

# Survival of Political Leadership

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## Abstract

We construct a game-theoretical model that addresses the question of how corrupt, authoritarian leaders and their regimes survive in societies with organised opposition and recurrent elections. We argue that these leaders may use political violence in order to increase their chances of re-election. In a collusive equilibrium, the leader can, in form of bribery, share the public resources with the army, to which the latter responds by producing politically motivated violence. We find that such an equilibrium is more likely, when the leader is sufficiently patient, but the army is shortsighted; when the public resources available to the leader are sufficiently large; when army's punishment in the opposition regime is mild enough but incumbent is threatened by a more severe punishment; and when army's salary in opposition regime is not too high. The model also predicts that given the existence of a collusive agreement, larger public resources lead to higher levels of violence and more corruption. In contrast, increasing the leader's future punishment suggests lower intensities of violence and corruption. A higher salary and a more severe punishment for the army associate with less violence but more corruption. Finally, a more patient leader and a more impatient army will contribute to more political violence and increased corruption.

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