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Analyzing Failure

Pakistan & the Failed States Index

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About the Author

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The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), established in August 1996, is an independent think tank devoted to research on peace and security from a South Asian perspective.

Its aim is to develop a comprehensive and alternative framework for peace and security in the region catering to the changing demands of national, regional and global security.

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Lidia Leoni was a Research Intern at the IPCS and wrote this essay during her internship.

Analyzing Failure

Pakistan and the Failed States Index

Lidia Leoni

Albeit a situation rated as critical, Pakistan climbed down the ranking of this year's Failed States Index, (FSI), in terms of both score (102.30 to 101.60) and placement (12th to 13th). Although this development is consistent with its slowly improving trend since its worst ever results in 2009 (104.1/120), a deeper analysis of the causal factors and at the individual indicators delineates how Pakistan's position deteriorated in three categories, Group Grievance, Poverty and External Intervention, while improvements in other categories can be traced back to external rather than internal factors. This report aims to pinpoint and contextualise what the 2012 Failed States Index means for Pakistan through an in-depth analysis.

The aim of the Index itself is to capture short and long-term stability developments within different countries; for this reason, the analysis will compare Pakistan's current scores with previous ones.

I OF FAILED STATES AND INDEXES

The question of how to deal with states that do not comply with generally accepted Weberian rules of state behavior and organisation has become a much debated issue within the International Relations community. As an increasing number of research institutes and international organisations engage in designing

assessment methods to identify the causes and find possible solutions, the whole concept lacks an authoritative and commonly accepted definition and terminology. State Failure, Fragility, Weakness and Collapse are just a few labels – in this paper the issue will be addressed as “State Fragility” as the terminology applied by the g7+ group of fragile states.

Despite a general lack of consensus on what state fragility means, a path can be recognised in the stress allocated to the functional role of state as a provider of basic services. The definitions part when it comes to identifying which services are the basic ones; while some tend to be very precise by listing factors from security to education, factually equalizing non-fragility with a liberal Western-style democracy, others leave more space for alternative systems, stressing especially security and control over the territory. Of all the indexes established so far, Fund for Peace's Failed States Index, which is published in collaboration with the authoritative magazine Foreign Policy, is the one that had the most powerful impact in popularizing state fragility. The term “failed state” has entered more than any other the public and media discourse. At the same time, it remains one of the most controversial terminologies. Even more than “collapsed”, the adjective “failed” does not allow any room for maneuver or improvement. When something or

someone has “failed”, it means that it or he did not succeed and has no chance to do so in future. Being a negative and widely popularised term, “failed states” contributed to influencing especially the Western perceptions of these states as places where there is no way back to stability. For this reason, the term is widely rejected by fragile states themselves and has been gradually challenged in the academic discourse, while newly developed assessment methods use more neutral terms like “state fragility”, “state weakness”, “fragile conditions” and the like. Nevertheless, “failed state” remains unchallenged in media and popular culture.

The methodology employed in the index has also received widespread critique; the next section will take a closer look at its structure, while at the same time reflecting on its weaknesses.

Fund for Peace’s Failed States Index: The Methodology

The Index compiled by Fund for Peace (FfP) is composed of twelve social, political and economic indicators reflecting different challenges to state stability on a scale from zero to ten. A score of ten corresponds to most unstable and zero to most stable. The social indicators comprise Demographic Pressures, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Brain Drain and Group Grievance; the economic indicators are defined as Uneven Development and Poverty and Economic Decline. Finally, the political and military indicators group is formed by State Legitimacy, deliverance of Public Services, Human Rights, Security Apparatus, Factionalisation of the Elites and External Intervention.

The methodology underlying the index is built on a content analysis of collected information about the different pressures,

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whose result is then translated into a score through an algorithm weighting the impact of each pressure on a given county. In a further step, these scores are completed through qualitative and quantitative data based on major events during a year. Since the information for the index is collected during the year previous to the publication, the 2012 index translates events that took place in 2011.

As already pointed out, the methodology used by Fund for Peace for compiling the index leaves room for criticism as well. The broad spectrum of indicators reveals in fact a narrow and very specific view of state success which is basically identified with a Western influenced liberal democracy. Moreover, a closer look at the indicators themselves highlights how some of them are so closely intertwined with each other that a separate treatment and analysis seems questionable. So for example Group Grievance can be seen as the result of Elites Factionalisation, but also of Uneven Development and internal as well as external migration (Refugees & IDPs). The protection of human rights is on the other side influenced by how the Security Apparatus works, if police is effective or if there is a military or paramilitary dictatorship persecuting

political opponents. The Security Apparatus also influences the perceptions of the population about the state and its legitimacy, as do the deliverance of Public Services and External Intervention.

II WHAT THE INDEX SAYS ABOUT PAKISTAN AND SOUTH ASIA

Pakistan...

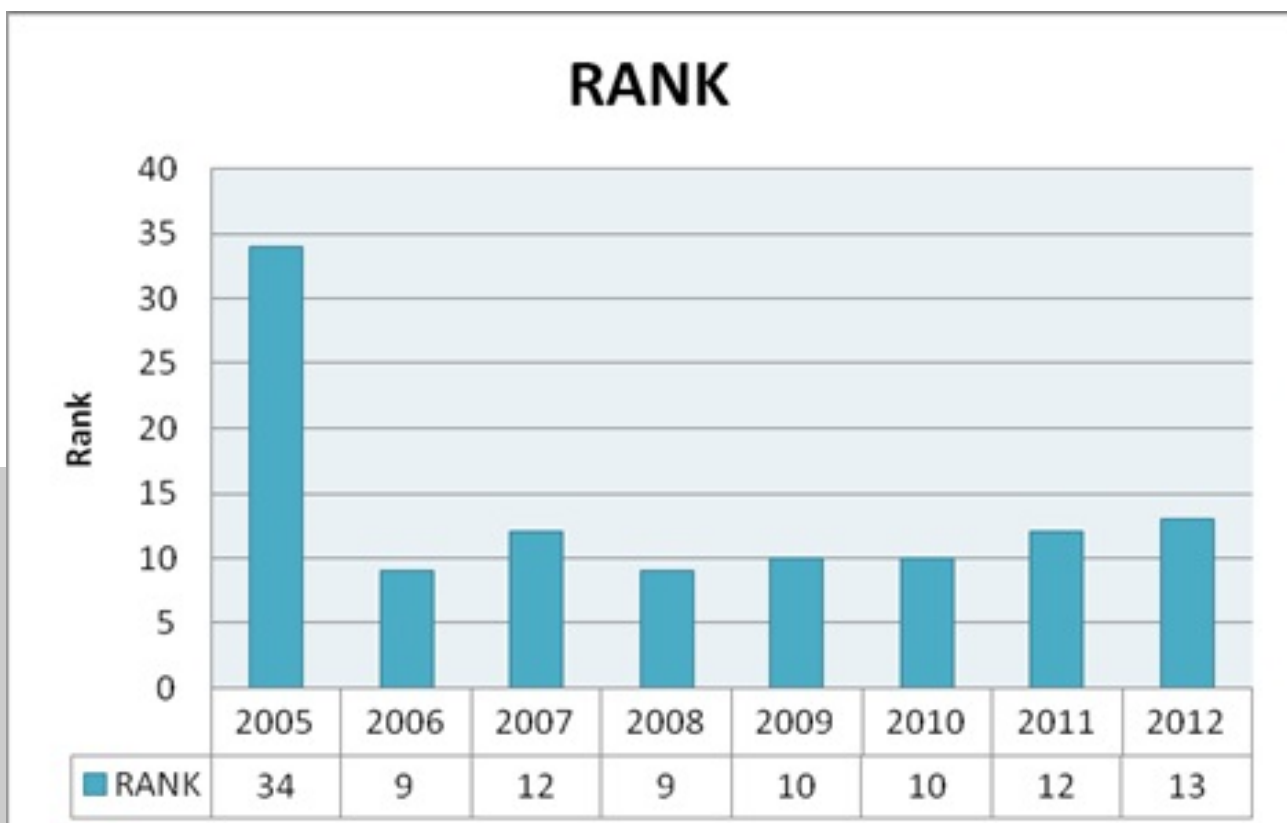
The social indicators have seen an improvement of 0.3 points in Demographic Pressures scoring 8.5 out of 10 compared to 8.8 the previous year, and Brain Drain with a score of 7.2 against the previous total of 7.5 out of 10. In Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, Pakistan scored at 9 opposed to the previous year's 9.2 score, thus improving by 0.2 points. At the same time, the indicator for Group

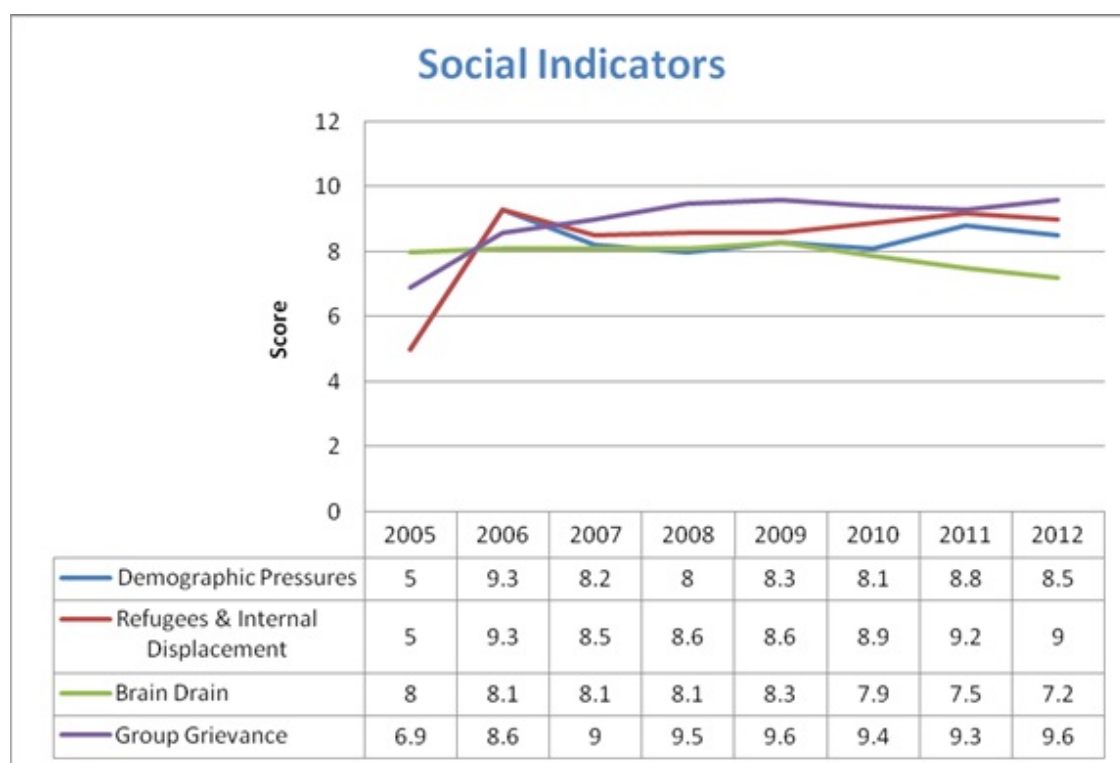
Grievance worsened by 0.3 points increasing from 9.3 to 9.6.

Given the migratory pressures Pakistan faced following the 2010 floods, as opposed to the smaller scope of the 2011 floods, it was predictable that the Demographic Pressures score would improve. Despite this development, Pakistan is yet to reach pre-2010 scores. Similarly, the results of Refugees And Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) can be explained by the same factor, though in this case Pakistan improved only 0.1 points, showing the government's failure in dealing efficiently with IDPs due to either flooding or instability.

As explained by the Fund for Peace in last year's Country Profile for Pakistan, the decreasing number of educated and

Pakistan and the Failed States Index (2005-12)





middle-class Pakistani deciding to emigrate (Brain Drain indicator) was the result of the tightening of immigration laws in countries that are the main targets of such immigration. This year's improvement of the indicator can be traced back to the same factor. In 2011 for example Kuwait banned visas for Pakistani nationals and the UK, a classical destination of the Pakistani diaspora, tightened its immigration laws significantly.

The increased score of the Group Grievance indicator underlines how ethno-sectarian related violence deteriorated, equalling the 2009 score, the year that marked Pakistan's worst performance in the index. In this respect, Human Rights Watch's Annual Report highlights how a spiral of violence against Shia Muslims and other minorities characterised the second half of 2011 in Pakistan. Attempts to amend the blasphemy law were silenced by the assassinations of two prominent politicians supporting the cause, Punjab

Governor Salmaan Taseer and Federal Minister for Minorities Shahbaz Bhatti. Ethnic violence especially increased in Baluchistan, where the army and the paramilitary Frontier Corps are considered responsible for the disappearance of alleged militants and opposition activists, in what The Guardian has named Pakistan's "dirty little war". At the same time, non-Baluchi civilians became increasingly target of Balochi nationalist militancy. The Ahmadi community was also subjected to systematic discrimination through blasphemy and community specific laws as well as social discrimination, as for example the expulsion of ten Ahmadi students from a school in Hafizabad, Punjab. This indicator had improved in the 2011 Index over 2010; a development explained by FfP as connected to the lack of ethnic violence during and as a result of the floods; this year's escalation score denotes how sectarian violence was resumed, as a result of the lack of widespread flooding.

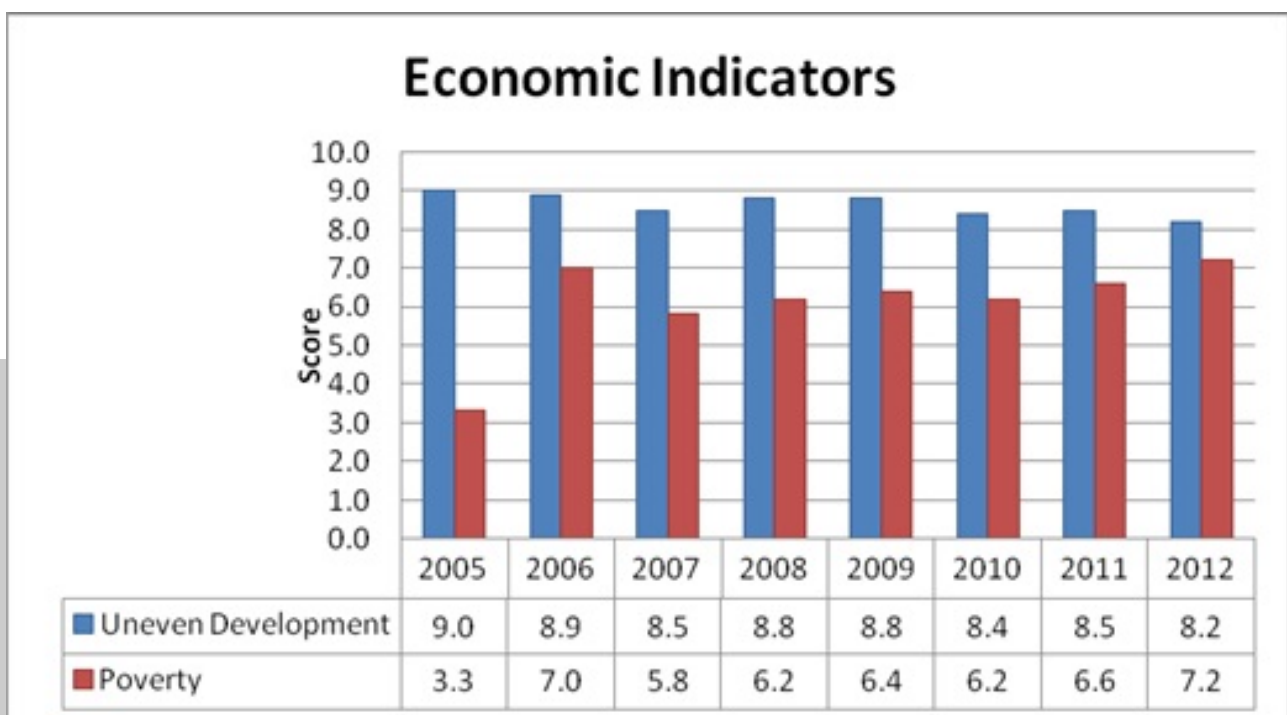
Economic Indicators

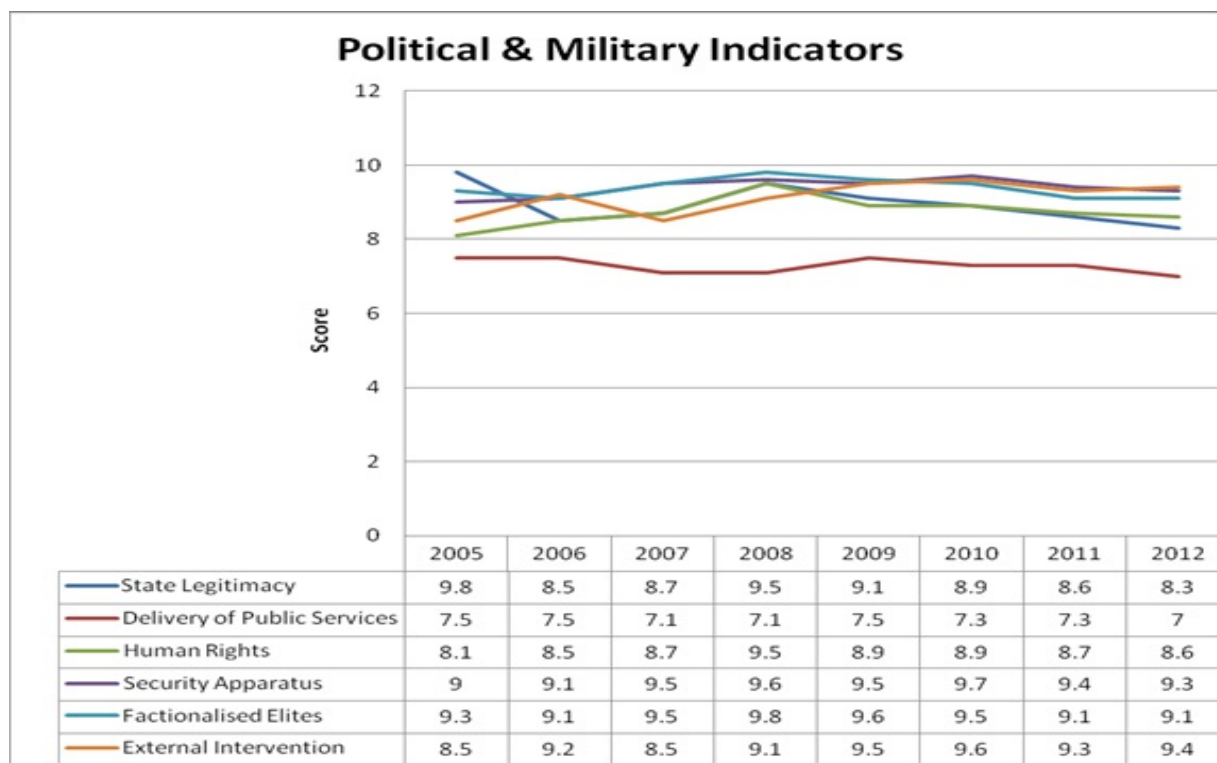
Within the economic indicators, the Uneven Development has improved, while at the same time remaining in the range of above 8 points, which is a constant result since the first publishing of the Index in 2005. The Poverty and Economic Decline (7.2/10) Indicator has increased its score by a whopping 0.6 over last year's score of 6.6, making for Pakistan's biggest jump in this year's Index. The Pakistani economy has been on a steady downfall since 2010; when compared with the first Index in 2005, the Poverty score worsened by 3.9 points. Pakistan's GDP growth is currently at 3.6 percent, remaining decidedly lower than other countries in the region, such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India. Inflation is also on the rise, even with a tightened monetary policy theoretically containing it. Inflation, power shortages and an insecure political situation have a negative impact on Foreign Direct Investment, as noted by the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects released in June 2012. Despite recovering from the floods of 2010, Pakistan remains exposed to the risk of

heavy rains and power shortages damaging standing crops and affecting this year's harvest, which has the potential of undermining the agricultural performance of a mainly agricultural country.

Political & Military Indicators

In the political indicators, the Legitimacy of the State indicator shows further improvements (0.3 jump from 8.6 in 2011). Since the end of the military dictatorship in 2008 the score has been constantly decreasing, although it remains fairly high at 8.3. The relative stability of the elected government despite significant challenges as well as the emergence of new political forces such as Imran Khan's increasingly popular Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf influenced this score. It should be kept in mind, however, that the data for the index is antecedent to the recent clash between the executive and the judiciary, which caused the resignation of PM Yousuf Raza Gilani. This development could renew a general lack of confidence in the political which will probably be reflected by the 2013 index.





The score related to the condition of Public Services remains high at 7. Gas, water and power shortages have become a constant feature and challenge of the Pakistanis' every-day-life. Surprisingly, this represents Pakistan's best performance among all the indicators, and an improvement of 0.3 points from last year; this represents its best performance in this category since the first publishing of the Index in 2005. Given the fact that 2011 was marked by an explosion of riots related to power shortages which caused outages of up to 18 hours per day, this result comes rather unexpected. The absence of significant infrastructural improvements during last year and a lack of information available in the public sphere make it difficult to put this result in context. One possible explanation is that increased poverty affected the total number of people able to afford public services so that better deliverance of extant services to a restricted group of people within society who can still afford the same.

According to Human Rights Watch, Pakistan's performance on the protection

rights record is related to its traditional weaknesses – the centrality of tribal and kinship structures within Pakistani society, as well as systemic abuses by security forces. This is reflected by the fact that Pakistan always scored above 8 since the first edition of the index, showing that Human Rights issues remain a constant in Pakistan regardless of the type of government in power.

The Security Apparatus indicator also remained consistent with last year's score, with a minimal improvement of 0.1 over last year's 9.4, but still critical at 9.3 out of ten. This score underlines how, despite the civilian government having been in charge since 2008, the army is still playing a crucial role in the Pakistani decision-making process, with a veto on foreign and defence policy as well as on its own economic interests. Beside of the presence

of an over-powerful army, Pakistan has to deal with the insurgent groups challenging its authority in some parts of its territory, despite the retaking of the Swat region in 2009 and improvements in police training. At the same time, however, the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies underlined in its Security Report how terrorism related violence declined during 2011.

The Factionalisation of Elites indicator scored 9.1 like last year, thus remaining constant in this year's Index. The poor record of Pakistan in this category is the result of communal violence and powerful communal-based groups, either on religious or ethnic grounds. At the same time, the ethnic polarisation reflected by the score delineates a rather weak feeling of national identity.

The External Intervention indicator increased marginally from 9.3 to 9.4; this can be traced back to an increased publicity for the American drone campaign on Pakistani soil, as well as manned incursions such as the one that killed Osama Bin Laden in May 2011. Although the U.S. campaign has been enduring since 2004, the 2011 campaign was increasingly more visible, including the highly publicised killing of Pakistani soldiers in October, after which Pakistan banned ISAF

Government's many initiatives, such as the Islamic Bank, Islamic University, Islamic pawnshop and Islamic economic foundations, imply that non-Malays, Chinese in particular need to double up and become more competitive. These are the parts of 'Malay first' policy of NEP.

supplies to Afghanistan from passing through its territory. This ban was lifted only recently after an official apology by the US government in July 2012.

...and South Asia

How do these scores look like when put in a South Asian context? The chart shows the results of the South Asian region in the 2012 FSI.

A first glance at the numbers reveals how Pakistan's score are close to Afghanistan, a country rated by the 2012 index as the 6th least stable worldwide. While Pakistan faces challenges that are not shared by its neighbours, or not to the same extent, its performance in some of the indicators is comparable or not very far other countries in the region which are generally considered stable. This is especially the case for the Uneven Development, where no country in the region except for the Maldives scores under 7.8. In fact it is interesting to notice how India, whose economic growth has been much praised during the last years fails to distribute these newly acquired resources evenly, scoring with a 8.4 worse than Pakistan does.

A regional trend can also be recognised in the Group Grievance indicator, where five out of eight countries scored 8.9 or higher and seven out of eight 7.6 or higher. This is the case for an established democracy like India (7.9 out of 10) and an ethnically homogenous country as Bangladesh (8.9 out of 10). These scores are the result of polarisation within society and the difficulties faced by the state in containing them due to a weakness in integrating different groups. Similarly, this trend is reflected also by the Factionalised Elites indicator, in which five out of eight South Asian countries score above 9.

Another regional problem seems to be a lack of legitimacy of and confidence in the state structures. All countries in South Asia with the exception of India, which has an established democratic system, and Bhutan, score 7.9 or higher out of 10. This trend is influenced by corruption which is a widespread phenomenon across the region, and by the fact that many South Asian states have experienced changes within their political systems and thus lack established structures.

Challenges in protecting Human Rights also seem to be present on the regional level. Of the eight South Asian countries considered here, four show poor results in this respect, scoring 8.2 or worse, while only India and Bangladesh score under 7. The traditional kinship and tribal structures which challenge the authority of the states and undermine the protection of human rights are not an exclusively Pakistani feature; they are also common in other states across the region. Even India, although scoring best in the region, still lags with 5.8 behind other established democracies which mostly reach scores of around 5.

What Pakistan means for Failed States Index

A closer look at Pakistan's score in the 2012 Failed States Index highlights how the Brain Drain indicator's results are the consequence of an external and extraneous variables, while the Demographic Pressures and Refugees & IDPs indicator improvements are related to extraneous factors like the lack of floods of the same scale as the ones in 2010. It does not reflect a substantial effort by the Pakistani government to deal effectively with the problem. Being antecedent to the recent developments within the Pakistani institutions, the result of the Legitimacy of the State indicator is somewhat outdated, and thus encounters difficulties in

highlighting the current situation. Rumours like the ISI sponsoring of supposedly popular political movements, mainly the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf, have not been factored in.

The improvement in the deliverance of Public Services remains difficult to grasp, since power and water riots became a common phenomenon in 2011 and continue to be in 2012. This lack of supply of public goods has the potential to further complicate the economic development and in return, to undermine the already low legitimacy of the state. Since Pakistan's water supplies suffer the precarious situation, this factor has the potential to be decisive in influencing Pakistan's stability in the near future.

The External Intervention is also worth a closer examination, despite having increased only marginally. Anti-American sentiments within the Pakistani Army have the potential to destabilize it, especially in the case of a failure on its side to stand up to the unpopular American interventions on Pakistani soil. While on one hand Pakistan benefits out of the army's acquiescence to such interventions in form of foreign aid, active incursions by US soldiers in Pakistan can prove an extremely destabilising factor as they can cause widespread desertions within ordinary soldiers – as noted by Anatol Lieven, a long-time observer of Pakistani politics and Professor at the Department of War Studies, King's College, in his 2011 book *Pakistan: A Hard Country*.

The killing of Bin Laden through a Navy Seals incursion of which Pakistan itself had apparently no knowledge, has by now acquired the image of a humiliation for Pakistan within the public discourse, and the death of Pakistani soldiers in Salat was interpreted as an attack on the Pakistani state by a supposed ally. The flip side of the coin is that while the Pakistani Army is

a major force in maintaining some kind of internal stability, it has the main responsibility of Pakistan's slow social and democratic development. This year's score within the Security Apparatus indicator shows how it remains the leading institution in Pakistan but that this indicator is also directly and inversely linked to the social and economic indicators.

Group Grievance and Factionalised Elites remain a critical challenge for Pakistan, being over the 9 point grade, and either repeated last year's score or worsened. Factionalised elites stirring up group-related violence have a major impact in the exercise and protection of human rights in Pakistan. Being a multi-ethnic country which has up to now had difficulties in defining itself in absolute terms, Pakistan's national identity is especially vulnerable to group violence and division.

But what does this mean in terms of

Pakistan's stability assessment? Is Pakistan more fragile than the Failed States Index methodology is able to convey? Probably not. Although Pakistan is definitely affected by stability concerns, it was able, up to now (besides the Swat crisis) to keep the insurgents largely at bay, which is confirmed by the fact that the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is still resorting to terrorist attacks to challenge the state rather than direct confrontation. Also, although the government and the institutions have generally weak legitimacy within the population, this does not necessarily translate in the rejection of the idea of Pakistan as a national entity. Widespread support for talks with the Taliban does not equate with a support for the Taliban themselves, but rather for it should be kept in mind, moreover, that the general weakness of Pakistani institutions and state vis-à-vis tribal and kinship structures especially in rural areas are not an uncommon feature in other South Asian

	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Nepal	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka	Bhutan	India	Maldives
Social indicators								
Demographic Pressures	8.9	8.5	7.9	8	7.1	6.7	7.3	5.7
Refugees & IDPs	9	9	7.7	6.8	8.7	6.6	5.5	5.6
Brain Drain	9.4	9.6	9	8.9	9.1	7.6	7.9	4.9
Group Grievance	7.4	7.2	5.6	7.8	7.1	6.5	5.9	6.5
Economic Indicators								
Uneven Development	8.1	8.2	8.4	8.1	8.1	7.8	8.4	4.7
Poverty	7.7	7.2	7.6	7.4	5.6	6.6	5.5	6.4
Political & Military Indicators								
State Legitimacy	9.5	8.3	8	8.1	8.2	6.3	5.5	7.9
Public Services	8.5	7	7.4	7.8	5.8	6.6	6.9	6.6
Human Rights	8.5	8.6	8.2	6.8	8.7	7.3	5.8	7.5
Security Apparatus	9.4	9.3	7.5	7.6	8.2	5.9	7.5	5.7
Factionalized Elites	9.7	9.1	8.2	8.9	9.2	7.5	6.8	7.6
External Intervention	10	9.4	7.4	5.9	6.5	7	5	6.1
Rank	6	13	27	29	29	59	78	88
Total Score	106	101.6	93	92.2	92.2	82.4	78	75.1

countries and are not to be equated with state collapse.

Similarly, the analysis has revealed how Pakistan's scores in some of the indicators are consistent with those of other countries within the region and that poor results in the same are not an exclusively Pakistani phenomenon. The fact that FfP does not publish details of its weighting system makes it difficult to comment in detail on how the effect of each destabilising factor on a country is assessed.

Nevertheless, FfP uses general, Western-inspired criteria to assess the success of a number of different states; a reflection on an assessment method taking into each country's own vision of state success and failure, as well as an in-depth analysis of which factors are indeed most destabilizing in each individual case would be much needed. It is in fact a challenging task to establish general criteria which have the capacity to capture the extent to which a state is successful or not without being biased towards a normative understanding of what characteristics a state should have in order to be considered as such. In the specific case of Pakistan, this approach would concentrate on the External Intervention and the deliverance of Public Services, especially water and electricity, as well as the economic downturn and the group related violence, not so much in form of religious fundamentalism, but especially of ethnic related violence, which is a continuum in

Baluchistan and in Karachi and undermines the internal cohesion.

At the same time, a reflection in necessary on the cultural aspects of community organisation common for the area that makes up Pakistan today. As already observed in the analysis, rural Pakistan is characterised by a predominance of tribal and kinship structures that undermine the authority of the state; for this reason, the establishment of stable structures in these areas is a much harder task than it is in other countries. In this respect, the proposal by the g7+ group of fragile states for a country-specific and country-led fragility assessment which at the same time leaves room for cross-country comparisons represents a new, much promising approach to the analysis of state fragility.

The identification of some kind of general criteria and indicators to allow comparisons between countries to be made, and to draw the attention of the international community towards a situation considered especially critical is in fact the greatest challenge faced by the concept of a country-specific fragility assessment – to reconcile these two factors is an important future task of state fragility research. At the same time it should be bear in mind that a method that allows the comparison of different countries' fragility may be irreconcilable with a truly country-specific, un-biased assessment.

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