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## **The curse of corruption**

- A quantitative analysis of the association between  
Administrative Capacity and Violence

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## **Abstract**

It is not uncommon that states repress and oppress its citizens by exerting violence upon them. Sometimes this violence leads to cases where states abuse their power. This abuse can lead to terrible consequences which several historical and contemporary cases shows. When analyzing state violence, it ought to be put in the context of violence from non-state actors, which often eclipse the violence of states. In this thesis, the relationship between administrative capacity as explanatory variable and non-state actor violence towards marginalized groups as dependent variable was analyzed using a quantitative analysis. Three hypotheses were created and tested in a statistical model to conclude what proxy of administrative capacity is the best predictor of the dependent variable. The result suggests that corruption and an index of corruption and governmental effectiveness are significantly associated with the dependent variable. It was concluded that the best predictor of non-state actor violence against marginalized groups is corruption. This thesis supports the view that corruption is closely associated with violence and it questions the belief that governmental effectiveness is a good predictor of violence. The results also suggest, that future research should analyze the subunits of corruption and those subunits association to violence.

**Keywords:** Administrative capacity, Corruption, Governmental effectiveness, Violence, Non-state actor violence, Marginalized groups

# **Preface**

Special thanks to Jens Mattsson, I dedicate this page to you.

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# 1. Introduction

Violence has for centuries if not for millennia interested scholars, religious people, victims, and lawmakers. Why are we violent towards each other? Why do societies as well as individuals repress and oppress? Steven Pinker claims in his book *“The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence has Declined”*, that the least violent human society to ever exist, is today’s society (Pinker, 2011). One fundamental variable in Pinker’s explanatory puzzle is the appearance and development of states which is associated with a decrease in violent behavior. States monopolize violence and this sometimes leads to horrible consequences which there are many historical and contemporary examples of, such as repression of political, sexual or ethnic minorities. The monopolization of violence can also protect non-state actors from arbitrary violence caused by other non-state actors. If one examines and critiques the threat of governmental abuse of power, then one also ought to put the threat of the state in contrast to the threats posed by non-state actors, which often eclipse the threat of the state. By infringing the rights of its citizens, the state protects its citizens from other citizens.

For centuries social contract theorists from Thomas Hobbes (Hobbes, 1651/1957) to John Rawls (Rawls, 1999) have found capacities/characteristics/qualities in the state which can encourage justice and peacefulness. One such capacity which distinguishes modern and highly functional societies are their administrative capacity; Weberian bureaucracy, low corruption and a strong rule of law. A bureaucracy, police officers or politicians who are less corrupt, more just and more effective, probably result in citizens who refrain from the use of violence because, rationally speaking, less is to gain from violent behavior. This thesis will focus on whether a state’s administrative capacity is associated with the violence of non-state actors. The purpose of the thesis is to expand the knowledge of the development of states, from a quantitative and global perspective. This will be done by improving the knowledge of the association between administrative capacity and violence, an association which have experienced a growing interest in the recent decade. The thesis will look at the violence between non-state actors, or more specifically, the violence from non-state actors as perpetrators towards marginalized groups as victims (see 4.1, for a definition of what marginalized groups include). To my knowledge, no other scholar has done this with the setup, perspective, variables, and data used in this thesis. The data which defines the dependent variable of this thesis has (to my knowledge) previously been an untested definition of violence in the context of administrative capacity. The thesis’ aim is to find what proxy for administrative capacity is the best predictor of non-state actor violence against marginalized groups. The reason for analyzing the violence against

marginalized groups is because it is hitherto an area in which there are knowledge gaps and the goal with this thesis is to fill one of those gaps.

The literature suggests an association between administrative capacity and violence, but because this thesis (to my knowledge) uses an untested definition of violence, two research questions are asked:

*Can administrative capacity predict non-state actor violence?*

*- If it can, what proxy of administrative capacity is the best predictor?*

In segment 2 is relevant literature present and discuss some theoretical standpoints of both state capacity and other variables commonly used as explanatory variables in relation to violence. In segment 3 several hypotheses will be introduced. In segment 4 the data used in this thesis will be presented and critically discussed. In segment 5 the method, as well as the model is presented, and the result of the statistical analysis is reported. In segment 6 the result is discussed and analyzed in the context of contemporary beliefs of the association between administrative capacity and violence. A possible mechanism behind the result is also discussed. In segment 7, the thesis is summarized.

# 2. Theory

## 2.1 The origin of violence

How did humans evolve to shape a world of less violence? The infamous 17<sup>th</sup>-century political philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1651/1957) claimed that the social contract made us less violent. In the *Leviathan* Hobbes uses the thought experiment of the “state of nature” to present a cynical and realistic view of the psychological challenge humans had to struggle with, in the state of nature – the state prior to the development of states, where anarchy rules. Succinctly put, if there is a “big brother”, a government, a state or a feudal lord, who can guarantee a subject’s safety, then that subject will less often submit to preemptive violent behavior as a defensive measure. Game Theory shows why Hobbes was on the right track. Figure 2.1 shows the fundamental issue of not acting violently in a place of anarchy. The Nash-equilibrium of [violence/violence] is unavoidable according to the logic of game theory (McKenzie Alexander, 2019). The entity of the state is by this logic necessary to force non-state actors into non-violent behavior. With the introduction of the state, [no violence/no violence] is the best choice for both non-state actors, A and B. The incitement of violent behavior is by the logic of game theory and rational choice theory (Hausman, 2019) reduced with a state present. The alternative cost of violence has changed. The relationship between the state and violence is more complicated, it is a scale rather than a binary relationship. By presenting violence with the idea of the Leviathan, game theory and rational choice theory, the perspective and the framework of thought, which forms the foundation of this thesis can be set.

	<b>B</b>	<b>No Violence</b>	<b>Violence</b>
<b>A</b>			
<b>No Violence</b>		25, 25	-100, 100
<b>Violence</b>		100, -100	-50, -50

**Figure 2.1**  
 Describes the possible outcomes between actors A and B in the state of nature. The left number represents A, the right number B. Violence/No Violence represents the choice of action of actor A/B. The bottom right outcome is the outcome of the state of nature, it is the Nash-equilibrium. The top left outcome is what I call the state of states, it is the outcome when a state is able to punish violent behavior.

## 2.2 Democracy and Economy

For the last decades, the focus on state capacity has grown, especially for any analysis involving inter- and intrastate violence. What explanatory variables have been sent to the sidelines as state capacity has experienced an increased interest? In the following paragraphs, a few important variables commonly used as explanatory variables for violence be discussed in relation to violence and state capacity.

There is a plethora of explanatory variables that scholars have used in the context of analyzing violence. Pippa Norris (2012) argues in her book, *“Making Democratic Governance Work”* that there is a clear association between the combined presence of liberal democracy and state capacity in terms of “administrative capacity” and the absence of violence. She also argues that democracy on its own is an insufficient variable for analyzing violence. Bo Rothstein and Jan Teorell (2008, s. 178) agree with Norris: “... *although democracy is probably a necessary condition for QoG[Quality of Government], it is hardly sufficient*”. Several scholars have found that without high administrative capacity; low corruption, rule of law, and limitations of patronage, can the benefits of democracy not be reaped (Collier, 2009 and Holmberg & Rothstein, 2010). Together, these scholars suggest that administrative capacity is more important than democracy for development. An interesting finding is that the relationship between democracy and violence is an inverted U-curve (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Hegre, Ellingsen, Gales, & Gleditsch, 2001). A control variable for democracy will be added in the model of this thesis (see 5.1).

Several decades ago Martin Lipset (1959) argued that political institutions are rooted in socioeconomic and geographic conditions, which some recent researchers strengthen in some aspects (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, & Limongi, 2000). Timothy J. Besley and Torsten Persson (2009) find that a lack of fiscal capacity can contribute to low incomes and a lack of legal capacity contributes both to a lowered economic growth and to an increased risk of civil war. Joel S. Migdal (1988) finds that weak, often developing countries lack the capacity to govern effectively and to raise taxes. Could it be that economic/fiscal capacities are the most important variables in the context of violence? When creating the model, relevant control variables covering fiscal and legal capacities will be added, (see 5.1).

## 2.3 What is state capacity?

The concept of state capacity can be vague due to its unclear meaning (capacity to do what?) and ambiguous due to its wide variety of definitions. Despite the shortcomings has the importance of the concept of state capacity kept growing. How does one define “state capacity”? Is the issue of vagueness to be taken seriously? What it comes down to are several factors, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Matthew Adam Kocher (2010) critiques the vagueness inherent in the concept of state capacity; the generalizability inherent in the concept of “state capacity” creates a tautological loop. The issue with this critique is that it misunderstands the potential of generalizability. If

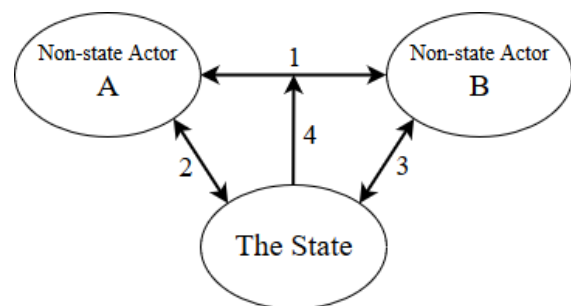


one could describe every detail of a state's capacities one would, but this is incredibly difficult due to the complexity and shifting nature of the state. With general concepts, political scientists, politicians, lawmakers, and bureaucrats get hints of where to focus future resources. For this reason, the critique of the vagueness in the concept of state capacity is an issue that can and must be handled.

When it comes to state capacity in the context of analyzing violence, some common definitions of state capacity are: "military capacity", "bureaucratic/administrative capacity" or "the quality and coherence of political institutions" (Hendrix, 2010). Many scholars regard military capacity as the most useful definition of state capacity, when analyzing violence or conflict (Mason & Fett, 1996; Mason, Weingarten Jr, & Fett, 1999; Balch-Lindsay & Enterline, 2000; Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, & Joyce, 2008; DeRouen & David, 2004; Walter, 2006). The way I interpret these scholars' thought process, is crudely: "What if X (something violent) happens" then only the repressive capacity of the state, such as military or police capacity will be relevant, no matter how low the corruption, how meritocratic the bureaucracy or good the democracy. I agree with this realistic view if we talk about the state of nature or the international arena of states, where anarchy rules. Then the repressive capacity will be a deciding factor, such as game theory suggests. What this thesis will focus on, is not a place where anarchy rules, it is a place where the influence of a state affects the decision of every non-state actor. Fearon and Laitin (2003, s. 88) motivate my standpoint well. They roughly argue; even a state with a low capacity of violence is powerful compared to unorganized, weak rebels if the state knows where to strike, which they likely do with high administrative capacity. Cullen S Hendrix (2010, ss. 274-275) roughly argues similarly; even a state with low military capacity could, with a strong capacity to monitor, repress violent behavior. For this reason, is the repressive capacity of the state not the main interest in this thesis. The main interest is rather how the state through its interference of non-repressive character, affects the violent acts between non-state actors. In Figure 2.2 the 4<sup>th</sup> arrow describes the interference.

In the last decade, many political scientists have started to define state capacity as "administrative capacity" (Norris, 2012; Engelhart, 2009; Franceschet, 2010; Hendrix, 2010; Lapuente & Rothstein, 2014). Hendrix (2010) argues that bureaucratic quality and tax capacity are satisfying from the perspective of construct validity for its high correlation with rational legality. It is an excellent measure of bureaucratic/administrative capacity and supersedes GDP per capita because it's difficult to imagine a theoretical link between bureaucratic quality and civil conflict, which does not operate through the state capacity causal channel. Lapuente and Rothstein (2014) found that when rule of law and bureaucratic quality is present, one is less

likely to turn to violent behavior as a defensive mechanism, since one got less to fear from the political opposition if the opposition were to win. Other scholars found that a centralized administrative core with impartial state institutions is necessary for a state to not detour into violence (Mansfield & Snyder, 2007). Tore Wig and Andreas Forø Tollefsen (2016) found that local areas in Africa with a strong administrative core and with high institutional quality are less likely to experience violence. Plenty of researchers suggest that there is an association between administrative capacity and many general definitions of violence. How about the association between administrative capacity and violence against marginalized groups? Susan Franceschet (2010) analyses domestic violence and in her research she found that Chile with its high administrative capacity was better than Argentina with its low administrative capacity at implementing policies dealing with domestic violence. Neil A. Engelhart (2009) analyzed in his paper the violence from state actors towards non-state actors. He found that low tax revenue, corruption, and a lack of law and order all have negative impacts on human rights and personal security and that the state capacity is a robust predictor of whether a state stands up for human rights or not. This suggests that there is an association between administrative capacity and several subunits of violence against marginalized groups, which show that further research in this area is necessary. This lack of empirical knowledge is a core reason to why this thesis is looking at marginalized groups.



**Figure 2.2**  
 1) Describes the violence between non-state actor A and B  
 2) Describes the violence between non-actor A and the State  
 3) Describes the violence between non-actor A and the State  
 4) Describes the interference of the state on the violence between non-state actors A and B. This interference can be both repressive and non-repressive character, this thesis is interested in the non-repressive type of interference and how it affects violence between non-state actors.

Many scholars whose results have been discussed here have analyzed the association between state capacity and general levels of violence. Their results are often applicable to violence against marginalized groups because it is easy to imagine a theoretical link between [high levels of general violence] and [high levels of non-state actor violence] in a society. One may imagine a theoretical link between administrative capacity and violence against marginalized groups, but does this link remain if empirically analyzed? As mentioned previously, there is a gap in the knowledge regarding the association between administrative capacity and violence against marginalized groups which needs further exploration. Scholars have often included the state as an actor and perpetrator of violence besides to the non-state actors in their measurements of violence. These attempts try to cover total societal violence. The reasons for seeking a broad definition of violence can be many, yet when looking at general definitions of violence, one risks missing that there are

different types of violence, with varying frequency, and with different perpetrators and victims. To understand more aspects of violence and the association to state capacity, one may adopt a more specific definition of violence. For that reason, this thesis will focus on violence between non-state actors and especially, whether a state's administrative capacity can predict the violence from non-state actors towards marginalized groups. The violence in interest is represented by the 1<sup>st</sup> arrow in Figure 2.2 and the interference of the state on that violence is represented by the 4<sup>th</sup> arrow. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> arrows represent violence, which is mostly excluded in this thesis (see 4.2 for an explanation). The premise is that the state can affect and predict the violence between non-state actors.

Two things need to be clarified before moving on. First, what this thesis will examine is not the fact that the state interferes in the violence between non-state actors, that based on the framework of Hobbes is an obvious thing. What the thesis will examine is what type of administrative capacity (via the interference channel) can best predict the level of violence. Second, the violence analyzed in this thesis is violence against marginalized groups and therefore any result is not applicable to the society as a whole nor applicable to all violence between non-state actors. Even though there are limitations to the applicability of any potential result, the result may help fill the gap in the knowledge over violence.

### 3. Hypotheses

Based on the theory section, many definitions of state capacity are associated with the level of violence in a country: Democracy, military capacity, administrative capacity (bureaucratic quality, corruption, rule of law) and fiscal capacity (GDP per capita, economic growth, tax revenue). This thesis focuses on administrative capacity, which normally comprises several important parts. The two parts of the administrative capacity of interest are government effectiveness (bureaucratic quality) and corruption since the literature suggests that these are two of the core variables of administrative capacity. A third core variable of administrative capacity “rule of law” will not be included. The reason for this is that variables which tries to measure “rule of law” often include a measurement of the prevalence of crime/the observance of the law. If such a variable is included on the right side of my model (see 5.1), then it risks measuring the prevalence of violence, which the dependent variable on the left side already measures (see 4.2, for an elaboration).

Administrative capacity is proxied with three different variables: An index of government effectiveness and corruption, government effectiveness and corruption, which are variables commonly used as proxies for administrative capacity (see 4. for the definitions). Violence is proxied with a variable over violence against marginalized groups (see 4.2 for the definition). The literature suggests an association between administrative capacity and violence, but since this thesis uses an untested definition of violence, a null hypothesis is created:

**H0:** *Administrative capacity cannot explain non-state actor violence against marginalized groups*

If the null hypothesis is rejected, then at least one proxy of administrative capacity can predict the violence. If administrative capacity can predict the violence, then the three hypotheses **H1**, **H2** and **H3** will be tested:

**H1:** *An index of government effectiveness and corruption is the best predictor of non-state actor violence*

**H2:** *Government effectiveness is the best predictor of non-state actor violence*

**H3:** *Corruption is the best predictor of non-state actor violence*

Note that with “the best predictor” I mean the best predictor out of the three explanatory variables tested.

## 4. Data

### 4.1 Data sources

The data in this thesis is from a dataset available via the Quality of Government institute (the QoG institute). The QoG institute is an independent institute within the department of political science at the University of Gothenburg. They collect a range of datasets and combine them into the same set of data. This thesis will use the Cross-Section (CS), QoG Standard Dataset from 2019. The dataset prioritizes variables from 2015, “...however, if no data is available for a country for 2015, data for 2016 is included. If no data exists for 2016, data for 2014 is included, and so on up to a maximum of +/- 3 years (Teorell, et al., 2019)”. The layout of the data coding is of interest because this thesis does not lag variables intentionally, but variables can be unintentionally lagged. Possible unintentional lag is in the context of the variables used in the thesis negligible. The justification for this is that the variables in question deal with slow change occurring over the decades. For example, a society’s view and acceptance of domestic violence is unlikely to change drastically over a short period. Improvements in bureaucratic culture or a reduction of corruption takes time, as can be seen in many places of the world where the fight against corruption and neopatrimonialism has been going on for decades. One may argue that it would nevertheless have been better to lag some variables, to be sure the result is correct. Those people overestimate the potential of such lagging. The result may change with a few percentages in any direction if anything drastic has happened in the world, but more than a few percentages is unlikely. Therefore, any potential effect of unintentional lagging of variables is negligible, in the context and scope of the variables.

### 4.2 Violence

This thesis singles out and analyzes violence between non-state actors, as described with the 1<sup>st</sup> arrow in Figure 2.2. The violence analyzed in this thesis stems from non-state actors as perpetrators towards marginalized groups as victims and is defined by using an index that is based on annual reports by the US State Department of Human Rights Reports. The index, Societal Violence Scale (SVS) is an ordinal scale ranking the countries with a value of 1 – 5 based on certain criteria (Gibney, et al., 2019; Teorell, et al., 2019). The index is coded on three criteria. The first criteria measure the scope of the violence, the second what proportion of society that is victimized, and the third criteria measures the severity of abuses. The marginalized groups that represents the victims of violence are a myriad and includes; Women;

Children; Victims of national, ethnic and racial violence; Victims of religious and sectarian violence; Refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons; Sexual minorities; Forced labor; Labor activists; Human rights activists; Humanitarian workers; Journalists; State actors; Victims of civil conflict; Others (added as needed), (Gibney, et al., 2019). Note that “State actors” are included among the victims. The violence analyzed in this thesis is branded as “non-state actor violence against marginalized groups” and often the 1<sup>st</sup> arrow in Figure 2.2 is referred to as representing the violence measured in the index. Note that the index does include a small sample of violence from non-state actors against actors of the state (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> arrow), but the proportion of the index which represents the state is small in comparison to all other victims included in the index and is therefore negligible. The focus will remain on the 1<sup>st</sup> arrow.

The index measures violence from three types of perpetrators; Violence perpetrated by individuals or ad hoc groups; Violence perpetrated by “corporate” actors, that is, organized groups for private profit; Violence perpetrated by organized, armed groups for group benefits (Gibney, et al., 2019). To clarify, the SVS index measures societal violence from non-state actors towards marginalized groups. For stringency and simplicity, from now on whenever “violence towards non-state actors” are spoken of, then it is the violence against the marginalized defined in the previous paragraph which is meant.

The purpose of defining societal violence the way it is done, is based on the following two reasons: Firstly, as already mentioned, to my knowledge no other scholar have yet singled out violence against marginalized groups, measured it with the SVS index, and quantitatively analyzed the effect of a state’s administrative capacity on this type of violence. Secondly, the index weighs the violence based on the three criteria already mentioned, which assures that any egregious violence between minorities is included but does not make a society look unproportionally violent. How does the SVS index classify and define violence? It classifies countries into group 1 – 5 based on the following categorical definitions (Gibney, et al., 2019) (Teorell, o.a., QOG, The Quality of Government Institute, 2019):

- 1) *“Societal violence is limited in scope and severity, with relatively few victims and few perpetrators”*
- 2) *“Societal violence is a problem, affecting a significant number of victims, albeit across few victim categories and of a less severe nature”*
- 3) *“Societal violence is widespread and serious in nature. It affects a significant number of people across several victim categories”*
- 4) *“Societal violence is pervasive in scope, severe in nature, assumes a variety of forms and affects a large proportion of the population typically across several victim categories and perpetrators”*

- 5) *“Societal violence is ubiquitous in scope, egregious in nature and assumes a variety of forms. It affects a large proportion of the population, commonly crossing numerous victim groups and perpetrators”*

Lastly, the QoG data over the SVS index which was downloaded was incorrectly coded. The SVS scale went from 1-6 instead of 1-5. The value of “2” only had two units of analysis in the dataset, number 124 Vanuatu and number 157 Singapore. The other values of 1,3,4,5 and 6 all had over 20 units of analysis each. The likely explanation for this error is that the units with a value of 2-5 got its value coded as C the original number +1, C+1. To resolve this error was the following done: The two units of analysis Vanuatu and Singapore was removed from the dataset, and every unit of analysis with a value of 3 or above was lowered by one number.  $(C+1)-1 = C$ . For example, a score of 4 was replaced with a score of 3. Vanuatu and Singapore was removed because it is unclear whether their actual score is 2 or something else. This way, the dataset is presumably restored into its original form.

An interesting thing to note is that Human Rights Report is US based, yet they lack data of both the US and China.

### 4.3 Administrative capacity

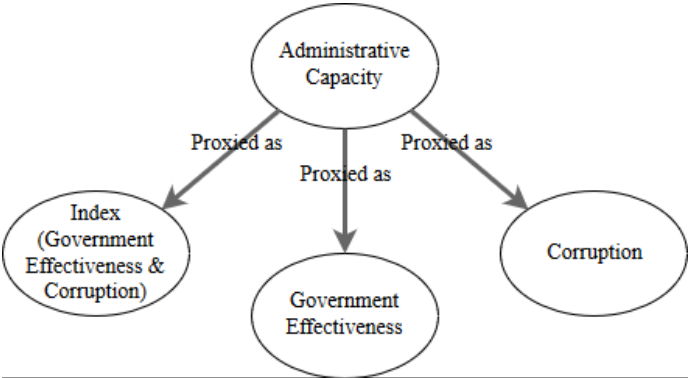
There are several well-established variables for measuring administrative capacity. I intend to explain why the most established sources were or were not used. One of the established sources is the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), by Transparency International (TI). TI bases its data on surveys which fulfill Cullen S Hendrix’s (2010) conclusion, that surveys are the best approach for modeling state capacity. Hendrix’s conclusion is an argument for using the CPI. The issue is that the CPI does not have a measurement for government effectiveness or bureaucratic quality, which this thesis needs to establish what proxy of administrative capacity which is the best predictor of non-state actor violence. To avoid mixing data sources will another source be used.

Another established measurement for administrative capacity is the International Country Risk Guide’s (ICRG) indicator of quality of government (QoG). This measurement presents a broad index of several factors of QoG: corruption, bureaucratic quality and rule of law. Unfortunately includes the measurement of rule of law *“...an assessment of popular observance of the law”* (Teorell, et al., 2019, p. 385), which is a measurement of the prevalence of crime, which in turn measures the prevalence of violence (assuming violence is against the law). To

avoid including variables measuring the same phenomenon on both sides of the model, the ICRG measurement will not be used (see 5.1 for the model).

Another well-established way of measuring administrative capacity is through the data collected by the World Bank Group (WB). The WB has coded the equivalence of the three parts of the ICRG QoG index as three independent variables. By using the WB data two things can be achieved. One, the variable which covers rule of law can be excluded, as it includes “...perceptions of the incidence of crime...” (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2019; Teorell, et al., 2019). Two, government effectiveness and corruption which covers the relevant aspects of administrative capacity can both be included. The two WB variables “Government Effectiveness” and “Control of Corruption” are in their indexes coded with a value from -2.5 to 2.5, where a higher score is better. A higher score means a more effective government or less corruption. The focus of the Government Effectiveness variable lies on the “inputs” necessary for the deliverance of public goods and services. It measures the quality of the public service provision, the quality of bureaucracy, the competence of civil servants, the independence of civil servants from political pressures and the credibility of the government’s commitments to policies. The Control of Corruption variable measures the perceptions of corruption in the sense of using public power for private gain. The particular aspect of corruption measured varies depending on the sources used in the WB indexes. The measurements range from “grand corruption” to “additional payments to get things done” (Teorell, et al., 2019, ss. 654-658).

A combined index of government effectiveness and corruption, built on the WB data, was added to the QoG data file and used in the statistical analysis. The index was coded by calculating the mean value of the two variables for the respective country. This index will from now on be referred to as “the index”.



**Figure 4.3**  
Describes the three ways in which the explanatory variable of administrative capacity is proxied



## 4.4 Control variables

The literature indicated that democracy is associated with violence. Perhaps because democracy allows the citizens to question their leaders. A control variable for democracy will be added. The variable used for measuring democracy is the well-established and indexed average of Freedom House (FH) and Polity that is made into an ordinal scale. Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell (2007) have shown that this averaged index performs better than the measurements do individually in terms of reliability and validity. As the literature suggests (see 2.2) there exists an inverted U-shaped relationship between democracy and violence. For this reason, the control variable democracy is squared in the model (see 5.1).

The literature also indicate that economic factors are associated with violence. The reason for this is perhaps that economic development mitigates the competition over resources and changes the alternative cost of violence. Three control variables for economic factors will therefore be added. The natural logarithm GDP per capita (2015 US dollar), GDP per capita growth (annual %) and tax revenue as (% of GDP). GDP per capita works better as the natural logarithm of GDP per capita, because of the nature of the measurement, which other researchers indicate (Bäck & Hadenius, 2008; Treisman, 2000; Lederman, Loayza, & Soares, 2001). The economic control variables are from the World Development Index (WDI), which can be found in the QoG dataset. The rest of the control variables which will be presented here are also from the WDI, found in the QoG dataset.

A control variable looking at the violence capacity of the state will be included. The state should theoretically through the 4<sup>th</sup> arrow in Figure 2.2 be able to repress violent behavior, either physically or non-violently. A control variable looking at the police force would be good, but due to the lack of such a variable, will a control variable over the armed forces' personnel (% of the total labor force) be used as a proxy for the state's capacity of violence.

Another control variable which will be included is a measurement of newly internally displaced people. The model uses the natural logarithm of this measurement, "internally displaced persons new displacement-disasters (number)". This variable is added to control for violation of rights. This variable measure the threat of violence rather than violence itself and is therefore unlikely to measure the prevalence of violence itself, though it may be a good predictor of violence.

## 5. Empirical research

### 5.1 Method

As mentioned previously, this thesis has two purposes. First, to analyze the established association between administrative capacity and violence from a new perspective by using new data that focuses on the violence against marginalized groups. The goal is to determine how administrative capacity interacts with this definition of violence. Second, if the administrative capacity is associated with the dependent variable, is it a specific part of administrative capacity (government effectiveness or corruption), or administrative capacity in its “entirety” (the index) which is the best predictor of violence against marginalized groups? A quantitative method was used, and a general model was created to test the hypotheses using regression analysis (see 3.). The model is as follows:

$$V_i = \alpha + \beta AC_i + \Gamma GG_i + \theta \log(GC_i) + \Delta \log(ID_i) + \Phi AF_i + \Lambda TR_i + \Psi D_i^2 + \varepsilon_i$$

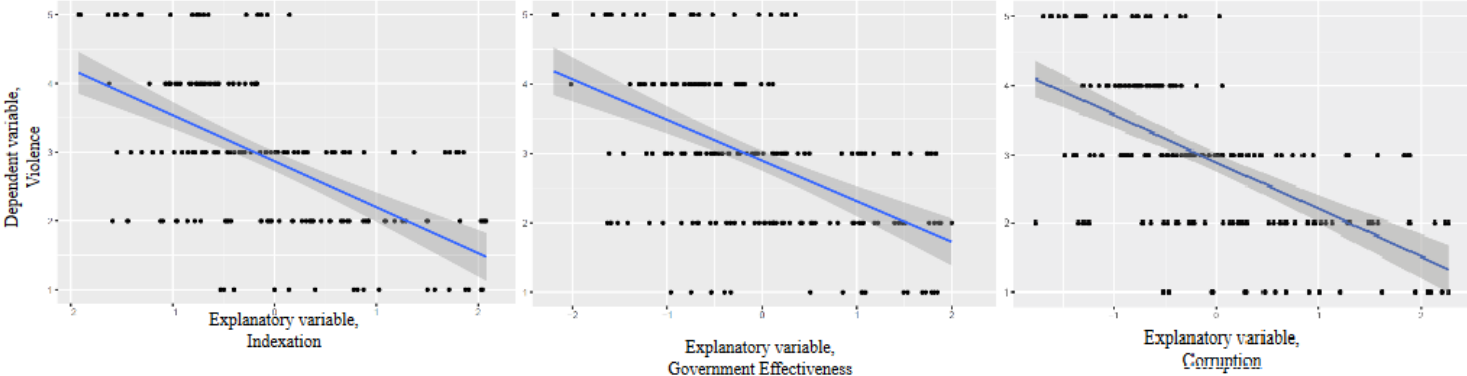
#### Model 5.1

$V_i$  is the dependent variable of non-state actor violence, where  $i$  is the country.  $\alpha$  is a constant.  $AC_i$  is the explanatory variable of administrative capacity for country  $i$ . Three different proxies, for administrative capacity will be used to represent administrative capacity in three different regressions. If  $AC_i$  increases by one unit, ceteris paribus,  $V_i$  is expected to increase/decrease by  $\beta$  units.  $GG_i$ ,  $\log(GC_i)$ ,  $\log(ID_i)$ ,  $TR_i$ ,  $AF_i$ , and  $D_i^2$  are control variables.  $GG_i$  represents GDP per capita growth of country  $i$ ; if  $GG_i$  is changed by one percentage point, ceteris paribus,  $V_i$  is expected to change by  $\Gamma$  units.  $\log(GC_i)$ , represents the natural logarithm of GDP per capita of country  $i$ ; if  $\log(GC_i)$  is changed by one percent, ceteris paribus,  $V_i$  is expected to change by approximately  $\theta$  units.  $\log(ID_i)$  represents the natural logarithm of internally displaced people (number) of country  $i$ ; if  $\log(ID_i)$  is changed by one percent, ceteris paribus,  $V_i$  is expected to change by approximately  $\Delta$  units.  $(AF_i)$ , represents armed forces personnel of country  $i$ ; if  $(AF_i)$  is changed by one percentage point, ceteris paribus,  $V_i$  is expected to change by  $\Phi$  units.  $TR_i$  represents tax revenue as (% of GDP) of country  $i$ ; if  $TR_i$  is changed by one percentage point, ceteris paribus,  $V_i$  is expected to change by  $\Lambda$  units.  $D_i^2$  represents democracy squared of country  $i$ ; if  $D_i$  is changed by one unit, ceteris paribus,  $V_i$  is expected to change by  $2*\Psi*D_i$  units. The variable  $\varepsilon_i$  accounts for everything which explains  $V_i$ , but is excluded in this model of country  $i$ .

The model allows a change of the explanatory variable of administrative capacity, it will be possible to figure out how they behave in relation to violence and several control variables. The null hypothesis  $H_0$  as well as hypothesis **H1**, **H2**, and **H3** are quantitatively tested with the model. Two factors will be sought, a coefficient with enough explanatory power to have an impact on the dependent variable and a statistical significance with the ability to predict the dependent variable. The different explanatory variables for administrative capacity will be analyzed in relation to the dependent variable of violence. The result is then analyzed further based on what the theory suggested.

### 5.2 Empirical Results

To ensure the correct definition of the regression model, the relationship between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable was first established. The results can be seen in Figure 5.2.1 and the figure indicate that the relationship is linear.



**Figure 5.2.1**  
Describes the relationships between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable.

Based on the results in Figure 5.2.1 the relationship was determined to be linear and with a linear regression model with several explanatory variables are tests for heteroscedasticity and multicollinearity necessary. This was done by running Breusch-Pagan and variance inflation (VIF) tests. The results of the regressions show that none of the models suffer from heteroscedasticity, nor from multicollinearity. The Breusch-Pagan values came back far above the  $p > 0.05$  level<sup>1</sup>. The Variance inflation test had no value above seven (Sheather, 2009; O'brien, 2007).

<sup>1</sup> The null hypothesis in the Breusch-Pagan test is homoscedasticity.

**Note:** The violence index goes from 1 – 5 (good-bad). The explanatory variables are flipped, a higher value is better and lower worse, -2.5 – 2.5 (bad-good). For example, if the relationship between the dependent variable and the corruption variable is negative, it means that low levels of violence is associated with low levels of corruption.

The three hypotheses were tested in the model, and the result can be seen in Table 5.2.2. Model 1 was run with the index as the main explanatory variable. The association between the index and the dependent variable is negative, which means that a high score in the violence index correlates with a low score in the index. This implies that low levels of violence is associated with “good governance”, an effective government and low levels of corruption. The index is statistically significant, with a large coefficient ( $\beta$ ), which makes the index a good predictor of non-state actor violence. The null hypothesis (**H0**) is rejected because at least one proxy for administrative capacity can predict the level of violence in a country.

Model 2 was run with government effectiveness as the main explanatory variable. The association between government effectiveness and the dependent variable is similar to model 1, a negative association. This implies that low levels of violence are associated with an effective government. However, government effectiveness is not statistically significant. This makes government effectiveness a bad predictor of non-state actor violence.

In Model 3 the main explanatory variable was corruption. The association between corruption and the dependent variable is like model 1 and 2 a negative association. A high score in the violence index correlates with low levels of corruption. Corruption is, like the index, statistically significant with a large coefficient ( $\beta$ ), which makes corruption a good predictor of non-state actor violence. The most important difference between model 1 and 3 is that model 3 with corruption is more significant in relation to the dependent variable, than the index. Note that corruption as a proxy for administrative capacity also rejects the **H0** null hypothesis.

This result suggests that corruption is the best predictor of non-state actor violence against marginalized groups. The results therefore support hypothesis **H3**, and hypotheses **H1** and **H2** are rejected. The index manages to predict the level of violence, but that is due to corruption driving up the significance. This result is even more interesting since every other variable in the model interacts with violence in roughly the same manner, while the only major difference is how corruption, the index and governmental effectiveness interacts with the rest of the model (see 6. for further elaborations). This suggests that the findings are robust.

Table 5.2.2: Regression output of the three models

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Violence		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
The Index	-0.492** (0.167)		
Government Effectiveness		-0.261 (0.188)	
Corruption			-0.510*** (0.133)
GDP growth	-0.037* (0.017)	-0.039* (0.018)	-0.037* (0.017)
GDP per capita, log	-0.054 (0.111)	-0.149 (0.127)	-0.073 (0.094)
Internally Displaced people	0.077* (0.031)	0.080* (0.032)	0.071* (0.030)
Armed Forces Personnel	-0.009 (0.091)	0.020 (0.094)	-0.020 (0.088)
Tax Revenue	-0.013 (0.015)	-0.017 (0.015)	-0.011 (0.014)
Democracy <sup>2</sup>	-0.001 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)
Constant	3.404** (1.041)	4.327*** (1.171)	3.499*** (0.898)
N	107	107	107
R-squared	0.469	0.433	0.497
Adj. R-squared	0.431	0.393	0.462
F Statistic	12.490***	10.818***	13.995***
Breusch-Pagan test p-value	0.145	0.204	0.191

**Note:** The standard errors for the coefficients are reported in parenthesis and \*, \*\*, \*\*\* denote significance at the 5%, 1% and 0.1% levels.

# 6. Discussion

## 6.1 What does the results imply?

Model 1 and 3 fulfill the requirement to reject the null hypothesis **H0**. In those models, it is shown that corruption as well as an index (of corruption and government effectiveness) can predict the level of non-state actor violence against marginalized groups. Government efficiency and corruption are both to some degree associated with non-state actor violence, but only corruption has a significant effect out of the two. For this reason, the only predictor of non-state actor violence out of corruption and government effectiveness is corruption. The significance of the index is carried by the half of the index which represents corruption, because model 2 (with government effectiveness) was not significant in relation to the dependent variable. Both the significance and the coefficient of corruption is higher than that of the index. This makes corruption a better predictor of non-state actor violence against marginalized groups than the index. The result suggests that when researchers such as (Wig & Tollefsen, 2016) uses an index of variables as a proxy for administrative capacity<sup>2</sup> in the context of violence, then any association between the index and the dependent variable may be carried by the corruption part of the index. For Wig and Tollefsen this means that the subunit of corruption carries the correlation between their explanatory and dependent variables. The other subunits of their explanatory variable may be insignificant in relation to violence. It is tempting to draw wider conclusions based on my result, but their dependent variable is wider, encompasses different aspects of violence, and they use a larger sample than I do and for this reason further research on the topic is necessary.

If one compares model 1, 2 and 3 closely, then one will see that all six control variables interact with the models in roughly the same way, the choice of explanatory variable does not affect the significance of any control variables.

The control variables who are significant stay significant and the variables who are insignificant stay insignificant. The model therefore seem robust, and I interpret my findings as reliable. At the same time, government efficiency and corruption are closely associated with each other,

	Government Effectiveness	Corruption
Government Effectiveness	1.0000	0.9057
Corruption	0.9057	1.0000

**Figure 6.1**  
Describes the correlation between the two explanatory variables, government effectiveness and corruption

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<sup>2</sup> Wig & Forø calls it institutional quality, and it encompasses corruption, law governance, and capable, efficient and trusted institutions.

the correlation matrix shows a correlation value of 0.91, on a scale from 0 to 1 where 1 means complete correlation. It is surprising that two variables that are this closely associated to each other simultaneously have such a huge difference in significance towards another variable. The 10% difference in correlation (which is small) must contain much of the explanatory power, to why corruption is significant, and to why government effectiveness is not significant, in relation to the dependent variable in this thesis. This result calls for a future disaggregation of administrative capacity and corruption. Researchers might want to avoid proxying administrative capacity with an index if it is possible to use more specific variables when analyzing violence. It is possible that by using subunits of corruption more can be said about the relationships between corruption and violence. For example, my result implies that an index such as the ICRG should be replaced with the independent variables obtainable via the WB (see **4.3**), like I have done in this thesis. This result also suggests that future research would benefit by a focus put on the subunits of corruption, to figure out what subunits of corruption are significant in relation to violence, and to try to isolate the relationship between the subunits, and the dependent variable. By isolating relationships, a more correct representation of the relationship between explanatory and dependent variables can be found. For this reason, when analyzing non-state actor violence, I advise future researchers to focus on the subunits of corruption, considering that this thesis showed the corruption variable to be the best predictor of non-state actor violence.

In the context of what the last half of the previous paragraph discussed can a similar conclusion about the dependent variable be made. The dependent variable deals with a specific form of violence and therefore excludes many other sources of violence. At the same time, it includes anything which can be considered violence against marginalized groups, which encompasses many cases of violence. Engelhart found that corruption<sup>3</sup> has a negative impact on human rights (Engelhart, 2009). He analyzed a subunit of “violence against marginalized groups” which covers human rights and he included the state as a perpetrator of violence<sup>4</sup>, this makes it difficult to compare our results. What can be said is that my and Engelhart’s results complement each other. Mine and Engelhart’s result prove that corruption is a relevant variable when analyzing violence. Corruption seems to be a good predictor of many different types of violence against marginalized groups and may be associated with violence even if wider or narrower definitions are used, and whether the state is included or excluded as a perpetrator of violence. I suggest therefore that future researchers should focus more on the subunits of

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<sup>3</sup> He does not include an explanatory variable for government effectiveness (which is comparable to mine)

<sup>4</sup> I talk about the PTS (Political Terror Scale) index he uses

violence such as (McCormick & Mitchel, 1997) suggests, to see if the relationship between corruption (or even the subunits of corruption) and the subunits of violence are associated differently to each other, than the association which this thesis suggests. Researchers could also try what Buhaug and Rød (2006) suggest, to disaggregate the analysis to smaller units of analysis than countries. The possibilities of future research are plentiful.

I believe that before drawing further conclusions, two disclaimers are necessary. The result is built on a cross-section analysis with data from year 2015. The number of cases (N=107), is quite small and future studies should try to replicate this result but by using a larger sample of observations, a time series analysis would be a good idea. Also, although I may intuitively think that if non-state actor violence against marginalized groups is high, then violent crimes in other areas of crime must surely be high and although it is tempting to attempt to scale my results into a broader context of violence, I should not do this. Unfortunately, there is a clear limit to my evidence. Based on my results, I cannot generalize about non-state actor violence, nor draw conclusions about the subunits of my dependent variable. Future researchers should analyze the generalizability of my findings.

## 6.2 The Mechanism of Punishment

Does the literature give any insight into possible mechanisms behind the result? Lapuente's and Rothstein's (2014) result show that bureaucratic quality (which roughly compares to government effectiveness) is associated to violence via a reduced usage of violence as a defensive mechanism. In the context of defensive mechanisms, let me return to the framework of Hobbes. To me it seems that the psychological mechanism behind the violence that Lapuente and Rothstein deal with is like the psychological mechanism behind the state of nature, you harm someone else to avoid being harmed because you cannot trust others (the opposition cannot be trusted in their case). It is possible that the violence analyzed in my thesis is of a different nature. Most violence towards marginalized groups is unlikely to be of a defensive nature. How common is it to beat a human rights defender or your wife based on a defensive notion? It may happen, but I doubt that it is commonplace. If the mechanism behind non-state actor violence against marginalized groups is not of a defensive nature, what then is the mechanism that causes the association between corruption and non-state actor violence? In the next paragraph I suggest a possible mechanism behind this violence.



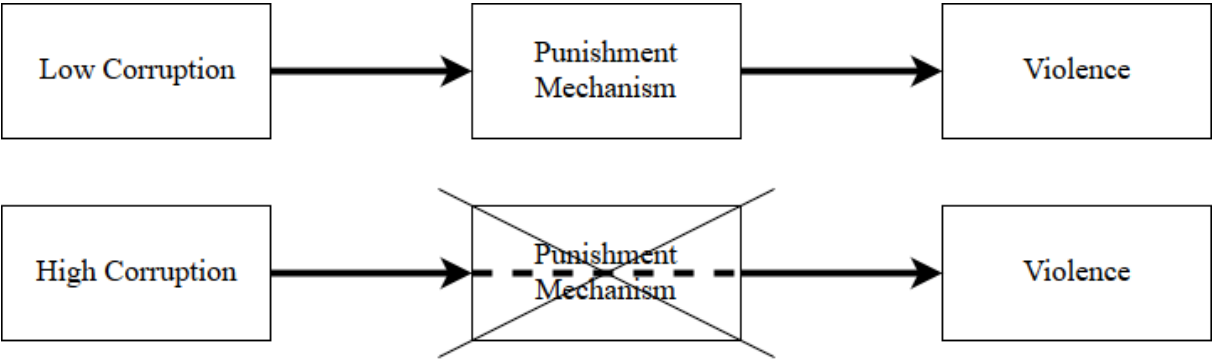
Yadong Luo (2002) argues that corruption causes unreliability, which in the context of my result is interesting. A system with high government effectiveness but a lot of corruption is an unreliable system. What I mean is that the competence of the public servants and the quality of public service they provide may be high, but if they are also corrupt, then the system will not be reliable. If high corruption and high government effectiveness are present, the service can still arrive quickly if you have the means necessary to bend the system according to your will. How can this be related to violence against marginalized groups? Imagine a hypothetical case: A does something violent (and illegal) against B. If the government effectiveness is high, then the state will quickly find and punish A for the illegal acts. But if corruption also is high, then (in theory) A can buy its freedom with bribes. In a system such as this A knows that it is possible to buy freedom, and therefore will not fear the potential punishment of the

	High Corruption	Low corruption
Low Government Effectiveness	Punishment Mechanism Absent	Punishment Mechanism Present
High Government Effectiveness	Punishment Mechanism Absent	Punishment Mechanism Present

**Figure 6.2.1**  
Describes under what conditions the Mechanism of Punishment is Absent/Present

state, as A would in a system with lower corruption. The mechanism of fear of punishment is an essential trait of the state. By simply existing can the state in a panoptical fashion shape the decisions of its citizens. I do not mean that the state is ubiquitous and judge our every act; what matters is a person's internalization of the belief that the state is present and able to punish. A good example of what I mean can be caught with the concept of the panopticon, it does not matter if there is a person or not in the middle of the panopticon, what matters is that the prisoners believe there is one (Foucault, 1977). In the context of the mechanism of punishment, this roughly translates to: It does not matter if you live in a state with the monopoly over punishment, what matters is that a potential perpetrator knows that the state will punish violent behavior. To the point which I am striving towards; if high corruption is present then the mechanism of punishment is absent, because the citizens do not believe that the state is capable of punishing them. That is because that state (or the actors representing the state) can be bought, which in essence is similar to an absent state in the context of the punishment mechanism. Low corruption is a necessary condition for the punishment mechanism to be present, while the level of government effectiveness does not affect whether the mechanism is present or absent, such as Figure 6.2.1 suggests. Government effectiveness instead works as Hendrix (2010, ss. 274-275) argues, the stronger the capacity to monitor [the higher the government efficiency], the better is the repression of violence. Government efficiency makes the punishment mechanism more efficient, but it does not make it appear or disappear. To conclude the discussion of the

mechanism I have suggested, a possible explanation of the result in this thesis, that high corruption undermines the mechanism of punishment, which is an essential part for the reliability of the state. In Figure 6.2.2 the mechanism suggested is described; high corruption cancels out the mechanism of punishment in the state. Keep in mind, the way I presented corruption and its relation to the punishment mechanism is a simplification. In reality (if this mechanism exists) it is probably not binary, as Figure 6.2.1 suggests. I made this simplification as an attempt to retain stringency and avoid an unnecessarily long discussion about a hypothetical mechanism. The mechanism may be logically sound, but that does not imply that it actually exists, that is for future research to decide.



**Figure 6.2.2**  
Describes how high corruption overrides the Mechanism of Punishment

## 7. Conclusion

This thesis analyzed the relationship between three proxies of administrative capacity (as explanatory variables) and non-state actor violence against marginalized groups (as dependent variable). This was done by using a quantitative analysis, where several hypotheses were created and then tested in a regression model. First, it was concluded that a proxy for administrative capacity is significantly associated with violence against marginalized groups. After that, it was concluded that both an index (of government effectiveness and corruption) and corruption can predict the dependent variable. The significant association between the index and the dependent variable is carried by the significance of corruption. This result suggests that the best predictor of non-state actor violence against marginalized groups is corruption. By exploring the relationship between corruption and a subunit of violence the result of this thesis has helped in strengthening the established view that corruption is closely associated with violence. To the best of my knowledge no other scholar have analyzed this relationship with the same data, perspective, and method. For that reason, this thesis has contributed to building up the knowledge of administrative capacity and violence, and I make several suggestions of how future research could continue to expand the knowledge and adapt based on my results. Future researchers are suggested to focus more on the subunits of both corruption and violence to find associations between those subunits. I also suggest a possible mechanism (the punishment mechanism) behind the correlation of corruption and non-state actor violence against marginalized groups (see 6.2).

The world consists of a diversity of states and it is not uncommon that some of these states abuse their power and we ought to be skeptic when they do. Even a weak state is powerful compared to unorganized citizens with a violent disposition (Fearon & Laitin, 2003, s. 88). Yet, violence from non-state actors seems in many places to eclipse the violence of states. It often seems that the issue is not that the state represses and oppresses citizens, but that the state cannot protect its citizens from the repression and oppression. Considering the association between corruption and violence found in this thesis, if we want states to be able to protect its citizens from violence, then we need to fight corruption because it undermines the stability, reliability and trustworthiness of the state. This is important for both scholars and state officials to recognize. We need further research on this topic, and the global fight against corruption must be revitalized. Perhaps C. Raj Kumar (2012) and Anne Peters (2019) are on the right track when they suggest that corruption should be included as a violation of human rights. The result of this thesis indicates that their suggestions might be a step in the right direction if our goal is to

minimize corruption and violence. For it is of the utmost importance for us all to recognize what corruption may cause and perhaps then, will we all fully realize the consequences of corruption.

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## A. Appendix

<b>Table A.1: Sources of the data</b>		
<b>Codebook Name</b>	<b>Codename</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
Societal Violence Scale Index	svs_ind	Quality of Government
Government Effectiveness, Estimate	wbgi_gee	Quality of Government
Control of Corruption, Estimate	wbgi_cce	Quality of Government
GDP per capita (current US dollar)	wdi_gdpcapcur	Quality of Government
GDP per capita growth (annual %)	wdi_gdpcapgr	Quality of Government
Internally displaced persons, new displacement-disasters (number)	wdi_idpdis	Quality of Government
Armed forces personnel (% of total labor force)	wdi_afp	Quality of Government
Tax revenue (% of GDP)	wdi_taxrev	Quality of Government
Level of Democracy (Freedom House/Imputed Polity)	fh_ipolity2	Quality of Government