CONDITIONS FOR WINNING WARS: PEACE PERFORMANCES OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN NATIONS

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Abstract

This paper is a theory oriented research that seeks to generalise the peace performance scenario of Middle East and North African nations, by examining different conditions in which the states of the region win or fail. For this, it scrutinises states' performance in terms of three basic domains—ongoing domestic and international conflict, societal safety and security, and the militarisation—that are chosen from Global Peace Index (GPI) reports where state-specific performance in every domain and all other relevant data are contained. By applying cross-nation comparative method and different kinds of statistical operations, the paper finds that lack of security is the core crisis of this region. However, the best and highly progressive performers of the region have good performance in conflict domain and have a favourable control over the conditions of security. But due to their bad performance in the domain of militarisation, they fall to be globally lagging in the GPI ranking. On the other hand, in spite of the worst performance in security which is caused mainly by their comparatively bad performance in conflict domain, the least and highly deteriorative performers show a better performance in the domain of militarization which implies that such countries have the potential to secure, for themselves, a globally progressed ranking in GPI evaluation, if they can continue the making of such progress in this domain.

Key words and terms: The Middle East, North Africa, peace performance, conditions of wining wars, social safety, conflict domain, and militarisation.

INTRODUCTION

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a region with a total of 20 countries that contain about 7% of world population who are divided into different ethnic and religious identities. While Muslims form the majority of its population, the region also has some seven million Jews residing mostly in Israel, about 34 Million Christians; an approximate number of 1.1 million Druze living in Israel, Syria, and Lebanon. It also has over 3.1 Million Hindus and an estimated 902,890 Buddhists and 700,000 Yazidi; including so many

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people from numerous other religions. Although Muslims form the majority, 23% of its population is Non-Muslims.[1]

The region is both the locus of abundant reserves of natural resources and dependent on them. Indeed, 55% of global oil reserves and 29% of natural gas reserves are located in the MENA region.[2] The hydrocarbon sector also dominates many of these economies, contributing to large shares of government and exports revenues.[3] Therefore, since the countries of this region are endowed with natural resources such as oil and gas, they are faced with important political, economic, military, and strategic challenges. Those challenges are both of short- and long-term nature.[4] As a result, the region often becomes the victim of both internal anarchy and external intrusion.

With such potential and challenges, however, the region has so far failed to create peaceful conditions on ground of at least three domains—societal safety and security, ongoing conflict, and the militarisation. For instance, the highest level of unemployment resulted in the lack of societal safety and security.[5] On the other hand, territorial disputes among the states, antagonistic internal relationship, external intervention, and military dynamics have also caused the countries to be prone to ongoing domestic and international conflict and militarisation.[6]

Such failures of MENA are specifically seen in the GPI reports. Among all the regions, MENA carries the ever-bad regional performance. Also, this region contains the countries of both categories—country with globally better performance and the least performance. It creates the space for this study where an attempt is taken to visualise the state of ranking-fluctuation over the years and then to specify the peace performance of every particular state in each of the three domains so that the core-crisis-domain of the region can be detected; and different conditions in which the countries of this region win or fail can be identified.

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[3]   "Gender inequality and entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa A statistical portrait," available at: <www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/Statistical%20Portrait.pdf> (accessed on 23 April 2017).

[2]   *Oil and Gas Journal Data Book*, Tulsa, Oklahoma: PennWell Books, 2009.

[3]   Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2016/mcd/eng/pdf/mreo1016.pdf> (accessed on 27 April 2017).

[4]   J. Frankel, "The Natural Resource Curse: A Survey of Diagnoses and Some Prescriptions," in *Commodity Prices and Inclusive Growth in Low-Income Countries*, edited by R. Arezki, C. Pattillo, M. Quintyn, and M. Zhu, International Monetary Fund, 2012.

[5]   Available at: <css.escwa.org.lb/SDPD/3572/Goal8.pdf> (accessed on 29 April 2017).

[6]   A. Cordesman, "Risks and Instability in the Middle East and North Africa in 2016," available at: <https://csis prod.s3.amazonaws.com/.../160114_cordesman_risks_and_instability.pdf.> (accessed on 2 May 2017).

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

This paper has a basic concern to analyse the peace performance scenario of MENA region. For this, it scrutinises three basic domains—ongoing domestic and international conflict, societal safety and security, and the militarisation. Thus, the paper deals with a total of four major concepts.

PEACE PERFORMANCE

It is categorised into four types- best performer, least performer, highly progressive performer, and highly deteriorative performer. While the best and least performers are identified looking into the first and last positions of the GPI reports of the respective years; progression and deterioration are determined based on the relatively higher number of changing-events—either progressive change or deteriorative—in which that particular kind of performance is shown by a state. Thus, a country with the highest number of progressive changing-events is termed as 'highly progressive', whereas the country marked as 'highly deteriorative' possesses the exactly opposite characteristics.

The other three concepts are seen in this paper as seen by GPI reports where *ongoing domestic and international conflict* is measured based on the following indicators:

- Number and duration of internal conflicts
- Number of deaths from organised conflict (internal)
- Number, duration and role in external conflicts
- Intensity of organised internal conflict
- Relations with neighbouring countries

Societal safety and security is defined based on 10 determinants which are as follows:
- Level of perceived criminality in society
- Number of refugees and internally displaced people as a percentage of the population
- Political instability
- Political Terror Scale
- Impact of terrorism
- Number of homicides per 100,000 people
- Level of violent crime
- Likelihood of violent demonstrations
- Number of jailed population per 100,000 people
- Number of internal security officers and police per 100,000 people

And finally, '*Militarisation*' is measured based on the following indicators:

- Military expenditure as a percentage of GDP