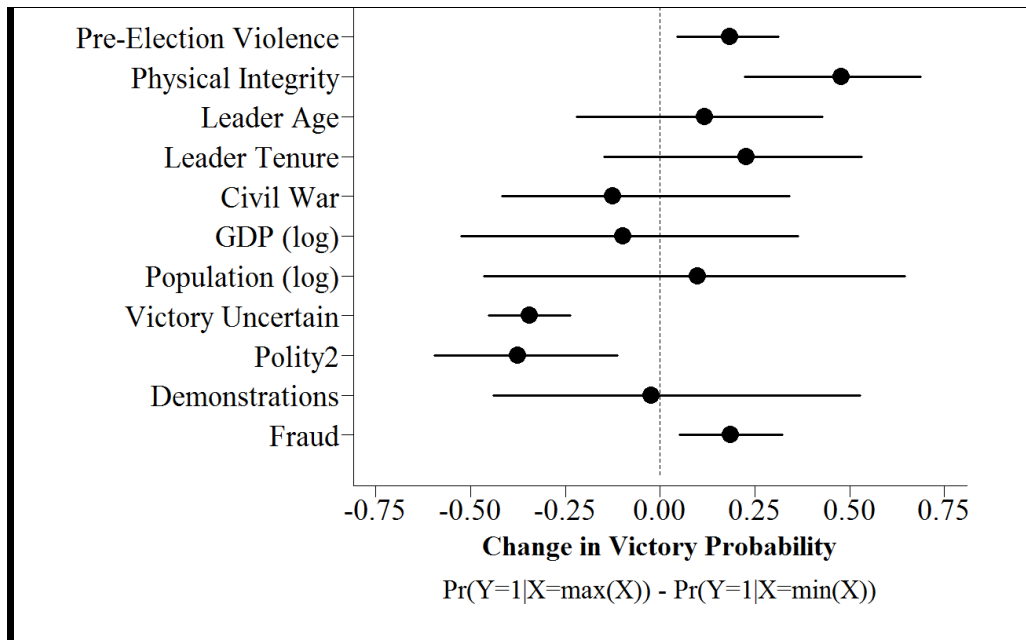
This figure shows the simulated increase in the probability of *Incumbent Wins* given a change in each independent variable from its minimum to its maximum level. Horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence interval for the prediction. The predictions are estimated using a logit model with robust standard errors.

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

	(1) Incumbent Wins
Pre-Election Violence	0.76**
	(0.28)
Physical Integrity	0.28**
	(0.09)
Leader Age	0.09
	(0.12)
Leader Tenure	0.01
	(0.01)
Civil War	-0.10
	(0.17)
GDP (log)	-0.05
	(0.13)
Population (log)	0.05
	(0.18)
Victory Uncertain	-1.48**
	(0.26)
Polity2	-0.08**
	(0.03)
Demonstrations	-0.01
	(0.04)
Fraud	0.76*
	(0.33)
Constant	-2.49
	(2.78)
Observations	458
Log Likelihood	-246.6

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

Figure 2 confirms the theoretical expectation 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 and that both 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,[27] and estimate a

logit model:

Equation 2

$$P(Boycott_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta ElectionViolence_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}),$$

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.[28] Boycotts, on average, also increase the

likelihood of victory for the incumbent: in Column 2, *Boycott* is positively associated with

Incumbent Wins. Column 3 includes the interaction between *Boycott* and *Pre-Election*

Violence, which allows us to estimate the relationship between opposition boycotts and the

election outcome conditional on the use of violence. We interpret the interaction using

predicted probabilities: the predicted probability that the incumbent wins in the context of

opposition boycotts and pre-election violence is 0.8, substantially larger than the

probability (0.4) that the *Incumbent Wins* without boycotts or the use of violence. Thus,

Pre-Election Violence is associated with an increased probability of *Boycott;* and *Boycott*, in

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[27] Coded from Nelda14.

[28] For ease of interpretation, *Fraud* is excluded from the models presented in Table 3 because *Fraud* is highly correlated with both *Boycott* and *Pre-election Violence*. The presence of *Fraud* is also a statistically significant predictor of *Boycott* The predicted probability of a *Boycott* when both *Fraud* and *Pre-Election Violence* occur is .18, compared to .03 when neither occur.

turn, increases the probability that the *Incumbent Wins* the election.

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

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

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

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 in overall voter turnout. Additionally,

turnout data are more likely to be falsified in precisely those regimes that are more likely

to use election violence.[29] Understanding these limitations, we look tentatively at data on

voter turnout. *Turnout* equals the percentage of registered voters who were recorded as

having voted.[30] 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*:

Equation 3

$$Turnout_{ij} = f(\alpha + \beta ElectionViolence_{ij} + Turnout_{ij-1} + \varphi X_{ij}),$$

where $Turnout_{ij}$ indicates the rate of voter turnout in country *i* and election *j*, $Turnout_{ij-1}$

indicates the prior election's turnout, and φX_{ij} is a vector of control variables.

Column 1 of Table 4 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 suppresses turnout by would-be opposition voters. In this case,

incumbent manipulation of who turns out to vote would favor the incumbent but would not

be observable in the model shown. These two processes are empirically indistinguishable

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[29] This would likely mean that errors in this model would not be independent or normally distributed. A majority of turnout data is likely to be an accurate reflection of actual voter turnout. We are also confident, however, that some turnout data is falsified, and not reflective of actual voter turnout. Yet because this falsification is often covert, we do not know when the measure is most likely to be inaccurate, and suspect that measurement error and propensity to use election violence may be correlated.

[30] 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.

at the aggregate level in the turnout data that is currently available.

Although we cannot determine whether or not violence influences voter turnout, 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).[31] 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.

Overall, these results are not particularly strong, and may reflect the weakness of turnout data, which may include not only real voter turnout data but may also reflect ballot stuffing or other falsification of official election results. Given the available data, we cannot confirm our hypotheses on voter turnout, although we can confirm that incumbents are much more likely to win elections in the context of pre-election violence when voter turnout is high.

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

Table 4: The Effect of Pre-Election Violence on Turnout and Victory

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

Together, these findings lend some support to our explanation for why pre-election violence likely serves the immediate interests of incumbent governments, increasing the probability of election victory. The results are consistent with our argument that violence

dissuades political opposition in a manner that favors the incumbent at the polls. Violence is significantly associated with the probability that opposition candidates boycott elections, and boycotts increase the likelihood the incumbent wins. These results suggest that violence is both successful, increasing the probability of victory, as well as strategic, altering the behavior of the opposition. Although we cannot say with any confidence that violence affects voter turnout, we find that higher reported voter turnout is associated with an increased likelihood that the incumbent will win.

Modeling Post-Election Violence

Next we evaluate our argument that pre-election violence can trigger political concessions from the incumbent in the post-election period. 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.

Election Protests measures post-election protests and equals one if there were election-related riots and protests after the election and zero otherwise.[32] 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:

Equation 4

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

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

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[32] 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."

The estimates in Column 1 of Table 5 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.[33]

Next, we evaluate the relationship between post-election protest and the probability that the incumbent makes *Political Concessions*, which equals one if the incumbent is removed from power by means other than the loss of the election—such as through resignation, coup, or other non-electoral means—or, alternatively, the initial election results that were favorable to the incumbent were annulled (and new elections followed).[34]

Equation 5

$$P(Political\ Concessions_{ij}) = f(\alpha + \beta ElectionViolence_{ij} + \varphi X_{ij}),$$

where *Political Concessions* indicates the probability that the incumbent makes a significant political concession in country *i* and election *j*, and φX_{ij} is a vector of control variables.

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[33] 95% confidence interval is (.12 to .34). Estimated first difference computed using Clarify (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000)

[34] 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? Political Concessions* equals one if *Nelda34* = "yes" and *Nelda39 = "yes"*. Cases in which *Nelda40* = "ýes" are coded as zero to exclude cases in which the incumbent lost the election and stepped down.

Table 5: The Effect of Protests on Election Outcomes

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

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

Column 2 of Table 5 provides estimates of *Political Concessions. Election Protests* increase the probability that an incumbent will make political concessions in the post-election period.[35] The estimated probability of *Political Concessions* increases by 0.07 when *Election Protests* are present.

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[35] This relationship holds when the sample excludes all cases in which the incumbent lost and exited.

To measure whether post-election protests were 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.[36] Column 3 shows that *Violence Against Protesters* does not reduce the likelihood that protests are followed by political 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 guarantee his or her hold on power once post-election protests have begun.

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. Our explanation, consistent with the evidence presented here, is that pre-election violence increases the probability that people come out into the streets in large numbers to protest the election results. On average, such protests increase the probability that the government will be forced out of office or face new and presumably cleaner elections.

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[36] 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."

Unlike in the pre-election period when violence tends to put in motion collective action—such as opposition boycotts—that actually reduce electoral competition in favor of the incumbent, violence against the public in the post-election period does not change the likelihood that regimes stay in power; protesters who are publically resolved to bring the government down are not typically deterred by more government-invoked violence.

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). In the aftermath of the heavily fraudulent elections, widespread election protest was met with excessive force by police officers, yet protests continued. In the end, Bhutto began making concessions, and the military ousted him from power (New York Times 1977).

Conclusion

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" (1991, 8). 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, and Rose 1978, vii; Lindberg 2009). Yet scholarly 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 suggests a more complex relationship between election violence and incumbent survival, with violence increasing the probability of election victory but also increasing the probability that the incumbent will be challenged—and may lose power—in the post-election period. Election violence is pervasive across most electoral regime types, and is most often assumed to 'work' for incumbents who resort to violent strategies. However, our analysis demonstrates that violence can eventually backfire on sitting governments. Although incumbents often win elections in which they use violence in the pre-election period, that violence also increases the probability that citizens respond with post-election protest, demanding the removal of the incumbent or the annulment of the election. Our analyses suggest that such demonstrations of people power, though rare, can be quite effective at bringing down governments or otherwise forcing political concessions, such as the holding of new elections. Moreover, once post-election protest begins, violence against demonstrators doesn't increase the probability that a government will avoid political concessions.

To be sure, election violence is more likely to occur in repressive regimes, electoral authoritarian countries, and non-democracies more generally. Nevertheless, it is not a phenomenon that is exclusive to these regime types, and even relatively democratic governments have, at various points in history, resorted to election violence. 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. Understanding the conditions under which governments are most likely to employ strategies of election violence (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonksi *n.d.*) and the conditions under which it is most likely to 'work' for the incumbent government is an important step in understanding the causes and consequences of election violence more generally.

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