

Determining Factors Contributory to Global Peace

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Abstract

This paper aimed at determining which of the Global Peace Index (GPI) indicators would significantly affect the internal and external peace of 162 countries. This was done by investigating the change of state from natural to normal. The data were obtained from the annual report of the GPI done by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) from 2008 to 2015. The result showed that the peacefulness of the countries can be attributed to the internal factors followed by the external factors. The deterioration of peacefulness can be first brought about by political instability. Various armed factions begin competing for influence in the power that lead to civil war. Violent crime, homicide rate, terrorist activities and the Political Terror Scale, followed substantially. To repress the population and fight the rebels, the government would increase the number of internal security officers, police, and army. Most of the external factors would also worsen because of these conflicts. Relations with neighboring countries would remain extremely tense. They would struggle to accommodate the flood of refugees. Interventions of United States (US) and other allied countries would have to take place.

Keywords and phrases: Global peace, Global Peace Index, peacefulness, conflicts, economics

Introduction

Everybody desires a harmonious and peaceful place to live. Many organizations are established to help sustain peace within and among nations. Peace interventions, talks, and agreements are promoted and implemented. But despite these efforts, it is still undeniable that many countries still fail to ensure peaceful communities. Peace is an interesting issue all over the world, perhaps because each country's economy is directly affected by the peacefulness of one's country. Millions of civilians are killed and affected by diverse violence.

According to Raffaldt et al. (2012),

“globalization prospers in peace, where global markets remain open.” It was reported that the economic impact of violence on the global economy was substantial and was estimated at US\$14.3 trillion or 13.4 percent of world Gross Domestic Product in the recent years (Blake, 2015). This is equivalent to the combined economies of Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. Since 2008, the total economic impact on global GDP has increased by 15.3 per cent, from US\$12.4 trillion to US\$14.3 trillion (*Global Index Report*, 2015).

The Institute for Economics and Peace

(IEP) reported that the world has become less peaceful every year. The necessity for determining which among the factors that will significantly contribute to global peace is essential. Assessing the social, political and economic factors of each country enables IEP to measure peace at the global and national levels. Every year, IEP publishes its results on these assessments, known as the Global Peace Index (GPI). It is a yearly report that started in 2008 to the present. However, Grossman (2003) noted that war is a means that groups sometimes choose to employ in attempting to settle a dispute favorably. Only a small fraction of disputes between sovereign states result in inter-state war, and only a small fraction of disputes between constituent groups of an institution results in civil war. Even disputes about secession are often settled peacefully and only sometimes end in wars of independence. Fry (2009) convincingly argues that our ancient ancestors were not innately warlike. He points out that even today when war seems ever present the vast majority of us live peaceful, quiet lives. We are not as warlike as we think, and if we can learn from our ancestors, we may be able to move beyond war to provide real justice and security for the world (Fry, 2015).

Outlining the sources of conflict would help us understand and enable us to determine the significant factors that contribute to peace. This study therefore attempted to understand what makes societies peaceful and what we need to do to mitigate violence in the future based on the GPI report from 2008 to 2015.

Conceptual Framework

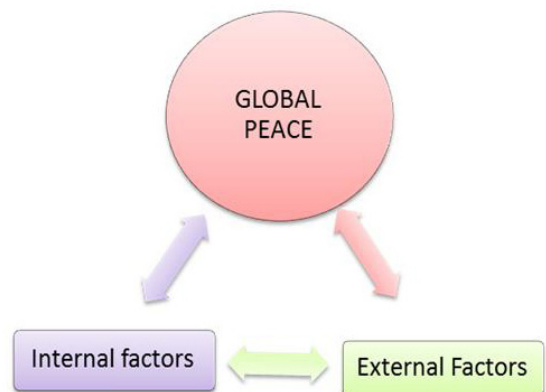
This study was anchored on the annual report of GPI. The GPI is the world's leading measure of peace. Produced annually since 2007, it ranks 162 countries on their levels of internal and external peacefulness. The IEP developed the GPI under the guidance of an international panel of experts with data jointly collated and calculated with the Economist Intelligence Unit. The Index measures the

relative state of peace, investigates potential determinants of peace, and creates a framework to track and compare levels of peace over time (Quantifying Peace, n. d.).

The Institute for Economics and Peace is the world's leading think tank dedicated to developing metrics to analyze peace and to quantify its economic value. The research is used extensively by governments, academic institutions, think tanks, non-governmental organizations and by intergovernmental institutions. It has offices in Sydney, Australia, Mexico and New York (Measuring and Communicating the Economic Value of Peace, n.d.).

According to GPI, a study done by the Vision of Humanity initiative of the Institute for Economics and Peace, the Index is an attempt to measure the relative position of nations' and regions' peacefulness. It is composed of 22 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources and ranks, the independent states, covering 99.6 percent of the world's population (GPI, 2015).

The indicators are divided into two factors the internal and external. The panel of experts gives more weight to the internal peace because they believe that nations that are peaceful have also a good relationship with others especially their neighboring nations. The GPI focuses on violence enacted by one person or state on another. It does not include indicators measuring child abuse, suicide rates, and animal abuse as no reliable data available on the countries ranked in GPI (IEP, n.d.)



The IEP identified the most and the least peaceful countries using the internal and external indicators. Most of the most peaceful countries belong to Europe while the least one in the Middle East and North America.

Objectives

This study aimed at determining which of the GPI indicators would significantly affect the internal and external peace. Specifically, it aimed:

1. To compare the peacefulness of the countries from 2008 to 2015
2. To identify the indicators that significantly affect the global peace

Methodology

This study is an exploratory design using data mining methods. The data obtained from the annual report of the GPI were conducted by the IEP. The GPI of countries from 2008 - 2015 were gathered. The score ranges from 1 to 5, 1 as the most peaceful. The idea of characterizing the smaller aspects of each country that contributes to peace is the same as looking for a change from the natural to the normal state. Thus, fractal statistical analysis (FSA) was utilized.

For the comparison of the global peacefulness, fractal dimensions from 2008 to 2015 were computed and plotted.

The factor that significantly affects the global peace was determined by hunting the fractal space from the histogram. This was done by identifying the country that departed from fractality or the natural state. The natural state of order is fractal as opposed to their normal state. (Padua, 2015). The identification of the factors was done by outlining the sources of the deviation from the fractal state.

Result and Discussion

Before the civilization and the existence of the organized societies, peace and freedom

ruled the earth. The philosophy of Rousseau that stated, “The less civilized man is, the happier, nobler, more peaceful he is” supports this statement. But because of the increase of the human population, societies were created, and a government was formed “Man is naturally good,” n.d.). To Hobbes, a government was made for the sole purpose of protecting one’s existence. According to social philosophy, freedom is man’s true condition and nature and to create a free society, man defends the freedoms of those who do not want them protected (Ross, 2008).

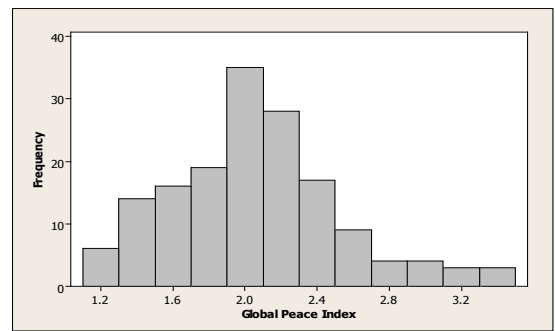


Figure 1. Histogram of GPI.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the GPI is in the normal state. The existence of conflict and violence are happening in the world today. The philosophy of Hobbes supported this scenario that once a civil government is instituted the natural state will disappear. Between nations, however, no such power exists and, therefore, nations have the same rights to preserve themselves—including making war (Ross, 2008).

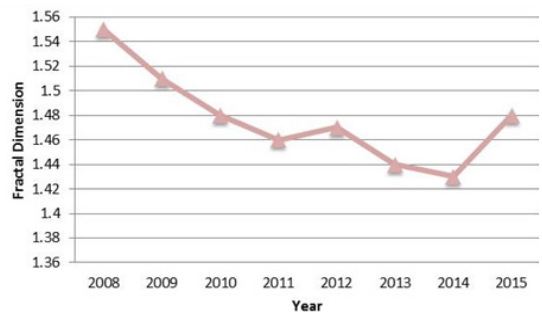


Figure 2. Distribution of fractal dimension from 2008 – 2015.

Figure 2 displays the distribution of the peacefulness of the countries from 2008 – 2015. There is a constant decrease of fractal dimension up to 2014 which implies that there is a deterioration of peacefulness. The report of IEP (2014) that the world has become less peaceful every year since 2008 supports the result.

In 2015, however, there was an increase in fractal dimension implying that there is an improvement in the index. GPI (2015) reported that four out of the nine geographical regions experienced a development in peace. Deterioration of peacefulness in the least peaceful countries, specifically in the Middle East and North America (MENA) is still happening. The increase of the index is affected by the improvement of peacefulness in most peaceful countries, predominantly in Europe. Europe maintained its position as the most peaceful region in the world, supported by a lack of domestic and external conflicts. These regions experienced the largest relative improvement in peacefulness (GPI, 2015).

Many groups have been working, advocating and promoting peace. There had been the implementation of treaties and agreements in pursuing peace within and between nations. However, despite these actions, there are still countries that fail to sustain peace. It can be seen in the following figures the regions that deviate from the natural state. These are the regions that suffered from an upsurge of violence and conflicts.

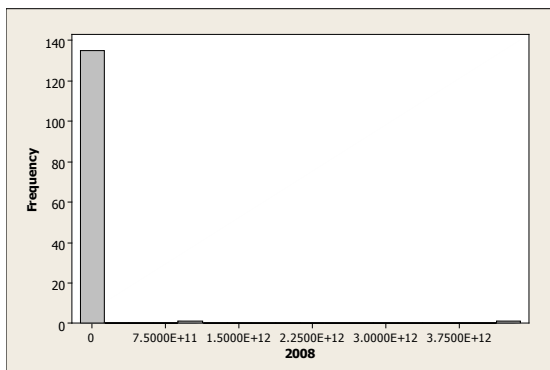


Figure 3. Fractality of GPI in 2008.

Figure 3 reveals that Somalia and Iraq deviate from the natural state which means that these regions are involved in a high level of conflict.

Iraq’s indicators show high levels of political instability and the number of displaced persons as a percentage of the population is also very high. This conflict in Iraq is due to political instability which started the downfall of Saddam Hussein regime. This conflict has led to Iraqis living in exile (GPI, 2008).

However, Somalia has a high number of homicides and violent crimes. This resulted in the ease of access to small arms and light weapons and the potential for terrorist acts. The conflict in Somalia originated from the nonexistence of a central government. Factions among armed groups have grown due to the competition for political and economic dominance “Enough: The Project to End Genocide and Crime Against Humanity,” 2015).

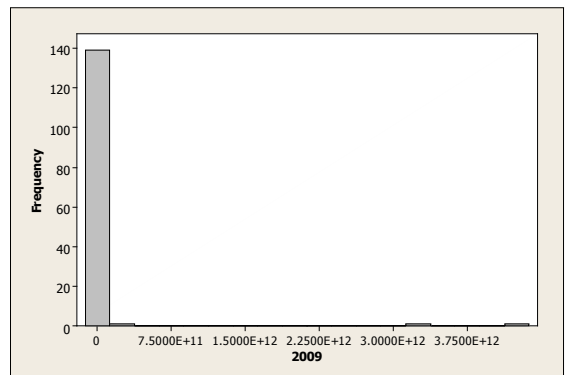


Figure 4. Fractality of GPI in 2009.

Figure 4 reveals that a high level of conflict continues in Iraq. Afghanistan receives also a high level of conflict.

The conflict in Afghanistan began when the Soviet Union sent military forces to support the communists. The United States supported those fighting the Soviets. After the fight, different groups controlled the country, such as Taliban who established extremely tough restrictions on the country (Vermilya, 2003). This situation resulted to a very low level of

trust in other citizens, high homicide rate, high level of violent crime and the potential for terrorist acts. Afghanistan’s relationship with most neighboring countries is also tense (GPI, 2009).

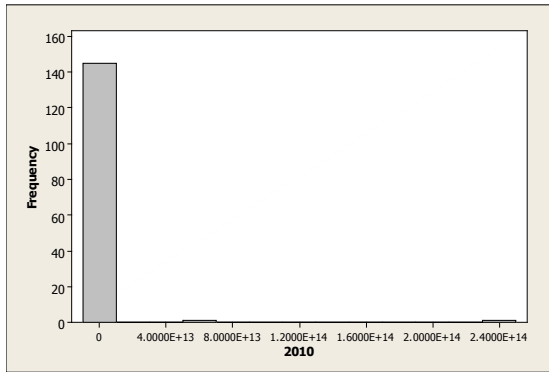


Figure 5. Fractality of GPI in 2010.

In 2010, Iraq remained the lowest-ranked nation of the GPI; it received the highest possible score indicating a high level of conflict. The ongoing violent conflict between the government, supported by US-led coalition forces, al-Qaeda in Iraq, and several insurgent groups can be the evidence. Iraq is a highly militarized country, small arms and light weapons remain very easily accessed. Similarly, Somalia’s internal conflict registered the highest possible score, meaning internal conflicts have continued (GPI, 2010).

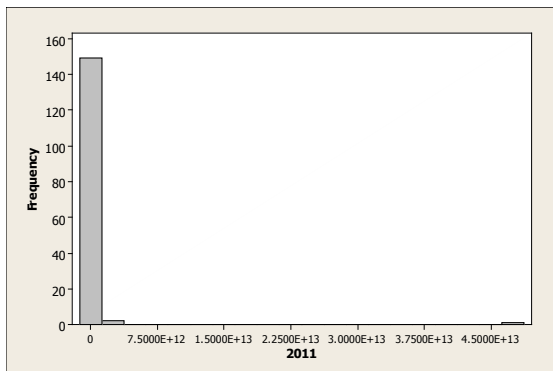


Figure 6. Fractality in 2011.

Somalia is classified the least at peace out of 153 countries. The rise in political instability reflects mainly the continual existence of the UN-backed transitional federal government

(TFG) in 2010 and early 2011, led by the apparently Islamist president, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed (GPI, 2011).

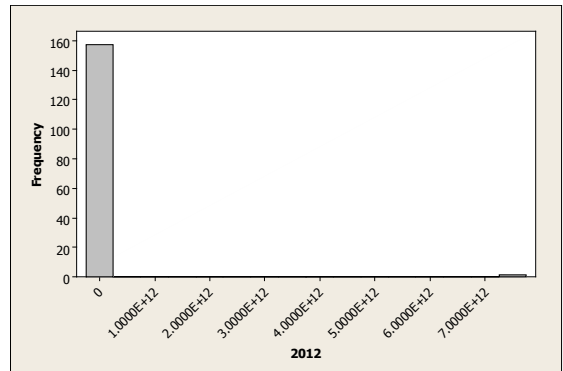


Figure 7. Fractality in 2012.

Figure 7 reveals that conflict is still present in Somalia. Nonexistence of central government led to factions among groups.

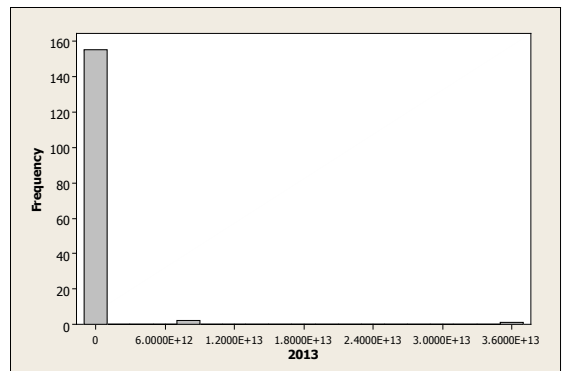


Figure 8. Fractality of GPI in 2013.

Somalia has been without an operative central government since 1991 (“Enough: The Project to End Genocide and Crime Against Humanity,” 2015). Somalians descended into infighting and lawlessness, igniting famine and massive refugee flows into neighboring countries.

Afghanistan has long been a battleground for strategic wars by larger external powers. This is partly due to its geographic position between the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia. Also, the fragmented and polarized nature of Afghan society, which is made up of many ethnic groups, has led to its multiple

internal struggles that have gained support from the different external powers (“Peace Direct: Insight,” 2011).

United Nations reported that the numbers killed or injured in the first six months of the year rose by a quarter from 2013 levels to nearly 5,000 people. Women and children are particularly badly affected by this violence (*The Guardian*, 2014).

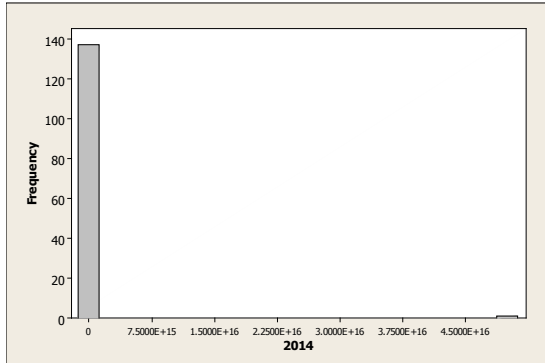


Figure 9. Fractality of GPI in 2014.

The war in Syria was brought about by violent conflict between groups loyal to the government and the opposition. The clashes among groups led to bloodshed. Political instability and militarization increased (GPI, 2014).

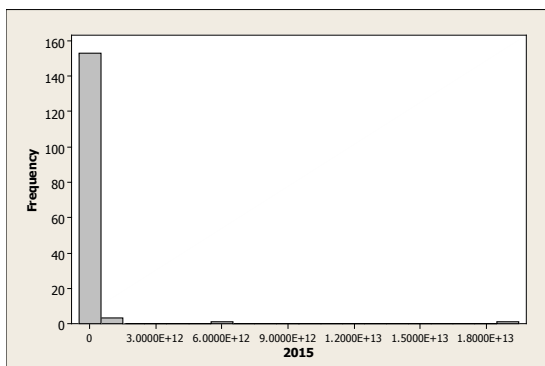


Figure 10. Fractality of GPI in 2015.

These internal conflicts affect their relationship with neighboring countries, such as Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. A flock of people fled since the start of the conflict, most of them women and children.

Neighboring countries have borne the brunt of the refugee crisis, with Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey struggle to accommodate the flood of new arrivals. Allied countries have interfered and gradually increased their support to the government and also to the opposition. Lebanon’s Shia Islamist Hezbollah movement supported the government. The Sunni-dominated opposition has, meanwhile, attracted varying degrees of support from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Arab states along with the US, UK, and France. However, the rise of hardline Islamist rebels and the arrival of jihadists from across the world has led to a marked cooling of international and regional backing (“Investigation Files,” 2015).

Conclusion

The increasing number of countries involved in conflicts threatens the global peace. Peaceful countries have the more stable political system. Political stability is the foremost factor that has a significant effect on internal peace. People living in a peaceful country are satisfied and have a high level of respect to the government officials. Their essential human needs are largely met, conflicts are accomplished peacefully through comprehensive political processes, respect for minority rights and peaceful resolution of rivalry.

Cultural, ethnic, political and religious conflicts are common to less peaceful countries. These factors contribute to the instability of a country. Internal conflicts bring stress and pressures into other countries. It gives disharmonious relation towards other countries which in turn threatens the global peace.

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