

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNHAPPINESS AND CONFLICT: EVIDENCE FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

KAMALIKA DASGUPTA* AND SIDDHARTHA MITRA

Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India

Abstract: This paper explores the intricate relationship between unhappiness and conflict, shedding light on the multifaceted dynamics that connect these two fundamental aspects of human experience. The research investigates how unhappiness, stemming from socio-economic factors and Ethno-linguistic Fractionalization (ELF), can create a fertile ground for conflicts at the international level. We attempt to gather empirical evidence, which illustrates the manners in which societal discontent can manifest in various forms of conflict. Structural Equation Model (SEM) is employed to analyze the both way causation. Preliminary empirical findings imply that overall feeling of Happiness and Ethnic Fractionalization significantly affect the occurrence and intensity of conflicts across the globe. It also points towards some specific socio-economic indicators, which if improved, can decrease the conflict fatalities through the increase in mass happiness. Through examining the interplay of different administrative, social and economic parameters, this research contributes to the understanding of how unhappiness and conflict are intertwined in human experience, with implications for fostering a more peaceful and harmonious world.

Keywords: Unhappiness, Conflict, Inequality, Polarization, Ethnic fractionalization, SEM

1. Introduction

Social conflict is a phenomenon that involves two or multiple groups with opposing interests, competing with each other with the intention of having access over economic resources, establishing religious/ethnic values and beliefs or simply to gain political power (Collier, 2004). Happiness on the other hand, can be defined as maximization of utility that represents the subjective well-being of the people in a society, in terms of materialistic and non-materialistic aspects. The connection between happiness and social conflict is not simple. Rather, it is a complex and multifaceted one. While happiness is generally associated with positive emotions, well-being, and satisfaction with life, social conflict involves tension, disagreement, and often negative emotions between individuals or groups. Social conflict can have a detrimental impact on mass happiness and well-being. Constant

*Correspondence to: Kamalika Dasgupta, PhD. Student, Department of Economics, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. E-mail: kamalika.dsgpt@gmail.com

exposure to conflict, hostility, or violence can lead to stress, anxiety, and trauma. When people's very existence becomes threatened due to social conflict, it becomes challenging to experience happiness or to maintain positive mental health as happiness is derived from positive social interactions and healthy relationships. However, social conflict can strain relationships and worsen social connections, leading to eroding levels of happiness.

Conflicts within communities cause fragmentation that create permanent rifts, deepen divisions, break trust, reduce social cohesion and foster a sense of isolation. Gurr's Relative Deprivation theory states that, social conflict often arises from the perception of individuals or groups that they are being deprived of power, resources, and opportunities. This theory emphasizes more on the role of psychological experience rather than just materialistic aspects and so it resonates with unhappiness (Saleh, 2013). Sometimes the people who gain benefit out of conflict, do not want the mass dissatisfaction to go away (Chong, 1996). Thus, prolonged feeling of relative deprivation makes the stakeholders to engage in conflicts (sometimes violent) in pursuit of happiness. Existence of systematic opportunity barriers for the marginalized communities, polarization politics, and falsified brainwashed idea of nationalism further adds to the problem (Joireman, 2003). Countries experiencing widespread inequalities, higher population, greater amount of ethno linguistic fractionalization and higher degree of polarization are often seen having a bottom rank in the World Happiness Report.

When there is widespread conflict within a society, it becomes challenging to cultivate an environment that promotes happiness and well-being for all members. So, while unhappiness can be a contributing factor to conflict, the reverse can also be true—conflict itself can generate unhappiness. This creates a cyclical dynamic where one perpetuates the other. Thus, in societies with significant social and economic inequalities, the resulting conflicts can hinder the happiness of marginalized or relatively disadvantaged groups. When individuals or communities face systemic barriers, discrimination, or injustice, it becomes difficult for them to achieve happiness and fulfillment. Happiness is subjective and is influenced by individual values and beliefs. Social conflict often emerges when different groups hold conflicting values, ideologies, or worldviews. Furthermore, the intensity and duration of both conflict and unhappiness can fluctuate, making it challenging to pinpoint a linear cause-and-effect relationship between the two. The intricacies of human emotions, behaviours, and societal structures further contribute to the complexity of the relationship.

The presence of social conflict does not necessarily mean complete absence of happiness and vice versa. For example, high-trust communities existed in conflict zones during the 1947 partition in India where high-trust multicultural communities erupted into violence due to external political shocks. On the other hand, traditional Japanese society had deep class divisions (samurai, farmers, merchants, etc.). Despite this class struggle, Japan had witnessed a relatively longer peaceful period especially during the Edo period (1603-1868). However, efforts to address social conflict, promote peace building, foster understanding, and reduce economic inequalities can contribute to creating an environment that supports individual and collective happiness. Considering this, the in-depth exploration of the above mentioned relationship appears to be necessary, as it is expected to hold significant importance to the policymakers. This paper is an attempt to investigate this complex relationship between unhappiness and conflicts, emphasizing how socioeconomic discontent and Ethno-linguistic fractionalization, i.e., the degree of diversity and potential social fragmentation contribute to the emergence and intensity of the conflicts at the international level.

The primary objective of this research aims to find out to what extent “unhappiness” is

responsible for the occurrence of conflicts in a society. The concept of “unhappiness” is multi-dimensional and it has significant implications for violent conflicts across the globe. All sorts of political ideologies, religions and revolutions receive support because they promise happiness to people. Similarly, trade and commerce prosper as they assure materialistic happiness to people in terms of providing the desired goods and services. Research suggests that individuals experiencing prolonged or chronic unhappiness, coupled with other factors such as lack of social support, economic strain, or mental health issues, may be more prone to engaging in violent conflicts (Eser, 2023). Unhappiness can increase the risk of conflicts both at the individual and collective levels. This study focuses primarily on group conflicts worldwide. It is also crucial to point out that the relationship between unhappiness and conflicts is not particularly deterministic. Many unhappy individuals might not resort to conflicts, and many individuals involved in conflicts may not necessarily be characterized by unhappiness. The aforementioned relationship is rather mediated by numerous individual, societal, and situational factors. Factors such as social support networks, access to resources, cultural norms, law enforcement, economic conditions and polarization, etc. These mediating factors are considered together in the empirical investigation of the relationship.

Through the study of unhappiness and conflict on a global scale this research has identified patterns, trends, and common underlying causes that may transcend national or regional boundaries. This understanding is essential for developing effective strategies and policies to address these issues at both local and global levels. Global discontents and conflicts undermine peace and stability within and between nations. If the root causes of conflict could be uncovered then potential solutions could also be identified to prevent or mitigate them. These facts precisely are the motivating factors behind the exploration of the relationship to a deeper extent. This research attempts to fulfill the following objectives:

- A. To understand the causal relationship between unhappiness and conflict, examining the interplay of psychological, social, and environmental factors that contribute to both phenomena, with the aim of elucidating the mechanisms through which unhappiness influences conflict dynamics and vice versa.
- B. To conduct an empirical investigation on the relationship between global conflicts and unhappiness, through analyzing data from diverse regions and demographics, aiming to explain the correlation, directionality, and underlying drivers between these phenomena.

2. Literature Review

Publications that establish a direct connection between “unhappiness” and “occurrence of social conflict” are sparse. From the existing literature, we get to know a lot about each of these subjects separately, without knowing much about their direct relationship. The subsequent literature review tries to establish the following claims: (a) when there is a happiness deficit people will act to pursue happiness, (b) This happiness deficit occurs due to various economic and non-economic factors, (c) The action mentioned in (a) often results in a conflict when the happiness deficit results from a resource deficit and multiple individuals try to erase their deficits by seeking to establish control over scarce resources. The two major control factors—Ethno-linguistic Fractionalization (ELF) and Polarization—which happen to influence the incidence and intensity of conflicts are also considered and evidence from literature to support this claim will be presented in the following sections.

Different people or different groups act against each other in opposite direction but with the same motive, i.e., to achieve authority over scarce resources that would guarantee them their happiness. Socioeconomic inequalities, perceived injustices, and economic grievances can fuel

conflict. Individuals or groups may be more likely to engage in conflict if they believe economic opportunities are unfairly distributed or if they face economic hardships (Peters, 2004). Research has suggested that there may be a correlation between ELF and levels of happiness or well-being within a society. High levels of ELF might lead to lower levels of social cohesion and trust within a society. When people identify strongly with their own ethnic or linguistic group and feel less connected to others, it can contribute to social divisions and mistrust (Hinks, 2012). Polarization on the other hand is a significant driving force behind generating discontent and fueling conflict. Political and cultural polarization can lead to increased partisanship, gridlock, and difficulty in achieving consensus or compromise on important issues widening the gap between different socioeconomic groups within a society (Esteban and Schneider, 2008).

There are several economic and non-economic factors as well that are responsible for the persistence and/or occurrence of unhappiness in the first place. Socioeconomic inequalities generates apathetic environment that leads to unhappiness which further contributes to high rates of international homicides in society (Coccia, 2018). Interesting evidence from thirty-two nations shows that economic development has a strong and positive impact on people's subjective well-being but the implications of this pattern is more significant in poor countries than in rich countries (Zagorski et. al., 2014). Evidences from the Europe and the US show that people are happier when the rate of inflation and the rate of unemployment are low and vice versa (Tella et. al., 2001). Thus, there is enough evidence and reasoning to believe that income and unemployment are two major, core economic determinants of happiness.

There are many supporting researches that brings out the key non-economic indicators of unhappiness such as status of health, satisfaction with personal life, level of governance in a country, social capital, etc. Long term prevalence of poor physical as well as mental health (depression, anxiety, etc.) among the population is a primary factor of decreased well-being and increased interpersonal conflicts (Rogers et.al., 2012; Veenhoven, 2010). A number of studies show that children experiencing loneliness or abuse at home are more likely to exhibit excessive and misdirected aggression when they grow up (Apsche and Dimeo, 2010). Apart from these two there is sizeable number of studies (Nowak et. al., 2010; Storch and Ledley, 2005; Vygotsky, 2012; Hollman, 2010) claim the same thing. Thus, the other non-economic indicators of conflict are 'satisfaction with home life' and 'major changes witnessed in life' which significantly drive various kinds of conflicts in the society.

Unhappiness often manifests as negative emotions such as anger, frustration, or sadness. When individuals are unhappy, they may express these emotions in ways that lead to conflict, such as lashing out at others or becoming defensive in response to perceived plights (Shemyakina and Plagnol, 2013). In some cases, unhappiness may be linked to underlying issues such as scarcity of resources or perceived inequalities. When people feel unhappy due to these factors, they may compete more fiercely for resources or opportunities, leading to conflicts over distribution or access (Coccia, 2018). Unhappiness within one individual can affect the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and group dynamics. For example, someone who is unhappy may withdraw from social interactions or exhibit behaviors that affect relationships, ultimately leading to conflict with others (Odaci and Celik, 2016). There is also evidence from China that in situations where unhappiness is rooted in power imbalances or perceived injustices, conflict may arise as individuals or groups seek to assert their interests or challenge existing power structures (Jiang et. al., 2012). While unhappiness itself may not directly cause conflict, it can contribute to a range of factors that increase the likelihood of conflicts emerging and escalate their intensity. Addressing underlying sources of unhappiness and promoting effective communication and conflict resolution skills are key strategies for mitigating conflicts in various contexts.

3. Data and Methodology

As discussed in the previous sections, the relationship between unhappiness and conflict is complex and mutually reinforcing, with each influencing and intensifying the other in a continuous feedback loop. Addressing one aspect (such as reducing conflict or improving happiness) often requires addressing multiple underlying factors simultaneously. Empirical models rely on data and observations rather than speculation or assumptions. By collecting and analyzing data on both unhappiness and conflict, we can establish patterns and correlations that reveal the true nature and strength of their relationship. The quantitative analysis reveals the magnitude of the association between unhappiness and conflict, helping to distinguish between causal relationships and not mere correlations.

To fulfil the aforementioned research objectives, secondary data is employed. There are two facets—unhappiness and social conflict. To explore the facets of unhappiness we turned to The World Values Survey (WVS).¹ As per the objectives and hypothesis of the research, the second dimension of WVS, i.e., “Happiness and well-being” is the one that has been considered. This dimension had a direct question on “feeling of happiness” itself (abbreviated as FOH in the next section) and few other questions that directly or indirectly influence the feeling of happiness. These unobserved components of happiness are described in detail in the next section. WVS data for five rounds (rounds 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) with each round covering five consecutive years starting from 1995 are considered for this research. The time span for FOH and its related unobserved indicators is roughly 1995-2022.

The data source for indicating social conflict is the ACLED website.² Country-wise number of reported fatalities (i.e., number of people killed and injured) due to civil conflict is considered for the period of 1997-2022. A total of 74 countries are considered for the analysis with some countries dropped because of non-availability of data. The countries are then grouped in terms of their geographical locations vis-à-vis South Asia, East-Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Middle-East and North Africa, Latin American and Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa. Now location wise each country is different from the other in demographic aspects. These demographic factors could skew raw data comparisons. Thus, in our analysis, country specific casualties are normalized by their respective country population for the years considered. This gives the probability of dying in a conflict, which is in fact an indicator of intensity of the conflict in consideration. After normalization, probability of death in a conflict (termed as the variable “Fatalities”) is considered as one of the observed variables in the analysis. This data normalization also improved transparency of the analysis.

It could be figured from the literature review that Ethno-linguistic Fractionalization (ELF) and Polarization are the two factors that act as catalysts in the two-way relationship between unhappiness and conflict as it affects the chance and intensity of conflict through several latent components of happiness (see next section). Hence, ELF is considered another observed variable of the analysis. The Historical Index of Ethnic Fractionalization (HIEF) dataset provides valuable insights into the dynamics of ethnic diversity across 165 countries over a significant historical period from 1945 to

¹ WVS is an academic project by social scientists to assess the state of socio-cultural, moral, religious, and political values of different cultures around the world. The survey was repeated after an interval of about 10 years and every 5 years since 1990. Surveys are typically conducted through face-to-face interviews, ensuring a diverse and representative sample of each country's population.

² ACLED stands for the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, and it is a non-profit organization that collects and analyzes data on political violence and conflict events around the world.

2013.³ It quantifies ethnic fractionalization using an index that measures the probability that two randomly chosen individuals within a country belong to different ethnic groups. This index is a good measure to understand the level of ethnic diversity, heterogeneity and degree of polarization within countries.

As a substantial body of existing literature suggests that the relationship between unhappiness and conflict is not a unidirectional one, a traditional regression analysis would not be the right method adopt. Structural Equation Model (SEM) offers several advantages over traditional regression analysis in such a situation. SEM allows for the modeling of complex relationships among variables. Unlike regression, which typically focuses on simple direct relationships between variables (e.g., predicting conflict from unhappiness), SEM can handle multiple dependent and independent variables simultaneously. It can model direct and indirect effects; mediation, moderation and latent variables (unobserved components of happiness measured through multiple indicators). SEM incorporates measurement errors explicitly. It allows us to model latent variables (factors) that are not directly observable but are inferred from multiple measured variables. This helps improve the accuracy and reliability of the relationship studied. SEM also enables testing of complex theoretical modeling of the two.

4. Results

In SEM, there are some variables that are observed (directly measured) also known as ‘indicators’ and some variables are not directly observed (constructs) also known as ‘latent’. The relationship between variables in SEM is known as ‘paths’. Paths can be direct (showing direct relationship between variables) or indirect (indirect relationship through other variables). Two types of models are used in SEM—the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model of SEM specifies how observed variables are related to their corresponding latent variables while the structural model of SEM specifies how the latent variables affect each other reflecting both-way causality. In this analysis, both the measurement model and the structural models are employed and their paths are analyzed. The observed and the latent variables of the study and their indicators and abbreviations are depicted in Table 1. Tables 2 and 3 provide the summary statistics of the above mentioned observed and latent variables, respectively.

Table 1: List of Observed and Latent Variables

Sl. No.	Variables	Abbreviations Used in the Study	Type	Indicator
1	Feeling of happiness	FOH	Observed	% of surveyed population saying they are very happy
2	No. of reported fatalities by country and year	Fatalities	Observed	No. of people killed & injured in a conflict normalized by year wise country population
3	Ethno-linguistic Fractionalization Index	ELF	Observed	The probability that two randomly selected individuals from a population belongs to different ethno linguistic groups.
4	State of health	SOH	Latent	Condition of health is very good these days

Contd...

³ The dataset is elaborated from this pre-existing resource: Ethnic Groups Data from the Composition of Religious and Ethnic Groups (CREG) project initiated by the Cline Centre for Democracy, University of Illinois at Urbana.

Table 1 contd...

Sl. No.	Variables	Abbreviations Used in the Study	Type	Indicator
5	Freedom of choice	FOC	Latent	A great deal of freedom of choice and control you feel you have over the way your life turns out
6	Life satisfaction	LS	Latent	Completely satisfied with life these days
7	Feeling of inclusion	FOI	Latent	Having a great deal of confidence in the government
8	Feeling of safety	FOS	Latent	Having a great deal of confidence in the police
9	Satisfaction with financial situation in household	SWF	Latent	Completely satisfied with the financial situation in household
10	Satisfaction with home life	SWH	Latent	In the last 12 months, the family has not gone without enough food, medicine and safety
11	Employment status	ES	Latent	Full time employed at present with 30 hours a week or more
12	Major changes witnessed in life	MC	Latent	Witnessed bold changes as compared to the previous generation

Data Source: World Value Survey (WVS), ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data) and HIEF

Table 2: Summary Statistics of the Observed Variables

Variables	Observation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
FOH	485	31.84	15.23	4.1	68.8
Fatalities	485	0.000027	0.00011	0	0.0014
ELF	485	0.564	0.285	0.021	0.884

Data Source: World Value Survey (WVS), ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data) and HIEF

Table 3: Summary Statistics of the Latent Variables

Variables	Observation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
SOH	485	26.36	12.08	2.5	59
FOC	485	7.04	8.46	0	33.4
LS	485	5.05	5.95	0.1	29.4
SWF	485	3.41	4.06	0	25.2
FOS	485	19.69	12.09	2.1	72.9
FOI	485	15.86	12.42	1.2	77.8
ES	485	29.67	12.91	9.1	70.4
SWH	485	66.70	2049	17.8	98.9
MC	485	56.88	15.79	12.4	90.3

Data Source: World Value Survey (WVS), ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data) and HIEF

As mentioned earlier, in SEM, both the measurement model and the structural model are essential components that help to understand relationships among variables, including latent

constructs and observed variables. Let us outline how these components are conceptualized using the observed variables and the latent variables listed above. The primary purpose of measurement model is to establish how well the observed variables represent the underlying constructs they are intended to measure. The key elements of the measurement model are ‘factor loadings’ and ‘error terms’. Factor loadings are the paths that connect each observed variable to its corresponding latent variable in the measurement model. Factor loadings represent the strength and direction of the relationship between the latent variable and the observed variable. On the other hand, each observed variable is associated with an error term, which captures the part of the observed variable’s variance that is not explained by the latent variable. These error terms are represented by circles connected to each observed variable in path diagrams. In our analysis, if we consider the construct of SOH, FOC, etc. as the latent variables (see Table 1), then its measurements would include observed variables such as fatalities and FOH. The factor loadings would indicate how strongly the FOH and fatalities reflect in the above mentioned latent constructs of happiness. Equations (1) and (2) written below represent the equations of the measurement model:

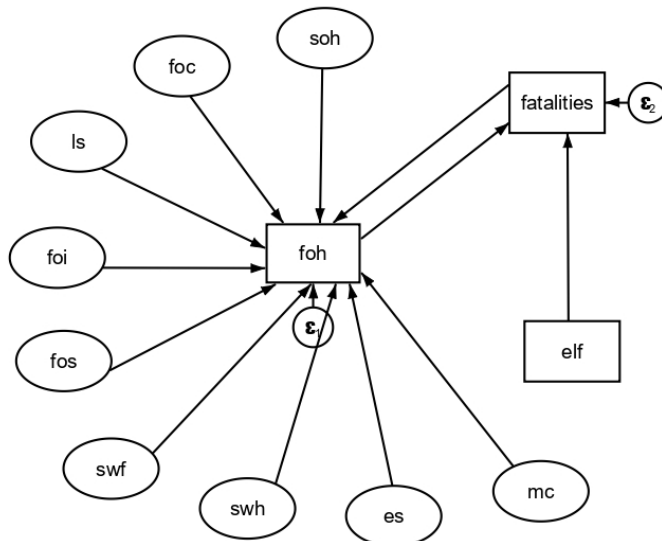
$$\xi_{1j} = \lambda_{1i} \eta_{ij} + \varepsilon_1 \quad \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

and

$$\xi_{2j} = \delta \xi_{1j} + \kappa \omega_j + \varepsilon_2 \quad \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

where η_{ij} is the vector of nine latent variables listed above and $i = 1, 2, \dots, 9$ and $j = 1, 2, \dots, 74$, reflecting 74 countries. ξ_{1j} and ξ_{2j} represent the two observed variables of the study—Feeling of Happiness (FOH) and Fatalities, respectively. λ_{1i} , δ and κ are the factor loadings indicating the strength of the relationships and ω_j represents the vector of Ethno-linguistic Fractionalization Index (ELF) for different countries. And finally, ε_1 and ε_2 represent the error terms of the model. Figure 1 displays the path diagram of the measurement model.

Figure 1: Path Diagram of Measurement Model



Data Source: World Value Survey (WVS), ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data) and HIEF

In Figure 1, the rectangles refer to the observed variables and the circles indicate the latent variables. The path arrows indicate the direction of causality. All the variables have their usual abbreviations as mentioned before. The three observed variables in the study (Fatalities, FOH and ELF) have causal relationship between them, with Fatalities and FOH having two-way causality. The individual latent variables also have indirect influence on 'Fatalities' via direct influence on FOH. Table 4 demonstrates the estimates of the Measurement Model.

Table 4: Results of the Measurement Model

Path	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error	P-value
Foh → Fatalities	-11.9	38.46	0.005***
Fatalities → Foh	-74.37	40.23	0.066*
Elf → Fatalities	0.009	0.0032	0.002***
Indirect effect			
Foh → Fatalities through soh	-1.22	0.10	0.000***
Indirect effect			
Foh → Fatalities through foc	-0.94	0.46	0.041**
Indirect effect			
Foh → Fatalities through Ls	-2.34	0.79	0.003***
Indirect effect			
Foh → Fatalities through foi	-3.61	0.51	0.000***
Indirect effect			
Foh → Fatalities through fos	-1.76	0.45	0.000***
Indirect effect			
Foh → Fatalities through swf	-2.02	1.40	0.149
Indirect effect			
Foh → Fatalities through swh	-1.71	0.47	0.000***
Indirect effect			
Foh → Fatalities through es	-0.77	0.65	0.241
Indirect effect			
Foh → Fatalities through mc	-9.23	5.20	0.076*

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Data Source: World Value Survey (WVS), ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data) and HIEF

Besides the measurement model, the structural model is also employed. The structural model of SEM uses a system of linear equations that estimate the hypothesized relationship among the endogenous and exogenous latent variables. It is important to understand the causality among the chosen latent variables of our analysis to further form a general theoretical structure. The system of equations used to estimate the structural model is as follows

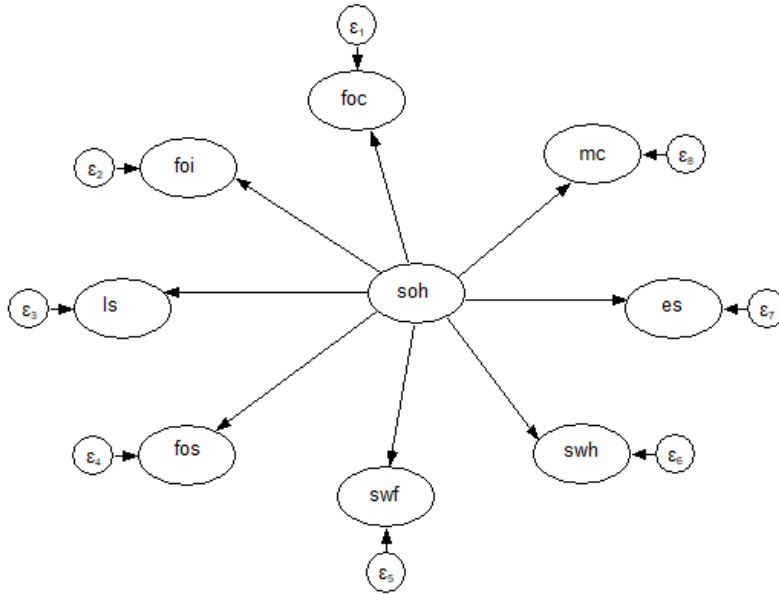
$$Y = BY + \Gamma\theta + e \quad \dots\dots (3)$$

In equation (3), Y represents the vector of endogenous latent variables; θ is the vector of exogenous latent variables; Γ is the matrix of coefficients among endogenous latent variables; stands for the matrix of regression coefficients from exogenous to endogenous variables; and e represents the vector of structural disturbances. In our analysis, State of Health (SOH) is considered as the only endogenous latent variable as it resonates with the feeling of how healthy a person is feeling from the inside, whereas the rest of the latent variables have exogenous components determining it.

Figure 2 represents the path diagram of the structural model.

In Figure 2, the latent variables, i.e., SOH, SWH, SWF, MC, FOI, FOS, FOC, ES and LS are shown in circular shape, while the ϵ 's represent the measurement errors of the model. The path diagram confirms that the endogenous and exogenous latent variables of the model are highly correlated (which is perfectly consistent with the literature) and there exists a unique causal relationship among them. Table 5 demonstrates the results of the structural model.

Figure 2: Path Diagram of Structural Model



Data Source: World Value Survey (WVS), ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data) and HIEF

Table 5: Results of the Structural Model

Path	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error	z	P > z
Foi ← soh	0.029	0.016	1.82	0.069*
Mc ← soh	0.003	0.001	3.02	0.003***
Ls ← soh	0.101	0.015	6.45	0.000***
Swh ← soh	-0.011	0.015	-0.78	0.433
Es ← soh	0.035	0.009	3.62	0.000***
Fos ← soh	-0.015	0.017	-0.84	0.398
Swf ← soh	0.052	0.009	5.61	0.000***
Foc ← soh	0.126	0.031	4.03	0.000***

Notes: LR test of model vs. saturated: $\chi^2(15) = 280.75$, Prob > $\chi^2 = 0.0000$; *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10

Data Source: World Value Survey (WVS), ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data) and HIEF

5. Analysis

The first two results in Table 4 show the direct, both-way relationship between the observed variables of the model. The path diagram quite clearly confirms the existence of both-way causality between the variables of the model, namely Feeling of Happiness (FOH) and Fatalities (Figure 1). The corresponding SEM coefficients turn out to be statistically significant at 1% and 10% level of significance, respectively. The signs of the two coefficients imply that if percentage of dissatisfied people increase the probability of occurring fatal conflicts also increase. At the same time long term prevalence of fatal conflicts also increase mass dissatisfaction. These implications are perfectly consistent with supporting literature (as discussed in the Literature Review section) and our underlying hypotheses.

Another observed variable of the model i.e. Ethno-linguistic Fractionalization (ELF) and Fatalities demonstrate limited reverse causality. A high degree of ELF exacerbates the likelihood of fatal conflicts to take place but not the other way round. The corresponding SEM coefficient is statistically significant at 1% level of significance. There are plenty of evidences and supporting literature that confirms the claim of high ELF giving birth to conflicts but not for the other way round. As per the definition of ELF it can be easily comprehended that Ethnic and linguistic divisions are deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of the society, while conflicts can make these divisions more prominent, it does not contribute to fundamentally change the societal structure in terms of diversity.

While Feeling of Happiness (FOH) has significant direct influence over fatalities, there are several other socio economic indicators (latent variables of SEM) that impacts FOH and are therefore responsible for indirectly impacting Fatalities. All these factors considered have statistical significance in indirect influences over Fatalities through their direct impacts over FOH except Employment Status (ES) and Satisfaction with Financial Situation in household (SWF). The respective signs of the significant coefficients are also consistent with the literature and hypotheses. One plausible explanation for ES and SWF to be insignificant might be the psychological predisposition of unemployment and financial hardship. The relationship between employment and happiness is individualistic. So, if a person is suffering from long-term unemployment, that is more likely to generate individual conflict and not group conflict. The occurrence of fatal conflicts—that are mainly a reflection of collective behaviours—might not often have any direct connection with individual employment status. Also, a person having generational wealth or income from capital gains or any other sources may remain unemployed for a considerable amount of time and still not be dissatisfied with his/her financial situation at household. This would not diminish their happiness and would reduce the chance of conflict participation. Hence, it is difficult to establish a definite connection between ES, SWF, FOH and Conflict Fatalities.

From the Structural model, we can infer that the latent components of happiness are correlated with each other and this causal relation is crucial to form the basis of administrative policies aimed towards reduced incidence of conflict. The endogenous latent variable SOH significantly affect the exogenous latent variables and in the process they as well affect observed variables like FOH and conflict related fatalities. As depicted in Table 3, SOH does not significantly affect FOS and SWH and the signs of the coefficients are also not consistent with the literature and hypotheses, whereas FOC, FOI, ES, LS, SWF and MC display statistically significant causation with SOH. There is logical explanation behind the causation between SOH and ES, LS and SWF. A person who is healthier is more likely to be more productive, have a well-paid job, and have financial stability at home and a materialistically satisfied life that reduces his incentive to participate in a conflict. On the

other, if a person is provided with better healthcare, he is eventually going to have a great deal of confidence in the government in other aspects too such as safety, inclusive policies, etc. A physically and mentally healthy and productive person would be more likely to adapt to the structural changes in the economy as well. And, in the process, it will increase subjective well-being through happiness and also reduce conflict participation of the individuals. This explains the significant causation among SOH, FOC, FOI and MC.

6. Conclusions

The above analysis highlights three major aspects. First, employment status and self-reported health satisfaction demonstrate substantial and meaningful effects on overall happiness, aligning with findings from prior research. Moreover, widespread unemployment can be regarded as an indirect consequence of conflict, underscoring the imperative for policymakers to address this issue to mitigate the likelihood of recurring violence. Second, when ethno-linguistic fractionalization contributes to unhappiness and conflict, governments can take several steps to address the issue such as promoting social cohesion, investing in community development programme, supporting cultural exchange and intercultural communication, ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all citizens etc. Third, providing mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution and mediation to address grievances and resolve disputes before they escalate into violence. This may involve establishing community-based mediation centres, facilitating dialogue between conflicting parties, and promoting nonviolent conflict resolution techniques.

Along with this, investing in mental health services and initiatives that promote emotional well-being and resilience among the population is very important. This may include expanding access to counseling and therapy services, providing mental health education and awareness campaigns, and promoting stress reduction techniques. This mechanism especially applicable in conflict infested pockets of the world. Places where people are exposed to conflicts for a long period of time and suffer from post-war traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) such as Syria, Ukraine, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, etc. Although it is of common knowledge that unhappiness brews conflict and creates a fertile ground for its future occurrence, there are some components of happiness that are always responsible behind conflict in different countries in spite of being different in several demographic aspects.

The longing for happiness, sometimes stifled by political ideologies, religious doctrines, or economic constraints, stands as one of our fundamental human aspirations. Remarkably, it serves as a primary impetus and rationale for violent political endeavors in every society. As shown empirically, people pursue happiness and in the process they engage into violence. Ethnicity, religion, and ideology establish the overarching frameworks for defining and pursuing happiness, while factors such as territory, resources, and markets are deemed indispensable in attaining this state. When individuals experience contentment, irrespective of their ethnic, religious, or national affiliations, they are more inclined to coexist peacefully. Therefore, ethnic and religious tensions should be perceived as symptoms rather than root causes of unhappiness and violence. As described by Hobbes, people find themselves as both perpetrators and casualties of violence. Given the prevailing global political climate marked by rising nationalism, divisions, hatred, xenophobia, and the persistence of multinational colonialism, the quest for happiness is likely to continue fueling violence in the foreseeable future. The only way to resist this is through decorate the conflict resolution framework in each country through improvement in the parameters of subjective well-being.

About the authors

Kamalika Dasgupta is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Economics, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. **Siddhartha Mitra** is a Professor at the Department of Economics, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India.

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