

Effect of military operations on presence and quality of social safety nets

Military operations have no effect on the presence and quality of social safety nets.

Geographical region: Global

Effect: Small effect ($g = -0.005$)

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence

Short summary

Military aid is expected to enhance institutional stability and reduce state fragility by strengthening security institutions and governance structures including the provision of safety nets. However, findings from one study indicate that U.S. military aid often fails to improve institutional stability and may instead increase fragility, particularly in states with weak domestic institutions.

Long summary

The intervention

Any efforts that involve the use of a state's armed forces to prevent, de-escalate or resolve a violent conflict or atrocity. This could be operations where armed forces are engaged in combat and those that do not have primary objectives to engage in combat (e.g. the presence of armed forces in specific locations, or training). This also includes cyberwarfare operations when delivered by a state's armed forces. The intervention in the included study here is U.S. military aid, security sector assistance (SSA).

How is the intervention expected to work?

Military aid may influence institutional stability and state fragility in recipient countries. It is expected to strengthen state institutions and reduce fragility, particularly through capacity-building and security sector support. Therefore, it will facilitate state provision of social safety nets. However, its effectiveness depends on domestic institutional strength, and in weak states, it may instead exacerbate fragility.

Evidence base

The cell holds 1 quantitative study: Schwab (2020). The study includes multiple countries globally, with detailed case studies on Colombia (Latin America) and Pakistan (South Asia).

Evidence findings

U.S. military aid often fails to improve institutional stability in recipient countries. Instead, it may exacerbate fragility, especially in states with weak domestic institutions. Aid does not effectively reduce fragility.

Included studies

Schwab (2020) explores how military aid is used to sustain U.S. influence in the global arms market, prevent state instability, and address strategic objectives, while questioning its overall success in achieving these goals. The study is divided into three chapters, each examining how the security sector assistance (SSA) reflects the interests of US policymakers, the relationship between SSA and a state's level of fragility, and how the shifting interests of US policymakers affect the SSA, as seen in the cases of Colombia and Pakistan. The quantitative portion of Schwab (2020) employs regression analysis to evaluate the determinants and effects of U.S. military aid across multiple countries. Key variables include U.S. military aid allocation (dependent variable) and independent factors such as state fragility, arms market competition, and institutional stability. The study shows that U.S. military aid allocation is significantly correlated with the desire to maintain dominance in recipient states' arms markets. Countries with high competition from other suppliers, particularly Russia and China, are more likely to receive aid, highlighting a strategic motive. The regression results also indicate that aid does not effectively reduce fragility. The study is rated medium as it is non-experimental and due to its partial description of the intervention.

Confidence assessment

Overall, the cell is rated low confidence.

Other outcomes in this study

None