

Can We Measure Peace?

Does it Help in Achieving it?

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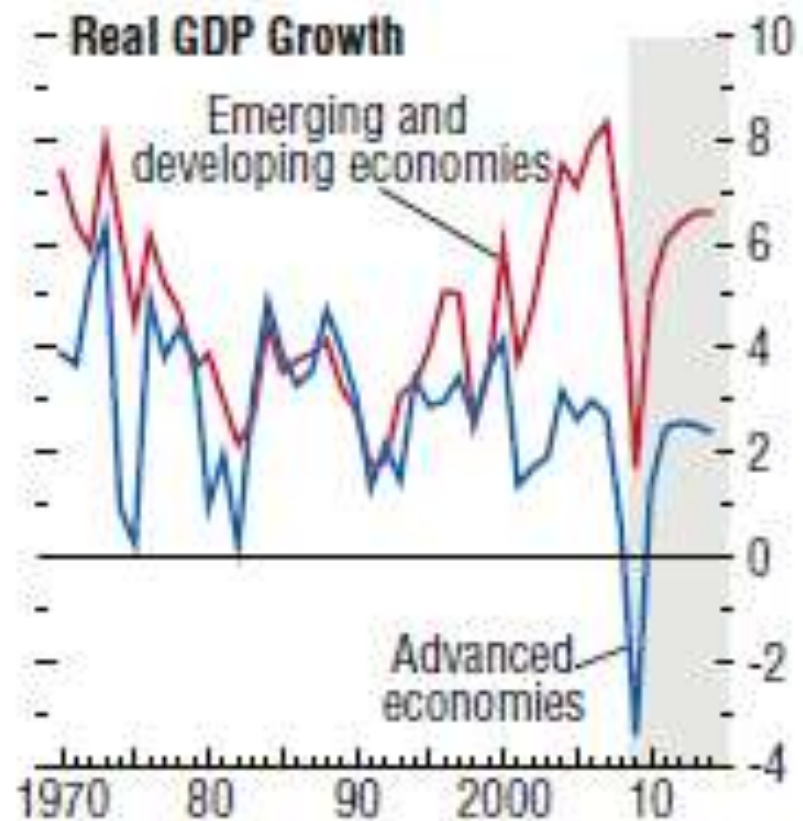
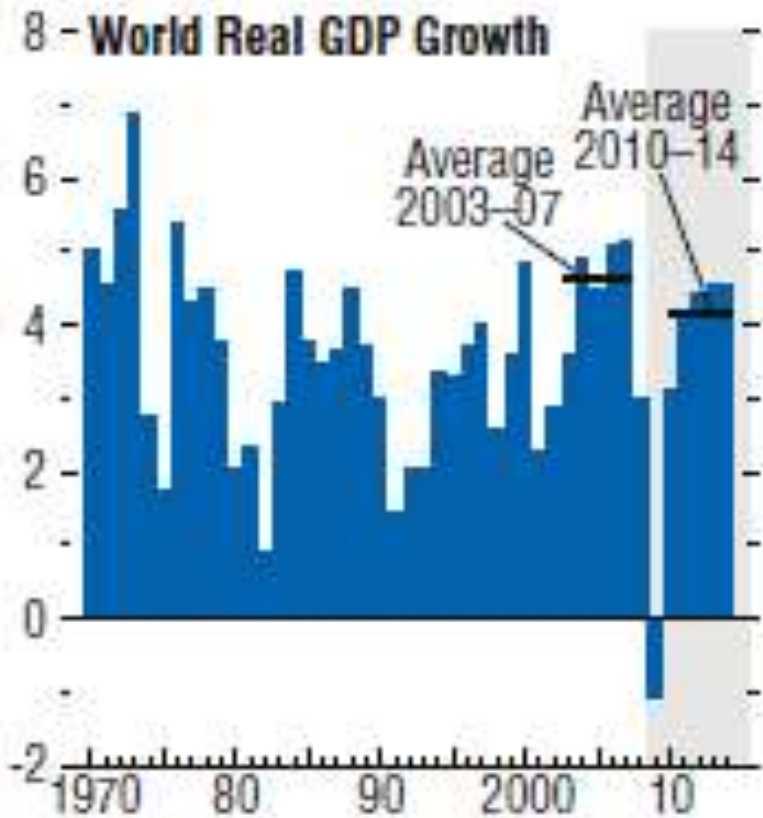
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- Management adage
 - One cannot manage what one cannot measure
- Perfect measures, perfect measurement?
 - Rarely exist
- What is peace?
 - Not the absence of war, but the total cessation of violence, or the threat thereof
- Does measuring peace help achieve it?
 - Measurement alone does not guarantee management
 - Diagnosis implies neither treatment, nor cure
 - Depends on the quality of policy, not on measurement
- We must measure peace; must measure progress toward peace
 - There is nothing optional about it

The economic crisis of 2009

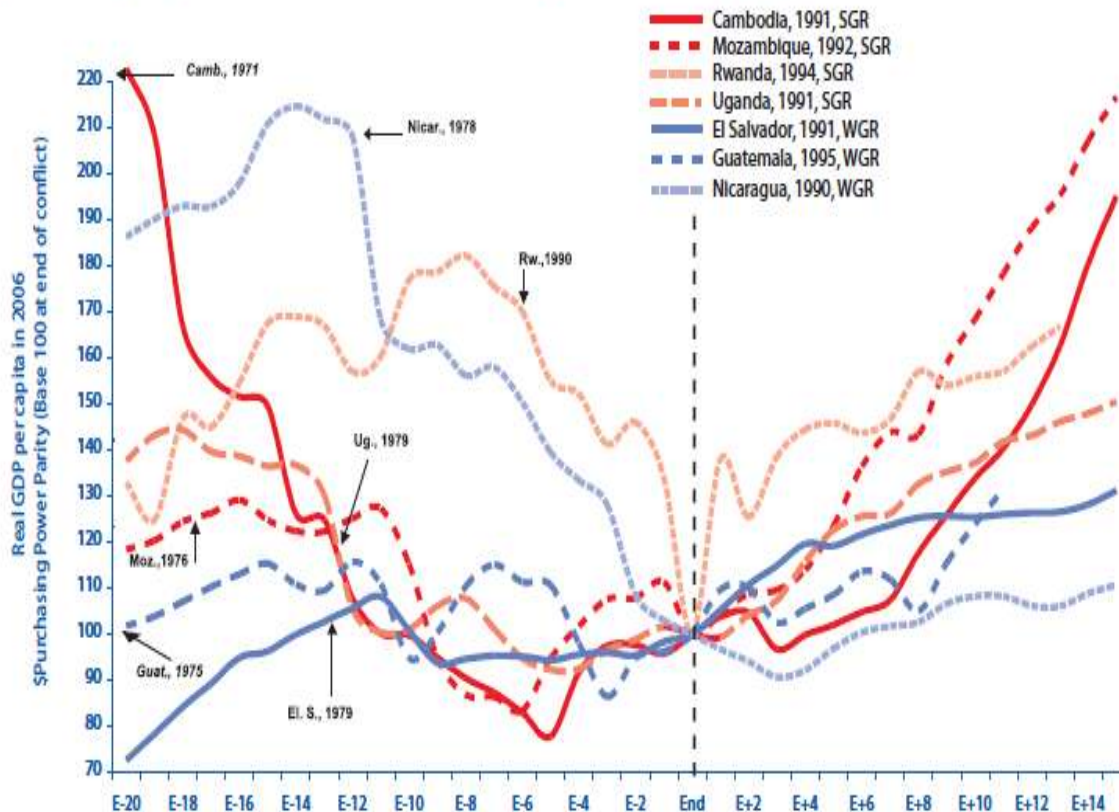


Source: IMF *World Economic Outlook* (Oct. 2009, p. 4)

Note: Real GDP is based on purchasing power parity weights.

The violence crisis

Figure 4.2 GDP per capita in selected SGR and WGR countries (year conflict ended, group)



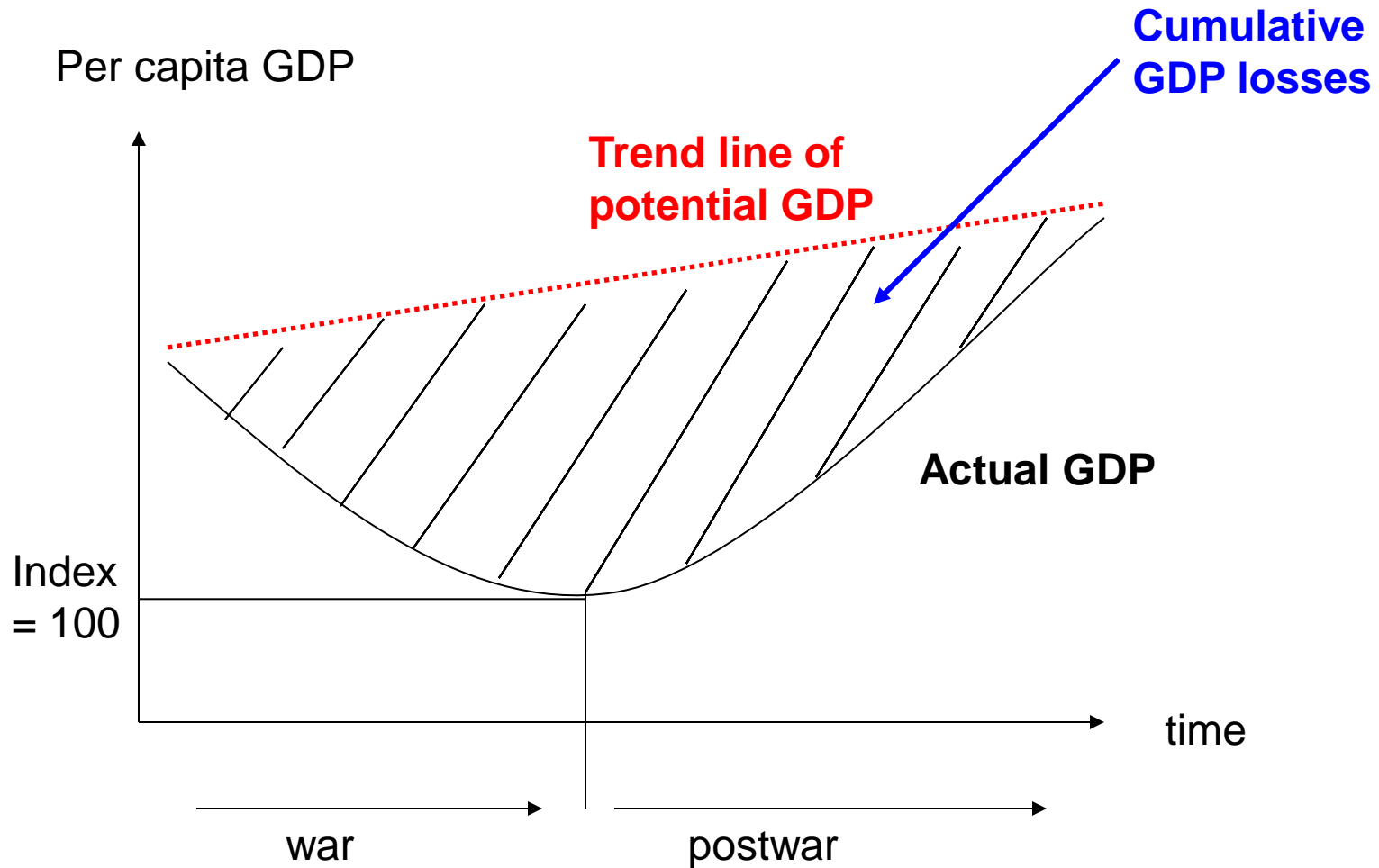
Note: Arrows point to starting year of conflict, unless where conflict is ongoing over the entire period covered (Cambodia, Guatemala), in which case the arrow points to the first year of the series.

Source: UNDP (2008, p. 111).

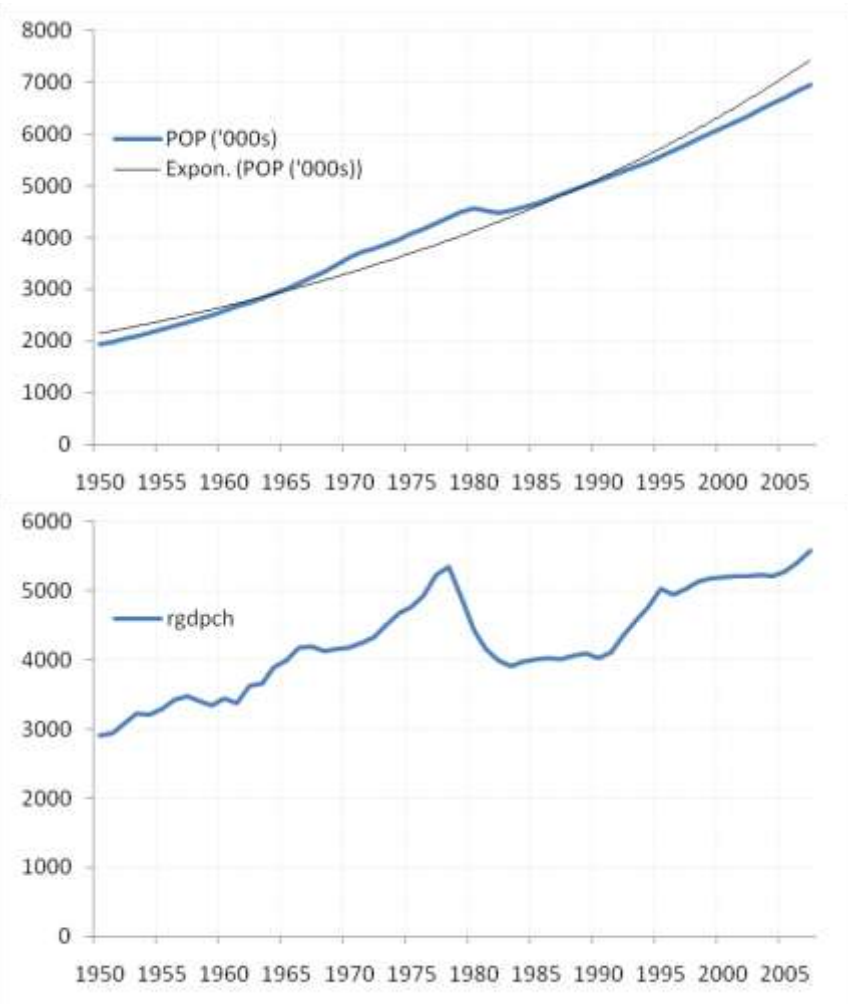
UNDP summarizes recent studies estimating the economic cost of civil war, especially for Africa, as lying somewhere between 1.7 and 3.3 percent of GDP per country per conflict year prior to 1990 and averaging 12.3 percent of GDP post-1990, that is, in the post-cold war era (UNDP, 2008, p. 35).

My own work indicates ~10% of GWP each year is lost due to violence

The violence crisis



The violence crisis



The case of El Salvador
Civil war: 1979-1991 (UNDP, 2008)

Data: 1950 - 2007

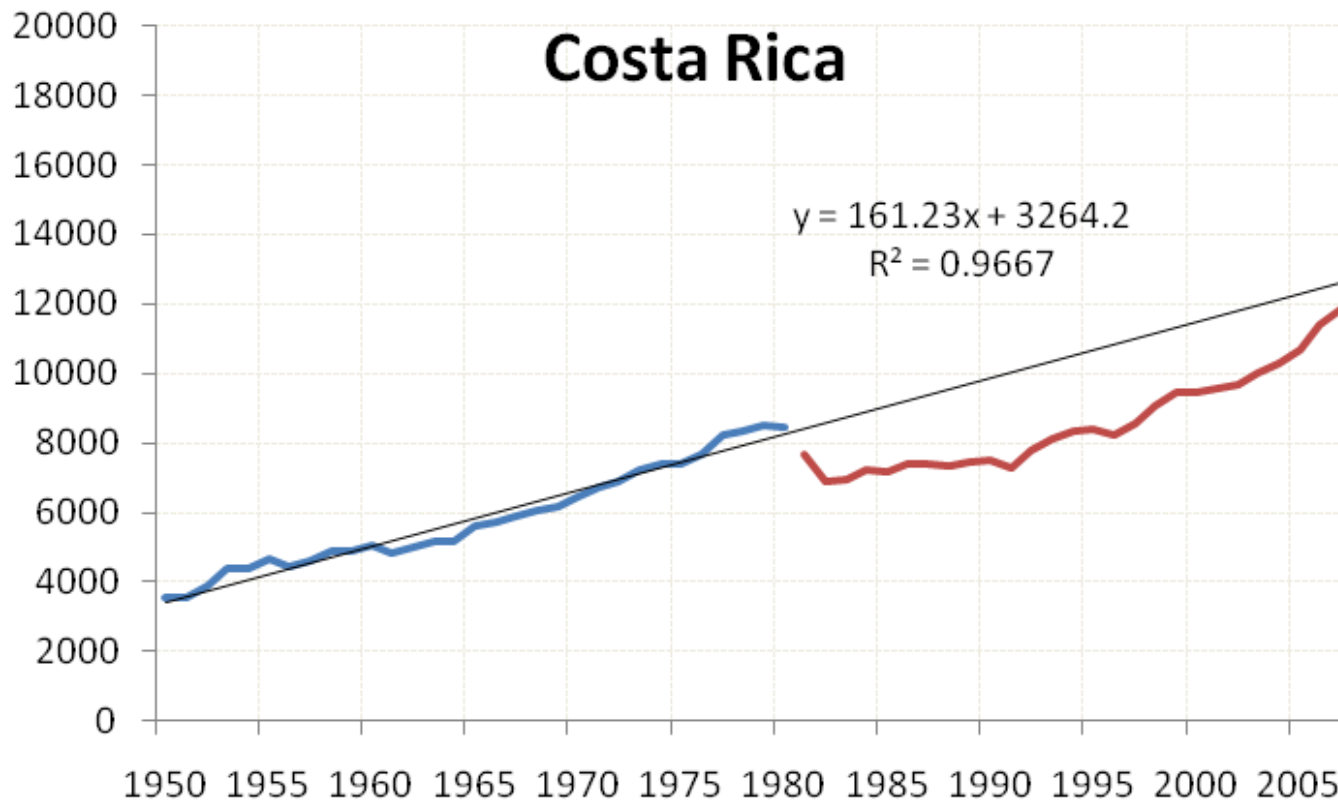
Top panel: population (in '000s)

Bottom panel: real per capita GDP (I\$)

Base year = 2005

Source: computed from
Penn World Tables 6.3

The violence crisis



The case of Costa Rica

Data: 1950 – 2007; real per capita GDP (I\$); base year = 2005

Source: computed from Penn World Tables 6.3

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- So, we need to measure peace; there is nothing optional about it; it's too costly an issue to ignore; one way to do that is to measure the (economic and other) effects of the absence of peace; but can we measure something by measuring its absence?
- Yes, of course. We measure many things indirectly
 - As an **absence** rather than as a **presence**
 - As a **deviation** from a goal rather than as a **goal**
 - Health => absence of illness
 - Environmental goods => absence of pollutants/pollution
 - We measure “bads” such as unemployment and inflation
 - We do the same in the natural/life sciences

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- We measure many things by measuring something else (proxies)
 - GDP per person => well-being, standard-of-living
 - Education => years of schooling and degrees
- We mismeasure things
 - Health => physical v psychological
 - Health => male v female
- We measure many things imperfectly
 - HDI => income, education, health
- Why not add a **personal safety** (peace) measure even if at first this were measured imperfectly?
 - Personal safety: safety about one's person, property, family, community

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- What should we measure to measure personal safety (peace)?
- At a minimum, we should measure **violence** and things related to violence
 - Violence includes preparatory offensive and defensive measures
 - Not only military expenditure and war
 - Not only terrorism and counterterrorism
 - Not only the cost of law and order and productivity losses
- Taking a **public health view** of things (WHO, 2002)
 - **Self-harm** (including suicide)
 - **Interpersonal violence**
 - **Collective violence** (<= traditional concept of “peace”)
- Need to cast the net more widely than is ordinarily done
- We also need to identify and measure the drivers of peace so that intervention (treatment) becomes possible

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- What does measurement achieve?
 - Disease vectors; DDT-misuse; atmospheric ozone depletion; AIDS/HIV; global climate change; ...
 - Measurement, like writing, is nothing but a record; a memory aid; in this case a numeric one
- Measurement changes perceptions => can help set goals
 - Structure – behavior - performance
 - Rules – strategies – outcomes
 - Structure/rules => incentives => objectives
- Measurement and achievement are related
 - We develop measures for the purpose of achieving an outcome
 - We hold ourselves hostage to our measure
 - It's a form of credible commitment: we either start to perform or we start to drop the measure and the measurement

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■ **Main messages:**

- ❑ Yes, we CAN measure peace (even if imperfectly, even if indirectly, even if by proxy); it's already being done
- ❑ The question is not “can we?” but “how do we?” and “how do we do it uniformly, completely, in a standardized, comparable way?”
- ❑ How do we develop a norm?
 - => an ISO 9,000 standard for quality management
 - => an ISO 14,000 standard for environmental management
 - => an ISO 26,000 social responsibility standard (due in 2010)
 - => an ISO xxx security standard (various study groups/committees)
 - ❑ Cyber security; transportation; biometrics; personal identification;
 - ❑ Societal security: incident preparedness and operational continuity management
 - => **an ISO 77,000 peace and security standard?**

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- **Main messages:**
 - Yes, we **MUST** measure peace
 - Human and economic cost is too high not to try to do better
 - Whether that helps achieve peace ultimately depends
 - On the development of a norm/standard
 - On the quality of individual behavioral response
 - On the quality of the political response and
 - On the quality of the policy response
 - But the very presence of a measure can provoke the response