Income and Optimism in North Africa: Steps to a Social Cohesion Index

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Residents of 5 North African nations have different perceptions of the freedom and opportunities available to them according to where they fall on their countries’ income scale.

The effects are often stronger than those seen in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Crabtree and Tortora, 2011)

Pessimism among poorer residents about job opportunities and their own living standards reflect low levels of economic mobility. This has been a key factor in the current unrest and is a formidable barrier to social cohesion.

Gallup World Poll Methodology

- Data presented here were gathered in 2010 from 5 countries in the North Africa region.
- All surveys are conducted in person after being translated into the major languages spoken in each country.
- Surveys from Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia use randomly selected, nationally representative samples. Sample sizes are 1,000 per wave in every country. Two waves per country were conducted in 2010.
- In Libya, the sample was restricted to three areas: Tripoli, Benghazi and Al Kufrah, representing about 50% of the population. The sample is somewhat skewed toward male and employed respondents.
- The Gallup World Poll continually surveys residents in more than 150 countries, representing more than 98% of the world’s adult population.
Perception of Income Versus GDP per Capita in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Living comfortably on present income
- Getting by on present income
- Finding it difficult on present income
- Finding it very difficult on present income
- Median GDP per capita (PPP)*

*Based on all countries surveyed in 2007, 2008, 2008, and 2010. The 2010 figure is calculated based on IMF estimates.
Perception of Income Versus GDP per Capita in North Africa

*Based on all countries surveyed in 2007, 2008, 2008, and 2010. The 2010 figure is calculated based on IMF estimates.
Right now, do you feel your standard of living is getting better or getting worse?

Results divided by respondents’ RELATIVE INCOME LEVEL within their own countries

- **Poorest 20%**
  - Getting better: 28%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 47%
  - Getting worse: 24%

- **Second 20%**
  - Getting better: 38%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 41%
  - Getting worse: 19%

- **Middle 20%**
  - Getting better: 46%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 38%
  - Getting worse: 14%

- **Fourth 20%**
  - Getting better: 56%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 31%
  - Getting worse: 11%

- **Richest 20%**
  - Getting better: 61%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 29%
  - Getting worse: 8%
Right now, do you feel your standard of living is getting better or getting worse? Results divided by respondents’ LEVEL OF COMFORT ON THEIR PRESENT INCOME
Right now, do you feel your standard of living is getting better or getting worse?
Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

- **Poorest 20%**
  - Getting better: 32%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 16%
  - Getting worse: 53%

- **Second 20%**
  - Getting better: 72%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 21%
  - Getting worse: 7%

- **Middle 20%**
  - Getting better: 72%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 23%
  - Getting worse: 14%

- **Fourth 20%**
  - Getting better: 66%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 25%
  - Getting worse: 8%

- **Richest 20%**
  - Getting better: 72%
  - Staying the same (vol.): 21%
  - Getting worse: 7%
Right now, do you feel your standard of living is getting better or getting worse?
Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Getting better</th>
<th>Staying the same (vol.)</th>
<th>Getting worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorest 20%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second 20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth 20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest 20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Right now, do you feel your standard of living is getting better or getting worse?  
Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

- Poorest 20%: Getting better - 26%, Staying the same (vol.) - 25%, Getting worse - 25%
- Second 20%: Getting better - 33%, Staying the same (vol.) - 20%, Getting worse - 20%
- Middle 20%: Getting better - 46%, Staying the same (vol.) - 14%, Getting worse - 4%
- Fourth 20%: Getting better - 69%, Staying the same (vol.) - 7%, Getting worse - 7%
- Richest 20%: Getting better - 79%, Staying the same (vol.) - 17%, Getting worse - 3%
Perceptions of Job Availability Rise with Income Levels
Data aggregated from 5 North African countries, 2010

*Thinking about the job situation in the city or area where you live today, would you say that it is now a good time or a bad time to find a job?*

Results divided by respondents’ RELATIVE INCOME LEVEL within their own countries

- **Poorest 20%**: Good time - 26%, Bad time - 64%
- **Second 20%**: Good time - 29%, Bad time - 59%
- **Middle 20%**: Good time - 33%, Bad time - 56%
- **Fourth 20%**: Good time - 37%, Bad time - 52%
- **Richest 20%**: Good time - 42%, Bad time - 46%
Thinking about the job situation in the city or area where you live today, would you say that it is now a good time or a bad time to find a job?

Results divided by respondents’ LEVEL OF COMFORT ON THEIR PRESENT INCOME

Perceptions of Job Availability Rise with Income Levels
Data aggregated from 5 North African countries, 2010
Thinking about the job situation in the city or area where you live today, would you say that it is now a good time or a bad time to find a job?

Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

- **Poorest 20%**: 19% Good time, 73% Bad time
- **Second 20%**: 23% Good time, 71% Bad time
- **Middle 20%**: 27% Good time, 71% Bad time
- **Fourth 20%**: 37% Good time, 55% Bad time
- **Richest 20%**: 48% Good time, 45% Bad time

**MOROCCO**, March 2010

Perceptions of Job Availability Rise with Income Levels
Thinking about the job situation in the city or area where you live today, would you say that it is now a good time or a bad time to find a job?

Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

- **Egypt**, March & October, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Good Time</th>
<th>Bad Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorest 20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second 20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth 20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest 20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?

Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

Perceptions of Safety and Security Vary by Income Level
Data aggregated from 5 North African countries, 2010
In [country], are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?

Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorest 20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second 20%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 20%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth 20%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest 20%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In [country], are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?

Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

Satisfaction with Personal Freedom Varies by Income Level
Data aggregated from 5 North African countries, 2010
In [country], are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?

Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

### Satisfaction with Personal Freedom Rises with Income in Some Countries

**TUNISIA, April & October, 2010**
In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the educational system or the schools?

Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest 20%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the educational system or the schools?

Results divided by respondents’ relative income level within their own countries

- **Poorest 20%**: Satisfied 63%, Dissatisfied 36%
- **Second 20%**: Satisfied 72%, Dissatisfied 28%
- **Middle 20%**: Satisfied 74%, Dissatisfied 26%
- **Fourth 20%**: Satisfied 76%, Dissatisfied 24%
- **Richest 20%**: Satisfied 87%, Dissatisfied 13%
Working toward a “social cohesion index”

- Would combine external indicators with Gallup’s extensive perceptual data from Africa
- Currently trying to identify existing World Poll questions that discriminate between populations that have experienced persistent conflict between social groups, and those that haven’t
- Following a recent report by the UK Department for Communities and Local Government, we are considering five aspects of social cohesion:
  1. Material conditions – Including employment, income, services
  2. Social order – Security, tolerance
  3. Positive interactions and exchanges – Networks, social capital
  4. Social inclusion and integration – Civil society, sense of belonging
  5. Social equality – Fairness in access to opportunities
Working toward a “social cohesion index”

Possible questions regarding material conditions:

- Which one of these phrases comes closest to your own feelings about your household’s income these days? Living comfortably; Getting by; Finding it difficult; Finding it very difficult
- In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the availability of quality health care?
- In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the educational system or the schools?
- In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the availability of good job opportunities?
- Have there been times in the past 12 months when you did not have enough money to provide adequate shelter or housing for you and your family?
Working toward a “social cohesion index”

Possible questions regarding social order:

- Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?
- In the city or area where you live, do you have confidence in the local police force, or not?
- Within the last 12 months, have you had money or property stolen from you or another household member?
- Within the last 12 months, have you been assaulted or mugged?
- Generally speaking, would you say people can be trusted or that you have to be careful in dealing with people?
Working toward a “social cohesion index”

Possible questions regarding positive interactions:

- If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?
- In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the opportunities to meet people and make friends?
- Approximately how many hours did you spend socially with friends or family yesterday?
- About how many close friends or relatives do you speak to at least once every two weeks, either in person or on the phone?
- Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?
Working toward a “social cohesion index”

Possible questions regarding social inclusion/integration:

- Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for racial and ethnic minorities?
- Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?
- Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for immigrants from other countries?
- Do you agree or disagree that leaders in the city or area where you live represent your interests?
- In your opinion, how many people in your country, if any, are afraid to openly express their political views?
Working toward a “social cohesion index”

Possible questions regarding social equality:

- Can people in this country get ahead by working hard, or not?
- Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?
- Can people in this country feel very confident that private property will be respected at all times?
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Women and men should have equal legal rights
- Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your personal health?
- What is the highest level of education you have completed?