

# Research explores military organization and child mortality rates

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Research out of the University of Cincinnati is revealing new information on how the formation of militaries affects the population of their countries. The examination by Steve Carlton-Ford, professor and head of the UC Department of Sociology, is published in the academic journal, *Sociological Studies of Children and Youth*, (Emerald Group Publishing Limited) Volume 14.

The study examined three approaches to military organization:

**Economic Militarization** – Military spending as a proportion of overall national economic activity.

**Social Militarization** – Maintaining armed forces and the proportion of the population that is in the military, which was initially believed to promote the well being of the civilian population.

**Praetorian Militarization** – These militaries are not controlled by a democratic society, but rather have direct or indirect control over the government in power. These are typically small militaries that are highly funded, operating in coup-prone countries.

It also compared three types of [armed conflict](#) on well being of civilian populations:

- International conflicts, involving at least two states;

- nternal conflicts, or civil wars;
- Internationalized internal conflicts, in which surrounding countries send armies into a country at civil war.

Carlton-Ford says the conclusions will force social scientists "to rethink how conflict and militarization affect civilian populations, as indexed by the child-mortality rate."

The study found that social militarization "significantly and substantially increases the child-mortality rate, regardless of whether the country engages in major armed conflicts, and that increases in social militarization produce particularly adverse effects during the years in which international internalized conflicts are active."

The study also found that increasing praetorian militaries – regardless of whether they were engaged in battle – also consistently increased the child mortality rate.

The study found little impact of economic militarization on child-mortality rates, which was consistent with previous research.

The study uses the "War and Children's Life Chances" data set to conduct a cross-national panel study from 1985 to 2003, examining the impact of armed conflict and militarization on children's life chances. The data set holds information from 179 countries with populations larger than 200,000.

The study used the under-five mortality rate – the number of children per thousand births who are expected to die before they reach age five – as an indicator of civilian mortality. It's an age that is not expected to be directly affected by combat and as a result, has been used in previous research as an indicator of the general well being of national populations, says Carlton-Ford.

Carlton-Ford also reports that in contrast to previous research, years of active major armed conflict appeared to have little consistent effect on child mortality.

"Previous research and scholarship has found little effect of economic militarization, beneficial effects of social militarization and have paid little attention to the impact of praetorian [militarization](#) on civilian populations," he writes.

Provided by University of Cincinnati

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