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Study identifies the 15 most 'miserable' countries in the world

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A recent study that focuses on the economic state of different countries around the world revealed that nations with really poor economies are considered to be countries of “misery.”

Steve H. Hanke, professor of applied economics at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and a senior fellow at the Cato Institute in Washington, used data from the Economist Intelligence Unit to create four different table charts of “high misery indexes” that showcase economies in the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East/Africa.

He studied the fiscal years between 2014 and 2015 for those economies, and his charts display the country along with its individual misery index score for both years. Only countries with current data for 2015 are represented in his findings.

Hanke explained that misery is marked by “the sum of the unemployment, inflation, and bank lending rates, minus the percentage change in real” gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. The higher the misery index score is, the greater the levels of misery per country.

According to his research, countries with a misery index score greater than 20 were in serious trouble. Countries with the highest misery index scores were Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Ukraine, and South Africa since they all had a misery index scores above 40.

There are many factors leading to a high score of misery. One reason is paradoxically what statistics and interventionists think will help — big governments. Hanke calls these “big players” and said they disrupt markets rather than stabilize them.

He offers three defining characteristics of “big players.”

- They are big enough to influence markets.

- They are immune to competitive pressures, thus insensitive to the discipline of profits and losses.
- They act with a large degree of discretion since their actions are not governed by a set of rules.