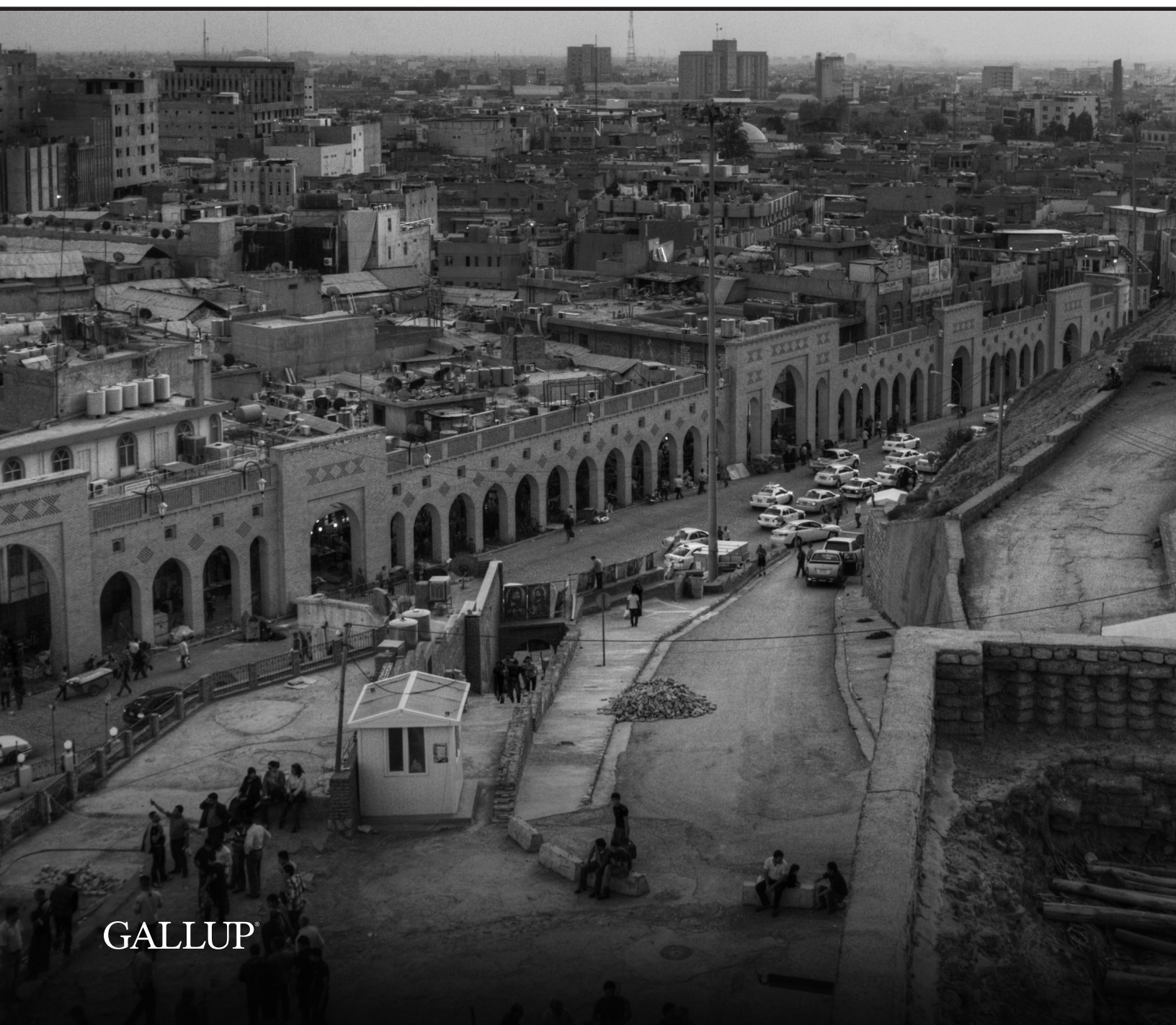


# Gallup 2017 Global Emotions



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**Jon Clifton**

Managing Partner,  
Gallup

## From Gallup's Managing Partner

When people asked Dr. George Gallup which public opinion findings interested him most, he quickly chose surveys that measured happiness in the United States.

As usual, America's polling pioneer was ahead of his time.

Not unlike Simon Kuznets proposing Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to gauge the national economy, Dr. Gallup sought metrics that would capture the entire country's mood. Gallup's *2017 Global Emotions Report* expands Dr. Gallup's prescient interest to the whole world.

Some people might argue that sentiment and emotions are "soft data" and only hard data such as GDP and unemployment really matter to a country's future.

The results from Gallup's *2017 Global Emotions Report* serve as a caution against this thinking because of two words — *behavioral economics*. According to this field of study, only 30% of individual behavior is rational — the other 70% is emotional. And while organizations are starting to apply this concept at a microlevel, governments have been slow to do it at a macrolevel.

Good national indicators such as unemployment and GDP exist to help quantify the 30% of rational behavior, but virtually no macrolevel data exist on the other 70%. This overreliance on hard data might be why global leaders, economists and political scientists missed social upheavals like the Arab Spring, the Maidan Revolution or Brexit. Gallup's data on the other 70% — or how people were feeling — told a different story in each of these places.

This report draws from the largest behavioral study of its kind, a project known as the Gallup World Poll. Gallup conducts rigorous surveys in 140 countries each year. Each is like a labor force survey — but instead of asking, "Do you have a job?" we simply ask, "How is your life going?" Also like unemployment statistics, the results on these questions are aggregated to produce national-level figures. The resulting metrics serve as macrolevel gauges for the emotional and behavioral side of life.

Gallup's report gives leaders a picture of happiness and well-being in their countries and quantifies "what makes a life worth living."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Clifton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jon Clifton  
Managing Partner,  
Gallup

## Global State of Emotions

Gallup's Positive and Negative Experience Indexes measure life's intangibles — feelings and emotions — that traditional economic indicators such as GDP were never intended to capture. Each index provides a real-time snapshot of people's daily experiences, offering leaders insights into the health of their societies that they cannot gather from economic measures alone.

The *2017 Global Emotions Report* presents the results from Gallup's latest measurements of people's positive and negative daily experiences based on nearly 149,000 interviews with adults in 142 countries in 2016.

### Positive Experience Index Questions

- Did you feel well-rested yesterday?
- Were you treated with respect all day yesterday?
- Did you smile or laugh a lot yesterday?
- Did you learn or do something interesting yesterday?
- Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday? How about enjoyment?

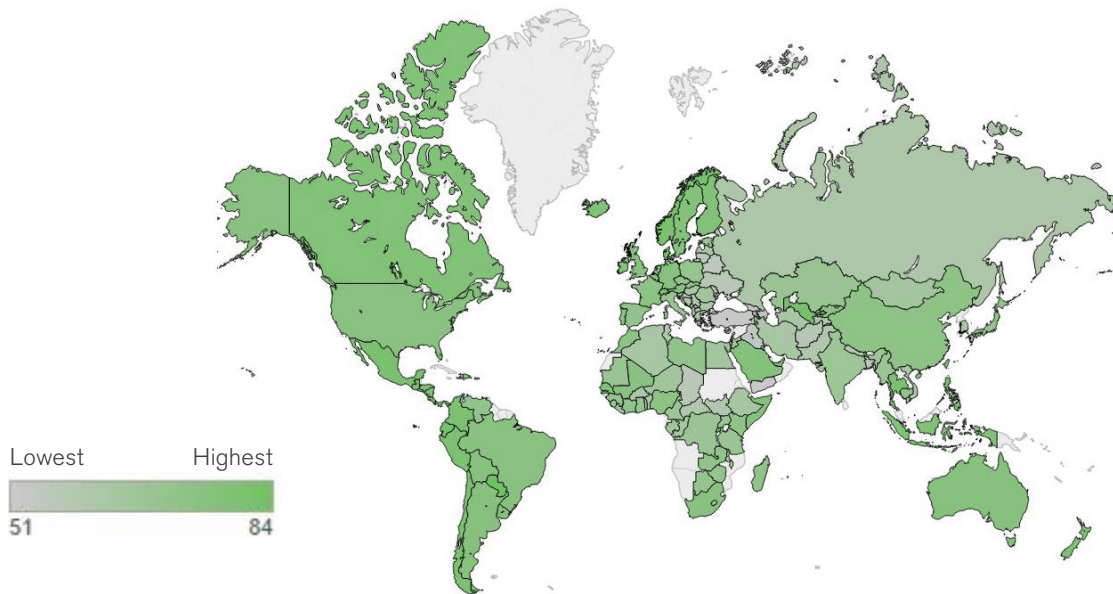
The Positive Experience Index score is the mean of all valid affirmative responses to these items multiplied by 100. Country-level index scores range from zero to 100. Higher scores mean that positive emotions are more pervasive in a country. These scores strongly relate to people's perceptions about their living standards, personal freedoms and the presence of social networks.

### Negative Experience Index Questions

- Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday? How about physical pain?
- Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday? How about worry?
- Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday? How about sadness?
- Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday? How about stress?
- Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday? How about anger?

The Negative Experience Index score is the mean of all valid affirmative responses to these items multiplied by 100. Country-level index scores range from zero to 100. The higher the score, the more pervasive negative emotions are in a country. People's experiences with health problems and their ability to afford food are predictive of higher negative scores.

### Positive Experience Index Worldwide 2016

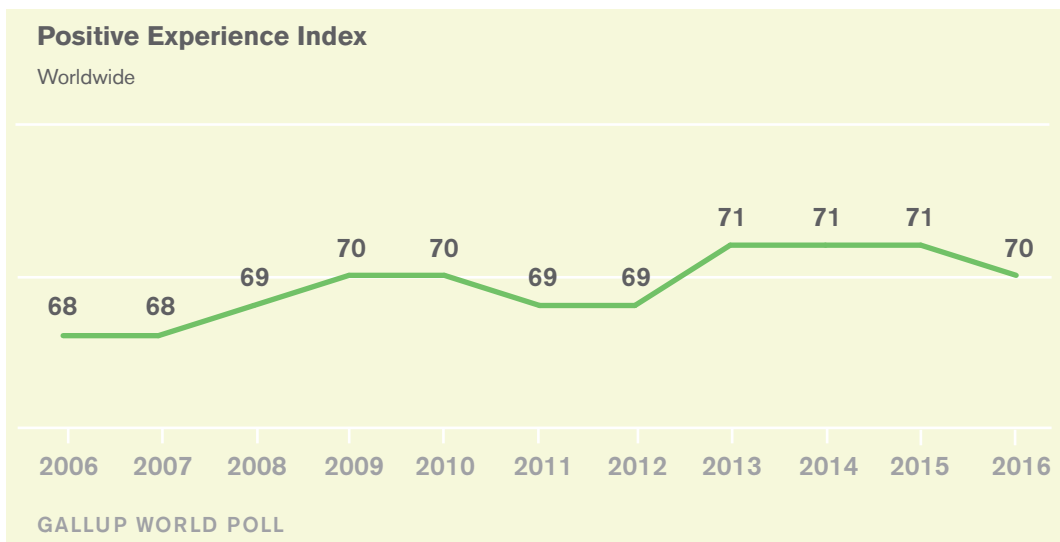


### Positive Experience Index Stable Again Worldwide in 2016

Gallup asked adults in 142 countries in 2016 if they had five positive experiences on the day before the survey. More than 70% of people worldwide said they experienced a lot of enjoyment, smiled or laughed a lot, felt well-rested, and felt treated with respect. People were far less likely, as is typically the case, to say they learned or did something interesting the day before the interview — just 50% said this was their experience.

Gallup compiles the “yes” responses from these five questions into a Positive Experience Index score for each country. The index score for the world in 2016 remains remarkably consistent at 70.

Scores worldwide ranged from a high of 84 in Paraguay to a low of 51 in Yemen. Paraguay also led the world in 2015. Syria earned the lowest score in 2015, but Gallup could not survey the country in 2016 because of security issues.



### Latin American Countries Lead in Positive Experiences

As they have for much of the past decade, Latin American countries dominate the list of countries in 2016 where adults are reporting a lot of positive emotions each day. The only countries outside this region that top this list are Uzbekistan, the Philippines and Norway.

So many people reporting positive emotions in Latin America at least partly reflects the cultural tendency in the region to focus on life's positives. The single variable that Gallup finds predicts results on both the Positive and Negative Experience Indexes is country of origin, suggesting cultural bias exists in how people answer these questions.

### Countries in Conflict Post Some of the Lowest Positive Index Scores

Personal freedom and the presence of social networks are also highly related to scores on the Positive Experience Index. The latter helps explain why — year after year — people from lower- and upper-middle-income economies in Latin America are more likely than those in most high-income economies to report positive experiences.

This relationship also helps explain why some of the countries at the bottom of the list do not change much. Several of the countries at the bottom — Ukraine, Iraq, Yemen and Turkey — have ongoing internal and external conflict in common.

Haiti and Ukraine also led the world in 2016 in the percentage of their populations who rated their current and future lives poorly enough to be considered suffering. Notably, Haitians gave ratings this poor before Hurricane Matthew hit that same year.

### The Middle East and North Africa, Post-Soviet States Have Lowest Regional Scores

In most years, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region alone has posted the lowest score among all global regions on the Positive Experience Index. But in 2016, MENA tied with another region, the post-Soviet states, for the lowest score (63). All countries in the post-Soviet states region except two, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, had scores lower than the global mean. Six countries in the MENA region, including most of the oil-rich Gulf Cooperation Council states, posted higher than average scores.

#### Highest Positive Experiences Worldwide

2016

Paraguay	84
Costa Rica	83
Panama	82
Philippines	82
Uzbekistan	82
Ecuador	81
Guatemala	81
Mexico	81
Norway	81
Chile	80
Colombia	80

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#### Lowest Positive Experiences Worldwide

2016

Yemen	51
Turkey	52
Iraq	54
Belarus	54
Georgia	55
Bangladesh	55
Azerbaijan	55
Lithuania	56
Haiti	56
Ukraine	57

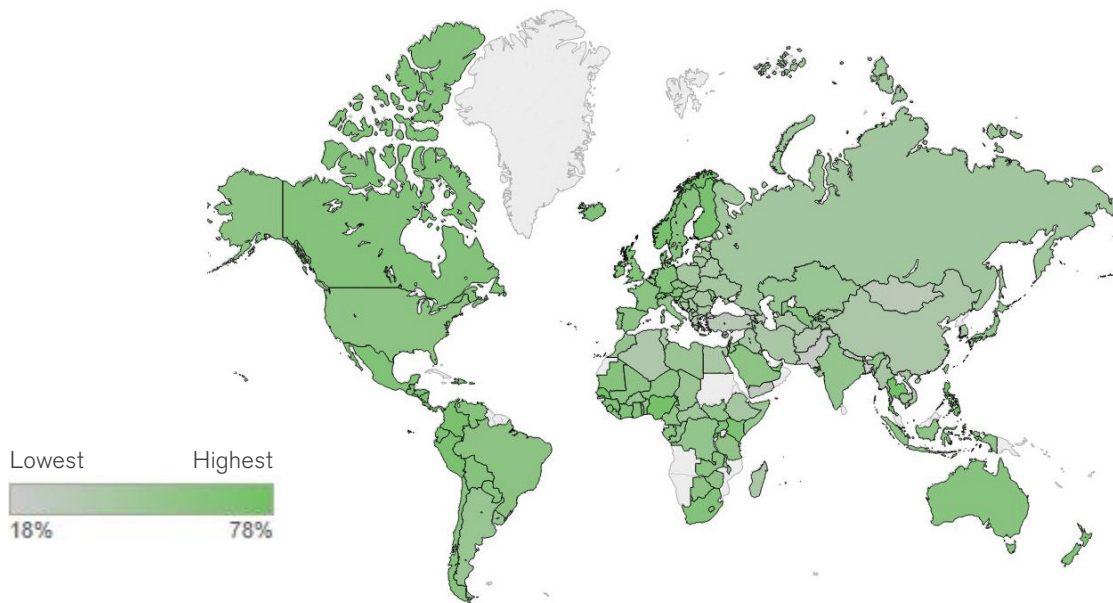
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### One in Two Adults Learned or Did Something Interesting

Solid majorities reported experiencing four of the five items that make up the Positive Experience Index, but a more modest 50% of people worldwide say they learned or did something interesting the day before the interview in 2016. While this percentage seems lackluster in comparison with current results for other items, it is on the higher end of scores over the past decade. Through 2012, majorities of adults worldwide said they did not learn or do something interesting the previous day.

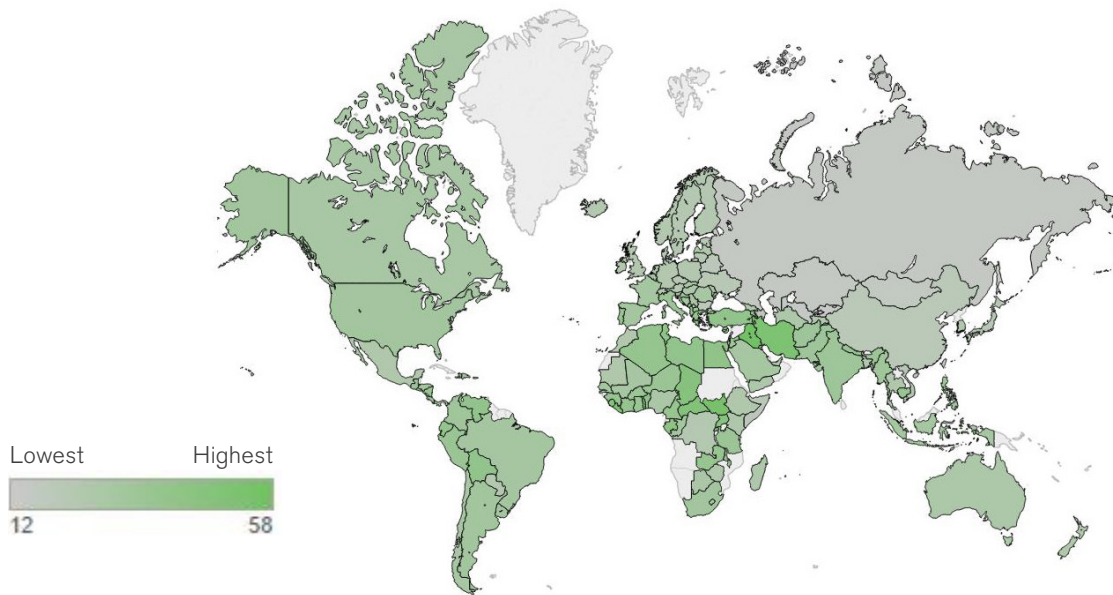
#### Did you learn or do something interesting yesterday?

Percentage “yes” among each country’s adult population



Percentages worldwide range from as low as 18% in Bangladesh to as high as 78% in the Philippines.

### Negative Experience Index Worldwide 2016

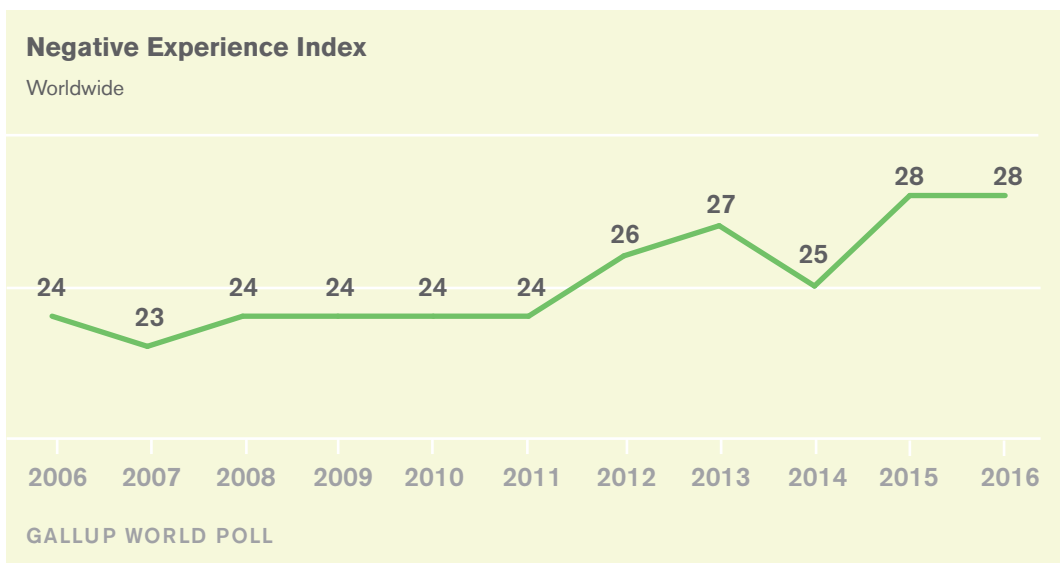


### Globally, Negative Experience Index Remains on Higher End in 2016

Gallup asked adults in 142 countries in 2016 if they had five different negative experiences on the day before the survey. More than one in three people said they experienced a lot of worry (36%) or stress (35%), and three in 10 experienced a lot of physical pain (30%). At least one in five experienced sadness (22%) or anger (20%). Physical pain was the only item that changed from the previous year, rising two percentage points from 28% in 2015.

Gallup compiles the “yes” responses from these five questions into a Negative Experience Index score for each country. The index score for the world in 2016 was 28, unchanged from 2015 and on the higher end of the trend since 2006.

Scores worldwide ranged from a high of 58 in Iraq to a low of 12 in Kyrgyzstan.





### Iraq Tops Negative Experience List for the Fifth Time

Iraq has the highest Negative Experience Index score in the world for the fourth year in a row. Iraq has been No. 1 on this index five times — in 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 — and has been among the top five in all other years since 2008. The next-highest country on the list is South Sudan, where the score leaped from 46 to 55 in one year as the country spiraled deeper into civil war and the population faced starvation and the threat of genocide.

The continued presence of Iraq at the top of the list is not surprising given how strongly related negative scores are to people’s perceptions about their living standards and health problems. As in past years, people in most of the countries with the highest negative scores in 2016 were contending with some type of turmoil. Many of the countries at the top of the list in 2015 remained there in 2016.

### Mix of Countries at Bottom of the Negative Experience List

Countries with the lowest negative scores do not necessarily have the highest positive scores. Almost all of the countries with the lowest scores on the Negative Experience Index in 2016 also appeared on the list in 2015. This list includes Russia and several of its former republics and countries within its sphere of influence.

It is worth noting again that country of origin is related to results on this index, suggesting cultural bias exists in how people answer these questions.

#### Highest Negative Experiences Worldwide

2016

Iraq	58
South Sudan	55
Iran	52
Liberia	52
Central African Republic	48
Togo	48
Chad	47
Sierra Leone	47
Uganda	46
Gabon	43

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#### Lowest Negative Experiences Worldwide

2016

Kyrgyzstan	12
Uzbekistan	14
Taiwan	15
Singapore	15
Russia	15
Kazakhstan	15
Mongolia	16
Bulgaria	18
Somalia	19
Estonia	19

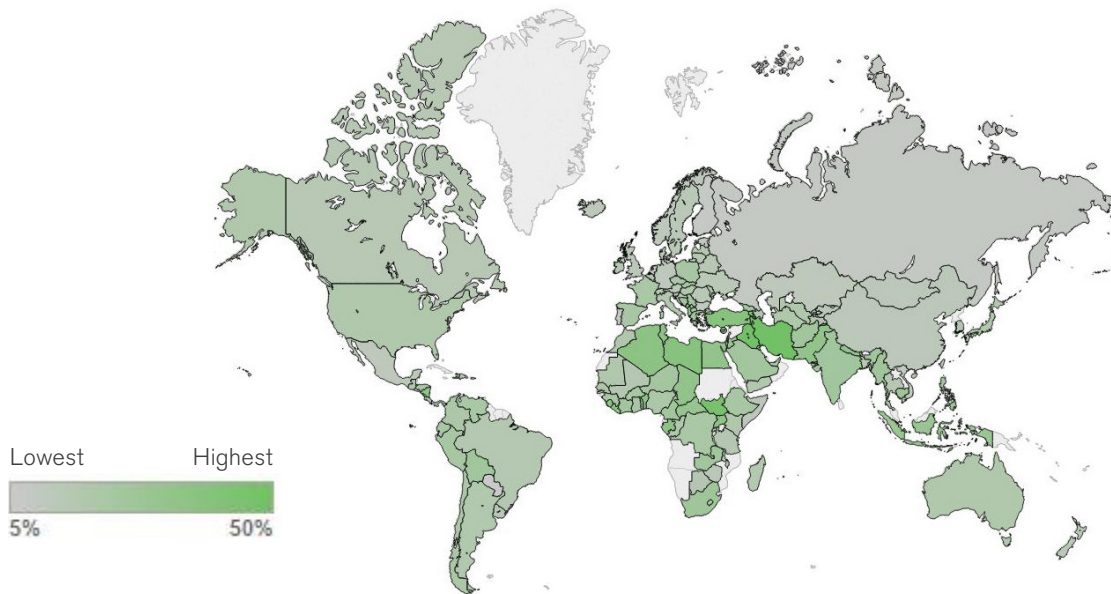
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### At Least Half of Iraqis Experienced Negative Emotions the Previous Day

Iraq's high Negative Experience Index score is largely attributable to the relatively high percentages of Iraqis who reported experiencing each of these negative emotions. Majorities of Iraqis experienced worry (63%), physical pain (60%), stress (59%) and sadness (57%) the previous day, and half of Iraqis (49%) were angry. Along with Iranians (50%) and South Sudanese (47%), Iraqis were the angriest populations in the world. They also tied with residents of Central African Republic (59%), South Sudan (59%) and Togo (59%) in reporting physical pain and tied with Liberia (55%) in reporting sadness.

### Did you experience anger during a lot of the day yesterday?

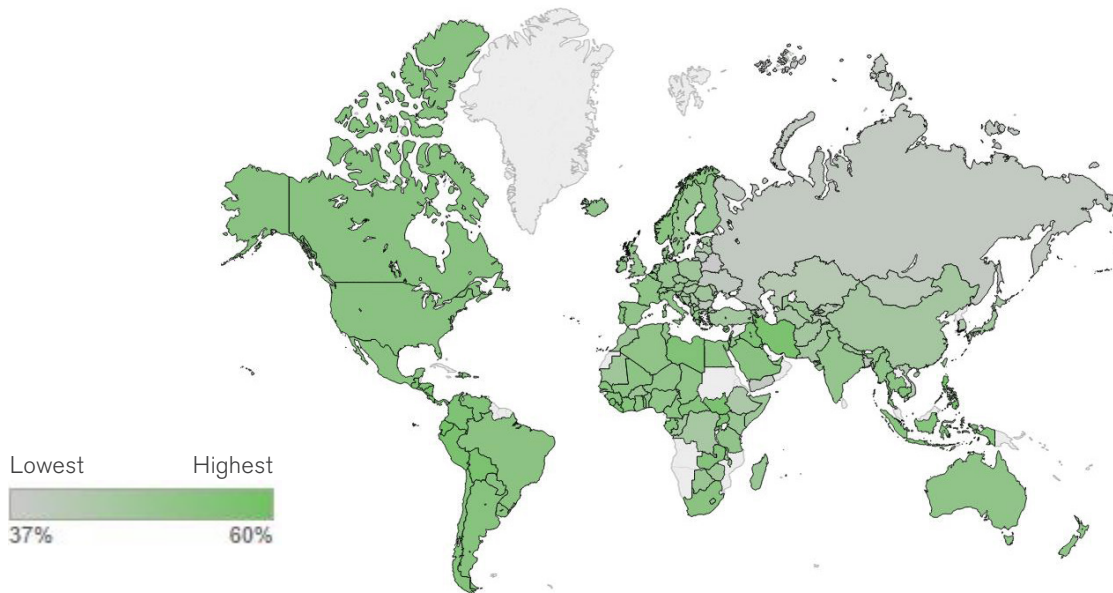
Percentage "yes" among each country's adult population



However, while majorities of Iraqis reported experiencing stress and worry, they were not the most stressed in the world or the most worried in 2016. In Greece, more than two in three residents (67%) said they experienced a lot of stress the previous day — the highest percentage in the world — as Greeks continued to grapple with unemployment rates above 20%. Worry was highest in the world in civil-war-torn Central African Republic (72%) and in Togo (71%).

### Total Emotions Worldwide 2016

Percentage average “yes” responses to all questions



#### Latin America Home to Many Emotional Leaders

Averaging the “yes” responses to the 10 questions that make up the Positive and Negative Experience Indexes provides a picture of the most and least emotional societies worldwide.

Ecuador, El Salvador and Liberia top the list of the most emotional countries in the world in 2016. On average, nearly six in 10 residents in each of these countries reported experiencing *positive or negative emotions* the previous day. Countries with ties to Russia and the former Soviet Union again largely dominate the list of countries at the other end of the spectrum, where fewer than four in 10 residents reported experiencing any of these feelings.

Percentages range from a high of 60% in Ecuador to a low of 37% in Belarus.

#### Total Emotions Worldwide 2016

Percentage average “yes” responses to all questions

Ecuador	60
El Salvador	59
Liberia	59
Philippines	58
Guatemala	58
Nicaragua	58
Peru	58
Costa Rica	58
Bolivia	58
Iran	57

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## Methodology

Results for surveys in 2016 are based on telephone and face-to-face interviews with approximately 1,000 adults, aged 15 and older, conducted throughout the year in 142 countries. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error ranged from  $\pm 2.1$  percentage points to  $\pm 5.3$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting.

For more complete methodology and specific survey dates, please review [Gallup's Country Data Set details](#).

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