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## Far More Georgians Are Happy Than Not



**THE SAME IS TRUE GLOBALLY, DESPITE PESSIMISTIC ECONOMIC PREDICTIONS**

**FRANK KLOBUCAR  
GORBI**

People around the world are generally happy despite having somewhat gloomy economic prospects, according to a new poll conducted by Georgian Opinion Research Business International and other members of WIN Gallup International. More than half of the people polled (53%) said they were happy, only 13% said they were unhappy, and 31% fell somewhere in between. By simply subtracting the percentage of people who were unhappy from their happier peers, we calculate the Gallup Happiness Index for various countries and demographics. The global index, then, is 40.

In fact, happiness was so ubiquitous that only one country scored below zero, having more sad citizens than happy: Romania. Georgia's score was a little above average when compared to other countries, ranking 27th out of 58. Of those polled by GORBI, 52% of Georgians said they were happy in general and only 6% expressed discontent, making the Georgian happiness index 46.

Since 1977, Gallup international's network of opinion polling firms has been conducting this annual New Year's survey. Until this year's poll, the survey questions focused almost exclusively on economic prosperity. However, following the example of a recent study on happiness in England, Gallup firms decided to include a simple question about happiness to see how it relates to economics on both a country and an individual level. So, in December of 2011, people in 58 countries worldwide were asked if they were personally happy, unhappy or "neither happy nor unhappy." The results showed that economics is not the only important factor in a person's outlook on life.

### Happiness by Country

| Rank |             | Happiness | Hope |
|------|-------------|-----------|------|
| 1    | Fiji        | 85        | 33   |
| 2    | Nigeria     | 84        | 80   |
| 3    | Netherlands | 77        | -33  |
| 4    | Switzerland | 76        | -17  |
| 5    | Ghana       | 72        | 51   |
| 27   | Georgia     | 46        | 43   |
|      | Average     | 40        | -2   |
| 54   | Lithuania   | 9         | -47  |
| 55   | Serbia      | 8         | -50  |
| 56   | Palestine   | 7         | -26  |
| 57   | Egypt       | 0         | -24  |
| 58   | Romania     | -10       | -29  |

### ECONOMIC PREDICTIONS AND HAPPINESS BY COUNTRY

42% of people across the globe who expect the economy to worsen in 2012 still say that they are happy. Not surprisingly, a much larger number of those with high hopes for the economy were cheery. On a country level there is definitely a relationship between expected economic prosperity and happiness. More than half of the countries with poor net hope scores are also below average in their happiness scores, and almost

three quarters of economically hopeful countries are above average in happiness. However, the differences between various regions suggest that a country's culture might be just as important a factor in determining its citizens' happiness as its economic prospects.

For example, despite a majority of Europeans predicting economic deterioration in 2012, most European countries have above average happiness index scores. Take the case of Spain: with all their economic and budgetary woes, Spaniards scored a net Economic hope score of -47. At the same time their happiness index is +55, suggesting many people in Spain remain in high spirits regardless of their economic future. Across the Atlantic, however, it's a different story. The US had higher economic hopes than most of Europe, scoring a -21, but its happiness index ranks below most Europeans at 33.

### AGE, WEALTH, AND RELIGION

Regardless of what country you're living in, there are some things that seem to universally increase your likelihood of being content. The first of these is your age, specifically the effect of being middle-aged. Those aged 51-65 scored a happiness index of 33, while those under 30 years old and the elderly (over 65) scored 44 and 43, respectively.

Another important factor is how much money you make. Money does buy happiness, but it's more about how much you make relative to your other countrymen than the total dollar amount. When compared to their countries' populations, the top 20% of earners claim twice as many happy people (net happiness of 51) than those in the bottom quintile (net happiness of 27).

Finally, when viewed by religion, those who claimed no religious affiliation have a substantially lower score than those who declared a denomination. Those who answered "no religion" had a happiness in-

dex of 27, while those of major religious denominations did much better: Catholics at 54, Protestants at 54, Jewish at 50, Hindus at 43, and Muslims at 42. The one notable exception to this is among those of Orthodox faith, who scored virtually the same as the non-theists (28). It should be noted that Georgia's results disagree with this: 95% of its poll respondents were identified as Orthodox, and within Georgia, Orthodox Christianity scored comparably to the other religions (46). It seems likely that these results were offset by Romania, a primarily Orthodox country with the unhappiest population of all those polled, scoring a -10.

### Happiness by Demographic

| Age                              |  |    |
|----------------------------------|--|----|
| Under 30                         |  | 44 |
| 30-50                            |  | 38 |
| 51-65                            |  | 33 |
| 65                               |  | 43 |
| Monthly Household Income         |  |    |
| (Low) Bottom Quintile            |  | 27 |
| Second Quintile                  |  | 35 |
| (Medium) Third Quintile          |  | 40 |
| Fourth Quintile                  |  | 48 |
| (High) Top Quintile              |  | 51 |
| Education                        |  |    |
| No / Basic Education             |  | 33 |
| Secondary School                 |  | 40 |
| High Education (e.g. university) |  | 44 |

For this study, GORBI teamed up with firms in 58 countries worldwide. There were more than 50,000 people included in the study, and just over a thousand Georgians. The error margins for studies of this kind are +/- 3.5% at a 95% confidence interval.