

Effect of diplomatic recognition and other diplomatic efforts on food and nutrition security and health security

The diplomatic recognition and other diplomatic efforts had moderate effect on reducing under-5 mortality by strengthening governance in ungoverned African spaces to improve public services and health security outcomes.

Geographical region: sub-Saharan Africa

Effect size: Moderate effect ($g=0.186$)

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence (1 study; 4 ES)

Short summary

The cell examines the impact of diplomatic recognition and other diplomatic efforts namely U.S. foreign policy, particularly the "Bush Doctrine," on governance in 49 African countries post-September 11, 2001. It analyses the relationship between U.S. military threats and African government actions using a principal-agent model. The interventions had moderate effects on food and nutrition security and health outcomes - specifically an improvement in under-5 mortality. We have low confidence in the cell findings due to a limited number of studies.

Long summary

The intervention

The intervention aimed to deter terrorism by encouraging African governments to assert control over ungoverned spaces. This strategy involved diplomatic recognition and military threats, with the expectation that improved governance would enhance food security and health outcomes, ultimately linking national security to developmental progress in the region.

How the intervention is expected to work

The interventions were expected to work by incentivizing African governments to strengthen governance in ungoverned areas. Enhanced control would lead to improved public services, including food security and health care, ultimately fostering stability and development, which would contribute to broader U.S. national security objectives.

The evidence base

The cell consists of one study which employed a quantitative design using a difference-in-differences approach to analyze the impact of U.S. interventions on governance. It focused on 764 provinces across 49 African countries.

Evidence findings

Diplomatic efforts had no significant impact on malnutrition, infant mortality, or vaccination but modestly reduced under-5 mortality.

Included studies

Downey (2021) investigates the effectiveness of the U.S. "Bush Doctrine" and its associated military interventions in deterring the emergence of ungoverned spaces in Africa following the events of September 11, 2001. The study employs a systematic empirical analysis across 49 African countries, utilizing a balanced panel of provinces. The analysis focuses on several proxies for "ungoverned" spaces, including population density, distance to the capital, and terrain ruggedness. The key findings showed that Non-violent expansions of government showed minimal progress in health outcomes. Malnutrition rates (-0.003, $p>0.10$), infant mortality (-0.036, $p>0.10$), and vaccination rates (0.020, $p>0.10$) showed no significant changes. However, under-5 mortality (-0.085, $p<0.05$) significantly declined, indicating a modest improvement in child survival despite overall limited impact. The study rated as low confidence quantitative study due to lack the depth qualitative analysis limit the understanding of the underlying factors affecting governance in ungoverned spaces.

Confidence assessment

The cell is rated as low confidence due to a limited number of studies.

Other outcomes in the study/cell

- Community and state governance/Access to justice, rights and public services
- Human security/Food security and nutrition & health security