

Beat: News

Understanding the perceptions and connections of global risk

IEP Safety Perceptions Index 2022

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Safety Perceptions Index 2022: Understanding the perceptions and connections of global risk.

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Executive Summary

This is the first edition of the Lloyd's Register Foundation Safety Perceptions Index (SPI), produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace using data from the Lloyd's Register Foundation's World Risk Poll.

The purpose of the index is to better understand how perceptions of safety differ across countries, and how the different aspects of risk are connected. The SPI measures the levels of worry, likelihood and experience of risk across five domains: health, personal, violence, environment, and the workplace. These domains and themes are combined into a composite score which reflects perceptions of safety at the country level. A high score indicates a high level of concern with safety issues

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Future versions of the index will be able to track trends and changes in perceptions of safety over time, and to see if perceptions of safety have changed across different regions. This will be particularly important as the world begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Data for the first iteration of the SPI was collected before the onset of the pandemic in early 2020. As such, it is highly likely that attitudes towards different risks will have shifted significantly over the past two years.

The SPI is constructed from data from the World Risk Poll, a collaboration between Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup. The World Risk Poll provides invaluable insight into cross country level of risk in areas where comparable data from official government sources is unavailable, incomplete, or insufficiently comprehensive. For example, comparable data on violent crime rates is unavailable across more than a handful of countries owing to differences in definitions, recording mechanisms, and police collection procedures. While some existing survey data is available, it covers far fewer countries than the World Risk Poll, and is now at least a decade old.

Similarly, cross-country data on mental health tends to reflect official prevalence rates, but potentially misses issues related to under-diagnosis or cultural differences in attitudes towards diagnosis and treatment.

The first edition of the SPI finds that there are significant differences in the safety perceptions across countries and regions. Russian and Eurasian countries have the lowest levels of fear and worry with nine of the 25 countries with lowest overall scores coming from this region. People were most fearful of falling victim to road accidents, followed by violent crime, however the poll was completed just prior to COVID and the fear of illness would likely have increased in 2021. Additionally, the risk from violent crime is substantially higher in South America than other regions, mental health conditions are perceived the most significant risk in Europe and North America. Risk is low across all domains in Russia and Eurasia, however in sub-Saharan Africa the opposite holds true.

The index also finds that although scores across domains vary significantly from region to region, as a whole different risk domains and risk themes are strongly correlated. If a country has high levels of risk in one domain, it is likely to face high risk in others. Similarly, if the experience of a certain risk is high, people are more likely to be worried about it in the present, and to feel that it is highly likely to reoccur in the future.

There are two key exceptions to this pattern found in the SPI. Risk from mental health and the risk of workplace injury are correlated far less strongly with other forms of risk. This suggests that these two domains have different drivers and correlates of risk, and that addressing these risks will require a different understanding, and different policy responses.

*ARAC International is an IEP 2022 Ambassador Cohort and media partner with ReliefWeb

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