

Study explores the impact of corruption and military organization on civilians

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New research out of the University of Cincinnati is believed to be the first to examine the relative impact of militarization and corruption on civilian populations. The findings reveal that a specific form of military organization—praetorian militarization—as well as national-level corruption—both adversely affect the well-being of citizens. The findings by Steve Carlton-Ford, a professor and head of the UC sociology department, and T. David Evans, a UC emeritus associate professor of sociology, will be presented at the 107th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association.

The researchers examined data from 148 countries over a 12-year period (1996-2008) to assess the relationship of militarization and corruption to the mortality rate of children under five years old. Independent of each other, the researchers found that praetorian militarization and general government and social corruption tend to increase the child mortality rate.

In democratic countries with a strong civil society, the government controls the military. Praetorian militaries, which have direct or indirect control over the government in power, typically are not found in democracies with a strong civil society. Generally small and highly funded, Praetorian militaries ordinarily operate in coup-prone countries.

The researchers write that historically, praetorian militaries have been common in Latin America, Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East.

Countries the researchers rated as highly praetorian included Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Uganda.

Countries the researchers rated as highly corrupt included Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

"Although praetorian militaries may be particularly prone to corruption, corruption is fairly widespread across different sectors of both the economy and the government," state the researchers.

"Countries with corrupt, non-democratic politics are also likely to have lower levels of economic well-being and to be at war; all of these factors can be expected to adversely affect civilian populations, pushing the child mortality rate higher. These characteristics—[corruption](#), non-democratic governance, low levels of economic development, and armed conflict—all of which are associated with praetorian militarization, may actually be the source of poor life chances of the general population," explain the researchers.

According to the researchers, "Careful consideration should be made concerning whether to provide economic aid to countries where [militarization](#) and other factors mitigate against its use to benefit the general population."

Provided by American Sociological Association

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