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SURVIVING ELECTIONS: ELECTION VIOLENCE AND LEADER TENURE

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Surviving Elections: Election Violence and Leader Tenure¹

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Abstract

This article is the first, to our knowledge, to examine the conditions under which strategies of election violence help incumbent leaders stay in power. We argue that election violence is a costly tradeoff for governments. When used in the pre-election period, including on election day, government election violence against opposition supporters, candidates, and the citizenry increases the probability that the incumbent and his party will win the election. Yet pre-election violence can backfire in the longer term by increasing the probability of post-election protests, which in turn make it more likely that the incumbent will eventually be forced to step down or hold new elections. This effect of protest on leader tenure is not mitigated by the use of violence in the post-election period. Unlike in the pre-election period, where the objective is to manipulate an election outcome, the objective of post-election violence is almost always to undermine an already resolved protest movement. This is inherently a more difficult task.

¹ Replication data for this article are available at _____, as is the Supplementary Information (SI).

“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

As these headlines illustrate, leaders throughout the world use election violence as one tactic to remain in power. Such tactics are more common in countries that hold elections but in which democracy is not consolidated.³ Election violence includes government harassment, intimidation or murder of political opponents and their supporters, the use of significant violence against civilians in the period around the election, and the use of violence against protesters, particularly in the post-election period.⁴ Governments use violence before an election in an effort to weaken electoral challengers and coerce voters. Violent tactics are used after an election to suppress post-election protests. A number of governments also engage in some combination of both.

Does election violence increase the probability that incumbent politicians or political parties win elections and stay in power? Or is violence prone to failure? This article is the first, to our knowledge, to examine how strategies of election violence influence the probability that incumbent leaders stay in power by winning elections and surviving post-election protests.

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.

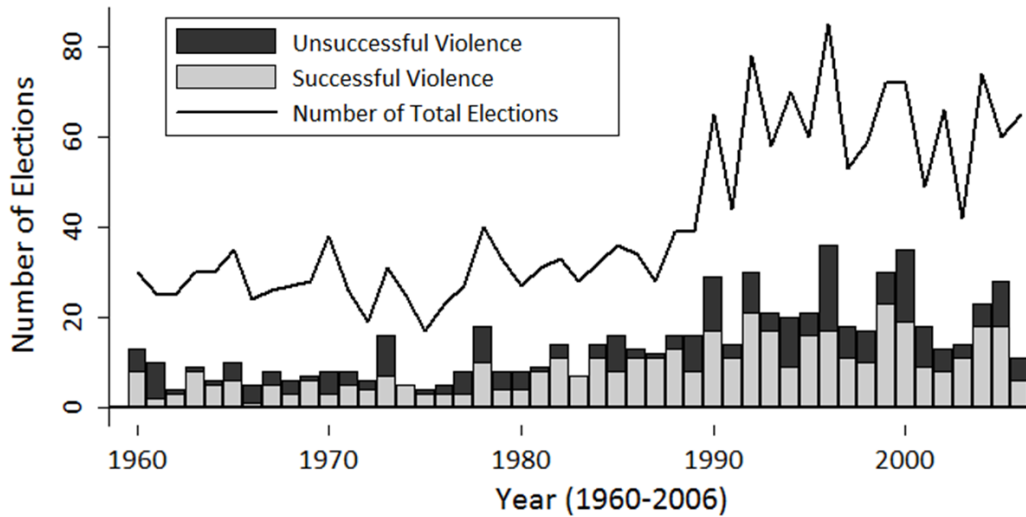
³ We take a broad view of this group of countries, and include all countries that hold elections except for: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA. We also exclude micro-states.

⁴ Although the opposition can use violent tactics, we focus on government use of violence, as the government has a disproportionate ability to employ many forms of election violence that we measure.

Many incumbents have employed election violence, the majority of which manage to stay in power. Figure 1 labels these instances “Successful Violence.” Yet contrary to the conventional wisdom, incumbent use of election violence is not a foolproof strategy for incumbent governments, shown in Figure 1’s cases of “Unsuccessful Violence.” Cases of unsuccessful violence are defined as elections in which the incumbent leader or party uses election violence, but one of three outcomes occurs 1) the incumbent leader or party loses the election, 2) the incumbent leader or party resigns following post-election protests, or 3) the incumbent leader or party faces post-election protests which result in the holding of new elections.

We argue that election violence is a costly tradeoff for governments. Pre-election violence against opposition supporters, candidates, and the citizenry increases the probability that the incumbent will win the election. Yet pre-election violence also increases the probability of post-election protests, which in turn make it more likely after the election that the incumbent will be forced to step down or hold new elections. Moreover, this effect of protest is not mitigated by the use of violence in the post-election period. Unlike in the pre-election period, where the government’s objective is to manipulate election outcomes, the objective of post-election violence is usually to undermine a protest movement that is already underway. As explained below, this task is inherently more difficult, and therefore more prone to failure.

Figure 1: Successful and Unsuccessful Election Violence



Note: Bar height indicates the total number of cases with pre-election violence. “Unsuccessful Violence” indicates that the incumbent government or party used pre-election violence but lost power. “Successful Violence” indicates that the incumbent used election violence and the incumbent or the incumbent’s party stayed in power.

This article explains our argument about the relation between election violence and the probability that the incumbent government will survive elections. The observable implications are then evaluated using a newly available data source on elections, pre-election violence, post-election protest, and government violence against post-election protestors from 1981 to 2006. These data contain over 1,300 elections in 140 countries, including over 400 elections in which pre- or post-election violence occurred. They stand apart from almost all other studies of violence, which are based on data that report general levels of repression and human rights abuses in a country during an election year rather than election-related violence.

Why Incumbent Governments Use Election Violence

Most governments in the world now hold elections, yet as many recent studies have shown, incumbents may use elections for non-democratic purposes.⁵ Such ‘pseudo-democrats’ are unwilling to allow genuine political competition and work to prevent the possibility that elections will lead to a transfer of power to another party. Election violence, which we distinguish from government repression that is not specifically associated with the election cycle, is one of several strategies they use to achieve this end.

Our focus is on government use of election violence during two distinct phases of the election process: in the period leading up to the election, including election day, and in the immediate post-election period. Unlike many related studies, including those that focus on subsets of repressive regime types, we measure violence that is election related and specifically targeted at civilians and parties. Although regime type and leader-specific characteristics are important in explaining the use of political violence, our empirical approach does not assume that only some types of regimes or specific leader could engage in election violence. Instead, in our models of election violence, we control for regime type and other leader-specific characteristics to account for the possibility that some types of leaders and some regime types are more repressive than others.

Some leaders use violence prior to an election against the general public or political opponents. Such pre-election violence is intended to prevent serious challengers from gaining a foothold or to coerce voters in a manner that makes incumbent victory more likely. Pre-election violence occurs during the period leading up to the election, often

⁵ See, for example, Blaydes 2010; Brownlee 2009; Bunce and Wolchik 2010; Cox 2008; Gandhi 2010; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Greene 2007; Hyde 2011; Lehoucq 2003; Lehoucq and Molina 2002; Magaloni 2006; Schedler 2006; Simpser 2005.

leading into election day. If the violent strategy works, the incumbent government wins the election, either because other candidates are dissuaded from running or potential voters are coerced into voting for the government. Known opposition supporters may be coerced into staying home. Pre-election violence may also involve some election day activity meant to intimidate individuals and deter collective action, potentially creating a climate of fear. In the end, a strategy of pre-election violence is intended to produce less competitive election results, thus increasing the probability that the incumbent government and his or her political party wins the election.

Elections in Belarus illustrate how pre-election violence can benefit the incumbent government. In every election since taking power in 1994, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's government has threatened his challengers and used violence and intimidation against political opposition, protestors, and citizens. Lukashenko remains in power in part because political challengers have been murdered, disappeared, imprisoned, or otherwise deterred from entering politics; pro-democracy protests have been met with deadly force; and voters are said to be afraid to support opposition candidates or engage in sustained post-election protest (Marple 2004). In the 2000 elections, some opposition parties boycotted the elections in an effort to protest the new election law, but the boycott had little long-term effect except to further divide the opposition and contribute to an even larger vote share for Lukashenko's party (Silitski 2005).

Leaders also use violence in an effort to retain their hold on power in the period immediately after an election has taken place. Post-election violence often occurs when an election reveals that the incumbent government is less popular than was initially believed, or an election process is worse than the public expected. For example, the incumbent may

lose the vote but refuse to leave office, either by nullifying the election results or simply refusing to step down. Or, the incumbent candidate or party may officially win the election, but perform significantly worse than anticipated, giving the opposition hope and an opening to challenge an entrenched regime. Such election results increase the probability of successful collective action against the government by providing a focal point for public demonstrations and revealing that the opposition has momentum (Kuran 1995; Tucker 2007).

In cases of successful collective action, citizens take to the streets in mass demonstrations against the regime. Once post-election protest occurs, leaders choose whether to respond violently. Some conclude that violence is necessary, either to weaken the organization of the political opposition or to subdue popular and organized protest over contested election results (authors). When post-election violence works, it lessens the resolve of demonstrators and the incumbent government stays in power. Examples of such cases include government violence against post-election protests following the 1995 elections in Egypt, the 1996 elections in Niger, the 2005 elections in Ethiopia, and the 2009 elections in Iran, where protestors eventually stood down in the face of government persecution (Hyde and Marinov 2011).

Election Violence Cuts Both Ways

We argue that there are important strategic differences in the effects of election violence on incumbent survival based on when the government employs violence in the electoral process. Although violence in the period leading up to an election is likely to serve the immediate interests of an incumbent government by increasing their likelihood of winning the election, it also increases the risk of post-election protests, which can

eventually bring down the government. Once mass protests begin, government violence against protesters may not be as successful at ensuring incumbent survival in office. Here, we explain our argument in greater detail and outline our hypotheses.

Why Pre-Election Violence Often Leads to Elections ‘Wins’

Pre-election violence tends to further a government’s most immediate election goal: to officially ‘win’ an election. It works by demobilizing opposition candidates and supporters as well as intimidating citizens into voting for the regime or not turning out to vote for the opposition. Problems of collective action, often coupled with a repressed informational environment, make it difficult for voters to judge whether the government is weak and the probability that a challenge will be successful (Kuran 1995; Tucker 2007). Thus, the first part of our argument is that if governments use violence in the pre-election period, the incumbent politician and his party are more likely to win the election (hypothesis 1.0).

One of the reasons why violence may be useful for the incumbent at this stage in the election cycle is that it intimidates voters and opposition candidates into not opposing the regime. Although intimidation is difficult to measure directly, we can observe whether the behavior of voters and candidates changes in response to electoral violence in a manner consistent with hypothesis 1.0. Therefore, in addition to evaluating the relationship between pre-election violence and incumbent victory, we also examine the effect of violence on election boycotts and voter turnout.

Election Boycotts

In the pre-election period, one way in which election violence can ‘work’ for the incumbent is that harassment of the opposition increases the likelihood that the opposition

will choose to boycott the election, a strategy that may give legitimacy to the opposition but that increases the probability that the incumbent wins. When opposition parties withdraw before an election takes place, the incumbent government's chances of winning improve substantially, even if the legitimacy of the election is reduced.

Existing research on election boycotts documents that they are relatively common, and that they are often more than the work of sore losers (Beaulieu 2006; Beaulieu and Hyde 2009; Kelley 2011; Lindberg 2006). Opposition parties take a gamble when they boycott an election because they reduce their potential vote share, often in the hopes that they can send a credible signal to domestic and international audiences that the elections are rigged.

There is already ample evidence to support the first step of our argument, 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" (2006, 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.

Although it seems logical to conclude that incumbent victory is more likely when the opposition boycotts an election because boycotts are, by definition, a campaign to prevent the opposition from participating in the election, we are not aware of any empirical research that documents this relationship cross-nationally. Opposition boycotts should, on average, increase the probability of an incumbent victory. Thus, one of the reasons pre-

election violence can work to bias elections toward the incumbent government is that violence leads to boycotts, which in turn boosts the chances that the government will 'win' the election.

Thus, two observable implications of our argument are that pre-election violence increases the likelihood that opposition groups will boycott an election (hypothesis 1.1), and that 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 improve the probability of incumbent victory is through manipulation of voter turnout. Pre-election violence can influence turnout in a number of ways. The government may use pre-election violence in order to make it more likely that voters will stay home on election day, coerce would-be opposition voters into voting for the incumbent, or threaten voters who would otherwise prefer to abstain into turning out to vote and voting for the incumbent. Such methods of using intimidation to increase turnout for the incumbent and decrease turnout for the opposition are often combined with methods to compromise the secrecy of the ballot. 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 that] they are also used to prevent supporters of other candidates from voting at all" (Blaydes 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, the use of election violence may influence voter turnout in either direction to the advantage of the incumbent: it may increase turnout in support of the incumbent through intimidation or decrease turnout in favor of the opposition through voter suppression.

In democracies, one puzzle surrounding voter turnout is why rational voters would bother exerting the effort it takes to vote when they have an extremely small probability of influencing the election result – the more people vote, the less any single person's vote shapes the outcome. Outside of the US context, research on voter turnout is less focused on whether an individual vote matters and much more focused on tactics of manipulation, intimidation, and vote or turnout buying as methods of election fraud, as well as explaining why voters bother participating in authoritarian elections at all (Blaydes 2010; Cox and Kousser 1981; Nichter 2008; Schedler 2002, 2006; Stokes 2005). Literature focused on voter turnout in new democracies also emphasizes literacy, socio-economic factors such as education, electoral systems, and disillusionment with politics (Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Endersby and Kriekhaus 2008; Lehoucq and Wall 2004). Absent coercion or other incentives to vote, voter turnout declines when citizens believe the system is corrupt or illegitimate (Birch 2010; Blaydes 2010; Magaloni 2006; Simpser 2005).

Other relevant literature on turnout suggests that electoral autocrats periodically cite high turnout as an endorsement of their governance, and as a general rule, are threatened by the potential delegitimizing effect of low turnout (Magaloni 2006). Thus, fraud and voter intimidation can both be employed to lead to higher official turnout overall and ostensibly more support for the incumbent government.

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 (Cox and Kousser 1981; Stokes 2005). However, there is relatively abundant survey data suggesting that even in democracies, a high percentage of voters do not believe their vote is secret (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, and Dowling 2012), and that in some countries, groups anticipate punishment if their village or neighborhood does not support the proper candidate (Blaydes 2010; Chandra 2007; Magaloni 2006; Stokes 2005).⁶

Together, these factors mean that in many of the countries in our study, violence is used as a tactic of election manipulation, and that pre-election violence may either increase or decrease turnout in order to increase the probability that the incumbent wins.⁷ Although the direction of the effect of pre-election violence on turnout could potentially go either way, we expect that the use of pre-election violence by the government should influence overall turnout (hypothesis 1.3) and that such pre-election violence will benefit the incumbent, thus increasing the probability that the incumbent government will ‘win’ the election (hypothesis 1.4).

Why Pre-Election Violence Often Backfires in the Post-Election Period

Although we expect that pre-election violence often helps incumbent candidates or parties ‘win’ an election, a more counter-intuitive part of our theory is that pre-election violence can backfire in the post-election period, making it less likely that the incumbent

⁶ On cross-national voter perceptions of ballot secrecy, see surveys conducted by IFES.

⁷ It is also possible that an increase in voter turnout due to intimidation coincides with an increase in voter turnout due to ballot box stuffing. These two methods are empirically indistinguishable at the aggregate level, and are usually covert. We control for fraud in all models.

will stay in office after the election despite winning the vote. Thus, the second part of our argument (hypothesis 2.0) is that when governments use violence in the pre-election period, the incumbent politician and/or his party increase the risk of removal from office after the election. This claim rests on three related conjectures: that pre-election violence increases the risk of post-election protest; that election protests increase the risk that the incumbent will be removed from office (often through resignation, coup, or the agreement to hold new elections); and that violent suppression of post-election demonstrators does not ensure that the incumbent government stays in power. We explain each in turn.

Why Pre-Election Violence Often Leads to 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 existing findings from these separate but related literatures. One fruitful discussion concerns why citizens ever protest and whether or not government repression deters or incites public dissent, although this research does not focus 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).⁸

⁸ 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).

Election violence also can increase citizen motivation and resolve to organize against the government and participate in post-election protests. Citizens, if convinced that the government regime is illegitimate, sometimes respond to its attempts at electoral manipulation after the election by expressing their dissent through non-institutional means, most frequently by protesting in the streets (Bunce and Wolchik 2010; Hyde and Marinov Ms.; Tucker 2007). Thus, if the incumbent government is repressive and unpopular, elections can provide a focal point for citizens to solve the collective action problem and protest against the regime.

There are many examples of post-election protests. In the 2010 elections in Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, the incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo performed poorly and by most accounts was defeated soundly by Alassane Ouattara (Nossiter 2010). Gbagbo refused to concede defeat and began a violent campaign against Ouattara (who was protected in part by international forces, including United Nations peacekeepers) and his supporters. Ouattara's supporters fought back. Although it took many months, cost many lives, and included some international intervention against Gbagbo, his violent strategy ultimately failed and Ouattara was inaugurated (New York Times 2011). During the "color revolutions," and more recently the 2009 Iranian elections, protestors also attempted to bring down newly re-elected incumbents by protesting election results. From 1960 to 2006, there were over 300 unique cases of post-election protest (Hyde and Marinov 2011), many of which were met with repression, and an important subset of which resulted in forcing the incumbent government out of office.

One observable implication is that pre-election violence against civilians and political opposition, sometimes in combination with election fraud, increases the risk of mass public demonstrations in response to an election outcome (hypothesis 2.1).

Why Post-Election Protests Can Hurt the Incumbent Government

Protest does not automatically follow elections that citizens judge to be unacceptable. For protests to be successful at challenging 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 succinctly:

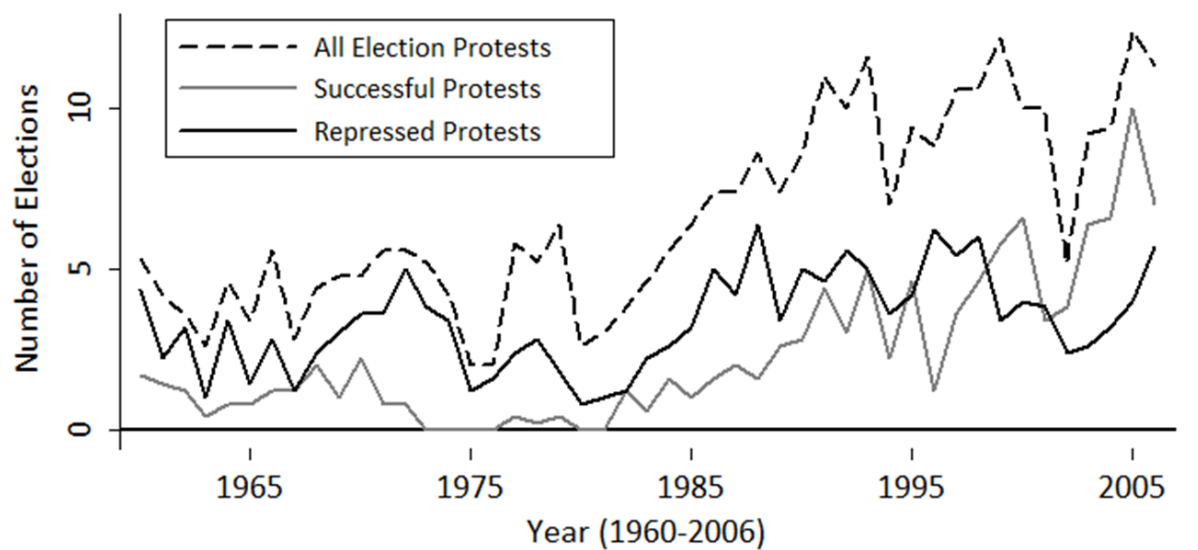
Most members of society would likely agree that society as a whole would be better off with a less abusive and appropriately restrained state....Achieving this goal in states where such abusive actions regularly take place, however, requires confronting these abuses and attempting to stop them (Tucker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

Because protestors—and especially those citizens who initiate protest—face significant risk of bodily harm, and because of collective action problems, many cases in which citizens are unhappy with their government do not result in protest, as 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” and by making the outcome of protests more likely to be successful (Tucker 2007, 540).

This logic also applies to state-sponsored violence, which can be paired with 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 an effective focal point for the organization of anti-

government action in the post-election period, and as the size of protests grow, each individual protester is less likely to be punished while the probability of successful protest increases (Tucker 2007).

Figure 2: History of Post-Election Protests and Protest “Success”



Note: Successful protests include any case in which election protests contributed to an incumbent stepping down or an election being annulled (with new elections scheduled). Repressed protests occur when the government used violence against demonstrators.⁹

Post-election protests are frequent (occurring in about 16% of our elections) and frequently repressed. In Figure 2 we show the rate of all elections that are followed by election-related protest, as well as whether protests are successful (by forcing election annulment and new elections or the resignation of the incumbent), and whether the government used violence against demonstrators.

Following hypothesis 2.0, an additional implication of our argument is that post-election protests increase the probability that the incumbent will face a negative post-election outcome, which we define as removal from office or the annulment of the election

⁹Coded by Hyde and Marinov (2011).

results and holding new elections (hypothesis 2.2). In both cases, though the incumbent may win the officially announced vote tally, the election (and the strategy of pre-election violence) can ultimately backfire and increase the probability that the incumbent faces a negative post-election outcome.

Why Crackdowns on Post-Election Protestors Often Don't Help the Incumbent

It is not surprising that governments often decide to respond to election protests with violence against demonstrators. The literature on government repression in response to expression 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 (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).¹⁰ Other research has shown that guerilla warfare also increases state use of political repression (Carey 2010). Developing country governments, in particular, have tended to respond with disproportionate violence in the face of non-violent protests (Mason 2004).

Though governments often use violence against demonstrations in the post-election period, we expect post-election violence to meet with less success than pre-election violence. Unlike in the pre-election period, where the objective of the incumbent is to manipulate an election outcome, the objective of post-election violence is almost always to

¹⁰ See also Gartner and Regan (1996) on the nature of the relationship between demands from protests and violent government response.

undermine an already resolved public protest movement. This is inherently a more difficult task. Post-election violence requires a very public demonstration of violence against citizens, which may be as likely to increase the resolve of protestors as to deter them. In addition, once protests have occurred, the opposition has, by definition, already overcome the initial collective action problem which would be most likely to limit their success. Finally, since protests are often a response to pre-election violence and other forms of election manipulation, protestors may have already factored the threat of violence into their decision to protest. Given these factors, violence against demonstrators at this stage in the election process is much less likely to be effective at reversing the risk of post-election protest and ensuring the incumbent's hold on power.

Case studies and anecdotal reporting on protests show that many protestors 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 despite significant risk of personal harm, disbursing them is not trivial. An observable implication of this argument is that once post-election protest occurs, post-

election violence against demonstrators will not increase, and could decrease, the probability that the incumbent stays in power (hypothesis 2.3).

In sum, we expect that violence in the pre-election period often increases the chances that an incumbent leader will 'win' an election, because leaders break the resolve of the political opposition, causing would-be opposition candidates not to seek office, convincing opposition parties to boycott the election, or intimidating voters into voting for the incumbent leader and his or her party (or not voting in favor of the opposition). However, civilian-targeted violence and opposition party intimidation in the pre-election period (along with election fraud) makes post-election protest more likely, which increases the probability that the incumbent will face a negative post-election outcome. At that stage in the election process, cracking down on election demonstrators is often a last resort that will not increase, and could decrease, the chances that the incumbent stays in power. Table 1 summarizes our hypotheses.

Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1.0: When governments use violence in the pre-election period, the incumbent politician and his party are more likely to win the election.

Hypothesis 1.1: Government persecution of political opposition candidates is a significant driver of election boycotts.

Hypothesis 1.2: Opposition boycotts will increase the probability of an incumbent victory.

Hypothesis 1.3: Pre-election violence will influence voter turnout though voter suppression or voter coercion.

Hypothesis 1.4: Larger voter turnout will favor the incumbent, increasing their prospects of winning the election.

Hypothesis 2.0: When governments use violence in the pre-election period, the incumbent politician and his party are at risk of removal from office after the election.

Hypothesis 2.1: Pre-election violence against civilians and political opposition increase the risk of mass public demonstrations in response to an election outcome.

Hypothesis 2.2: Post-election protests increase the incumbent's chances of being removed from office by force or forcing the cancellation of the election

Hypothesis 2.3: Crackdowns on election protests will not increase and may reduce the likelihood that the incumbent stays in power.

Empirical Evaluation

To evaluate this theory, we take advantage of new data on the characteristics of over 1,300 elections from 1981 to 2006 in 140 countries (Hyde and Marinov 2011).¹¹ The NELDA dataset provides detailed information on all election events, including more specific measures of election violence, incumbent victory, and the dynamics of post-election protest than has previously been available.¹² For each election, we use the NELDA data to code whether the *Incumbent Wins* and whether the incumbent party in the legislature won, labeled as *Party Wins*.¹³ In the post-election period, we are interested in whether protests are successful in ousting leaders from office. Protests are successful (from the perspective of protestors) when either the newly re-elected incumbent is removed, through resignation, coup, or other non-electoral means;¹⁴ or, alternatively, if the results of an election are annulled. These variables are labeled as *Incumbent Removed* and *Election Annulled*, respectively, and both are coded from the NELDA data.¹⁵

In order to measure whether an incumbent used election-specific violence prior to an election, we create *Pre-Election Violence* that equals one if an incumbent harassed or used violence against opposition members or civilians prior to or during the election and

¹¹ Our sample size varies by model based on the relevant type of election and the amount of missing data in control variables.

¹² Data and codebook are available at <http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda>. In the SI, we include a full list of countries included in the sample.

¹³ *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. *Party Wins* is coded from *Nelda 24*: "Did the incumbent's party lose?" equal to one if no and zero otherwise.

¹⁴ We also exclude cases where an incumbent chose to give up power or faced a term limit.

¹⁵ *Incumbent Removed* equals one if an incumbent was removed for reasons other than an election loss, term limits, or a decision not to run (coded from *Nelda 39*, *Nelda 40*, *Nelda7* and *Nelda8*). *Election Annulled* is coded from *Nelda 34*: "Were results that were favorable to the incumbent cancelled?" and equals one if yes and zero if no.

zero otherwise¹⁶. To measure whether post-election protests were met with government-sponsored violence, we create a variable, *Post-Election Violence*, that equals one if an incumbent used violence against demonstrators protesting the election and zero otherwise.¹⁷

These data offer potential improvements over existing cross-national studies of state-sponsored political violence, which largely 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. Thus, we provide more accurate estimates of the relationships between election violence and election outcomes.

Pre-Election Violence

We expect that pre-election violence against opposition supporters, candidates, and the citizenry will increase the probability that the incumbent or his party will win the election. Although our election specific measures of violence represent a significant

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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."

improvement, there remain a number of challenges in estimating the effect of election violence on the probability of election victory. One issue is that the choice to use election violence is not independent of the level of competition faced by the incumbent. In other work we have shown that incumbents choose to use violence in response to electoral challenges (authors). Another issue is that less institutionalized electoral systems are frequently more likely to experience violence, and may also be less likely to have a truly competitive political environment. The model therefore includes other factors that might drive electoral competitiveness and violence in order to minimize this form of bias.¹⁸

In order to account for the fact that governments may use violence in response to the expectation of political competition, we first control for pre-election measures of whether the public expected the election to be competitive. We create a variable, *Uncertain Victory*, which equals one if pre-election polls were negative for the incumbent or suggested a close race.¹⁹ *Uncertain Victory* also equals one if the incumbent or opposition party members made statements prior to the election that suggested they were not confident of victory before elections.²⁰ If polls or statements were not available, or if publicly announced polls or pre-election statements suggest that the incumbent is likely to win, *Uncertain Victory* is equal to zero. As validation of this measure, *Uncertain Victory* appears to be a reasonable measure for pre-electoral expectations of victory. As shown in Figure 3, incumbents win over 80% of the cases in which pre-election statements suggest the incumbent is confident of victory. In addition to including *Uncertain Victory* as a

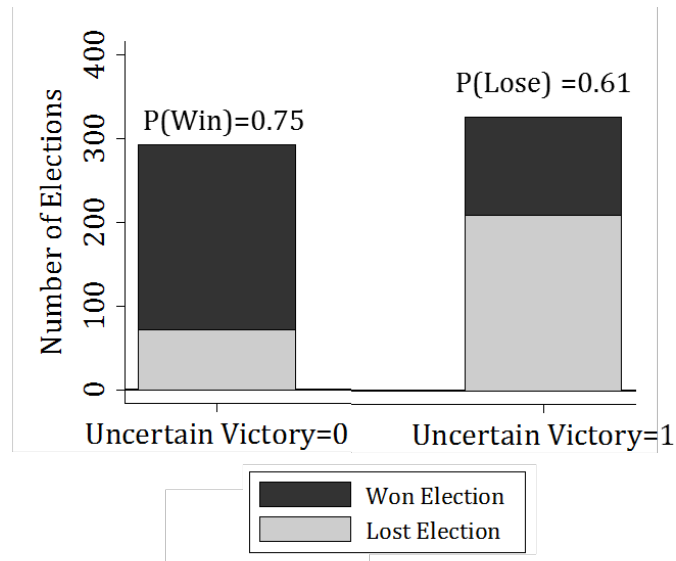
¹⁸ Because incumbents are more likely to use violence when facing significant electoral challenges, we are less likely to find a significant relationship between violence and incumbent victory.

¹⁹ Coded from *Nelda26*.

²⁰ Coded from *Nelda 12*.

control variable, we run a model in which we exclude all cases where *Uncertain Victory* is equal to zero, providing additional evidence that unobserved expectations of a close election (and resulting use of violence) are not driving our results.

Figure 3: The Effect of Uncertain Victory on Incumbent Victory



Note: Figure represents the effect of positive pre-election polls and statements (*Uncertain Victory*=0) and negative pre-election polls and statements (*Uncertain Victory*=1) on the probability of incumbent victory.

In addition to controlling for pre-electoral competitiveness, we also control for the type of political institutions and the pre-existing propensity of a government regime to engage in political repression (as distinguished from election violence). 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 intended to measure a country's political institutions, ranging from the most autocratic (-10) to the most democratic (10). We also 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.²¹

Additionally, to verify that our results are not sensitive to country-specific institutional features, we estimate our results with and without country-level fixed effects. Country fixed effects account for all other time-invariant and un-modeled country characteristics, and ensures that our results hold within countries, as well as between countries. We also estimate a model with leader-specific fixed effects, excluding all other measures of government repression.²² While the sample of leaders for which it is possible to estimate this within-leader effect is small, the results validate the fact that the results are not simply driven by the propensity of some leaders to be more violent or repressive than others. Summary statistics are shown in the supplementary information.

First, we estimate a logit model in which the dependent variable is a binary measure of whether or not the incumbent or incumbent's party wins the election. This estimation is represented below:

$$P(Wins_{ij}) = c_i + \beta_1 ElectionViolence_{ij} + PhysicalIntegrity_{avg} + Polity_{avg} + \varphi X_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

$PhysicalIntegrity_{avg}$ and $Polity_{avg}$ are the pre-election three year averages of these variables and φX_{ij} is a vector of additional control variables. The variable c_i represents country-level fixed effects, although we also estimate models with country-level random effects and leader-specific fixed effects. Because wealth and population may influence the

²¹ *Polity* responds to electoral changes. Therefore, including a measure of *Polity2* from the year of the election would be problematic.

²² Since within leader variation in repression is highly correlated with within-leader variation in electoral repression, we are not able to separate these effects without a larger sample.

use of violence and are included in existing studies, we include *GDP (log)* and *Population (log)*, from the World Development Indicators (World Bank 2006). To help account for leader-specific factors that may influence the likelihood that incumbents will use election violence, like time in office and experience, all models include *Leader Tenure* and *Leader Age* from the Archigos dataset (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009). We also include *Civil War* from the Major Episodes of Political Violence dataset (Marshall 2007) because internal conflict is correlated with human rights violations (Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999).

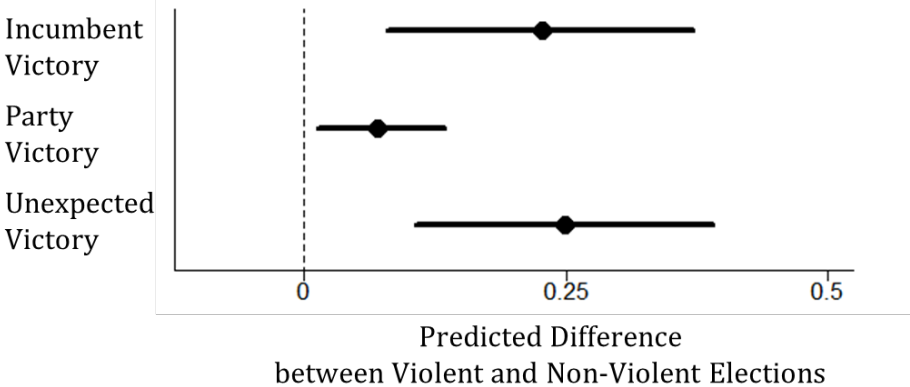
All models include measures of pre-election expectations of *Fraud* and an aggregate annual measure of *Demonstrations*. Electoral violence is occasionally used as a response to public demonstrations, or as part of a broader strategy of electoral manipulation. We include controls for these variables to ensure that we are truly capturing electoral violence, and not inadvertently using election violence as a proxy for other related events. *Fraud* is from the NELDA data, and measures whether there were concerns, before the election, that it would not be free and fair.²³ 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 4 provide broad support for our first hypothesis. They show that pre-election violence, on average, increases an incumbent's likelihood of winning the election. When incumbents choose to target opposition candidates or voters prior to an election, they are more likely to win than

²³ Coded from *Nelda11*. We use pre-electoral perceptions of fraud rather than post-election accusations of fraud.

election. The magnitude of this result is substantial. When incumbents repress opposition candidates or voters, the incumbent has a 23% greater predicted probability of winning the election. This result is also statistically significant if analysis is limited to only legislative elections (and victory by the incumbent party in the legislature). We find that incumbent parties are significantly more likely to win an election in which pre-election violence occurs (Models 4-6). In terms of magnitude, the results are substantial. Incumbent parties in the legislature are approximately 8% more likely to win an election where voters and opposition parties were targets of violence.

Figure 4: Effect of Pre-Election Violence on Election Outcomes



Estimates show the simulated increase in the probability of election victory when we move from a non-violent election to a violent election. Estimated using a logit model with country-level random intercepts and the set of controls shows in Table 2.

As a further check, when we exclude cases in which the incumbent is confident of victory before the election (Models 3 and 6), the relationship of interest remains statistically significant. And, since incumbents are less likely to use violence when elections are less competitive (authors), the magnitude of the estimates in Models 3 and 6 are greater than those from the full sample. Across all models, *Fraud* is also an important explanation for incumbent and party victory. *Fraud* in the pre-election period and/or on election day is a strategy that is distinct from the use of pre-election violence, and may

complement or substitute for violence. As shown in Table 2, the effect of *Pre-Election Violence* is in addition to the effect of *Fraud* on incumbent victory.

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

| | <i>DV: Incumbent Wins</i> | | | <i>DV: Incumbent Party Wins</i> | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Pre-Election Violence | 0.79+ (0.45) | 0.94** (0.34) | 1.27** (0.44) | 0.52+ (0.27) | 0.59* (0.25) | 0.75+ (0.44) |
| Physint (avg) | 0.53** (0.16) | 0.35** (0.10) | 0.38** (0.14) | 0.54** (0.10) | 0.33** (0.08) | |
| Leader Age | 0.02 (0.02) | 0.02+ (0.01) | 0.02 (0.02) | 0.01 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.01 (0.02) |
| Leader Tenure | -0.02+ (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) | -0.00 (0.01) | -0.02** (0.01) | -0.01+ (0.01) | -0.08** (0.02) |
| Civil War | -0.32 (0.36) | -0.13 (0.19) | -0.27 (0.37) | -0.01 (0.14) | -0.03 (0.12) | 0.22 (0.52) |
| GDP (log) | 0.24** (0.08) | 0.03+ (0.02) | 0.06 (0.04) | -0.04 (0.03) | -0.00 (0.01) | -0.23 (0.15) |
| Uncertain Victory | -1.71** (0.40) | -1.57** (0.34) | | -2.83** (0.37) | -2.54** (0.32) | -1.71** (0.52) |
| Polity (avg) | -0.18** (0.04) | -0.19** (0.03) | -0.14** (0.04) | -0.16** (0.03) | -0.18** (0.02) | -0.37* (0.16) |
| Demonstrations | 0.18** (0.06) | 0.01 (0.04) | 0.07 (0.05) | -0.04 (0.03) | -0.02 (0.03) | -0.05 (0.05) |
| Fraud | 1.08* (0.44) | 0.87* (0.34) | 0.28 (0.39) | 1.29** (0.30) | 1.22** (0.27) | 1.39** (0.52) |
| Number of Elections | 338 | 490 | 303 | 760 | 1,083 | 377 |
| Log Likelihood | -99.47 | -254.1 | -107.3 | -274.3 | -489.8 | -101.5 |
| Country Fixed Effects | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Country Random Effects | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Leader Fixed Effects | No | No | No | No | No | Yes |
| Includes Favorable Polls | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Standard errors in parentheses. +significant at 10%; *significant at 5%; **significant at 1%. Models 1-3 (Incumbent Wins) are restricted to cases where the incumbent contested the election.

Thus far, the evidence suggests that pre-election violence and election victory for the incumbent and the incumbent's party are strongly related (hypothesis 1.0). Does pre-election violence also deter opposition to the incumbent and influence turnout in a manner that favors the incumbent? We argue that violence should increase boycotts and influence turnout, and that the presence of a boycott and changes in turnout will favor the incumbent (hypotheses 1.1-1.4). In order to evaluate these hypotheses we create two variables.

Boycott equals one if some opposition leaders boycotted the election and zero otherwise.²⁴

Turnout equals the percentage of registered voters who actually voted.²⁵

Table 3 shows whether *Pre-Election Violence* is associated with an increased probability of boycotts (hypothesis 1.1) and whether *Boycott*, in turn, increases the probability of an incumbent winning an election (hypothesis 1.2). In Models 1 and 2, we show that the use of violence is associated with a significant increase in the probability that an incumbent candidate boycotts the election. In Models 3 and 4 we also demonstrate that boycotts, on average, favor victory for the incumbent.

Table 4 shows similar results for the effect of *Pre-Election Violence* on *Turnout*. When incumbents use violence, turnout during an election increases on average by 3.7 percentage points, suggesting that pre-election violence is, on average, associated with higher turnout (hypothesis 1.3). The data also suggest that turnout is favorable for the incumbent (hypothesis 1.4): as shown in Models 3 and 4, higher *Turnout* significantly increases the likelihood of victory for incumbent.²⁶ The finding that pre-election violence is associated with higher turnout should be interpreted with care, as it is clear that pre-election threats of violence can also be used to persuade voters to stay home. It is also likely that voter coercion is often used alongside forms of election fraud that may also influence turnout. Either way, higher turnout—whether legitimately obtained or not—tends to benefit the incumbent government.

²⁴ Coded from Nelda14.

²⁵ International IDEA Voter Turnout Website. <http://www.idea.int/vt/> (Accessed September 2011).

²⁶ The SI includes estimates of the interactions between *Boycott* and *Pre-Election Violence*, and *Turnout* and *Pre-Election Violence*, on *Incumbent Wins*.

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

| | <i>DV: Boycott</i> | | <i>DV: Incumbent Wins</i> | |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Pre-Election Violence | 0.66* | 0.72** | 0.77 | 0.89* |
| | (0.30) | (0.26) | -0.48 | (0.36) |
| Boycott | | | 3.76** | 2.55** |
| | | | (1.06) | (0.67) |
| Physint (avg) | -0.22* | -0.23** | 0.57** | 0.39** |
| | (0.10) | (0.08) | (0.17) | (0.11) |
| Leader Age | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.02+ |
| | (0.02) | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.01) |
| Leader Tenure | 0.00 | -0.00 | -0.02* | 0.00 |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| Civil War | 0.15 | 0.14 | -0.57 | -0.31 |
| | (0.15) | (0.12) | (0.42) | (0.21) |
| GDP (log) | -0.53* | -0.20** | 0.25** | 0.04* |
| | (0.22) | (0.06) | (0.08) | (0.02) |
| Uncertain Victory | 0.40 | 0.31 | -1.78** | -1.63** |
| | (0.41) | (0.35) | (0.42) | (0.36) |
| Polity (avg) | -0.04 | -0.06* | -0.19** | -0.19** |
| | (0.04) | (0.03) | (0.05) | (0.03) |
| Demonstrations | 0.03 | 0.05 | 0.17* | 0.01 |
| | (0.05) | (0.04) | (0.07) | (0.04) |
| Fraud | 2.16** | 1.91** | 0.42 | 0.55 |
| | (0.34) | (0.31) | (0.49) | (0.37) |
| Num Elections | 559 | 1,083 | 338 | 490 |
| Log Likelihood | -167.8 | -330.3 | -88.31 | -244.0 |
| Country Fixed Effects | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Country Random Effects | No | Yes | No | Yes |

Standard errors in parentheses. +significant at 10%; *significant at 5%; **significant at 1%. Estimated using a logit model with country random effects or country fixed effects.

Together, these findings lend support to our argument that pre-election violence tends to serve the immediate interests of incumbent governments, increasing the probability of incumbent victory. Our results are also consistent with our argument that violence dissuades political opposition and coerces voters in a manner that favors the incumbent. Violence is significantly associated both with the probability that opposition candidates boycott elections, as well as the extent to which voters turnout, presumably in favor of the incumbent. These results suggest the violence is both successful, increasing the

probability of victory, as well as strategic, altering the behavior of voters and opposition candidates.

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

| | <i>DV: Turnout</i> | | <i>DV: Incumbent Wins</i> | |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Pre-Election Violence | 3.75** (1.11) | 3.29** (1.08) | 0.86* (0.37) | 0.31 (0.52) |
| Turnout | | | 0.04** (0.01) | 0.03+ (0.02) |
| Physint (avg) | 0.80+ (0.41) | 0.81* (0.37) | 0.29** (0.10) | 0.39* (0.20) |
| Leader Age | 0.17** (0.05) | 0.18** (0.05) | 0.02 (0.02) | 0.01 (0.02) |
| Leader Tenure | -0.04+ (0.02) | -0.04+ (0.02) | -0.00 (0.01) | -0.02 (0.01) |
| Civil War | -0.29 (0.69) | 0.11 (0.64) | -0.08 (0.22) | -0.15 (0.39) |
| GDP (log) | -0.15 (0.15) | -0.04 (0.10) | 0.03* (0.02) | 0.25** (0.08) |
| Uncertain Victory | 0.04 (1.05) | -0.11 (1.03) | -1.66** (0.36) | -2.09** (0.48) |
| Polity (avg) | -0.40** (0.12) | -0.40** (0.11) | -0.15** (0.03) | -0.11* (0.05) |
| Demonstrations | 0.14 (0.14) | 0.14 (0.14) | 0.06 (0.05) | 0.14* (0.06) |
| Fraud | -2.95* (1.16) | -3.20** (1.12) | 0.87* (0.37) | 0.89+ (0.50) |
| Num Elections | 826 | 826 | 401 | 275 |
| Log Likelihood | | | -212.7 | -79.33 |
| R-Squared | 0.06 | 0.04 | | |
| Country Fixed Effects | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Country Random Effects | No | Yes | No | Yes |

Standard errors in parentheses. +significant at 10%; *significant at 5%; **significant at 1%. Estimated using a logit model with country random effects or country fixed effects.

Post-Election Violence

The section evaluates our argument that pre-election violence can backfire against the incumbent in the post-election period. We focus on a specific but high-profile form of election violence in which governments respond to post-election protests by using violence

against demonstrators. This form of post-election violence is a very different tactic than pre-election violence since it publically targets protestors and seeks to undermine their ability to challenge the government directly.

In order to measure post-election protests, we create a variable, *Election Protests*, which equals one if there were election-related riots and protests after the election and zero otherwise.²⁷ In order to measure violence against protestors, we create a variable, *Violence Against Protestors*, which equals one if the government used violence against protestors and zero otherwise.²⁸

Successful Protests are relatively uncommon events in our sample, occurring only 169 times. Consistent with our argument, however, repressing a protest makes no difference in the percentage of protests that are successful (6.8% of unrepressed protests are successful and 6.2% of repressed protests).²⁹

In order to investigate these relationships more rigorously, we estimate the effect of *Pre-Election Violence* on post-election protests using a logit model with the same set of control variables described above. The results (Table 5) show that pre-election violence significantly predicts post-election protests (hypothesis 2.1). This is consistent with our argument that pre-election violence is a costly tactic. While pre-election violence is successful at increasing the probability the incumbent will 'win' the election, it also creates public discontent that can make post-election protest more likely.

²⁷ Coded from *Nelda29*.

²⁸ Coded from *Nelda31*.

²⁹ Additional summary statistics are available in the supplementary appendix.

Table 5: The Effect of Pre-Election Violence on Post-Election Protests

| | <i>DV: Post-Election Protests</i> | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| | (1) | (2) |
| Pre-Election Violence | 2.38** (0.33) | 2.34** (0.37) |
| Physint (avg) | -0.04 (0.09) | -0.14 (0.11) |
| Leader Age | -0.02 (0.01) | -0.03 (0.02) |
| Leader Tenure | -0.02** (0.01) | -0.02* (0.01) |
| Civil War | -0.07 (0.15) | -0.10 (0.21) |
| GDP (log) | 0.03+ (0.02) | 0.06+ (0.04) |
| Polity (avg) | 0.00 (0.03) | -0.01 (0.03) |
| Fraud | 0.98** (0.31) | 0.74* (0.34) |
| Num Elections | 812 | 462 |
| Log Likelihood | -305.5 | -151.0 |
| Country Fixed Effects | No | Yes |
| Country Random Effects | Yes | No |

Standard errors in parentheses. +significant at 10%; *significant at 5%; **significant at 1%. Estimated using a logit model with country random effects or country fixed effects.

Next, we evaluate the relationship between post-election protest and the probability that the election will be annulled or that an incumbent will step down (hypothesis 2.2). We measure whether an incumbent was removed from power by creating a variable, *Incumbent Removed*, that equals one if the incumbent was removed by means other than the loss of the election and zero otherwise.³⁰ We also create a variable, *Election Annulled*, equal to one if initial election results that were favorable to the incumbent were cancelled and zero otherwise.³¹ To account for any confounding effect of violence used prior to the

³⁰ Coded from *Nelda39* and *Nelda40*.

³¹ Coded from *Nelda34*.

election on the likelihood of these outcomes, we control for *Pre-Election Violence* in these models.

Table 6: The Effect of Protests on Election Outcomes

| | <i>DV: Incumbent Removed</i> | | <i>DV: Election Cancelled</i> | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (4) | (5) |
| Election Protests | 3.46** (1.11) | 3.32** (1.26) | 2.84** (0.90) | 2.54* (1.07) |
| Protest Repression | | 0.26 (1.20) | | 0.59 (1.08) |
| Pre-Election Violence | 0.50 (0.99) | 0.44 (1.04) | -0.54 (0.78) | -0.61 (0.80) |
| Physint (avg) | -0.42 (0.33) | -0.41 (0.33) | 0.33 (0.24) | 0.34 (0.24) |
| Leader Age | -0.03 (0.04) | -0.03 (0.04) | 0.01 (0.04) | 0.01 (0.04) |
| Leader Tenure | -0.06+ (0.03) | -0.06+ (0.03) | -0.00 (0.02) | -0.00 (0.02) |
| Civil War | 0.59* (0.25) | 0.59* (0.25) | 0.31 (0.36) | 0.30 (0.36) |
| GDP (log) | -0.47+ (0.28) | -0.46+ (0.27) | -0.02 (0.07) | -0.02 (0.07) |
| Polity (avg) | -0.06 (0.08) | -0.05 (0.08) | -0.10 (0.08) | -0.10 (0.08) |
| Fraud | -2.82* (1.23) | -2.85* (1.24) | -0.43 (0.85) | -0.48 (0.86) |
| Num Elections | 749 | 749 | 603 | 603 |
| Log Likelihood | -27.82 | -27.80 | -59.17 | -59.02 |

Standard errors in parentheses. +significant at 10%; *significant at 5%; **significant at 1%. Estimated using a logit model with country random effects or country fixed effects.

Table 6 provides estimates of the effect of *Election Protests* on both outcomes.

Consistent with our argument, *Election Protests* increase the probability that an incumbent will lose power or that election results will be annulled. Table 6 also shows whether *Violence Against Protesters* is successful at preventing outcomes that challenge the incumbent government's hold on power. Consistent with hypothesis 2.3, the coefficient on

Violence Against Protesters is positive with a large standard error across most specifications, suggesting little or no effect of post-election violence on the effectiveness of protests. Although we cannot rule out selection effects, such as the possibility that the more virulent protests are being repressed, this lack of a relationship suggests that post-election violence is not necessarily a successful way for the incumbent to guarantee his or her hold on power once post-election protests have begun.

Together, these findings lend credibility to our argument that pre-election violence can backfire on sitting governments in the post-election period by increasing the probability they are ousted from power or favorable election results are annulled. 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, both of which are outcomes that are very costly to the incumbent government. Unlike in the pre-election period, violence against the public in the post-election period does not boost the chances that the weakened regime will stay in power.

Conclusion

Election violence is pervasive, especially among the growing number of 'pseudo-democratic' governments. However, violence can backfire on sitting governments. While incumbents often win elections in which they use violence leading up to the vote, that violence 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. Moreover, once people engage in election protest, violence against demonstrators historically has been unlikely to stop them. Post-election protest gives the government a difficult choice between doing nothing—and increasing the risk that post-election protest will generate an electoral revolution—and using significant and very public violence against their own citizens. In the post-election period, both options may be too little, too late, and even when they are effective, can damage the regime's international and domestic reputation.

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