



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات  
ARAB CENTER FOR RESEARCH & POLICY STUDIES

# The Arab Opinion Project: The Arab Opinion Index

March 2012

Copyright © 2012 Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. All Rights Reserved.

---

The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies is an independent research institute and think tank for the study of history and social sciences, with particular emphasis on the applied social sciences.

The Center's paramount concern is the advancement of Arab societies and states, their cooperation with one another and issues concerning the Arab nation in general. To that end, it seeks to examine and diagnose the situation in the Arab world - states and communities- to analyze social, economic and cultural policies and to provide political analysis, from an Arab perspective.

The Center publishes in both Arabic and English in order to make its work accessible to both Arab and non-Arab researchers.

**Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies**

PO Box 10277

Street No. 826, Zone 66

Doha, Qatar

Tel.: +974 44199777 | Fax: +974 44831651

[www.dohainstitute.org](http://www.dohainstitute.org)



## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Assessing the General Situation	7
Arab Public Opinion and Arab Revolutions	20
Arab Public Opinion and Democracy	32
Confidence in Key Institutions in Arab Countries	46
The Role of Religion in Public and Political Life	61
Attitudes Towards other Arabs	72

## Introduction

This report contains the main results of the Arab Opinion Index 2011, gathered in the field through face-to-face interviews carried out by qualified local polling bodies on behalf of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS). Respondents formed representative samples of the 12 Arab countries in which the survey was conducted: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen. Taken together, these countries represent 85% of the total population of the Arab League. All responses were gathered from February to July 2011, with a total of 16,173 respondents.

The geographical spread of the respondents and the depth of surveying justifies the use of the expression "Arab public opinion," as an indication of aggregate trends in public opinion, in this instance; the responses to this survey represent the great majority of Arab public opinion, and cover most of the territorial vastness of the Arab homeland: the Maghreb, the Nile Valley, the Levant/Mesopotamia, and the Arabian Peninsula.

These results are also the debut findings of the inaugural Arab Opinion Index, which has been established as the annual flagship project of the Arab Public Opinion Project itself, envisioned as a cornerstone of the ACRPS' efforts. The program conducts surveys to determine public attitudes towards economic, social, and political issues that concern the Arab citizen. The project further aims to provide an open resource for Arab researchers, decision-makers, civil society organizations, and other actors and interested parties on the directions of public opinion in the Arab Homeland, one that would contribute to a deeper understanding of our societies, free of stereotypes and prejudices. In this way, the data will provide a knowledge base that can be utilized in the development of policies and plans that address problems and shortcomings, and aim to improve the conditions of the Arab people, in the belief that the ultimate goal of academically rigorous surveys, centered on the citizen, is to ameliorate the interests of the citizens.

This first survey measures public opinion trends in any and all Arab countries in which the conduct of surveys was feasible for the ACRPS. It concerns itself with trends regarding many issues, including the following: the degree of citizens' satisfaction with their economic conditions, standards of living, and the level of services they receive, as well as their views on democracy, political participation, and the impact of religion on

general and political life. The Arab Opinion Index also contains questions that measure how much confidence citizens have in state institutions, how they define the sources of threats to their personal or national security, and their perceptions of their Arab surroundings.

Defining the goals of the Arab Opinion Index, the questions it should contain and preparations for fieldwork initially took place during the last quarter of 2010, before the onset of the Arab revolutions. It was therefore necessary to amend the survey with specific questions that would gauge some of the public’s positions towards these revolutions. The Arab Opinion Index was conducted using a multistage cluster sampling approach, which is self-weighted and is particularly appropriate in cases where there is incomplete data on the countries being surveyed. The main results, included in this report, are reported with a 95% confidence limit, with an in-built margin of error of 3.5%. This report includes the main results of the public opinion survey, with a more complete set of findings to be published in a book which will be made available on the ACRPS website in order to give researchers the opportunity to make use of the data therein.

The presentation of the results begins with public opinion in the Arab region as a whole and then addresses the results of each state separately. The average results of public opinion trends for the whole Arab region were calculated from the results of the 12 countries covered by the survey, and the results for each of the countries surveyed were weighted to reflect the relative population of each country. This method ensures that all countries’ populations are fairly represented.

**Countries in which the Arab Opinion Index Survey was conducted:**

Name of Country	Date of Fieldwork
Algeria	05/15/2011– 05/28/2011
Egypt	05/30/2011– 06/07/2011
Iraq	02/13/2011– 02/22/2011
Jordan	07/03/2011– 07/16/ 2011
Lebanon	18/03/2011– 04/02/2011
Mauritania	03/03/2011– 03/23/2011
Morocco	04/14/2011– 05/14/2011
Palestine	03/17/2011– 09/08/2011
Saudi Arabia	02/12/2011– 03/15/2011
Sudan	05/30/2011– 06/30/2011
Tunisia	05/30/2011– 06/30/2011
Yemen	05/16/2011– 05/31/2011

This report is divided into six sections:

### **Assessing the General Situation**

This section gauges the level of Arab citizens' satisfaction with their lives and economic situations, in addition to their attitudes towards the economic, security, and political situations in their countries. This section also explores what Arab citizens regard as the greatest threats to their security.

### **Arab Public Opinion and Arab Revolutions**

This section deals exclusively with respondents' opinions regarding the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, in addition to questions specific to trends in public opinion in Egypt and Tunisia towards the two revolutions.

### **Arab Public Opinion and Democracy**

This section examines respondents' definitions of democracy, their stances towards democratic systems, and their assessments of the levels of democracy in their respective countries.

### **Confidence in Key Institutions in the Arab Countries**

This section gauges the levels of confidence citizens have in their countries' governments, including executive and legislative branches, judiciaries, militaries, and general security. It also includes indicators for assessing the performance of governments and parliaments.

### **The Role of Religion in Public and Political Life**

This section shows trends in public opinion towards the role of religion across a range of political issues. This also includes respondents' descriptions of the extent of their religious observance.

### **Perceptions of the Arab Surroundings**

This final section covers questions of inter-Arab bonds, and other pan-Arab issues, including, for example, the respondents' perceptions of threats to the wider Arab order, and how respondents feel about Arab-Arab cooperation.



## Assessing the General Situation

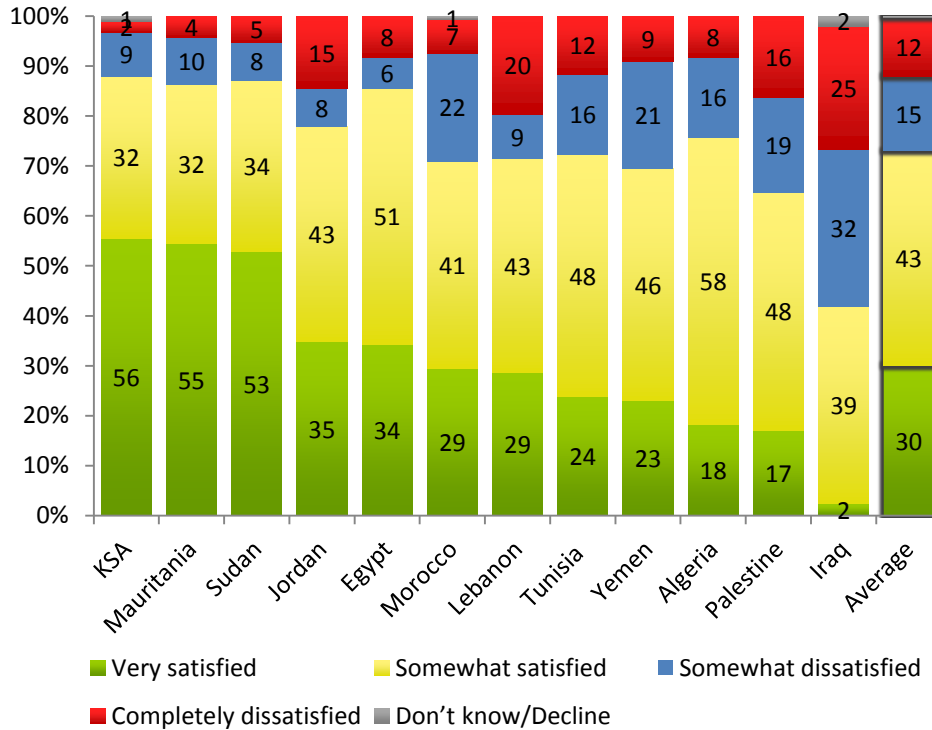
This section presents a range of indicators designed to reflect Arab citizens' attitudes towards the core issues, for their own lives and their societies, by determining the degree to which they are satisfied with their lives in general, with the level of security in their homes, and with their economic situations. This section included indicators which showed the respondent's assessment of the general situation in their respective countries and its level of security, as well as their evaluation of the general political and economic situation. Respondents were also asked to identify which states they regarded as representing a threat to their personal security and that of their countries.

### **Respondents' Satisfaction with Their Conditions**

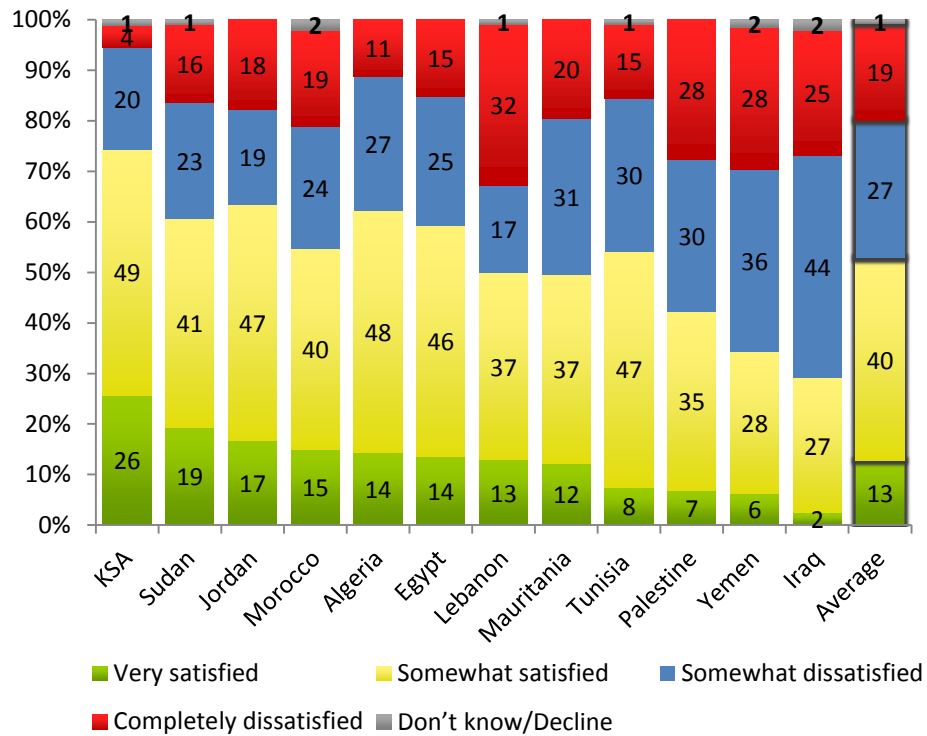
Citizens of Arab states are content – in general – with their lives. Some 73% stated that they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their lives, compared to 27% who stated that they were “somewhat dissatisfied” or “completely dissatisfied”. Responses varied according to country. The highest percentages of those satisfied with their lives were found in Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, and Sudan, with rates above 85% and more than half of all respondents were “very satisfied”. In general, between two-thirds and three-quarters of respondents in the various countries reported being satisfied with their lives, with the notable exception being Iraq, where a majority of respondents reported being dissatisfied.

Only 2% of Iraqis stated that they were “very satisfied”. Specifically, we wish to point out that 35% percent of Palestinians, 30% of Yemenis, and 29% of respondents from each of Morocco and Lebanon stated that they were dissatisfied to some extent.

**Figure 1: Respondents' satisfaction with their lives**



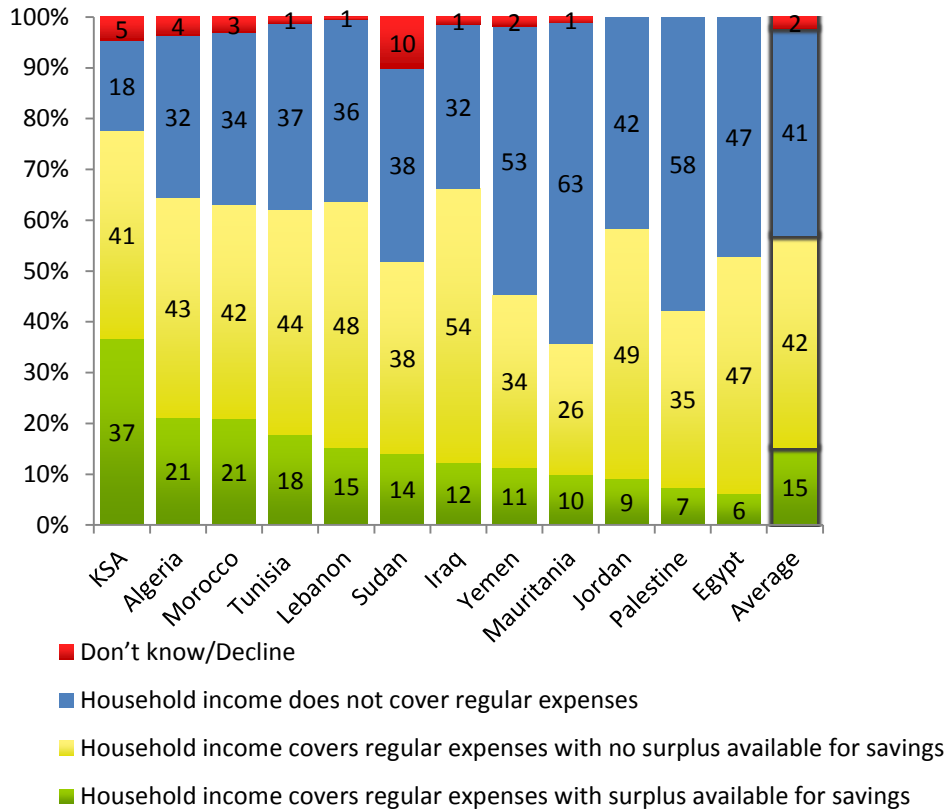
Citizens of the Arab region offered mixed assessments of their household economic situations: 53% of respondents expressed satisfaction with their household economic standing, while 46% said they were dissatisfied. The proportion of those who were “very satisfied” with the economic situations of their households was 13%, while 19% stated that they were “completely dissatisfied”. There are marked variations between countries in the respondents’ assessments of their household economic situations. While most respondents were satisfied with their household economic situations in Saudi Arabia (75%), Jordan (64%), Algeria (62%), Sudan (60%), and Egypt (60%), majorities in others stated that they were dissatisfied, such as Mauritania (51%), Palestine (58%), Yemen (64%), and Iraq (69%).

**Figure 2: Respondents' satisfaction with their economic situations**

Respondents' assessments of their household economic situations are influenced by a variety of factors, their assessments being set against a personal benchmark, an admittedly subjective standard influenced by a variety of factors. Such factors include a family's subjective attitude towards their own economic situation, as well as the psychological factors related to the concept of "satisfaction" and economic conditions of other families included in the survey. To minimize the influence of such subjective, personalized factors, the ACRPS further measured the extent to which household income covers regular household expenditures and needs. Among respondents to the survey, just 15% reported that their household income adequately covers their needs and further allows them to add to their savings, while the rest were divided into two groups. The first, comprising 42% of respondents, stated that their household income covers their expenses but leaves no surplus left over for savings ("living hand-to-mouth"); the second, amounting to 41% of respondents, said their regular incomes did not cover their regular domestic needs.

This means that a large proportion of households are destitute or living on the edge thereof. With the exception of Saudi Arabia, where 37% of respondents reported that their household income covers their needs and permits saving, respondents from the rest of the surveyed countries can be categorized in either of the two groups mentioned above, with the relative sizes of the two groups varying from country to country. It is important to note that more than 50 percent of respondents in Yemen, Mauritania, and Palestine report that their income is insufficient to meet household expenditures.

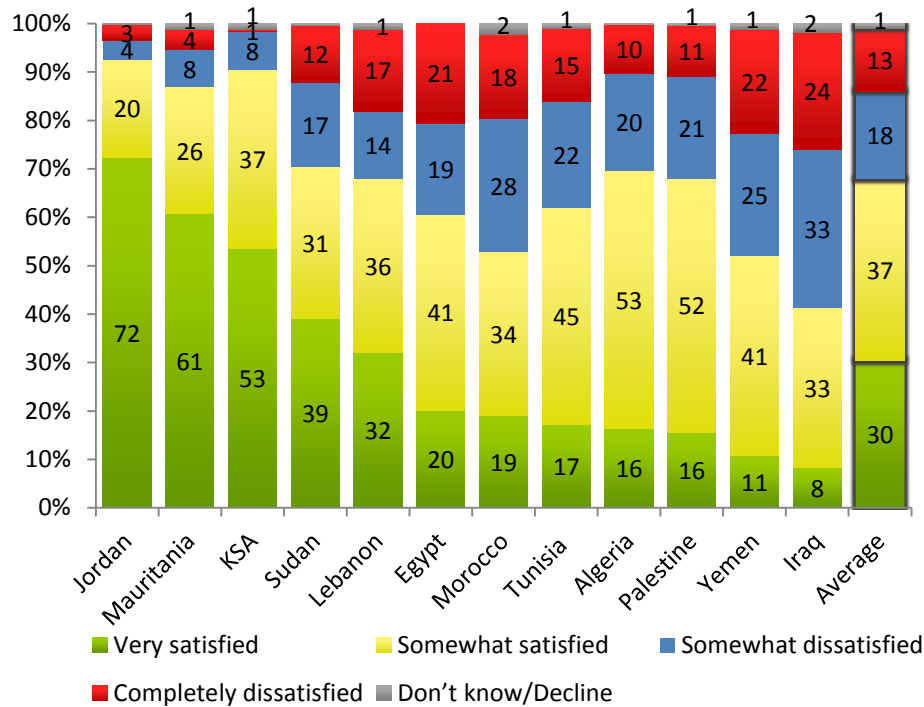
**Figure 3: Which of the following phrases best describes your household income?**



Measuring the degree of respondents' satisfaction with the level of security in their homes shows that more than two-thirds are satisfied (30% "very satisfied" and 37% "somewhat satisfied"), compared to 31% who are dissatisfied (18% "somewhat dissatisfied" and 13% "completely dissatisfied"). The level of satisfaction with security levels in the respondents' place of residence varies from one country to another. While respondents living in Jordan, Mauritania, and Saudi Arabia report overwhelming

satisfaction (approximately 90%) with the level of security in their places of residence, the proportion of satisfied respondents in Sudan, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, and Palestine ranges between 60% and 75%. A clear majority of Iraqis (57%) were dissatisfied with the level of security in their homes, while Yemeni public opinion was more divided.

**Figure 4: Respondents' satisfaction with levels of security in their places of residence**

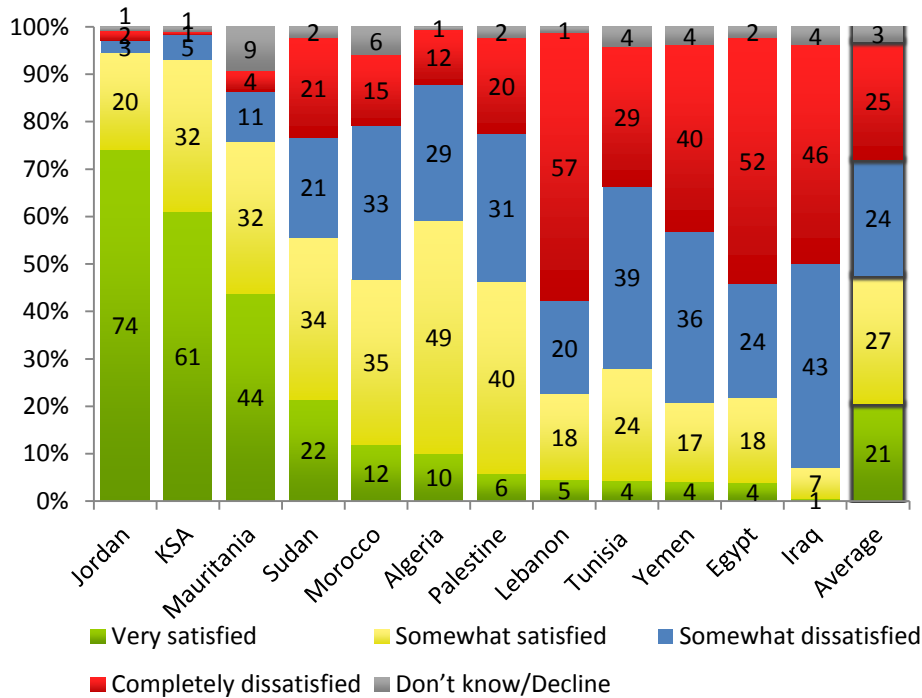


**Assessment of the General Situation in Arab Countries**

General assessments of the situations in the respondents' countries were not as optimistic as their assessments of their own household situations. The proportion of respondents who reported satisfaction with the level of general security in their countries was 48% (21% very satisfied, 27% somewhat satisfied), compared to 49% who stated that they were dissatisfied (24% somewhat dissatisfied and 25% somewhat dissatisfied). Respondents' stated levels of satisfaction with security in their home countries in general were significantly less than rates of satisfaction with the security in their own places of residence. While the majority of respondents in Jordan, Saudi

Arabia, Mauritania, and Sudan stated that they were satisfied with the levels of security in their countries, majorities in the other countries were dissatisfied.

**Figure 5: Respondents’ satisfaction with the level of security in their countries**

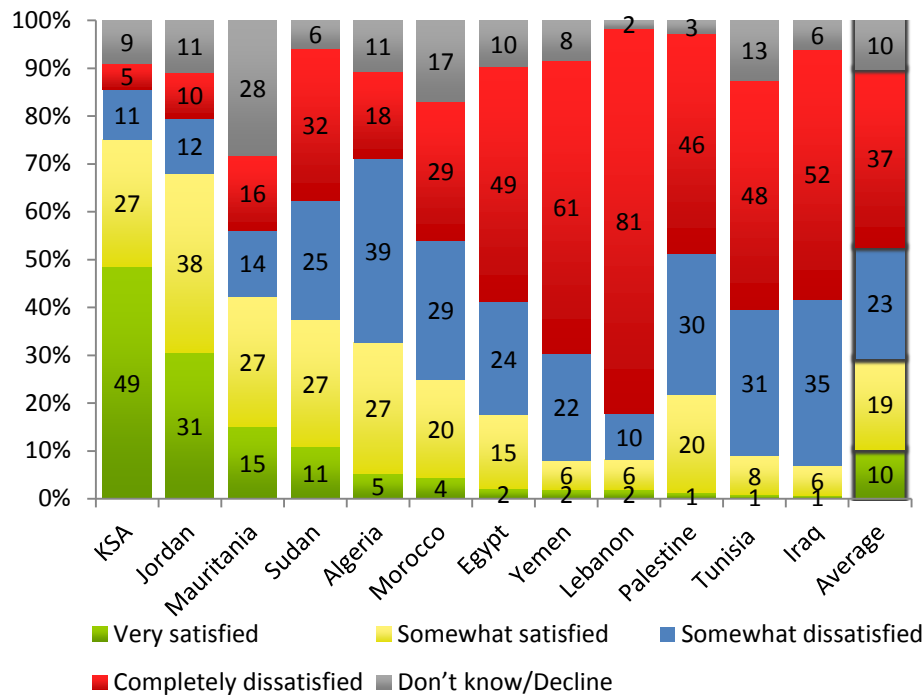


Overall, citizens of the Arab states assessed the general performance of their own countries’ governments negatively. Less than a third of all aggregated respondents expressed approval for their governments,<sup>1</sup> whereas 60% expressed dissatisfaction. As opposed to the majority of respondents from Saudi Arabia and Jordan who expressed satisfaction with the political situation in their countries, the majority of respondents from the remaining countries expressed dissatisfaction with their country’s political situations. Respondents from Lebanon (91%), Iraq (87%), and Palestine (76%) reported similar levels of dissatisfaction with their country’s government. The same applies to Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. It is important to note, however, that the survey in Yemen occurred two months into the beginning of the popular revolution there, while

<sup>1</sup> The actual question posed in Arabic was of *al wadi as siyasi*, which translates literally into “political situation” or “political direction” of the country; this is a general question about the performance of the government and the individual respondent’s assessment of that performance.

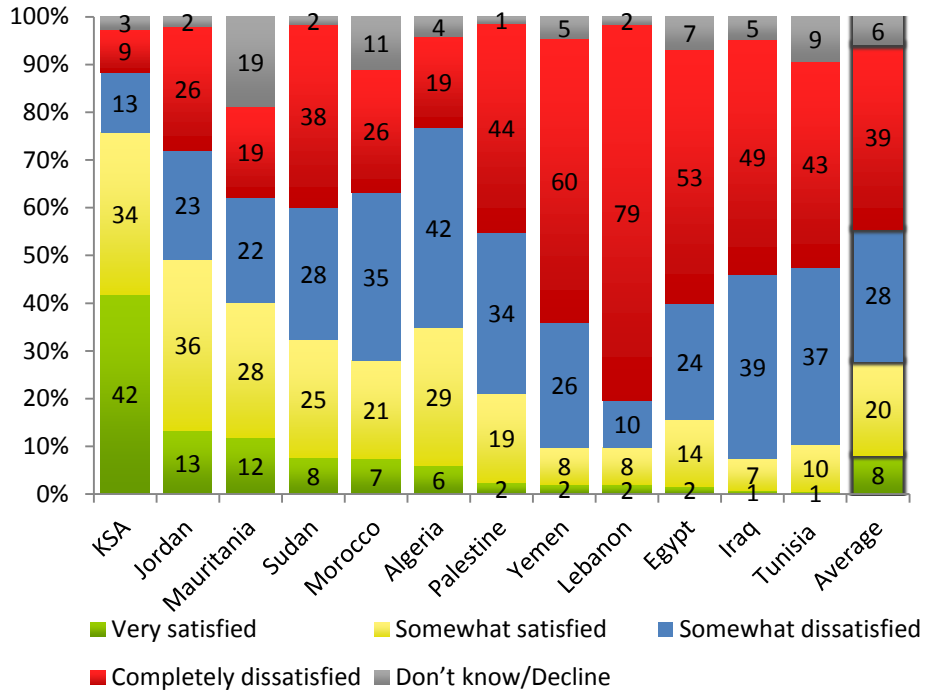
Egypt and Tunisia were only five months into their post-revolutionary orders when respondents there were asked their opinions.

**Figure 6: Respondents' satisfaction with the political situation in their countries**



Consistent with the overall negative assessment of their governments' performance, as well as the negative assessment of the reality of their household incomes, respondents in Arab countries covered by the Index also negatively assessed the economic situation in their countries. Across all countries, 28% of respondents reported being satisfied with their country's economic situation in general, compared to two-thirds of respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the economic situation in their countries. With the exception of Saudi Arabia, where respondents expressed their satisfaction with the economic situation in their country at a remarkable rate of 76%, the majority of respondents in all the countries that were surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with the economic circumstances in their countries.

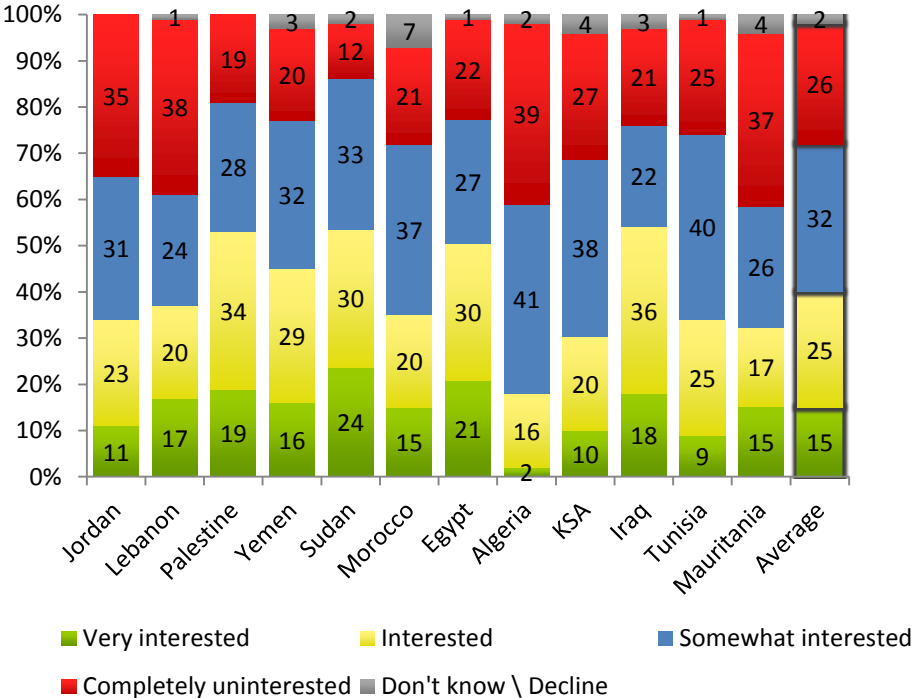
**Figure 7: Respondents' satisfaction with the economic situation in their countries**



The results of the survey show that the majority of the public in the Arab region are interested in the political affairs of their countries. Only 26% of respondents said that they were completely uninterested in politics, compared to 40% who stated that they were either interested or very interested in politics, and around one-third of respondents said that they were fairly interested in political affairs within their countries. Although interest in politics doesn't vary considerably from one country to another, respondents from Sudan, Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq were the most interested in their country's political affairs in comparison with respondents from the other states. Respondents from Lebanon, Mauritania, Jordan, and Algeria were the least interested in their countries' political affairs.



**Figure 8: Respondents' interest in the political affairs in their countries**



The most trusted source for information on political affairs was television, as reported by 69% of respondents, followed in order by radio, Internet, and daily newspapers. This means that television is not only the main source for political news, but also the most trusted source that citizens of the Arab region depend upon. The results show that television is the most depended on and the most trusted in all the countries where the survey was conducted except Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania. Respondents from Mauritania report a near-equal division between television and the radio as trusted sources of information on political affairs, while respondents in Algeria and Morocco showed more diversity in the sources for news that they trusted, such as the Internet, daily newspapers, and magazines.

**Table 1: The most trusted sources used by respondents to gain access to political news**

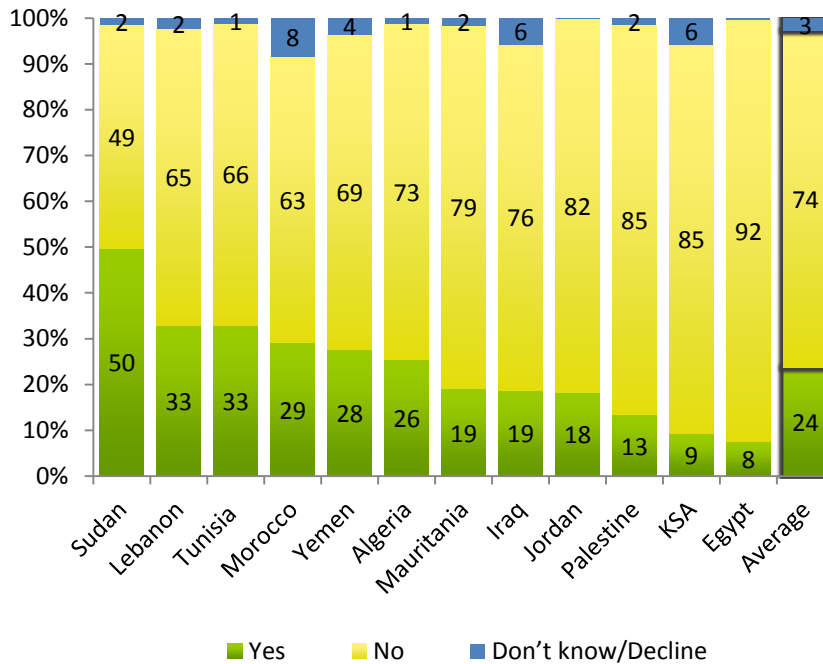
	TV	Radio	Daily newspapers (electronic and paper copies)	Weekly and monthly magazines	The Internet	None of these	DK/Decline
<b>Iraq</b>	87	4	3	0	3	1	1
<b>Palestine</b>	84	7	2	0	4	5	0
<b>Lebanon</b>	81	2	3	0	3	8	4
<b>Egypt</b>	81	1	3	0	3	10	3
<b>Jordan</b>	75	3	5	0	7	10	1
<b>KSA</b>	75	2	8	0	6	7	3
<b>Yemen</b>	72	4	3	0	5	11	5
<b>Sudan</b>	65	11	5	0	11	7	1
<b>Tunisia</b>	58	9	1	1	10	15	5
<b>Mauritania</b>	46	39	0	0	0	15	0
<b>Algeria</b>	45	4	10	0	7	28	7
<b>Morocco</b>	39	5	12	5	8	21	11
<b>Average</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>

The reported desire for respondents to emigrate from their own countries is a significant indicator of “overall satisfaction” with their individual lives and their countries. The results show that 24% of respondents “want to/intend to” migrate compared to 74% who do not wish to do so.

Fifty percent of respondents from Sudan and 33% of respondents from Lebanon and Tunisia stated that they either want to or intend to emigrate from their countries. The same proportion was about a quarter for Morocco, Yemen, and Algeria. Respondents with the least desire to emigrate from their countries were Palestinians (13%), Saudi Arabians (9%), and Egyptians (8%). The analysis for the reasons selected by respondents as reasons for migration and analysis of their choices of countries as destinations for migration, indicate that Arabs’ desires for emigration are motivated by a desire for financial betterment. It is also worth pointing out that respondents’ definitions of migration\* varied considerably: some individuals reported a desire to leave their home country for another land, permanently, while others defined migration as temporarily leaving their countries to become a part of an expatriate workforce.

---

\* Arabic *hijra*

**Figure 9: Public opinion trends showing the desire to emigrate**

### Sources of Threat to Citizens' Security

The survey included questions that determined the countries that are seen as representing the greatest threat to respondents' countries, and their personal security. Taking together these survey results, "Israel" (28% of respondents) was the single most frequent response given to the question: "In your personal view, out of all the countries in the world and the region, which country is the most threatening to your personal security?" The second most cited country in response to this question is the United States, with 8%. (Readers are reminded that the United States is generally seen to be unerringly aligned with the Israelis). In third place came a group of other neighboring Arab states, with the exact state named varying from one Arab state to the next (accounting for 7% of the respondents), while Iran came in fourth place with 3% of the respondents.

There is near consensus among Palestinians (83%) that Israel is the single country most threatening to their personal security, a view shared by roughly two-thirds each of Egyptians and Lebanese, one-third each of Sudanese and Jordanians, and 18% of Saudi

Arabians. On the other hand, the US was seen to be the single largest threat to respondents’ security in Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, and Algeria. Notably, a majority of the respondents overall declined to name a specific country.

What the above discussion makes clear is that public opinion within Arab countries overwhelmingly believes that Israel is the single biggest threat to the security of their countries. Of course, one finds variations in degree from one state to the next: it rises from one-third of respondents in Saudi Arabia and Sudan, to roughly two-thirds of respondents in Lebanon and Egypt.

**Table 2: In your personal view, out of all the countries in the world and the region, which country is the most threatening to your personal security?**

	Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine	Yemen	Sudan	Morocco	Egypt	Algeria	KSA	Iraq	Tunisia	Mauritania	Average
Israel	27	62	83	5	37	13	65	6	18	8	5	3	28
USA	3	3	2	2	25	3	17	15	4	16	3	0.4	8
Iran	3	4	0.4	1	0.3	0	1	0	10	18	0	0	3
Arab countries or in the Neighboring region	1	5	1	1	0.4	22	0.5	9	2	10	31	0	7
countries Arab	0.2	0.3	0.3	1	0.2	0	0.2	0	0.4	0	0.1	0	0
countries Other	0.1	0	0.1	0	0.1	1	1	0.3	2	1	0.5	4	1
Spain	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
France	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other	0	2	4	0	0	0	0		1	5	0.2	0	1
Non-Arab countries in the region or neighboring	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
DK	66	10	8	80	23	42	16	57	54	27	56	90	44
Decline	1	13	1	9	7	13	0	13	7	15	4	2	7

Aggregating the results as a whole and using weighted averages, it was clear that the Israelis were considered to be the single most significant threat to the respondents’ countries, with 35% of those responding to the survey saying that they considered the Israelis to be the single biggest threat to their countries’ security. This was followed by the US, with 14% of respondents saying they regarded the Americans as the biggest threat to their country’s security. The overall trends reported above are also reflected

when one takes an aggregate set of results for all of the countries combined, with “other neighboring Arab states” accounting for 12% of the respondents when determining which country was the largest threat to their own country, and Iran accounting for 7% of the total response to the question about threat’s to state security.

Some respondents mentioned neighboring countries (or countries “in the vicinity”) as a source of de-stabilization to their national security for various reasons. Segments of public opinion in Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria held the view that Libya was a source of threat in light of the developments in Libya where armed conflict and military intervention by NATO followed the eruption of the Libyan revolution, though this is hardly surprising as surveys in these countries were conducted just two months after these rapid developments in Libya. The situation was similar in Lebanon, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, where respondents cited other Arab states as sources of tension within their own borders.

**Table 3: In your personal view, out of all the countries in the world and the region, which country is the most threatening to your country’s security?**

	Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine	Yemen	Sudan	Morocco	Egypt	Algeria	Saudi Arabia	Iraq	Tunisia	Mauritania	Average
<b>Israel</b>	48	70	81	22	32	12	65	15	30	14	14	18	35
<b>USA</b>	6	5	9	19	27	3	17	20	6	32	12	6	14
<b>Iran</b>	4	8	3	10	0.5	0	1	0	28	25	0	0	7
<b>Neighboring Arab countries / in the region</b>	2	5	1	13	1	51	1	17	3	10	34	0	12
<b>Arab Countries</b>	1	2	0.1	3	0.2	0	0.5	0	1	0	1	0	1
<b>Other countries</b>	0.2	0	0.1	0	0.2	0	1	0	0	0	0.2	6	1
<b>Spain</b>	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Turkey</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>France</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
<b>Non-Arab countries in the region or neighboring</b>	0	0	0	0	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Other</b>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
<b>Don’t know</b>	39	10	5	28	14	21	14	36	25	13	32	67	25
<b>Refused to answer</b>	1	0	0	5	4	7	0	11	5	4	2	2	3

## Arab Public Opinion and Arab Revolutions

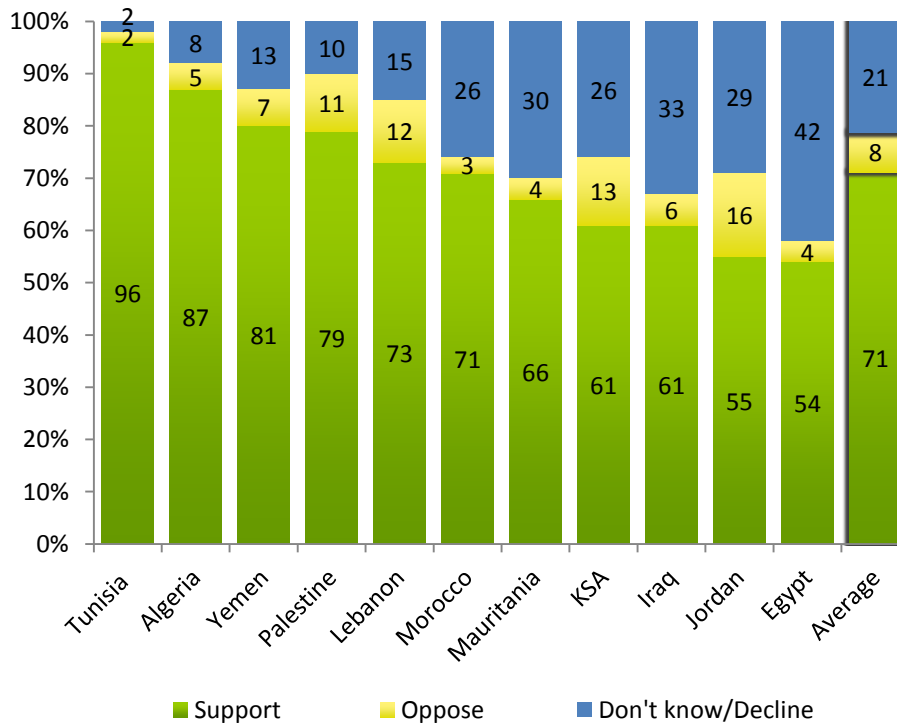
To reflect a rapidly changing situation, the survey was quickly amended to take into account the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia. As noted earlier, the Index was originally envisioned, and the survey questions prepared, several months before the start of the Arab revolutions, necessitating that some questions be added following the success of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. Although other revolutions in different Arab countries arose later, the Index focuses on questions about the two revolutions that succeeded. Citizens' stances on these two revolutions should reflect trends in Arab public opinion with regards to democracy, freedom, and change and how these are reflected – if at all – by the popular revolts in Egypt and Tunisia.

### **The Tunisian Revolution**

A wide majority of Arab public opinion (71%) voiced support for the overthrow of former Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali as a result of popular protests, while 8% of respondents were opposed. Expectedly, there is near consensus among Tunisia's respondents (96%) in their support for the overthrow of Ben Ali, compared to 2% who did not view this as a positive development (an insignificant figure given the margin of error). In line with the opinion in Tunisia, support for the ousting of Ben Ali was especially high across the Arab Maghreb. Eighty-even percent of Algerians and 71% of Moroccans supported the ousting of Ben Ali, compared to 5% and 3%, respectively, of respondents from those countries that opposed the former dictator's removal from power.

While there is variation among respondents from different countries in their support (or otherwise) for the overthrow of Ben Ali through popular protests, it is also true that there is no serious opposition to his ousting. The case of Mauritania is illustrative; with two-thirds of the population in this Arab country in the African Sahel being overtly in support of the ousting of Ben Ali, only 4% of the respondents were in opposition to his fall from power. The highest proportion of respondents who expressed their opposition to his overthrow came from Jordan at 16%, Saudi Arabia at 13%, and Lebanon at 12%.

**Figure 10: Supporters and opponents of the overthrow of Ben Ali through popular protests**



A structured analysis and categorization of the 14,000 reasons given by respondents reveals a clear consensus on the understanding of the causes that stood behind the Tunisian revolution. When asked to explain these causes, the respondents gave reasons related to the nature of the Tunisian regime led by Ben Ali, describing it as dictatorial and despotic. Seven percent cited factors related to the regime's suppression of civil liberties and political rights, in addition to the suppression of the Tunisian people's rights, as the causes of the revolution. One other factor which was commonly cited by respondents as driving the revolution was the "unjustness" of the Tunisian regime and the unfair, unequal treatment of its citizens. These last reasons represented 14% of the total of reasons given by respondents to explain the Tunisian revolution.

Seventeen percent of respondents reported the deteriorating economic conditions which characterized Ben Ali's rule in Tunisia as being the primary force behind the protests. They focused primarily on the spread of unemployment and poverty, the rise in prices, and the deterioration of citizens' living standards. Reasons related to the corruption and nepotism of the Ben Ali regime represented 15% of responses that sought to explain

the build-up to the popular revolt. Four percent of respondents said the reasons were related to poor management on all levels (social, economic, political, foreign policy, and cultural) during Ben Ali’s rule. Two percent highlighted the people’s will and their steadfastness as direct reasons for the success of the Tunisian revolution. Notably, only one percent of responses attributed the eruption of the revolution to Mohammed Bouazizi’s self-immolation.

Here, too, respondents’ feedback varied from one country to the next. Respondents from Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia focused on economic factors as causes for the revolution. While this concern was shared by those from Tunisia, they, along with participants from Morocco, Algeria, Yemen, and Egypt, also tended cite corruption as a reason for the revolution. Respondents from Morocco and Algeria also focused on dictatorship, as did respondents from Saudi Arabia.

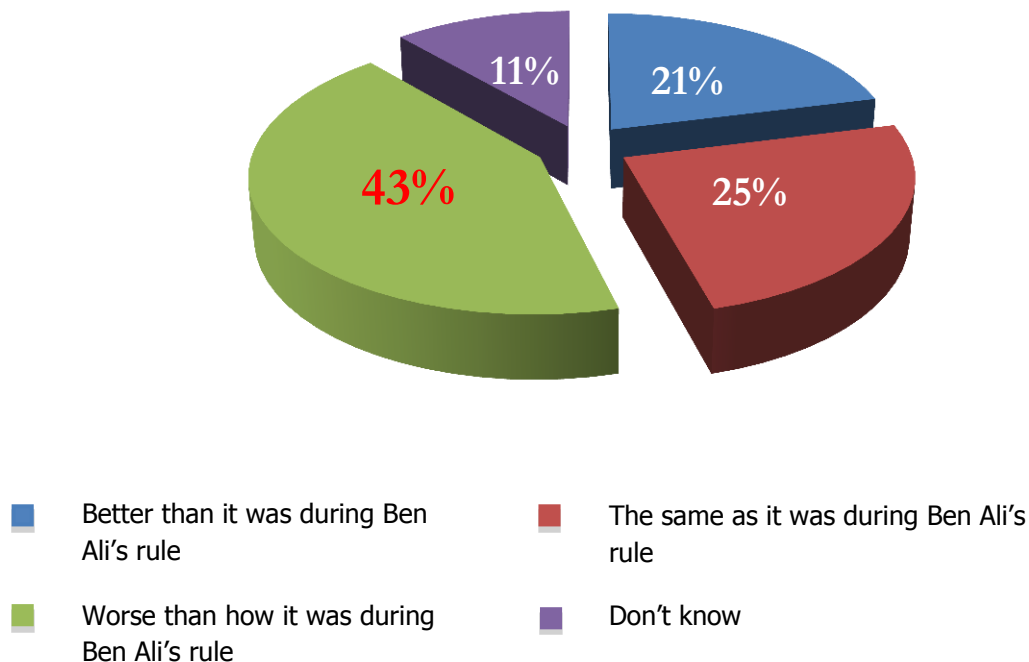
**Table 4: Reasons given by respondents for the outbreak of the Tunisian revolution**

	Deteriorating economic conditions	Regime’s corruption	Injustice and oppression	Dictatorship / Tyranny / Oppression	Suppression of freedom and confiscation of people’s rights	Poor management	People’s will	Monopoly of power / the absence of pluralism	Bouazizi	Foreign intervention	other	Don’t know / Refused to answer
Jordan	23	12	23	2	5	2	1	0	1	2	2	29
Lebanon	19	14	23	10	0	3	5	1	0	5	0	19
Palestine	33	18	21	4	3	3	2	2	0	2	1	11
Yemen	17	18	15	9	12	2	1	1	3	1	1	21
Morocco	8	29	2	21	3	2	1	1	2	0	0	30
Egypt	8	18	17	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	52
Algeria	12	19	14	13	14	0	0	1	0	0	2	24
Saudi Arabia	24	15	0	15	3	2	1	0	0	1	3	36
Iraq	10	0	8	0	15	23	7	0	0	0	0	36
Tunisia	28	20	19	9	12	3	4	1	3	0	1	2
Mauritania	10	2	15	16	10	1	1	5	0	0	1	40
Average	17	15	14	9	7	4	2	1	1	1	1	27



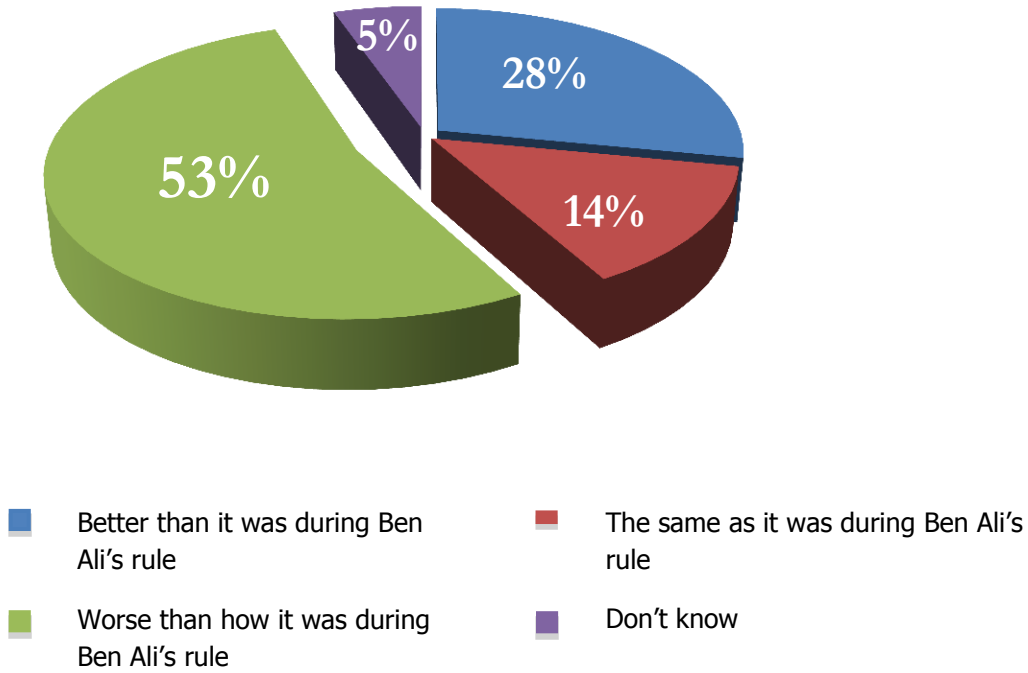
The Index's survey in Tunisia included questions related to the assessment of the economic and security situations in the post-revolutionary period, compared with the period of Ben Ali's rule. The results showed that one-fifth of respondents think the economic situation after the revolution is better than it was during the rule of Ben Ali, while a quarter of Tunisian respondents stated that the economic situation after the revolution did not change (essentially equivalent proportions given the margin of error); 43% reported the view that the economic situation had become worse after the revolution than it was during the period of Ben Ali.

**Figure 11: Tunisian public opinion's assessment of the economic situation in Tunisia during the month of June 2011 compared to the situation before the revolution**



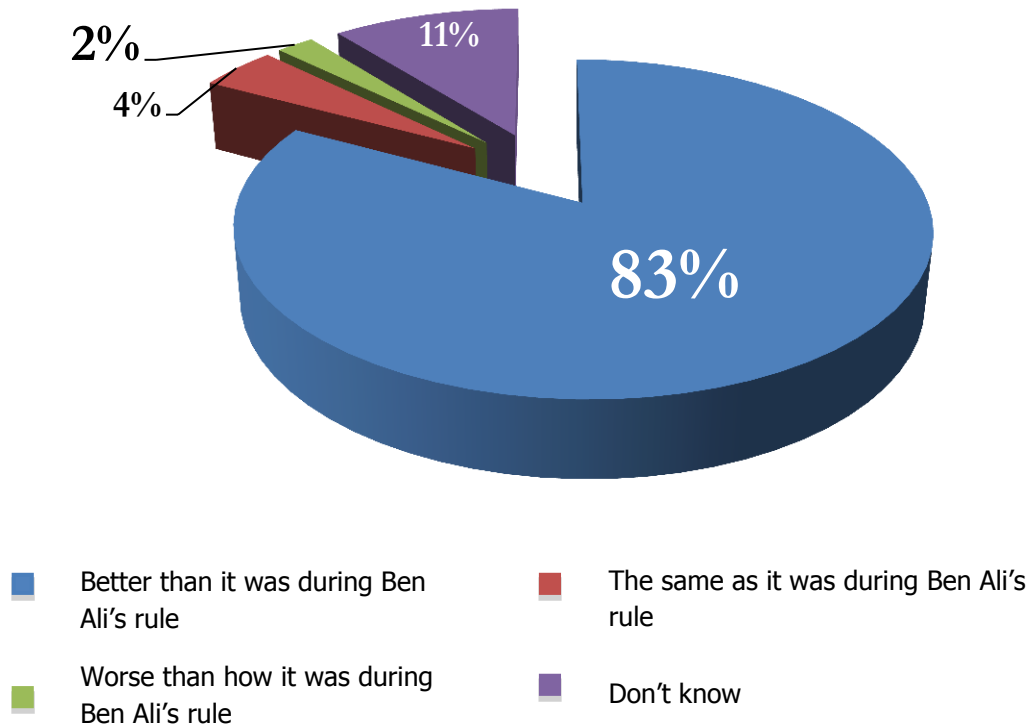
Respondents in Tunisia were also roughly equivocal, overall, when it came to assessing the security situation in their country before and after the Tunisian revolution: 53% of Tunisian respondents stated that the security situation was worse during the rule of Ben Ali, 28% stated that it was better [now] than it was before the revolution, and 14% viewed the security situation in Tunisia after the revolution as being equivalent to what it was during the rule of Ben Ali.

**Figure 12: Tunisian public opinion’s assessment of the security situation in Tunisia during the month of June 2011 compared to the situation before the revolution**



Despite Tunisians’ differences in their assessments of the economic situation before and after the revolution, and their negative assessment of the security situation after the revolution, they were optimistic about the future of Tunisia. Eighty-three percent expressed certainty that post-revolutionary Tunisia would be better than how the country fared during the rule of Ben Ali, while only an insignificant 2% expected that the future of Tunisia would be worse than it was during the rule of Ben Ali.

**Figure 13: Tunisian public opinion's expectations for the future of Tunisia as compared to during the rule of Ben Ali**

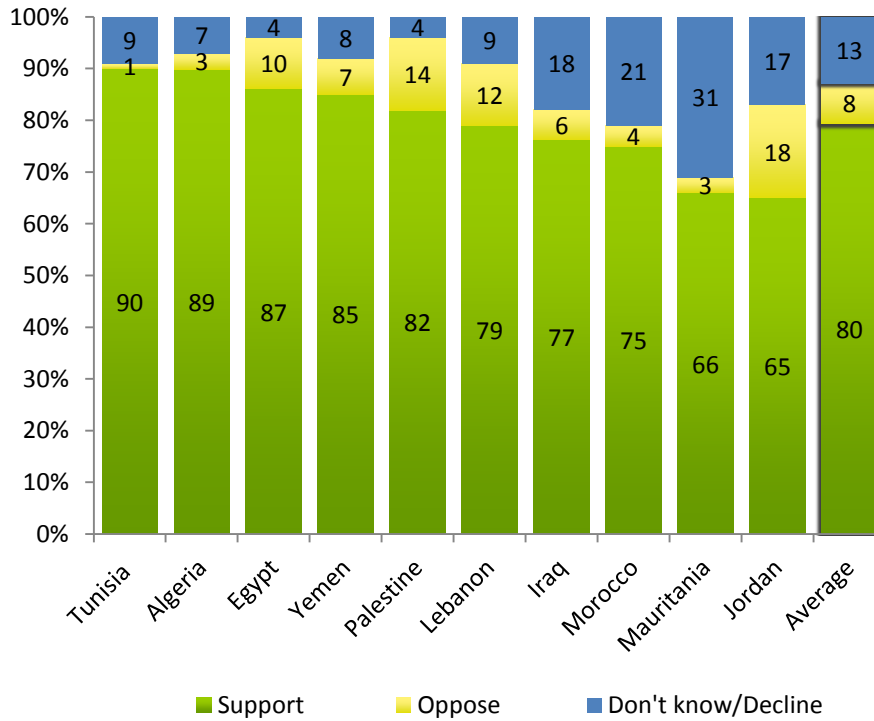


### The Egyptian Revolution

Arab public opinion was nearly unanimous in its support for the overthrow of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. With responses from the different countries taken together, 80% of respondents from the surveyed countries expressed their support for the ouster of Mubarak through popular protests, compared to a meager 8% of respondents who opposed it. The countries with the lowest reported rates of support were, again, Jordan and Mauritania, where only (roughly) two-thirds of respondents in these two countries were in favor. Here again, however, the comparative lack of enthusiasm does not mean support for a counter-revolution: only 3% of respondents in Mauritania were opposed to the change of leadership in Egypt while a third of respondents there either abstained from answering or refused to answer. Jordan recorded the single-highest level of opposition to the ouster of Mubarak, at 18%. The

other countries with high levels of opposition to the change in Egypt include Palestine (14%) and Lebanon (12%). These factors notwithstanding, it seems clear that Arab public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of the overthrow of the former president of Egypt.

**Figure 14: Supporters and opponents of the overthrow of Mubarak**



As was the case with the Tunisian revolution, the majority of respondents (81%) from the surveyed countries were able to provide substantive and meaningful arguments to explain the Egyptian revolution. The deteriorating economic conditions in Egypt (a decline in living standards, high unemployment, and widespread poverty) accounted for the bulk of the reasons mentioned by respondents as an explanation for the eruption of the Egyptian revolution and made up for 26% of all answers. The corruption and nepotism of Mubarak and his regime came second with 16%, and in third place came the unfairness of Mubarak’s regime and the spread of injustice and the oppression of citizens.

Other reasons suggested by respondents for the eruption of the Egyptian revolution were dictatorship, despotism, and tyranny of the Mubarak regime, accounting for 9% of

the provided explanations. The suppression of freedoms and the curtailment of citizens' rights accounted for 6% of responses to the question. Respondents also cited the Mubarak regime's monopoly of power and dominance over it, and the absence of political and intellectual pluralism (3%), and the regime's poor management of the Egyptian state at all levels, the economic, social, security, and foreign policy (2%).

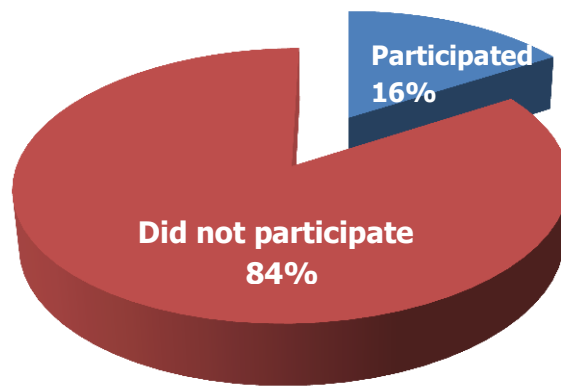
The reasons provided by respondents to explain the outbreak of the Egyptian revolution are similar to the reasons given to explain the outbreak of the Tunisian revolution, with some statistically significant differences in emphasis and proportions of responses given for each explanation, yet there are some important factors which were provided by respondents to explain the Egyptian revolution that did not figure into explanations of the Tunisian revolution. One of these was Mubarak's alleged status as an agent for "foreign countries," particularly Israel, the US, and the West in general. This represented 3% of all answers given by respondents to explain the Egyptian revolution. Only an insignificant number of respondents (1%) considered the Tunisian revolution one of the reasons for the Egyptian revolution.

**Table 5: The reasons provided by respondents to explain the outbreak of the Egyptian revolution**

	Deteriorating economic conditions	Unfairness , injustice, oppression and tyranny	Corruption	Dictatorship,despotism and oppression	Suppression of freedoms and confiscation of people's rights	People's will	Monopoly of power / Absence of pluralism	Poor management	Foreign intervention	Agent for the west	The Tunisian revolution	Other	Don't know	Refused to answer
<b>Palestine</b>	51	17	12	3	7	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Tunisia</b>	34	15	8	6	8	2	1	0	0	3	7	2	13	0
<b>Iraq</b>	32	5	8	6	8	0	2	13	0	0	1	0	16	9
<b>Egypt</b>	30	16	40	4	5	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	5	0
<b>Jordan</b>	29	20	18	2	3	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	15	2
<b>Lebanon</b>	27	16	13	10	4	4	3	0	5	4	0	0	9	5
<b>Algeria</b>	20	10	15	8	8	0	8	1	0	6	0	0	12	11
<b>Yemen</b>	19	17	20	7	7	1	2	2	1	7	1	1	14	3
<b>Morocco</b>	14	2	27	19	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	18	12
<b>Mauritania</b>	3	8	1	24	8	1	10	1	0	3	0	1	37	4
<b>Average</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>

Examining the attitudes of the Egyptian people towards the revolution in their own country, 16% of Egyptian respondents reported being involved in support activities for the Egyptian revolution, including demonstrating, providing assistance and support to protesters, and participating in “revolutionary activities” on social media networks.

**Figure 15: Egyptian respondents who stated that they had participated in the work of the revolution (any of the different and diverse activities)**



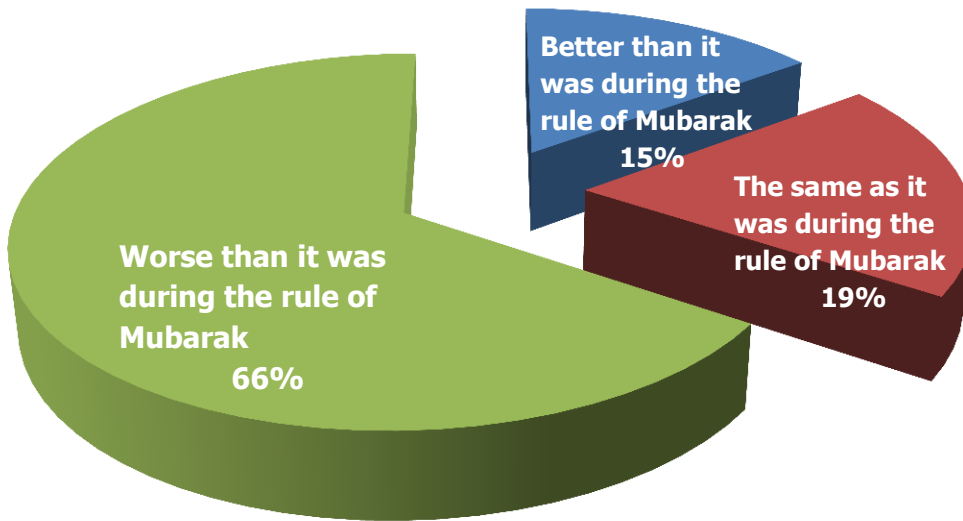
Around half of Egyptian respondents who said that they participated in the revolution’s activities stated that they were involved in the demonstrations during the revolution, whether in Tahrir Square or in provinces other than Cairo, and these represent 8% of all Egyptian respondents. Thirteen percent of Egyptian respondents stated that they participated in the Popular Committees for providing security for Egyptian neighborhoods, 3% stated that they took part in protecting demonstrators, a similar number claimed to have backed the revolution through social networking sites, and 2% said that they participated by providing protesters with water and food.

**Table 6: Egyptian respondents who participated in the process of the Egyptian revolution**

	Yes	No
Participated in revolution activities	8	92
Participated in the protection of protesters	3	97
Participated by providing protesters with water and food	2	98
Participated in the People’s Committees for protecting neighborhoods	13	87
Participated by backing the revolution through social networking sites. (Facebook, twitter, etc..)	3	97

Egyptian respondents' assessments of the economic situation in Egypt four months after the Egyptian revolution compared to the Mubarak era show that 66% reported an economic situation in Egypt worse than it was before the revolution, 15% stated that the economic situation improved, and 19% reported that it had not changed.

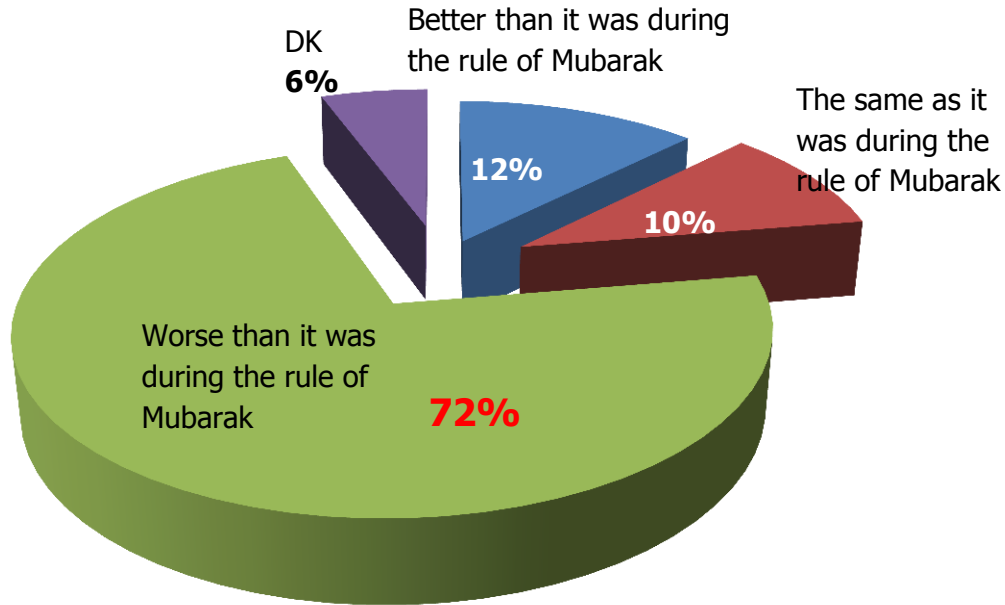
**Figure 16: The Egyptian public's attitude towards the economic situation in Egypt during the month of June 2011 compared to the situation before the revolution**



Seventy-two percent stated that the security situation was worse than it was before the revolution, while 12% reported that it has improved, and 10% reported that they saw no change in the security situation.

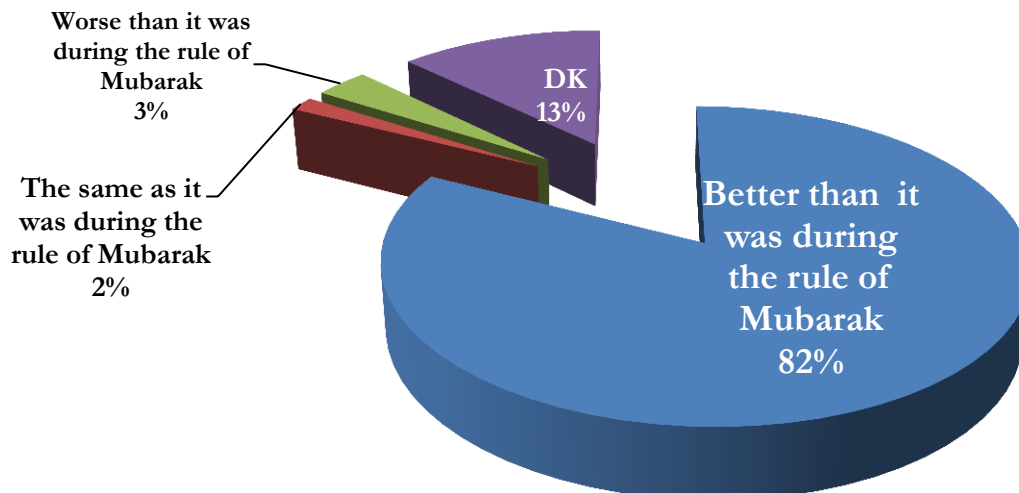


**Figure 17: The Egyptian public opinion's assessment of the security situation in Egypt during June 2011 compared to the situation before the revolution**



Although the overall assessment of the economic and security situations in Egypt four months after the revolution (at the time of the survey) had a negative outlook compared to the situation before the revolution, there is near-unanimous optimism among Egyptians, 82% of whom report that they believe the general situation in their country will improve in the next three years compared to Mubarak's reign.

**Figure 18: Egyptian public opinion's expectations for the future of Egypt over the next three years compared to the situation during the rule of Mubarak**



## Arab Public Opinion and Democracy

This section deals with a set of indicators that aim to identify trends in public opinion in Arab countries with regards to democracy through identifying the following: how respondents define democracy, how acceptable a democratic system of government is to Arabs, and how the public assess the level of democratization in their countries.

### **Citizens' Definitions of Democracy**

The Index aimed to identify how Arab citizens define democracy by asking respondents what they felt were the main requirements for a democracy. The results of the survey concluded that the vast majority of citizens in the Arab region are able to give the word "democracy" a meaningful definition, with 81% of respondents presenting a substantive and meaningful answer when asked about the most important requirements for a country to be considered a democratic country. The proportion of those who gave the answer "don't know" was 14%, with 6% refusing to answer the question. Analysis and categorization of 13,000 answers given by respondents detailing the conditions which they stated should be available for a country to be considered democratic show that Arab citizens understand the definition of democracy to rest in five main areas:

1. The guarantee of freedoms and civil and political rights

The requirements cited by respondents from all countries within this category are the most popular and represent 35% of all answers. The answers in this category show that citizens of the Arab region base their views of democracy on what individuals and groups in society should enjoy in the realm of civil and political rights and freedoms, including, for example: civil liberties, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of information/freedom of the press. The guarantee of freedom of opinion and expression were the most frequently cited within this category as a condition for democracy.

2. Justice and equality

Twenty-one percent of the gathered responses fit into this category. Citizens' responses that match this broad topic stated that in order to achieve the

existence of a democratic system of government the principles of justice and equality between citizens must be met. Justice, here, included two meanings: the first was to establish justice among the people and treat them all in a just manner; the second was to guarantee and not compromise the rights of citizens.\* Respondents' answers focused on principles of equality among citizens.

### 3. A democratic system of government

This category included statements which emphasized the people's role in granting governments legitimacy through consent, the distribution and devolution of powers within a governing system, and the guarantee of political pluralism within a system, as well as the guarantee of checks and balances. Such statements accounted for roughly 8% of the total answers received.

### 4. Improving citizens' economic situations

A total of 6% of the answers received from respondents about the nature of a democratic regime focused on the provision of economic opportunities, and the betterment of the economic prospects of a citizenry. Respondents whose answers fit into this category focused on issues regarding the improvement of citizens' economic conditions and standards of living as pre-requisites for a genuine democracy.

### 5. Security and stability

A further 6% of the responses to questions about the requirements of a democracy placed emphasis on the need for a government to provide security and stability. Respondents suggested that a government would need to ensure the safety and security of its citizens, and ensure stability of the country in general for it to be considered to be democratic.

Any other "requirements" given by respondents that would qualify a country as democratic were either limited to individual countries or were not statistically significant. Respondents who regarded "the application of [Islamic] religious laws" as a

---

\*In many Arab states, citizens may have their rights to be considered citizens withdrawn at the will of the government.

criterion for a country to be considered democratic represented less than 1% of the answers to this question. Another statistically insignificant result includes “the spread of awareness and education within society” (0.7% of responses); statements that placed moral values as a criterion for democracy – such as cooperation and fraternity between members of a community, honesty, and other similar themes – represented no more than 1.2% of the results.

Respondents in certain countries – namely Lebanon, Iraq, Mauritania, and Jordan – also explicitly mention the abolition of confessional and political sectarianism, combating racism and regional jingoism and the establishment of national unity as being necessary to a democracy. Clearly, such responses, being localized as they are to a sub-set of specific countries, are a reflection of the political realities within those specific countries, an expression of the frustration of a population with specific obstacles to the democratic development of their own countries. The fact that 11% of Lebanese respondents mentioned the “abolition of religious and political sectarianism” as a pre-requisite for democracy is a clear indication that many Lebanese refuse to accept the sectarian-based political reality of their country. The same applies to Iraq respondents.

It becomes clear that a majority of Arab public opinion defines democracy in a political sense. They believe that the importance of a democracy is based on ensuring rights and political freedoms, as well as a system of governance that guarantees political pluralism, the devolution of power, and justice and equality among members of society. Further, the criteria for a democracy that were provided by respondents show a large degree of agreement across the expanse of the Arab Homeland; disagreements on the definition of democracy across the Arab countries tend to be centered on a small group of frameworks. These facts corroborate the general finding presented here, which is one of cultural and political bonds and similarities which tie the Arab countries together. Nonetheless, it would serve us well to examine some of the differences between countries where the emphasis of respondents lay.

Respondents from Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq were the most likely to emphasize “rights, civil liberties and political freedoms” as necessary criteria for a democracy. Respondents from Palestine, Tunisia, and Yemen were more focused on a democratic system of governance in terms of the distribution of authority within as state. Respondents from Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia were the most likely to focus on justice and equality as prerequisites for democracy while respondents

from Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine, were the most likely to focus on economic development and the betterment of citizens' economic circumstances. Respondents from Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt provided "security and stability" as the two main criteria for a democracy. The Lebanese answers reflect their focus on the abolition of confessional and political sectarianism, at a rate of 11%, the most frequently cited criterion among Lebanese respondents.

**Table 7: The requirements cited by respondents as conditions that must be available for a country to be regarded as democratic**

	Political freedoms and civil liberties	equality and justice among citizens	A democratic system of governance	Improving the economic situation	Security and stability	Abolishing sectarianism, political sectarianism, racism, and regionalism	Other	Don't know	Refused to answer
<b>Sudan</b>	49	17	8	5	4	--	3	10	3
<b>Iraq</b>	46	13	3	13	3	2	1	10	10
<b>Lebanon</b>	41	13	4	9	6	11	3	2	11
<b>Algeria</b>	41	22	5	2	1	--	--	20	9
<b>Jordan</b>	39	19	8	5	1	1	4	13	--
<b>KSA</b>	38	17	7	4	5	--	5	18	7
<b>Egypt</b>	34	20	4	6	10	--	4	22	--
<b>Palestine</b>	32	14	15	8	7	1	5	17	--
<b>Yemen</b>	30	17	16	5	4	1	7	10	10
<b>Tunisia</b>	29	26	13	4	8	--	5	13	3
<b>Mauritania</b>	22	44	6	5	2	1	1	17	3
<b>Morocco</b>	17	26	5	5	15	--	2	19	10
<b>Average</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>

### Stances Towards Democracy

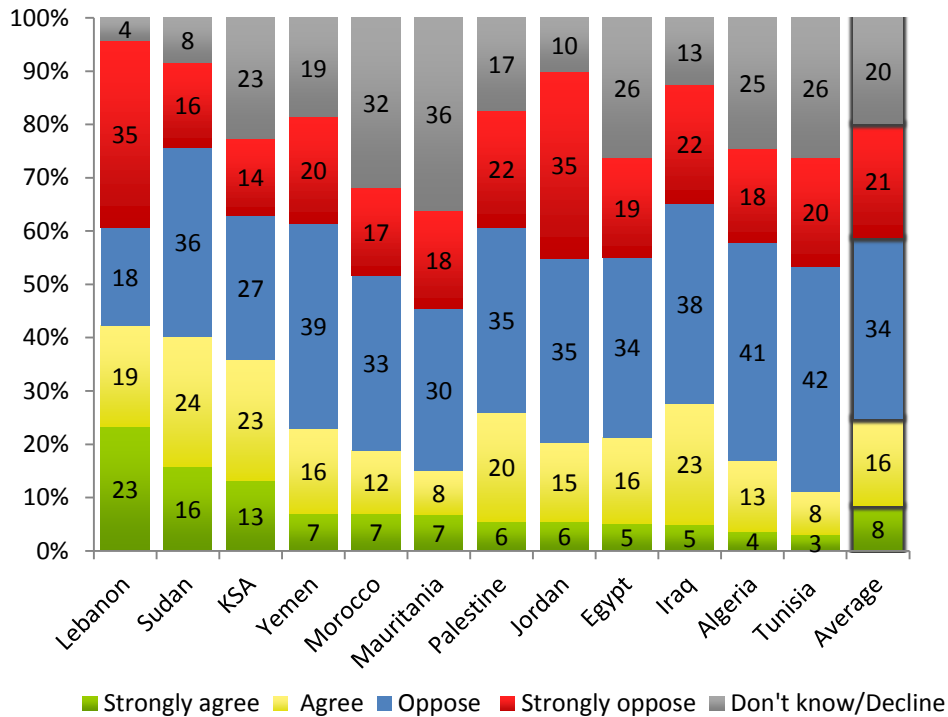
One of the goals of the Arab Opinion Index is to determine the level of acceptability of a democratic political system among citizens of Arab states by measuring trends in public opinion in the Arab region in relation to a number of variables. This specified three points of view that are usually used to demonstrate the potential pitfalls in a democratic political system, or are inherent within it. Such points are often raised in Arab political discourse to try and discredit the perceived advantages of a democratic political system, to highlight democracy's supposed shortcomings and disadvantages.

Claims such as these are often put forward by commentators hostile to democratization within the Arab countries. In sum, the survey which underpins the Arab Opinion Index put the following ideas to the survey respondents:

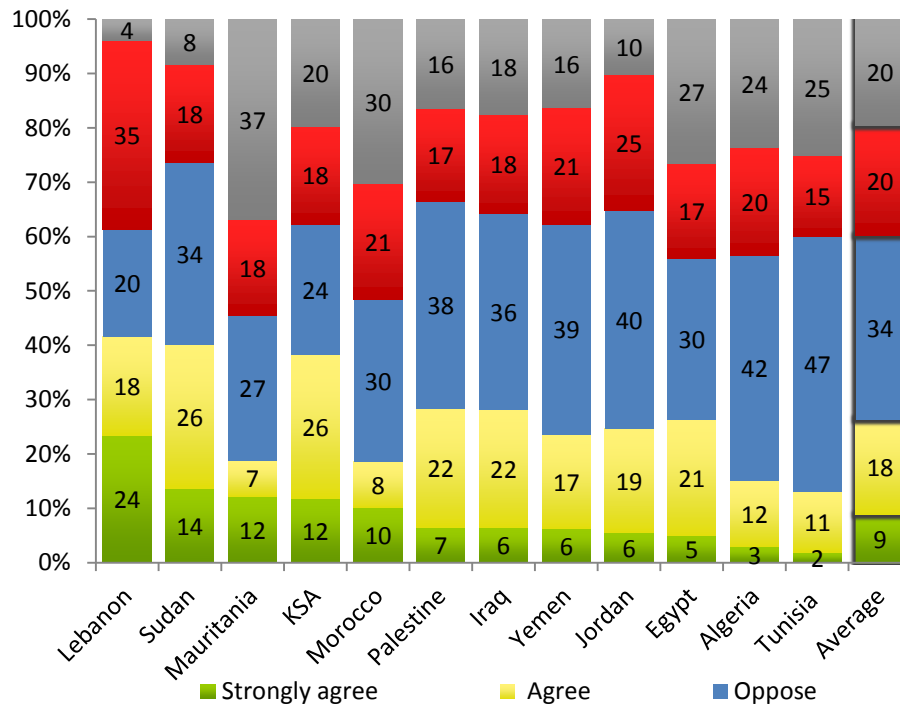
- Economic performance suffers in a democratic system;
- A democratic system is characterized by indecision and constant bickering;
- A democratic system is incapable of maintaining order.

The results indicate that a majority of the Arab public reject the previous statements. Fifty-five percent opposed the view that “economic performance suffers in a democratic system,” compared to 24% who agreed with that statement. Fifty-four percent of respondents opposed the view that “a democratic system is not good at maintaining order,” compared with 27% who accepted that position. Respondents opposed – albeit to a lesser extent (48 percent) – the view that “a democratic system is characterized by indecision and constant bickering,” compared to 33% who agreed with it.

**Figure 19: Those who agree with the argument that “economic performance runs badly in a democratic system,” and its opponents**

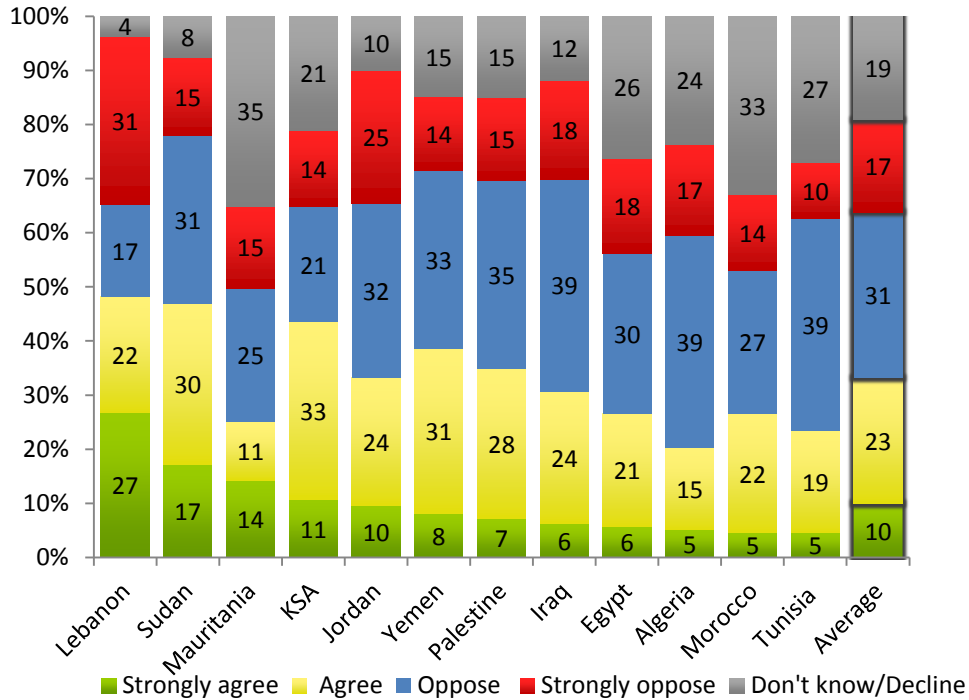


**Figure 20: Those who agree with the argument that “a democratic system is not good at maintaining order” and those who oppose it**



While a majority of respondents in the countries surveyed expressed rejection of these anti-democratic sentiments, local differences still persist from one country to another. This is especially true in Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan. The fact that such anti-democratic sentiments were echoed in some countries and not others could be attributed – in addition to the impact of the promotion of these views – to the absence of democratic experiences for extended periods of time in those countries. Citizens’ experiences of the exercise of democratic forms and procedures were, on the whole, negative, particularly in countries like Iraq and Lebanon.

**Figure 21: Those who agree with the argument that “the democratic system is characterized as indecisive and full of bickering” and those who oppose it**

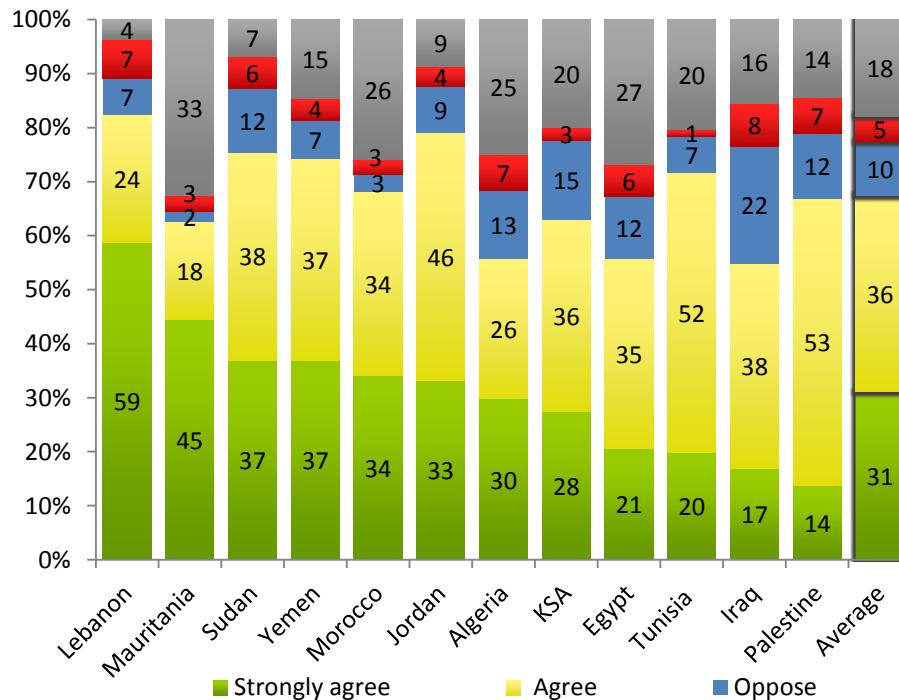


Another benchmark used by the Arab Opinion Index to assess the level of acceptance of a democratic political system was to identify citizens’ responses to the statement: “In spite of having its problems, a democratic system is better than other systems.” More than two-thirds of respondents (67%) agreed with this statement, compared to only 15% who opposed it. There is no doubt that this clearly expresses citizens in the Arab region’s bias in favor of democracy, and the relative weakness of camps or factions opposed to democracy.

Of course, here, too, there were local differences between countries. Respondents from Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, and Tunisia supported the statement which placed democracy as the best-possible system to a very high degree (between 70% and 80%), while support for the same statement among respondents in Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco varied from 55% to 70%.



**Figure 22: Those who agree with the statement that “in spite of having its problems, a democratic system is better than other systems,” and those who oppose it**



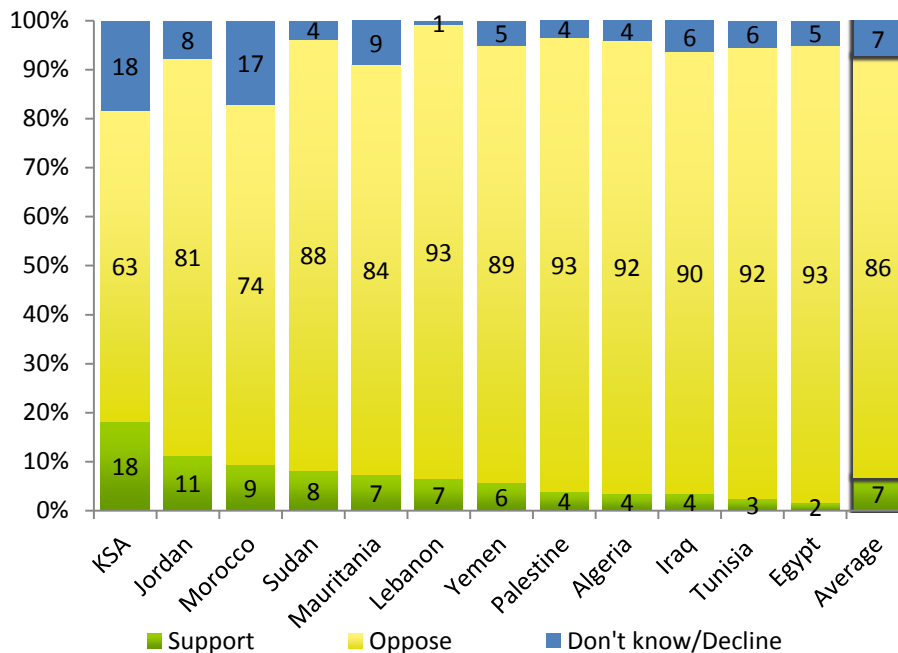
A further test of the extent of this pro-democracy bias in Arab societies was to measure the Arab public’s attitudes towards principles of power sharing and devolution of power. This was done by asking respondents to evaluate their attitudes on two questions. The first of which was in regards to hereditary succession in ostensibly “republican” systems; the second question asked respondents their opinions on the rise to power of political parties with which they disagreed through democratic means.

Public opinion in the region displays near unanimity in opposition to a leaders’ offspring succession of power in republican systems of governance, with 86% of the total of respondents from all surveyed countries opposed to this. Only 7% of respondents supported hereditary transfers of power within a republican state. Hereditary succession of power in republican states and the promotion of such moves have been a mainstay in the politics of many Arab countries’ over the last 15 years.

Such policies of hereditary transfers of political power were promoted under the pretext of ensuring stability and continuity, warding off chaos and confusion, and as a response to the absence of alternatives. The vast majority’s rejection of hereditary succession of

power in governments reflects the failure of these policies, and the publicity accompanying them on the one hand, and a rejection of a monopoly of power in the hands of a small elite on the other. The highest proportions of support for the succession of power in republican systems, however small, came from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Morocco. This is understandable as citizens of these countries are familiar with the idea of succession in monarchical and hereditary systems of governance.

**Figure 23: Supporters and opponents of the succession of power to offspring in republican systems**

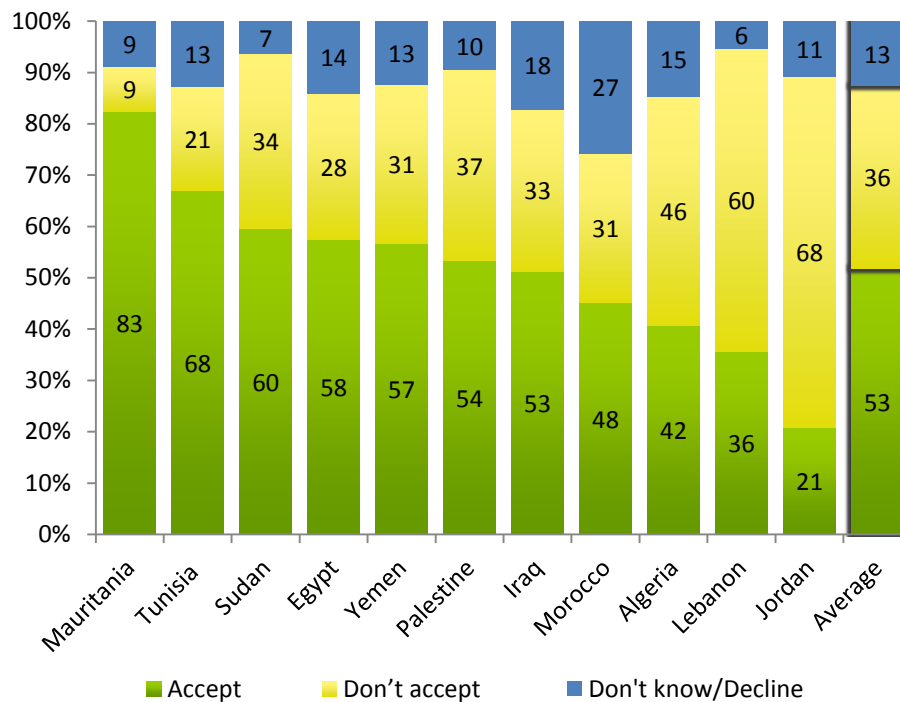


The second question queried respondents' tolerance of the rise to power of a political party with which they disagreed through general elections. It is a matter which tests the acceptance of the principle of pluralism on one hand, and the acceptance, in principle, of the idea of devolution of power on another. The results showed that 53% of respondents in Arab countries accept that a political party that has opposing views to theirs could obtain power through the ballot box, while 36% were opposed to this idea, in principle. A further 13% either did not express an opinion, or openly refused to express a preference.

Although the majority of respondents – as a whole – accepted that a party that they don't agree with could in theory attain power through the ballot box, public opinion on this question varied from one country to another. Countries with greater-than-expected

positive answers to this question included Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, and Palestine; in Mauritania, 83% of respondents accepted this. While Algerian opinion was divided on this point, a majority of those who were opposed to it were in Jordan and Lebanon.

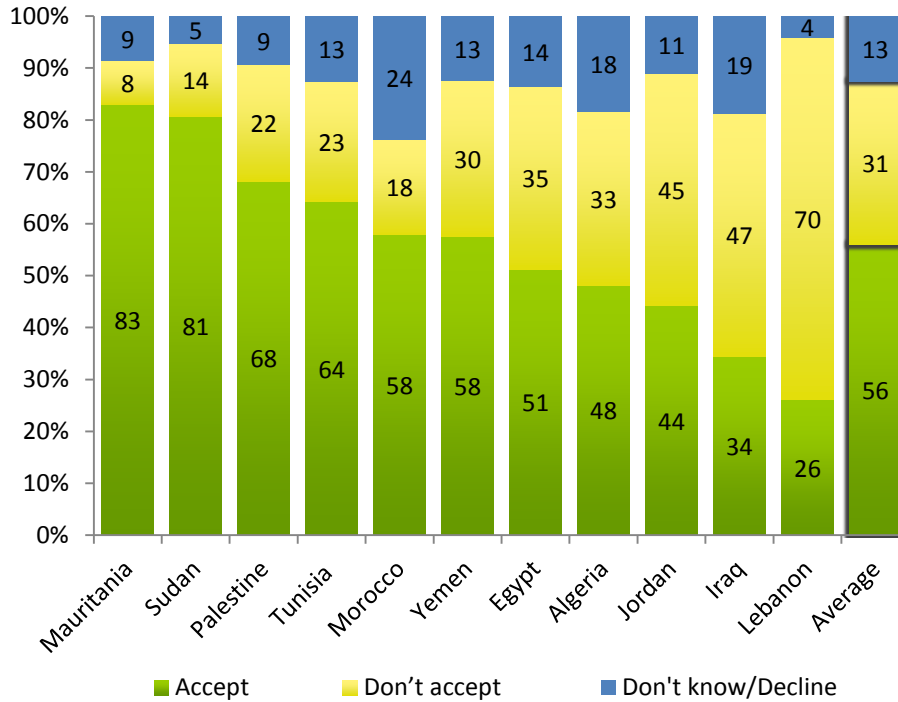
**Figure 24: Trends in public opinion towards the attainment of power by a political party that disagrees with their views, if this party receives the necessary number of votes**



Perhaps unexpectedly, 31% of respondents overall claimed to be opposed to the rise to power of a religious-based political party, with 56% of those answering the question saying that they would accept the rise to power of a religious political party provided the said party had won the necessary votes. Lebanese respondents were the most opposed to the rise to power of a religiously inspired party (70%). While public opinion in Algeria and Jordan was fairly evenly divided in its attitudes to the rise of religious parties to power through democratic means, respondents in Palestine, Sudan, Mauritania, Tunisia, and Yemen were especially supportive of the statements, and claimed that they would be in favor of a religious party coming to power. The picture becomes more complicated when respondents stated whether they support the

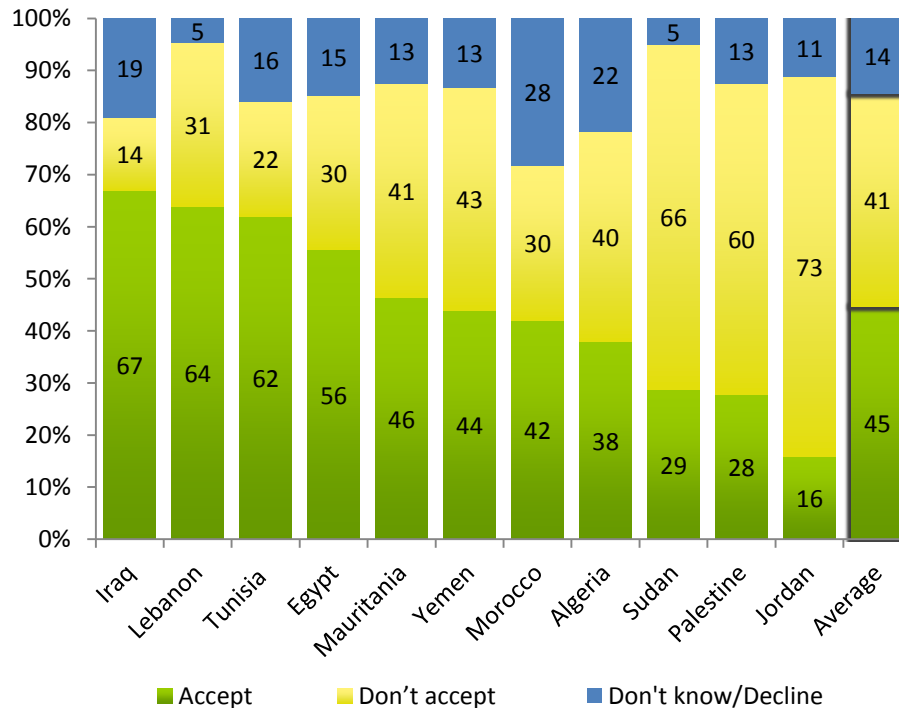
democratic rise to power of a party which “believes in the separation between religion and the state (literally, ‘from politics’)”.

**Figure 25: Supporters and opponents of a religious party attaining power if it received the necessary votes**



While the majority of Arabs responding to the survey accepted that political parties with which they disagreed have a right to rise to political power, opinion was nearly evenly divided on the question of separating religion from politics and state: 45% of respondents reported that they would support the rise to power of such a party, while 41% reported that they were opposed to such a change in the politics of their countries. At the level of individual countries, nearly two-thirds of respondents from Lebanon, Iraq, and Tunisia, and 56% of respondents of Egypt, said that they would accept the attainment of power by a political party which sought to establish a divide between politics and religion. In contrast, this statement had less than 50% support in Algeria, Morocco, and Yemen; in contrast, a majority of the respondents from Jordan, Palestine, and Sudan were opposed to this sentiment, regardless of public support during an election.

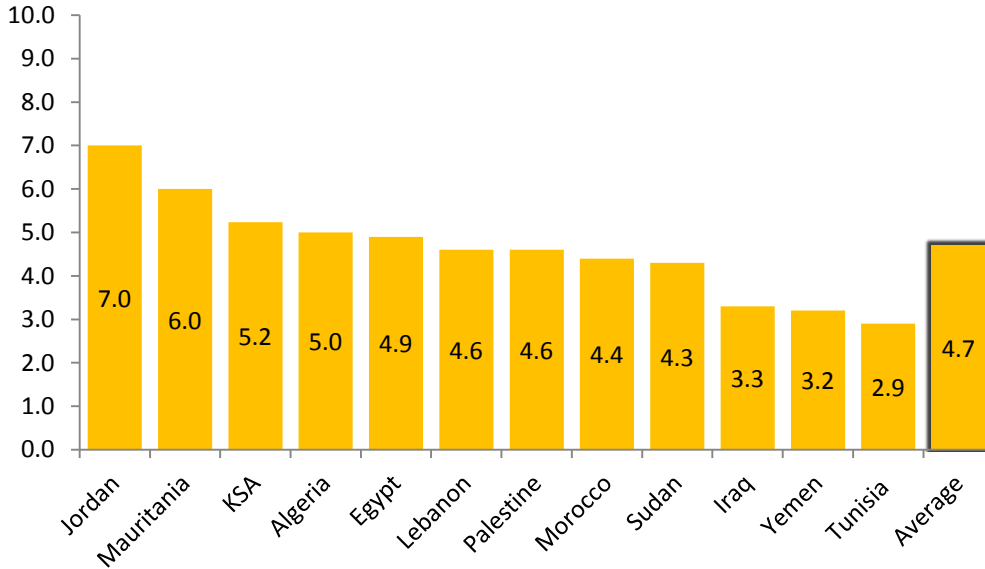
**Figure 26: Supporters and opponents of the attainment of power by a political party that receives the necessary votes but believes in the separation of religion and state**



### Assessment of the Level of Democracy in the Arab region

Citizens of Arab states have a broad negative assessment of the democratic status, or otherwise, of their own countries. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means that a country is not democratic and 10 means that it is democratic to the greatest extent possible, the assessment of democracy in the surveyed Arab countries was 4.7 points, below midpoint on the scale. Respondents' assessments did not vary greatly from country to country. The only respondents who scored their own countries' democracy positively were those from Mauritania who assessed it at 6 points and those from Jordan who gave it 7 points.

**Figure 27: Citizens’ assessments of the levels of democracy in their countries**



The Arab public is capable of providing a definition of democracy that is substantive and significant. Although there is not a single interpretation of democracy which is dominant over all others, one can conclude, in general terms, that citizens view democracy through a political prism which is based on a guarantee of civil and political freedoms, a system of governance that respects pluralism and the devolution of power, or through a political understanding that depends upon a system of governance that would achieve justice and equality among citizens.

The researchers who prepared this survey manually interpreted the written results to open-ended questions regarding the definition of democracy presented during each of the interviews. This analysis sought to categorize all of the responses into intelligible categories which were narrow enough to have a clear meaning. Although such a human-led process cannot be considered perfect, it is necessitated by the wide-spread lack of reliable software that can qualitatively analyze written Arabic statements.

Two broad, somewhat distinctive trends emerge when one seeks to understand Arab perceptions of democracy: the first is economic and social and the second is related to achieving security and stability. These two trends together represent 12% of the different types of definitions that Arab citizens give for democracy. Citizens who gave a

definition emphasized positive attributes, such as a democratic state solving the problem of unemployment, and ensuring freedom of opinion and expression and used phrases like “justice” and “equality”. Of 13,000 different responses to open-ended questions surrounding democracy, only 30 individuals provided negative answers. This means that Arab citizens’ understanding of democracy is a positive one and a sign that they accept it in principle.

Public opinion in Arab countries is in favor of democracy. The majority sees democracy as the best system of governance. Arguments like “the economy would suffer under a democracy” or “democracy leads to a breakdown in law and order” are not popular among citizens of the region. There is near unanimity among citizens of Arab countries on the question of rejecting hereditary and unchallenged succession of power in republican states, a clear indicator of their rejection of the monopoly of power and demands for the devolution of power.

Nonetheless, it must be stated that traditions of the devolution of power and of political pluralism are not deeply rooted in the Arab countries, and the responses of those who participated in the survey suggest that opposition to political pluralism can reach up to one-third of the population in certain countries.

## Confidence in Key Institutions in Arab Countries

This section of the Arab Opinion Index report examines attitudes in Arab public opinion towards public institutions of respondents' countries by examining their responses to several questions. The first question covers confidence in state authorities, in addition to armies and security apparatuses (i.e., the police though the wording was changed for some countries). The second question covered the performance of [the executive branches of] governments and legislative bodies. This sub-set of questions also sought to establish the public's assessment of the degree to which laws are equally applied among all citizens, and how those citizens judged the extent of financial and administrative corruption within Arab states, as criteria to measure the success of a state in carrying out its functions.

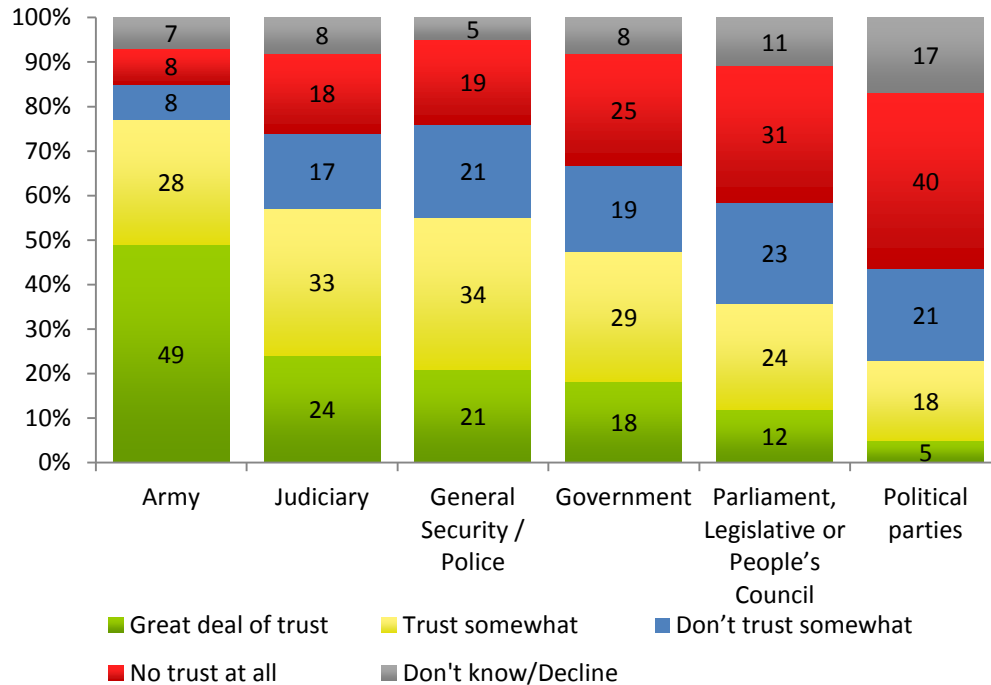
### **Confidence in Institutions**

Arab public opinion on the level of confidence it places in state institutions is divided and varied. The majority of citizens of Arab states have great confidence in their countries' armies with 77% reporting that they are either very confident or are "somewhat confident" in their countries' militaries. Arab militaries are the institution with the single-highest level of support among Arabs; the level of confidence which Arabs express in the police forces of their countries, for example, is 55% (with the results aggregated), while roughly 40% of those surveyed expressed a lack of confidence in their countries' police forces.

Fewer than half of those surveyed expressed confidence in their governments and legislative bodies. Forty-seven percent of respondents reported that they had confidence in their countries' governments compared to 44% who expressed their lack of confidence in them. The proportion of those who had confidence in their legislative bodies did not exceed 36%, compared to the majority of respondents – 54% – who stated that they did not have confidence in their countries' legislative bodies. This same lack of confidence also applied to political parties. Twenty-three percent said they have high confidence or some confidence in political parties compared to 61% who stated that they did not have confidence in them.

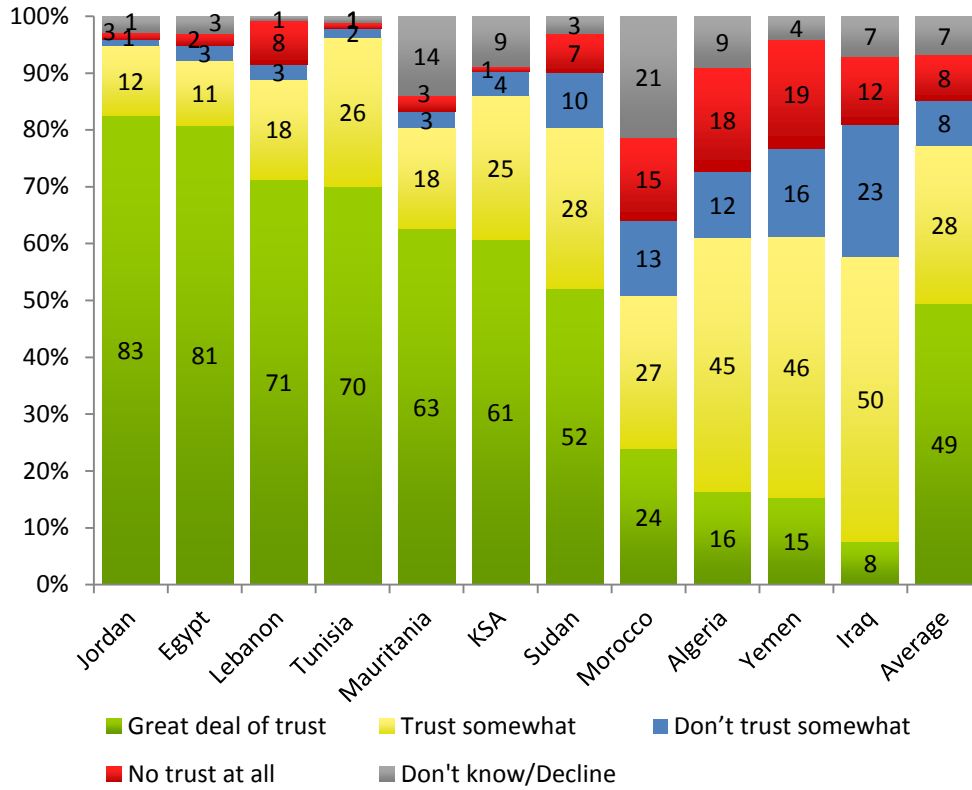


**Figure 28: The level of citizens' confidence in their main public institutions (the overall average of the surveyed communities)**



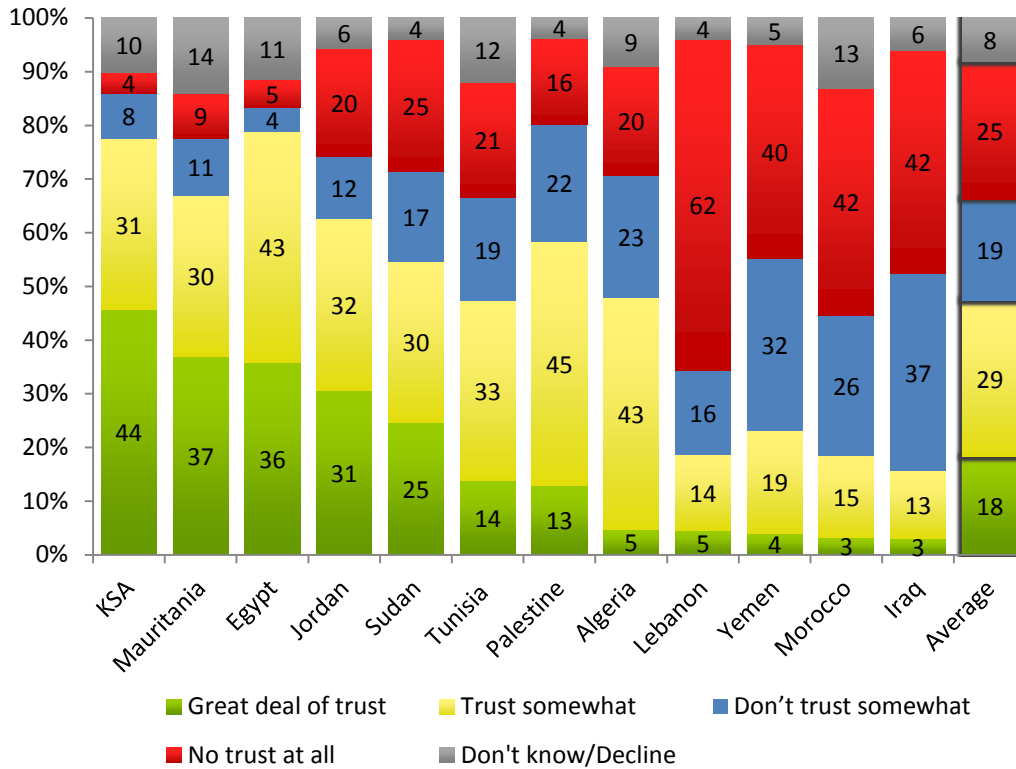
According to the surveyed countries, there is near consensus among citizens of Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, and Mauritania in their confidence in their armed forces. This confidence is less prominent among citizens of Yemen and Iraq, in particular. The lack of confidence in the army in Yemen can be explained by the fact that this poll was carried out during the Yemeni revolution, when the military was widely seen to be playing a negative role. The feelings of trust are, therefore, linked to a large extent to this issue. Lack of confidence in the army in Iraq could be explained through the absence of security and stability, and/or the way in which the Iraqi Army was reorganized after the US invasion.

**Figure 29: Trends in public opinion of respondents' confidence in their countries' armies**



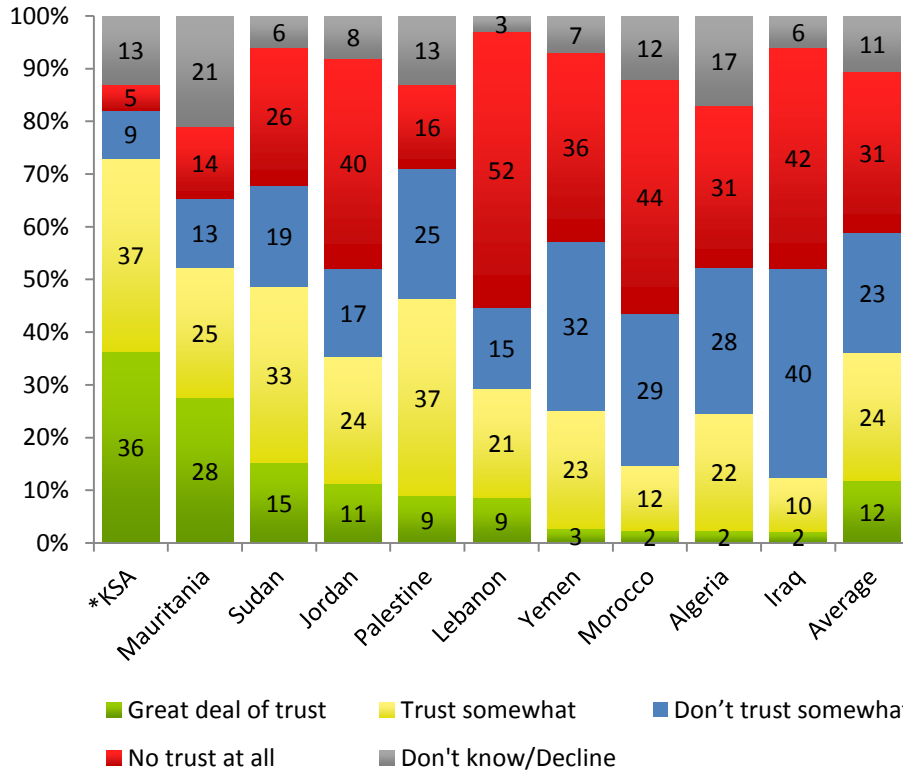
Results further show that the majority of respondents from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and Mauritania have more confidence in their governments than respondents from the other countries surveyed, with rates that range between 60% and 80%. Public opinion is split in Palestine, Sudan, and Algeria while the majority of respondents from Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, and Yemen expressed lack of confidence in their government.

**Figure 30: Trends in public opinion towards the level of respondents' confidence in their country's government**



Although the general pattern in the surveyed countries is that public opinion has no confidence in representative councils, confidence in the representative councils of Saudi Arabia and Mauritania exceeded 50% of respondents, which is higher than in the rest of the surveyed countries. The highest rate was in Saudi Arabia, where 73% of respondents said that they trusted the Consultative Assembly (*Majlis al-SHURA*) of Saudi Arabia. Notably, this council is unelected and has limited powers. There was near consensus among Iraqis, Moroccans, and Yemenis on their lack of confidence in their countries' parliaments.

**Figure 31: Trends in public opinion towards the level of respondents' confidence in their representative councils**

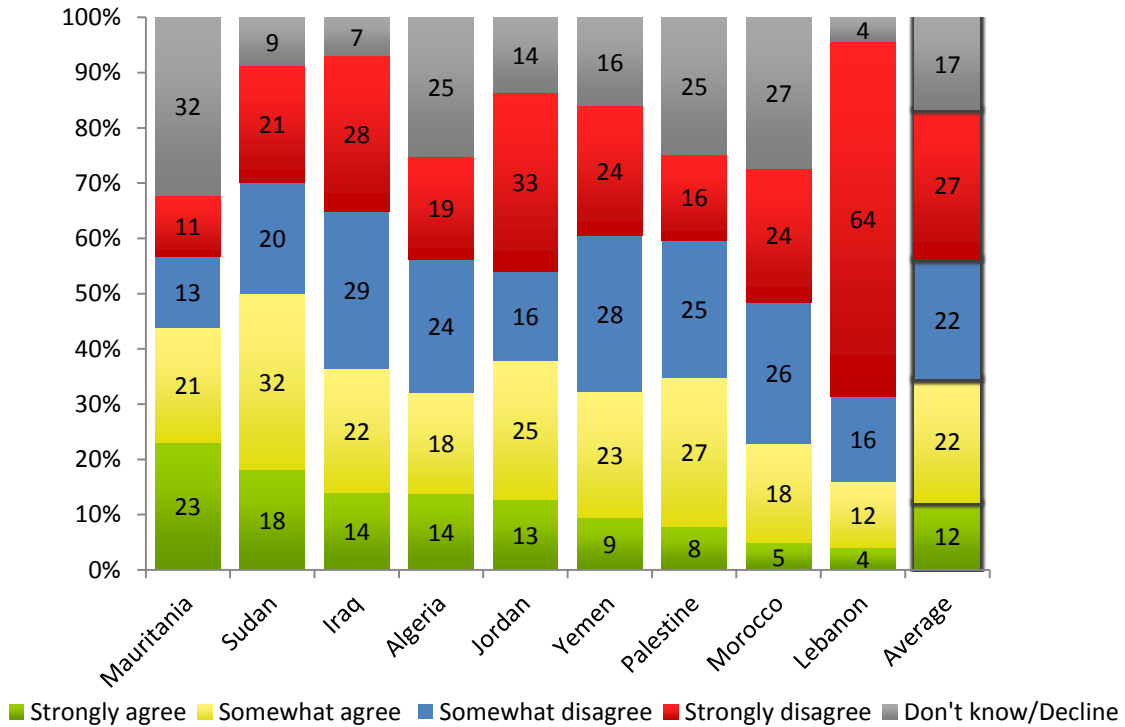


\* In Saudi Arabia, respondents were asked about the Consultative Assembly (*Majlis al-Shura*) of Saudi Arabia

**Evaluating the Performance of Governments and Representative Councils**

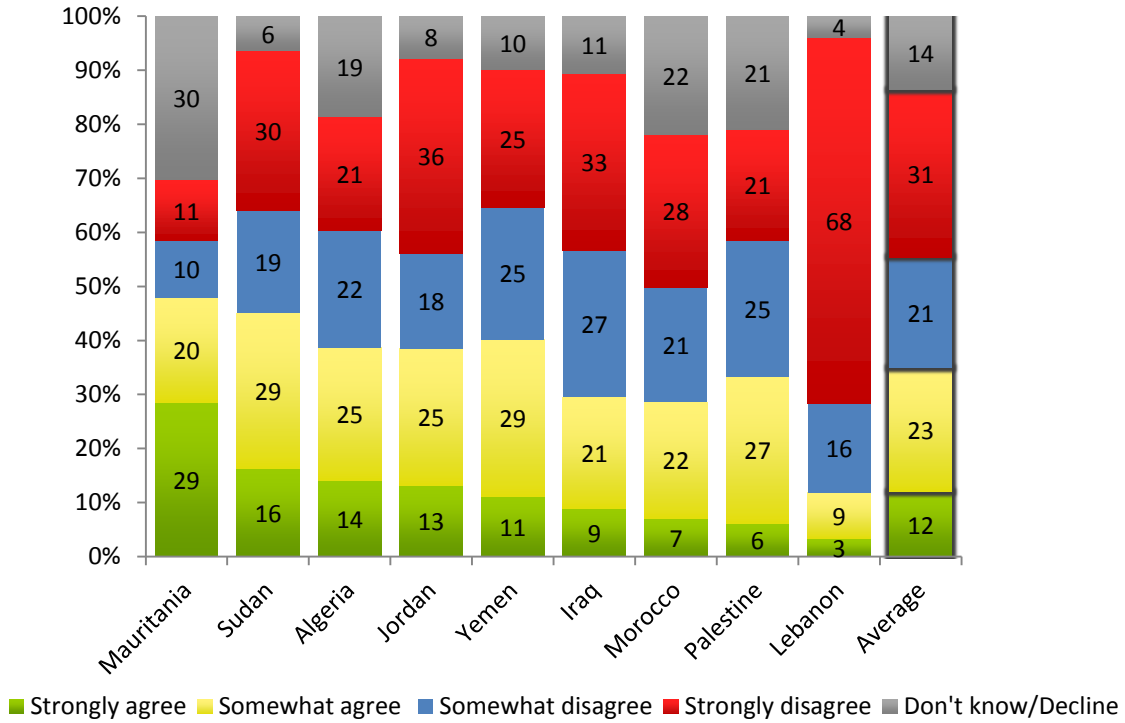
The trust between Arab citizens and their governments on the one hand, and between them and the legislative councils on the other, is supposed to be effectively linked to citizen satisfaction with the performance of each of the governments and legislatures. Therefore, a set of indicators that would make it possible to identify citizens' opinions on the performance of their governments and legislative councils were used. The evaluation of the performance of representative councils was done by identifying the level of citizens' satisfaction with the councils' effectiveness in monitoring the executive arms of their governments. Arab citizens' assessment of the representative councils' performance using this set of indicators shows that 36% of citizens believe that their legislative councils fulfill their role in monitoring the government, compared to almost half of citizens who are not satisfied with the way their legislatures carry out this role. Differences among respondents were very limited. There is an almost total agreement that these councils have failed in their monitoring role.

**Figure 32: Respondents' evaluation of the performance of their parliaments, and their duty in monitoring governments**



At the same time, 35% of respondents felt that representative councils were concerned with the problems of the citizenry while a majority (52%) did not share this sentiment. A clear majority of respondents expressed the opinion that their countries' legislative councils do not serve the public interest.

**Figure 33: Respondents for and against the idea that representative councils reflect citizen problems**

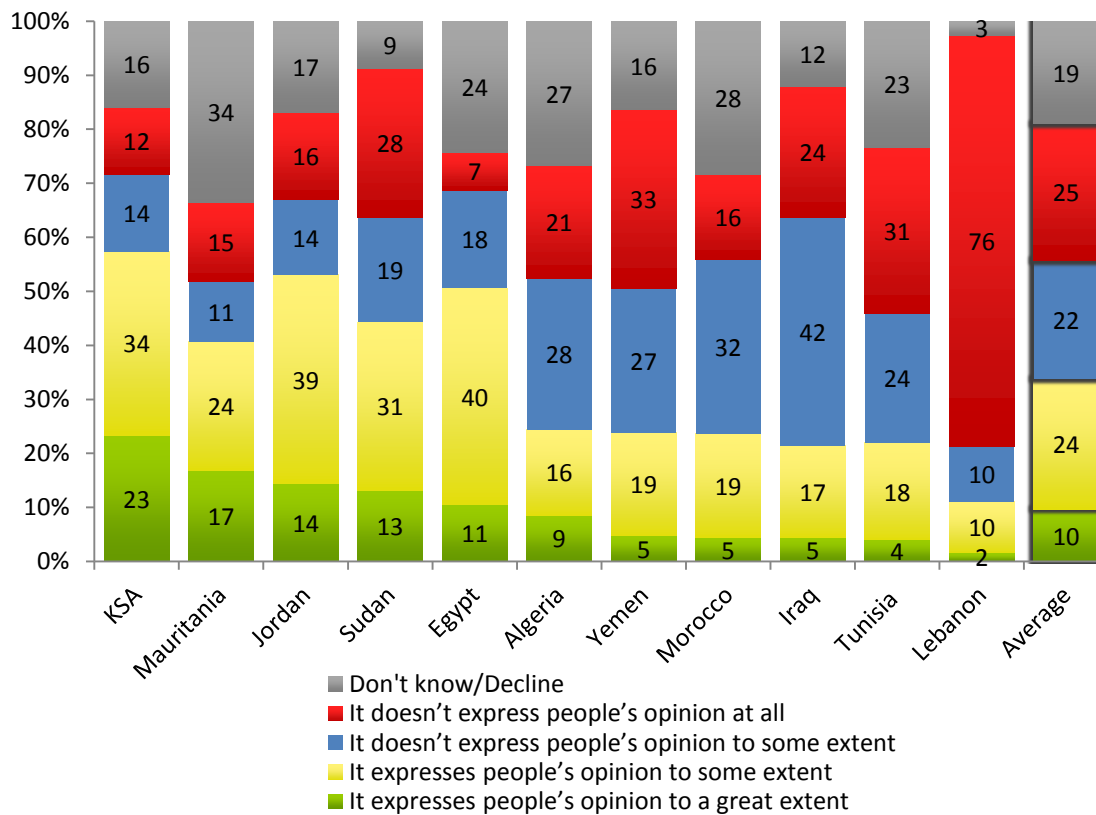


General indicators were used to measure citizens’ assessment of foreign and economic policies, as well as to identify the extent of their satisfaction with basic public services that affect the lives of all citizens, namely health and education services. Regarding respondents’ evaluation of their countries’ foreign policy, 34%, on average, shared the view that their countries’ foreign policies reflect the views of citizens (either “to a large extent” or “to some extent”). On the other hand, 47% held the view that their countries’ the foreign policies do not reflect citizens’ views.

More than half the respondents from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt (57%, 53%, and 51%, respectively) reported that their countries’ foreign policy reflects the views of the citizenries. On the other hand, more than half of the respondents in the rest of the countries surveyed stated that foreign policy does not reflect the views of citizens. In countries such as Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco and Iraq, the proportion of those who said that their countries’ foreign policies reflects the views of citizens ranged from 12% to 25% of respondents. Although the proportion of those in the surveyed countries who did not know or refused to answer ranged between 3% and 33%, the fact is that the

majority of citizens who responded to the survey expressed some opinion on foreign policy. Furthermore, the general assessment of the foreign policies of Arab governments was broadly unsatisfactory, confirming the view that Arab citizens are generally interested in matters of foreign policy.

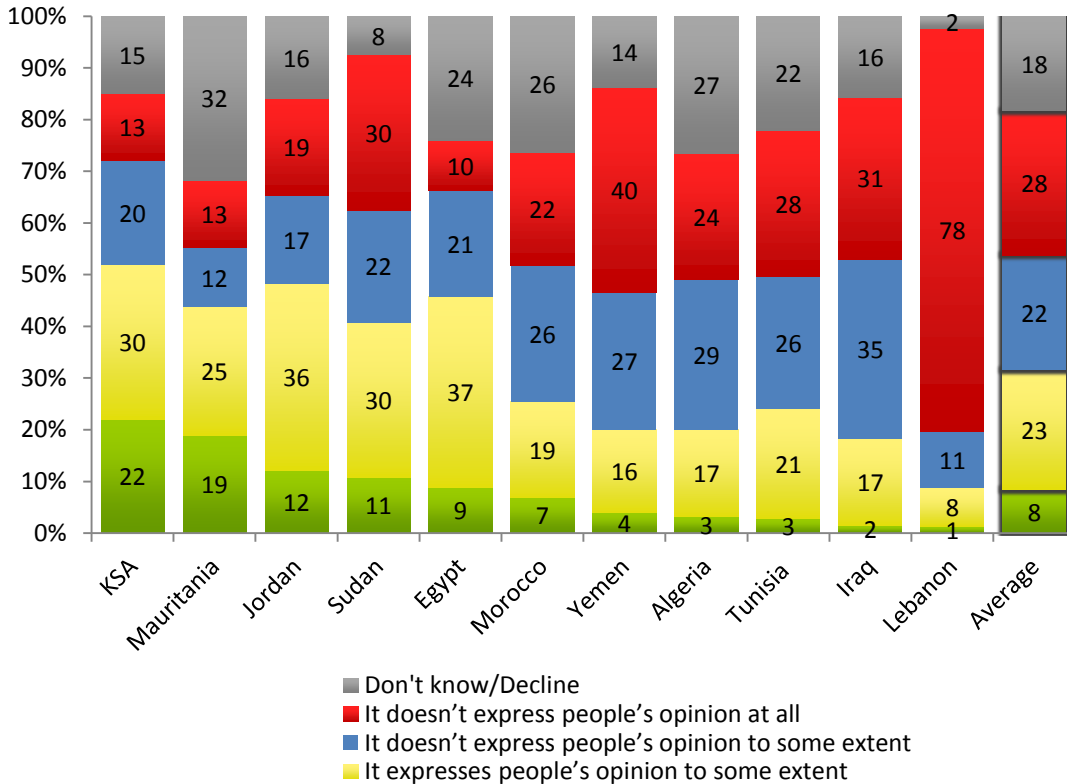
**Figure 34: Respondents who stated that their countries' foreign policies reflect the views of citizens, and those who said they do not reflect their opinions**



The majority of respondents (50% on the weighted average with all countries combined) stated that domestic economic policies in their countries do not reflect the views of citizens, while the proportion of those who agreed with this statement was 31%. Saudi Arabia was the exception, as more than half of the respondents (52%) said that their country's domestic economic policies reflect the views of its citizens, either to a large extent or to some extent. In other countries, less than half the respondents believed that these policies reflect the views of citizens, reaching as low as nearly one-fifth of respondents or less in Lebanon, Iraq, Algeria, Yemen, and Morocco. More than half of the Sudanese, Moroccans, Yemenis, and Algerians responded that their

countries' economic policies do not reflect the views of the citizens of their countries.

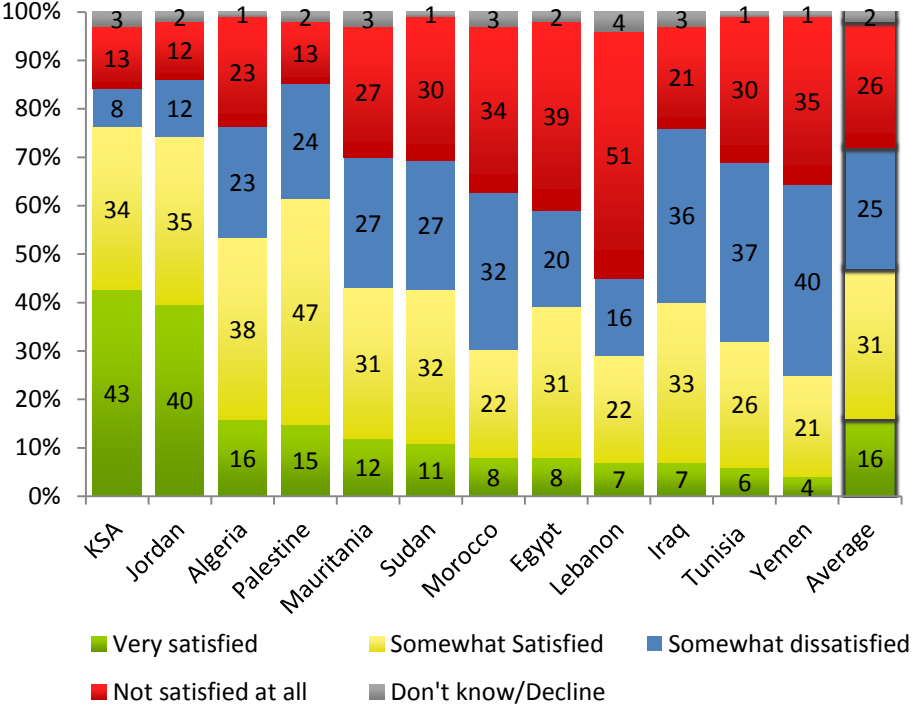
**Figure 35: Respondents who reported that their domestic economic policies reflect the views of citizens, and those who reported that they do not reflect the views of citizens**



This general assessment of economic policies is mirrored in the evaluation of government health services. Less than half the respondents (47%) in the countries surveyed were satisfied with government health services, compared to 51% of respondents who said that they were not. This dissatisfaction was most prominent among citizens of Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen, Tunisia, and Mauritania, while satisfaction with health services reached its highest level in Saudi Arabia (77%) and Jordan (75%).

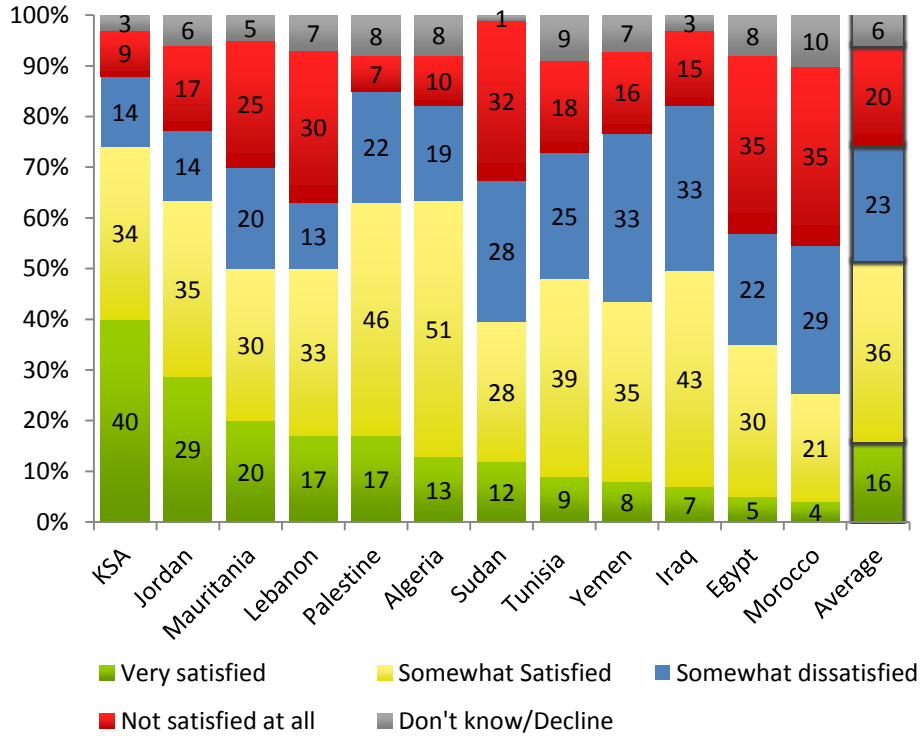


**Figure 36: Satisfied and dissatisfied respondents with government health services**



Arab public opinion is seemingly divided on the question of satisfaction with education in state sector schools. While 52% of respondents report being satisfied with the level of education in state sector schools, 43% of respondents were dissatisfied. The highest levels of satisfaction with state sector education were found in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Palestine, while the highest levels of dissatisfaction were found among the citizens of Morocco, Egypt, Yemen, and Sudan.

**Figure 37: Satisfied and dissatisfied respondents with the level of education in government schools**

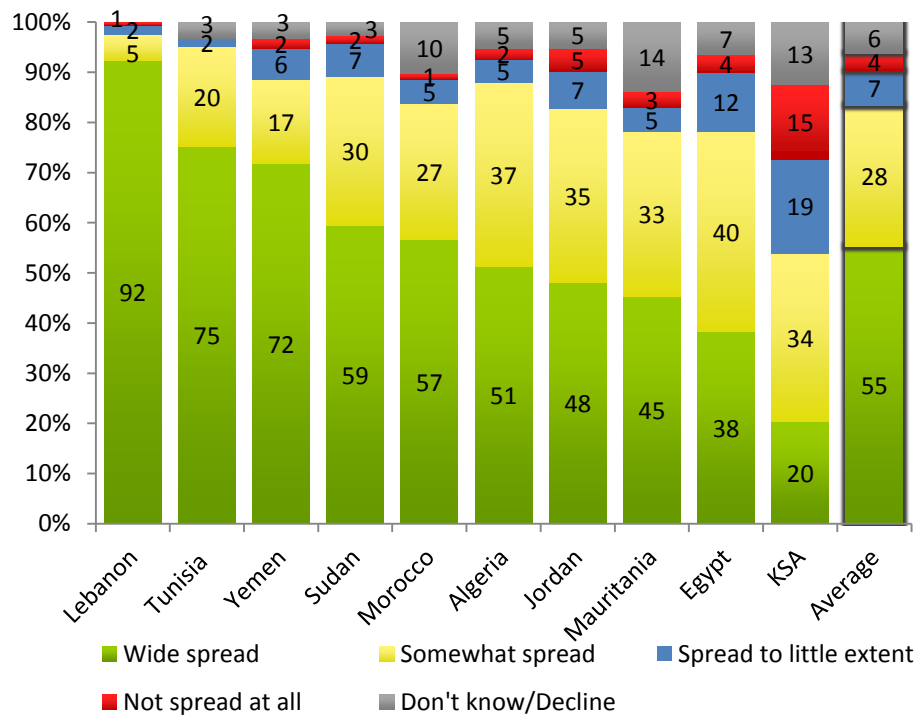


It can be deduced from the above that the dissatisfaction with and lack of confidence in Arab governments and legislative bodies on the part of their peoples is a reflection of a general lack of satisfaction with the level of basic services which are to be provided by the state, in addition to the failure of representative councils in playing their constitutional part in government on behalf of citizens.

The survey also sought to determine the level of (perceived) financial and administrative corruption within Arab countries. Public opinion in general (83%) believed that financial and administrative corruption is widespread (by responding either "widespread" or "somewhat widespread") in Arab countries overall; a sub-set of these respondents, who form a slim majority of the public (55%), believed that financial and administrative corruption was "very widespread" in their countries. By contrast, only 4% of respondents expressed the idea that corruption was "not at all widespread" in Arab countries, while 7% described the degree of corruption in Arab countries as "very little". While there was a great degree of agreement among respondents that corruption was

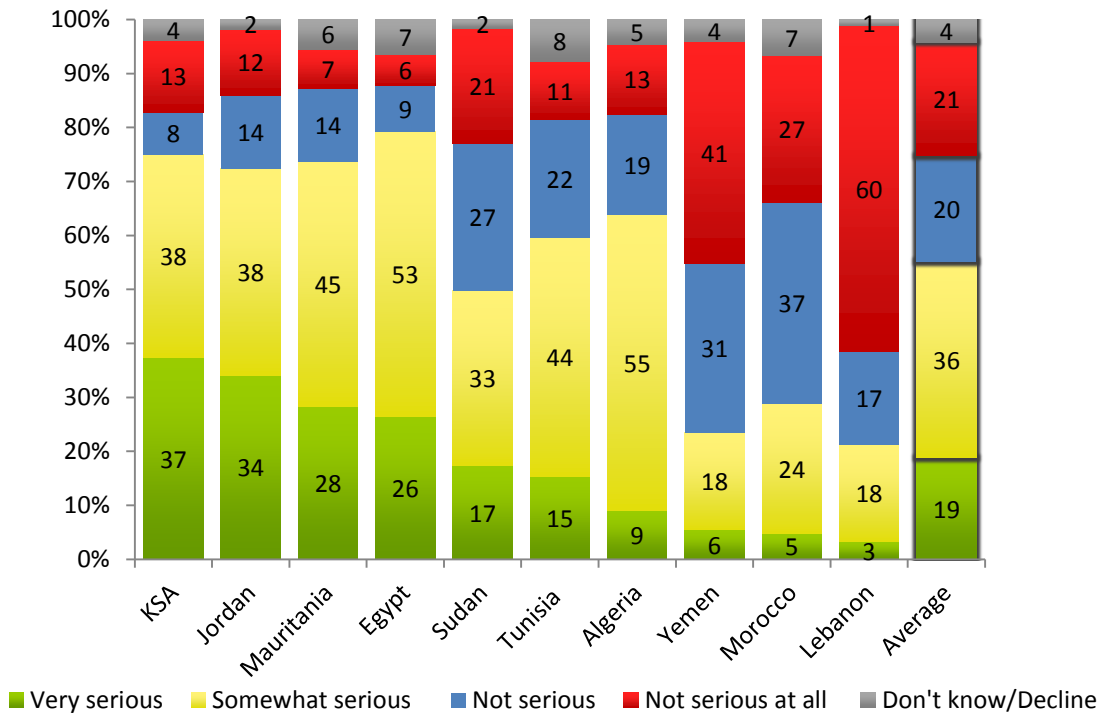
widespread in Arab countries overall, there was some disagreement over the extent of corruption within their own countries.

**Figure 38: Trends in public opinion towards the extent of financial and administrative corruption in the countries surveyed**



Public opinion was further divided over how serious governments of the surveyed countries are in combating corruption. Fifty-five percent believe that the governments of their countries are serious about fighting financial and administrative corruption, compared to 41% who believe their government not to be serious. This 55% of the public opinion in the region who believe that governments are serious in addressing a problem considered by their own populations to be very widespread is incredibly modest. Respondents from Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, and Tunisia were the most likely to believe in their governments. By contrast, a majority of respondents in Algeria, Yemen, Morocco, and Lebanon do not believe that their governments are serious about fighting corruption.

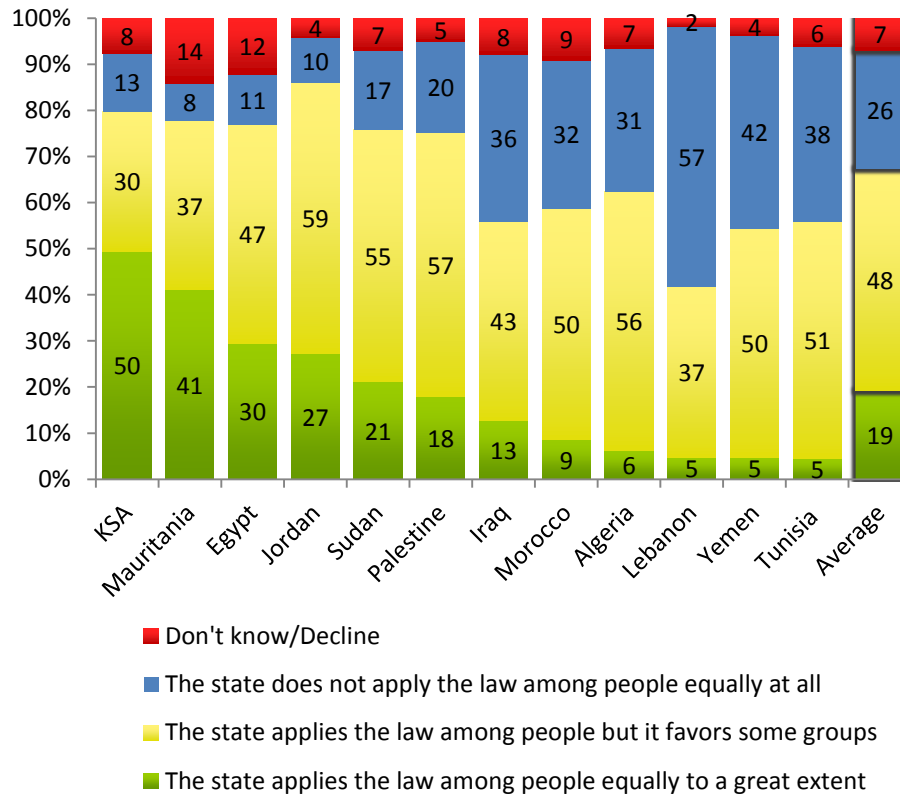
**Figure 39: Trends in Arab public opinion towards the seriousness of their governments in the fight against financial and administrative corruption**



The second question sought to determine how the public evaluates the extent of the equal application of the law among the people. Equality of citizens before the law counts as one of the sources of state legitimacy, in general, and the political system, in particular.

Fully one-fifth of Arab citizens define democracy as a governing system that ensures justice and equality among citizens. The absence of justice and equality were some of the main reasons cited by respondents to explain the outbreak of the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions. Arab public opinion holds that the state has been unsuccessful in applying the law equally among people. Only 19% of respondents (taking the weighted averages across all states) agreed that the state applies the law equally between all citizens, while 26% feel that the Arab states do not at all enforce the law equally among its citizens. Nearly half of Arab public opinion (48%) agrees that the Arab state does indeed apply the law of the land, but that they do so in a biased way.

**Figure 40: Trends in public opinion about the state's application of the law equally among people**



Citizens of Arab states have limited trust in their states' institutions. While the majority of respondents trusted the military establishment, only a little over half had confidence in their countries' judicial systems. Those who placed their faith in government executive bodies and legislatures were in a minority. Confidence deficits in public approval were reflected in the lack of faith in political parties. This lack of trust between citizens and their states, in particular with regards to governments and parliaments, is rooted in realities.

The assessment of the performance of parliaments in the Arab region, with respect to their monitoring of the work of the executive branches of government (with the exception of Saudi Arabia, this is the basic role of the legislatures in the surveyed countries), was negative. Respondents also indicated that they felt that the legislatures of their countries failed to express their citizens' concerns and interests. Furthermore,

public assessment of government performance using a number of indicators (foreign and economic policies, as well as health and education services) is either negative or conservatively positive.

There is a near-consensus in public opinion that financial and administrative corruption is widespread, and public opinion is equivocal about their governments' seriousness to combat that corruption. In addition to this, only about 20% of respondents believe that Arab governments apply the law equally.

One can conclude that Arab countries suffer from a legitimacy deficit with respect to their citizens based on the following combined: the broadly negative or, at best, reservedly positive view of state performance; the erosion of trust between citizens and the basic institutions of their countries; the widespread feeling that Arab states do not apply the law equally; and the impression that financial and administrative corruption is widespread.

The Arab states lack of initiative to formulate policies to persuade citizens that governments are rectifying the shortcomings in their performance, and that they are working to take into account the importance of principles of justice and equality to citizens, or creating any policies and procedures that contribute to bolster confidence between the citizen and the state, will inevitably lead to a deterioration of state legitimacy in the Arab region.

## The Role of Religion in Public and Political Life

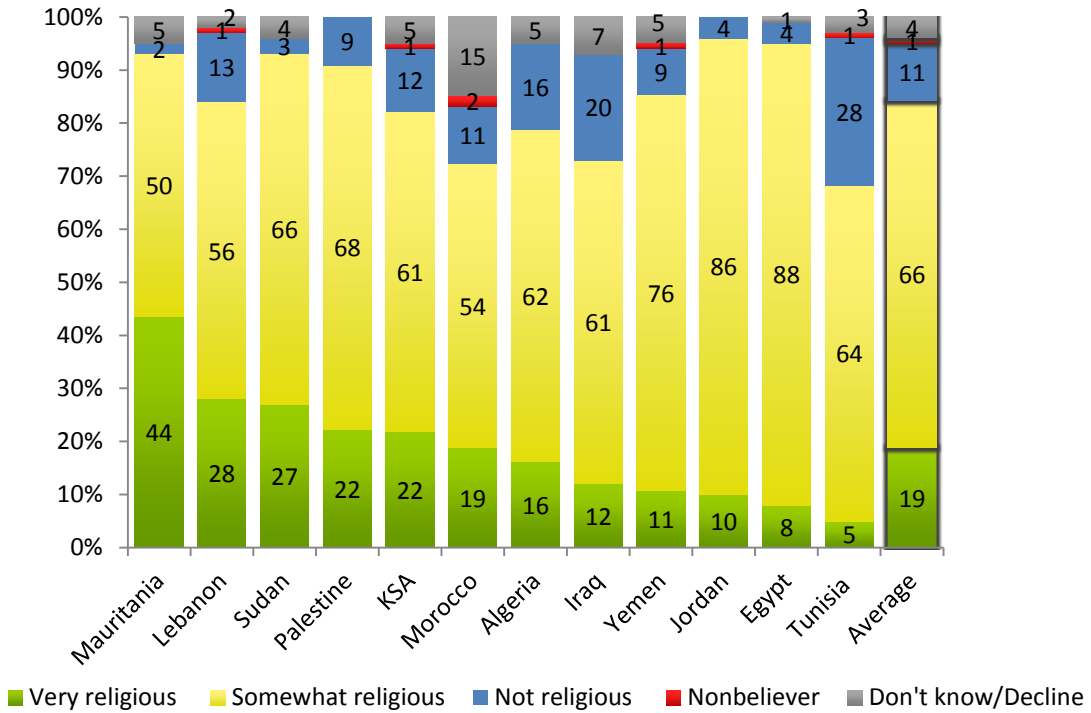
The Arab region is host to a recurring debate on the role of religion in public and political life. In public discourse, the debate does not distinguish between the role of Islamic political movements and that of religion and religiosity in Arab societies. It deals with these terms as if they were interchangeable and refer to the same concept. The Arab Opinion Index attempts to examine the approach of the Arab public towards the role of religion in public and political life in Arab countries, and the degree of its influence as a determinant in the social and political activity of the citizen. Questions which attempted to ascertain the attitudes of the Arab public towards their preferred role for religion in public life were, for these reasons, included in the survey.

### **Religion and Religious Practices**

Respondents were asked to describe themselves as either “very religious,” “religious,” or “not at all religious”. This variable depends on the respondents’ self-assessment of the extent of their own religiosity. A clear majority of citizens (85%) described themselves as religious to some extent, with 19% reporting that they were “very religious” and 66% reporting that they were “somewhat religious”. Only 11% reported being not religious. These results were consistent throughout every country surveyed.

An examination of local differences here would be informative. While 28% and 20% of respondents, from Tunisia and Iraq respectively, described themselves as non-religious, only 2% of Mauritians described themselves thus, which is insignificant given the margin of error. In fact, 44% of Mauritians and about a quarter of respondents in each of Lebanon, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Palestine described themselves as “very religious”.

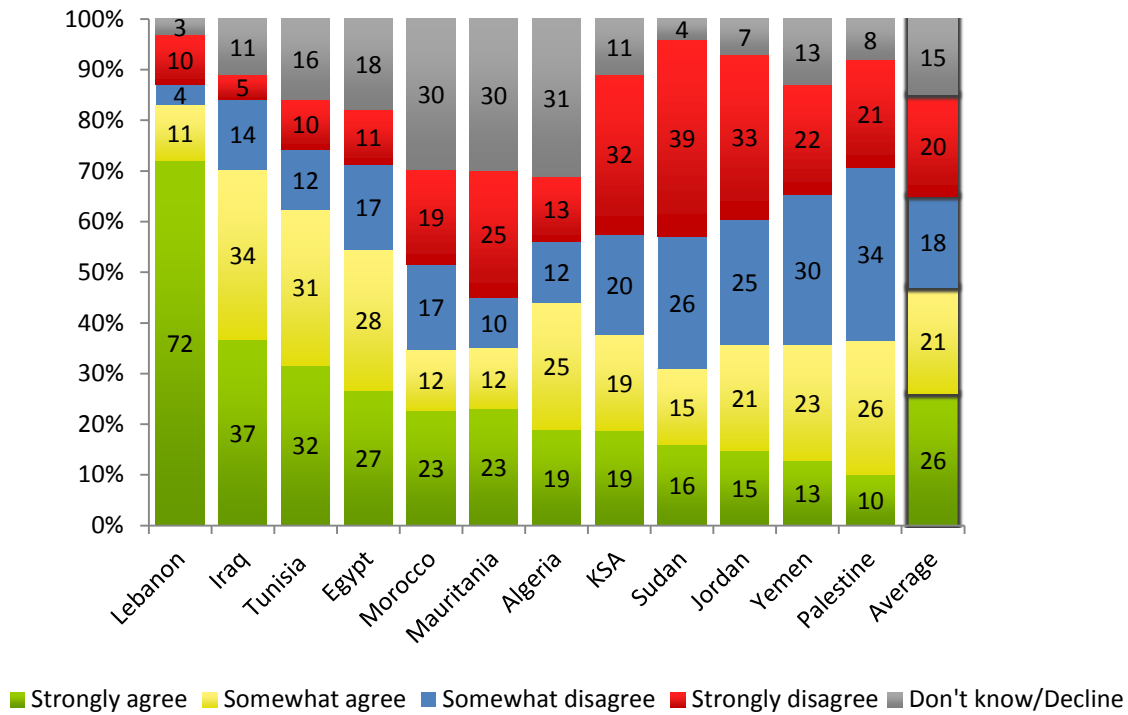
**Figure 41: Regardless of whether you visit places of worship or not, do you consider yourself religious?**



Results show that the attitudes of respondents to the statement that “religious practices are private and must be separated from social and political life” were divided. Forty-seven percent agreed with this statement, compared to 38% who opposed it. While clear majorities of respondents in Lebanon (83%), Iraq (71%), Tunisia (63%), and Egypt (55%) leaned towards separating religious practices from social and political life, the majority of respondents in Sudan (65%), Palestine (55%), Jordan (58%), and Saudi Arabia (52%) reject the contention that religious practices are private, and that these were to be separated from social and political life.



**Figure 42: Respondent trends towards the statement that “religious practices are private and must be separated from political and social life”**



### Religion in Public Life

The Index assessed the impact of religion as a determinant of respondents’ actions and their behavior in public life, through examining their responses to two questions. Firstly, respondents were asked about their societal and economic interactions with others and whether or not these were affected by religiosity. Respondents were also asked to define their feelings towards a close relative (defined as either a sibling or one of their children) marrying across confessional lines.\*

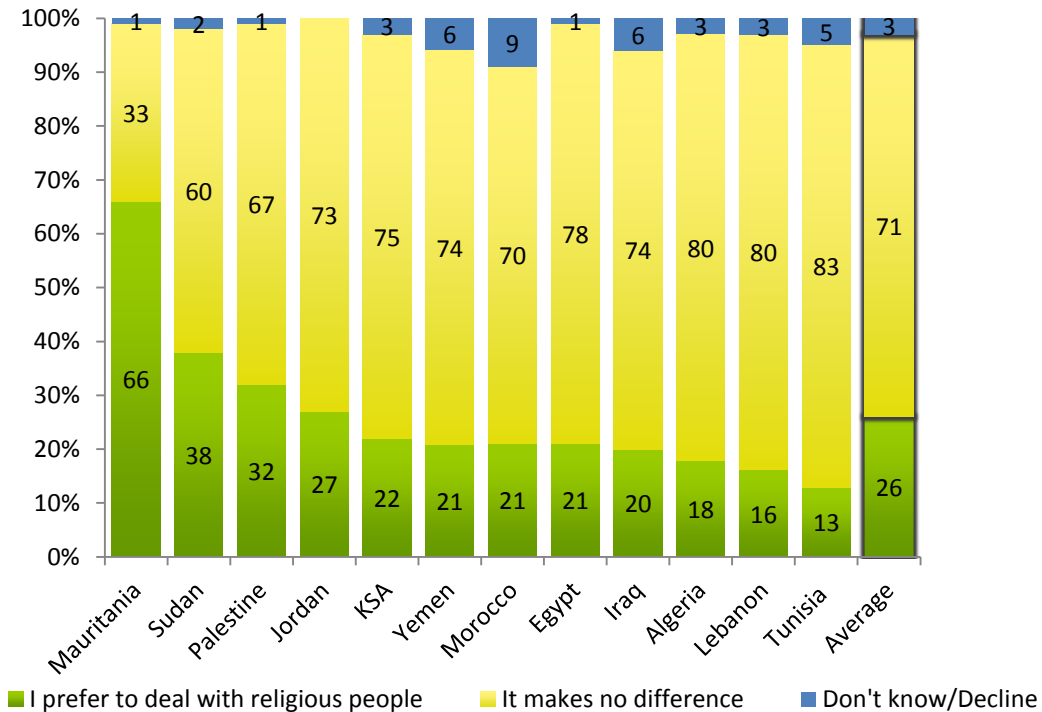
While a majority of citizens clearly identify themselves as religious, this was not a determining factor in their societal interactions with others. Twenty-six percent of respondents reported that they prefer to deal with religious people, versus 71% who

\* Compare this to questions famously posed to survey respondents in the US and UK about their children marrying across racial lines.

said that it did not matter whether they deal with people who are religious or not religious.

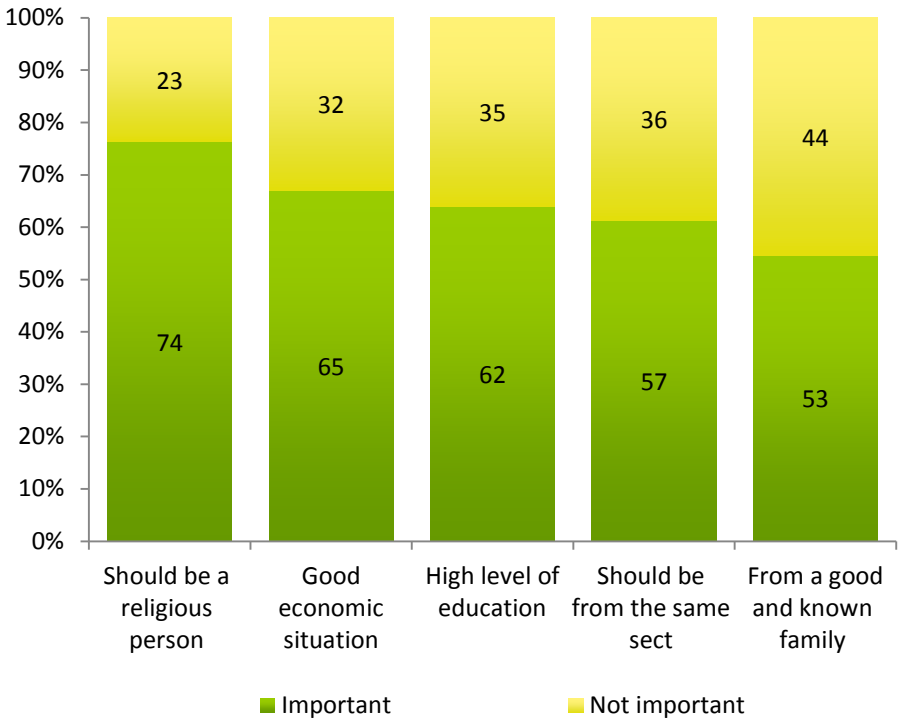
It seems clear that the vast majority of respondents from all surveyed countries do not take others’ religiosity as a basis for how they deal with them, except for respondents from Mauritania, where 66% reported that they prefer to conduct their personal/societal business with religious people, versus 33% who reported that it doesn’t matter.

**Figure 43: When dealing with others, do you prefer to deal with religious people or does it not matter to you?**



The main, stated factors determining respondents’ approval (or otherwise) of the marriage of a close relative, for a majority of respondents in the Arab region, were: the level of education of the potential spouse at 62%, good economic circumstances at 65%, and descent from a known family or a clan with high social status at 53%. Additionally, the majority of head-of-household respondents (74%) stated that the degree of religiosity of the prospective spouse is a main factor in the acceptance of a child’s marriage.

**Figure 44: Trends in public opinion towards the importance of a group of factors in approval of a close relative’s marriage**



When respondents were asked to rank the relative importance of the factors above, the results showed that 41% agreed that the religiosity of a prospective spouse comes first, followed by a person’s level of education (18%), while “good economic status” came in third, at 16%. Being from a well-known family scored 10%, and belonging to the same confession/sect accounted for 7% of the answers regarding what people considered to be the most important factor when approving a close relative’s prospective spouse.

**Table 8: The determining factor in respondents' approval of the marriage of a close relative to someone**

Which of these main factors (in the previous question) plays the biggest role in your approval of this marriage?								
	High level of education	Good economic status	From a well-known family / clan that has high social status	To be religious	To be from the same religious sect	To be from the same religion	Don't know / Refused to answer	Total
<b>Morocco</b>	46	23	1	14	2	--	--	100
<b>Lebanon</b>	30	17	5	14	31	--	4	100
<b>Yemen*</b>	23	18	14	37	0	--	1	100
<b>Tunis</b>	20	26	23	18	7	--	9	100
<b>Iraq</b>	19	23	28	12	8	--	0	100
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	17	16	16	32	13	--	1	100
<b>Sudan</b>	14	5	3	74	4	--	17	100
<b>Algeria</b>	14	23	4	40	2	--	6	100
<b>Palestine **</b>	12	9	6	39	0	32	11	100
<b>Mauritania</b>	12	15		66	4	--	6	100
<b>Jordan</b>	6	7	5	68	13	--	3	100
<b>Egypt</b>	4	10	4	82	0	--	6	100
<b>Average</b>	18	16	10	41	7	--	5	100

\* Not asked in Yemen, Egypt and Palestine.

\*\* Belonging to the same religion was only asked in Palestine.

The importance of a prospective spouse's religiosity as a factor in the approval of a marriage in Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, and Mauritania seems clear. Two-thirds or more of the respondents from these communities stressed the importance of religiosity, while this factor had a limited impact or a less important one, among the respondents from Iraq, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Lebanon, where the proportion of respondents who emphasized it was lower than the overall weighted average. On the other hand, the level of education emerged as a relevant factor in both Lebanon and Morocco, and the economic status factor was of importance in Iraq and Tunisia.

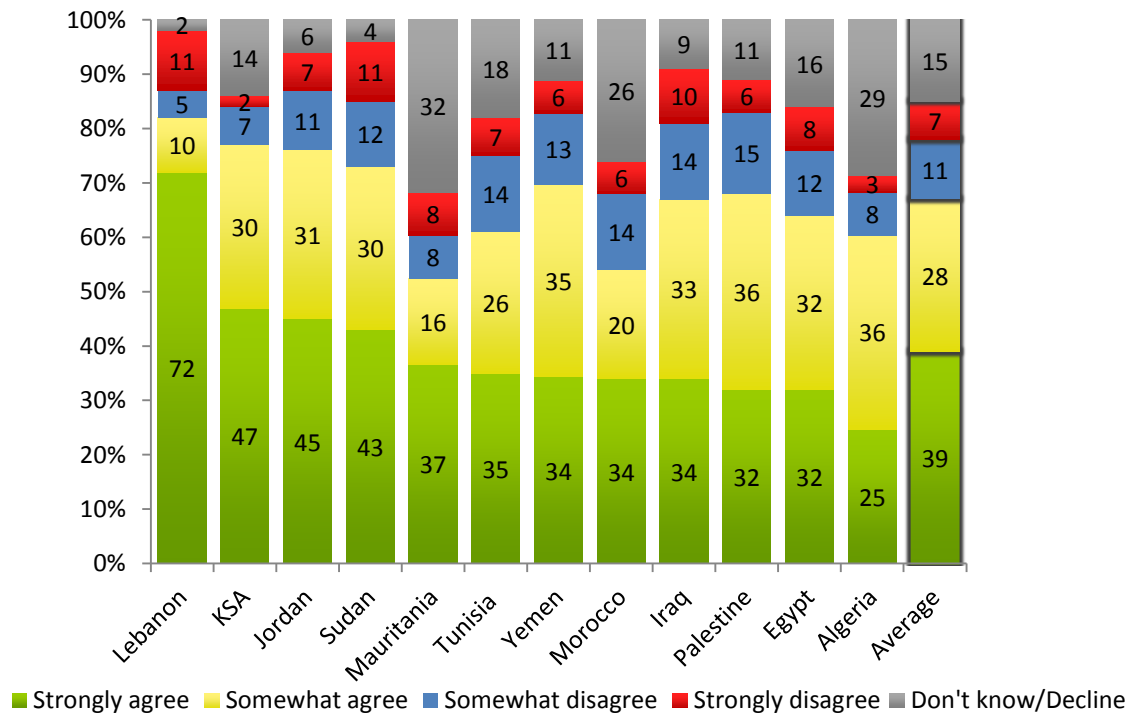
### Religion and Political Life

The importance of religion to the political life of Arab respondents was tested through measuring public attitudes towards four important issues:

- The impact of the clergy\* on the electorate’s vote;
- The impact of clergy on government decisions;
- Religious people holding public office;
- The separation of religion from politics.

A clear majority of public opinion in the Arab Homeland (67%) supports the statement that “clergy and sheikhs should not affect how the electorate votes,” compared to 18% who disagreed with this statement, and 15% who reported that they did not hold an opinion or declined to answer. This majority in opposition to the interference of the clergy in the voting habits of the public was found throughout all of the countries in which the survey was undertaken.

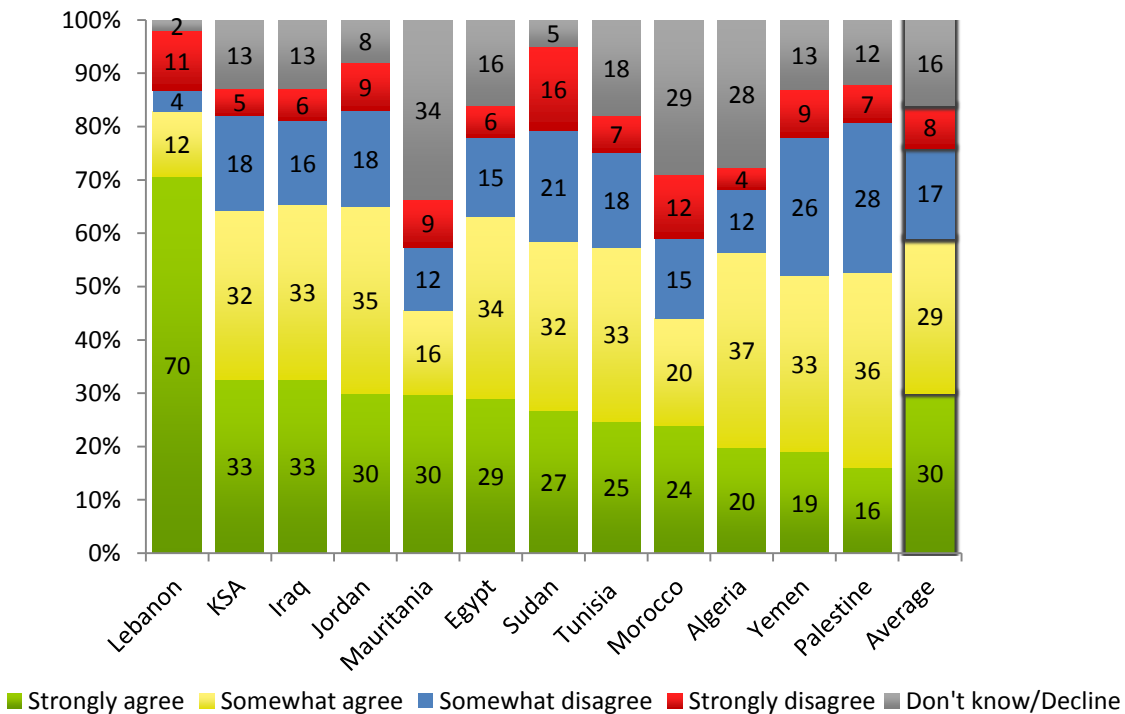
**Figure 45: Supporters and opponents of the statement that “the clergy and Sheikhs must not influence the way the electorate votes”**



\* The Arabic word used was *sheikh* which is used exclusively for Muslim clergy.

In terms of public opinion trends on the impact of the clergy on government decisions, the majority of respondents, 59%, agree with the statement, “clerics should not affect government decisions,” compared to 25% of respondents who disagreed with this statement. The majority of respondents in each country surveyed confirmed their support of the viewpoint that religious clerics should not affect government decisions.

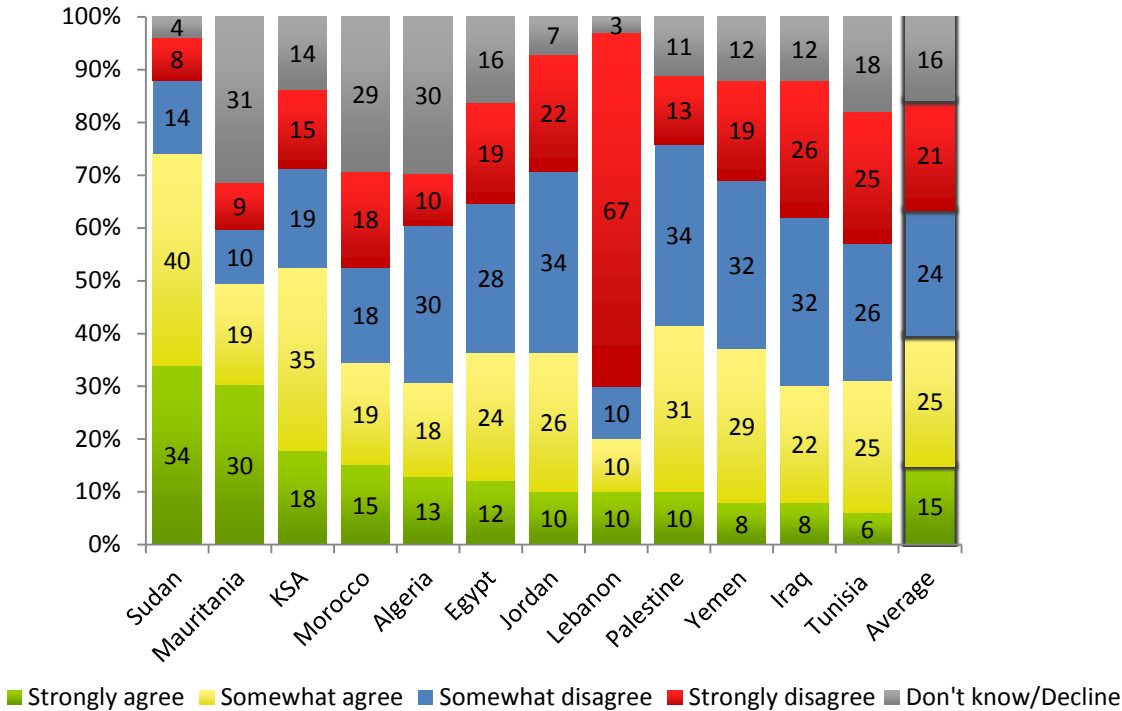
**Figure 46: Supporters and opponents of the statement that “religious sheikhs should not affect government decisions”**



Public opinion was split when the statement, “it is better for the religious people to take over public office in the state” was put to survey respondents. Forty percent agreed with this statement, compared to 45% of respondents who disagreed. The percentage of those who did not express an opinion or refused to answer was 16%.

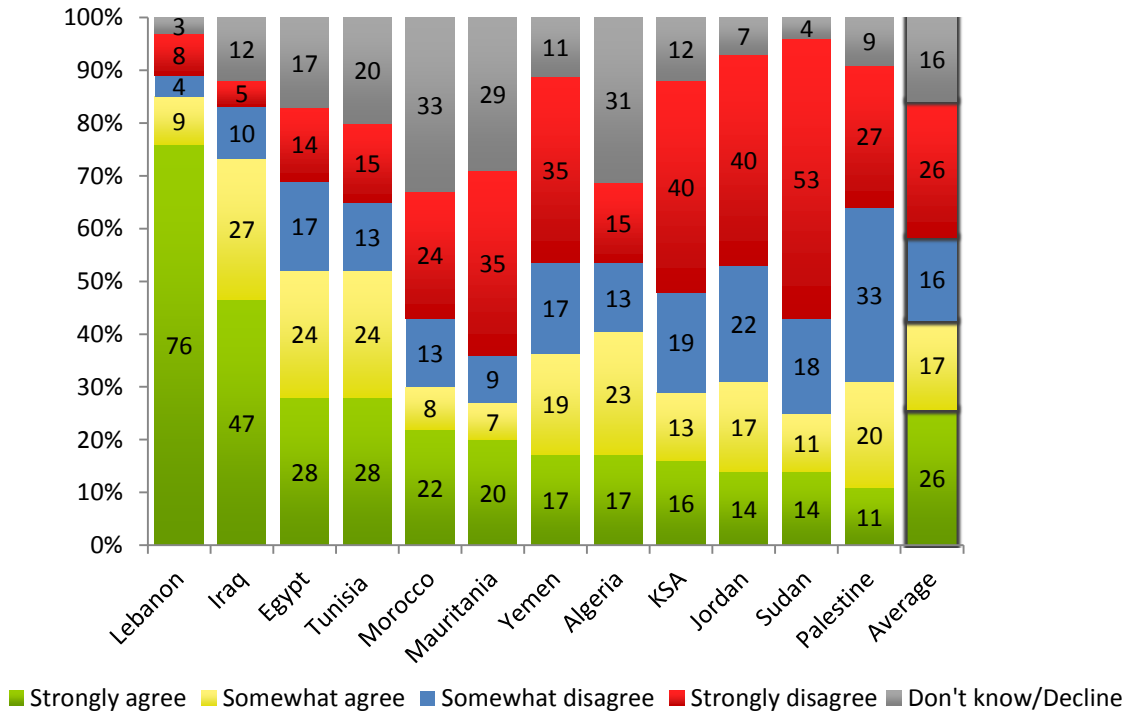
It is clear that the support for religious people holding public office is mainly concentrated among respondents in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Mauritania. Opposition to this statement was more prevalent in the other countries surveyed, particularly in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Tunisia. It is worth noting that almost a third of the respondents in Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania did not express an opinion or refused to answer this question.

**Figure 47: Respondents’ trends towards supporting or opposing the statement that “it is in the country’s best interest for religious people to take over public office in the government”**



Public opinion was split almost down the middle, between those who agreed with the statement, “It is in the country’s best interest to separate religion from politics,” a total of 43% of respondents and the 42% of respondents who opposed it; in contrast, 26% of the respondents strongly agreed with this separation and 26% strongly disagreed. These results indicate a balance between supporters and opponents of the separation of religion from politics.

**Figure 48: Respondents’ trends towards supporting or opposing the statement that “It is in the country’s best interest to separate religion from politics”**



The majority of Arab citizens describe themselves as being either “religious” or “somewhat religious,” but the religious factor is not a determinant on deciding how respondents treat other citizens. The religiosity of a person becomes relatively important, but not overwhelmingly so, when compared with social, economic, and educational factors regarding attitudes towards the marriage of a close relative.

Arab public opinion is divided over the question of separation of religion from political life. A large section of public opinion, although not the majority, believes that religious practices should be private and separate from social and political life. However, public opinion in Arab countries shows little appetite for a political role for the clergy in deciding how citizens vote, how governments make decisions, and it opposes their holding of public office. This means, practically speaking, that the majority of citizens are in support of the separation of religion from politics when it comes to implementation on the ground. One explanation could be that, in the Arab Homeland, citizens think the role of religion in politics is not that of implementing religious morals and values, but the actual role of religion in practice, through religious institutions or



the clergy. It seems that public opinion in the Arab countries is biased in favor of the non-interference of religion, either in the form of institutions or as clerics, in citizens' political lives.

## Attitudes Towards other Arabs

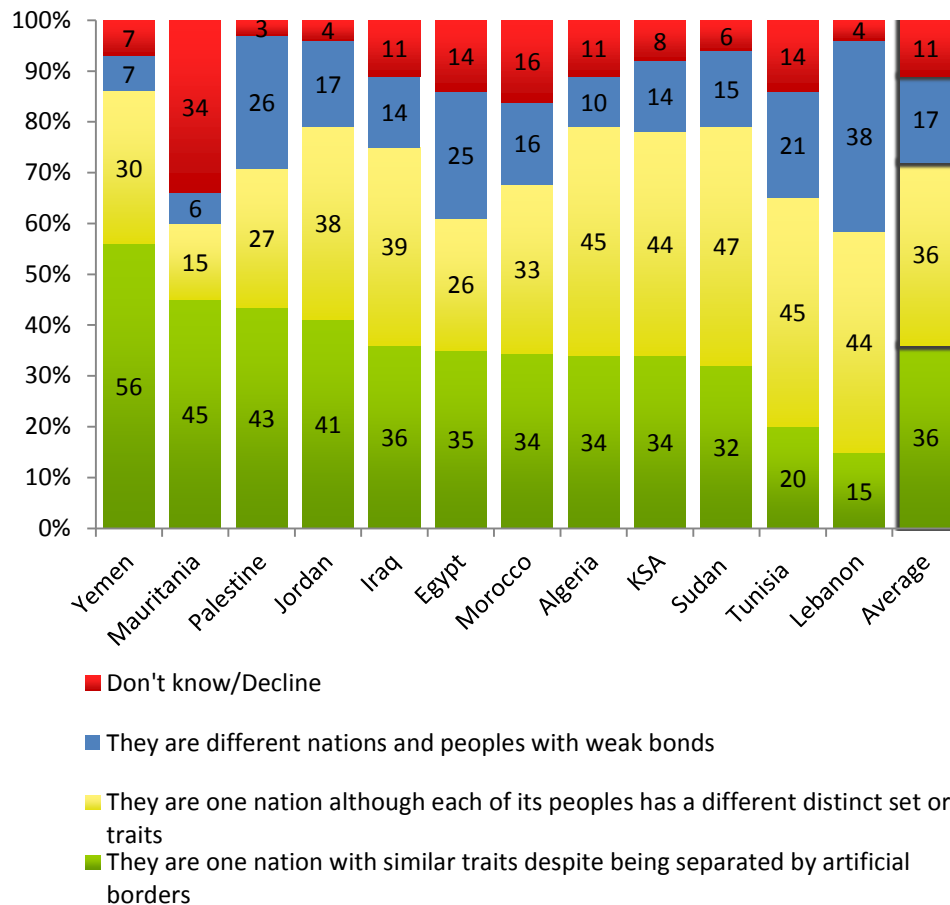
One of the objectives of the Arab Opinion Index is to examine trends in public opinion in the countries surveyed towards their Arab surroundings and the links between them and other peoples in what is referred to as the Arab Homeland. In addition, the survey sought to identify citizens' views on various forms of cooperation between Arab countries. Identifying the views of citizens in the region to these issues is of great importance, especially in light of some of the widely available public discourse on this topic, where some bold statements have been made on how Arab peoples define their relationship with each other, without having been justified.

### **Perceptions of Public Opinion**

Respondents were asked to choose between three statements, each of which reflects a broad set of opinions surrounding a vision for citizens of the Arab world. The results indicate that on average more than a third of the respondents (36%) believe that the entire population of the Arab world constitutes one nation with the same characteristics, separated by artificial boundaries, while 36% of respondents see the population of the Arab world as constituting one nation, albeit one where each individual community has its own specific characteristics. By contrast, 17% believe that the population of the Arab countries is composed of different nations and different peoples, with only tenuous ties linking them. This variety of opinion reflects, as is argued here, the broad spectrum of Arab public opinion surrounding these issues.

The results of this survey indicate a slightly more nuanced picture: around half of the public opinion in countries such as Yemen, Jordan, Mauritania, and Palestine believe that Arabs constitute one nation with degrees of specificity differentiating one group from another. These two viewpoints are, taken broadly, complementary and compatible. They collectively represent 72% of respondents in the surveyed countries, compared to a limited 17% of the aggregated weighted average who believe that the population of the Arab world is composed of different nations and peoples linked only by tenuous ties. The proportion of supporters of this view ranges between 7% and 6% in each of Yemen and Mauritania, respectively. It rises to 26% and 38% in Palestine and Lebanon, respectively.

**Figure 49: Perceptions of respondents in the countries surveyed towards inhabitants of the Arab world**

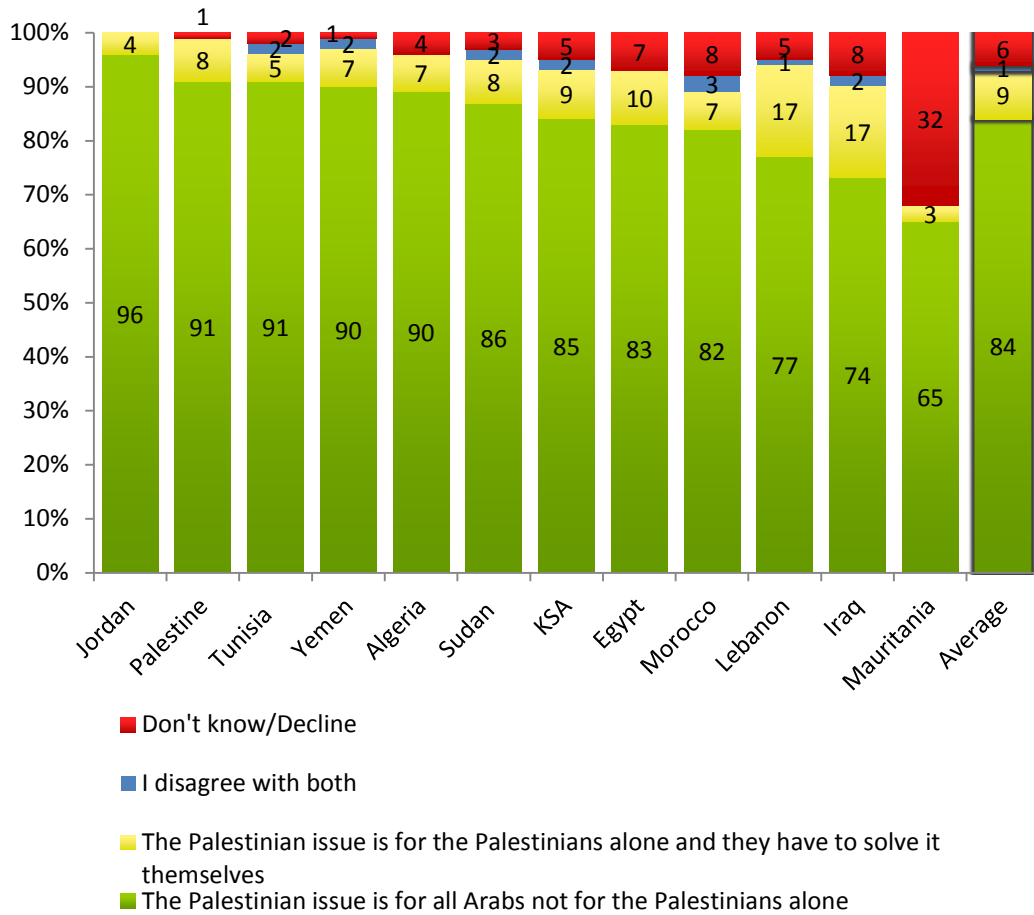


### Public Opinion Trends on Regional Issues

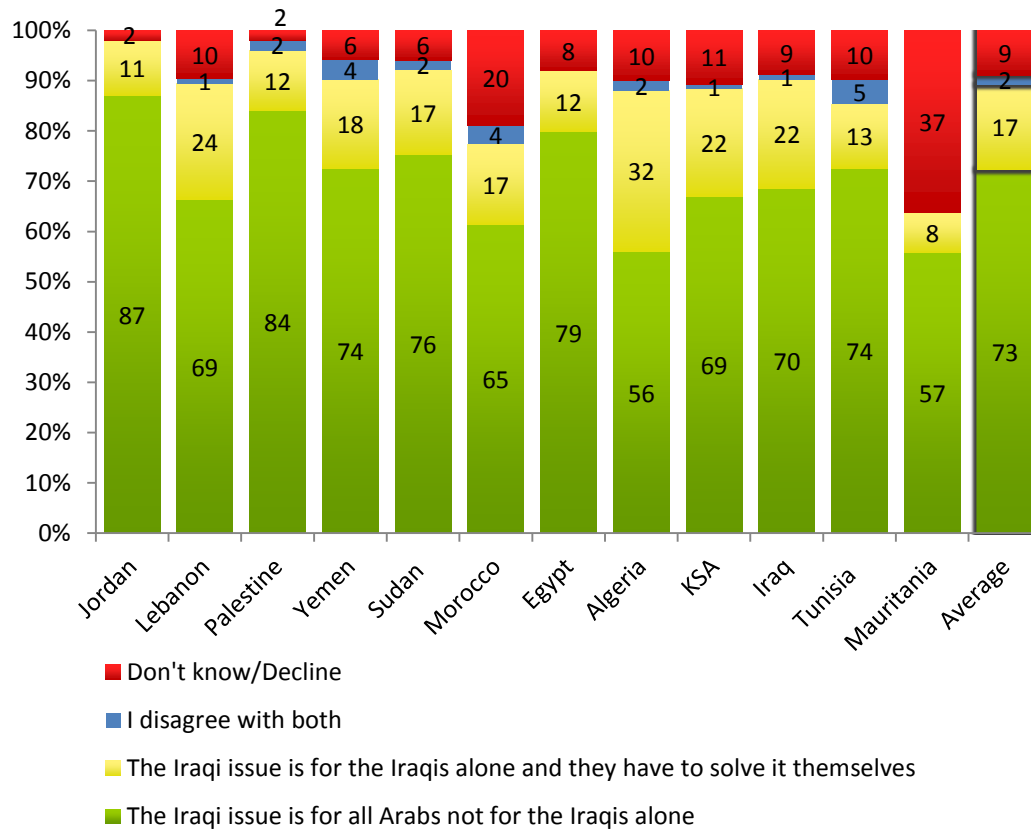
Public opinion towards regional issues suggests that citizens regard these issues as being pan-Arab issues, and not being limited to any one country in particular. There is almost a consensus among citizens of the countries included in the poll that the Palestinian cause is a matter for all Arabs, not only Palestinians. Respondents who believed that the Palestinians alone should deal with the Palestinian cause was as low as 3% in Mauritania and never higher than 17% in both of Lebanon and Iraq. In addition to the Palestinian cause being one that unites the largest proportion of respondents who see it as a cause for all Arabs, there was also majority of respondents

who further believe that the Iraqi and the Sudanese causes both belong to all Arabs, not only to citizens of these two countries.

**Figure 50: Trends in public opinion on the Palestinian cause as one for all Arabs or for Palestinians only**



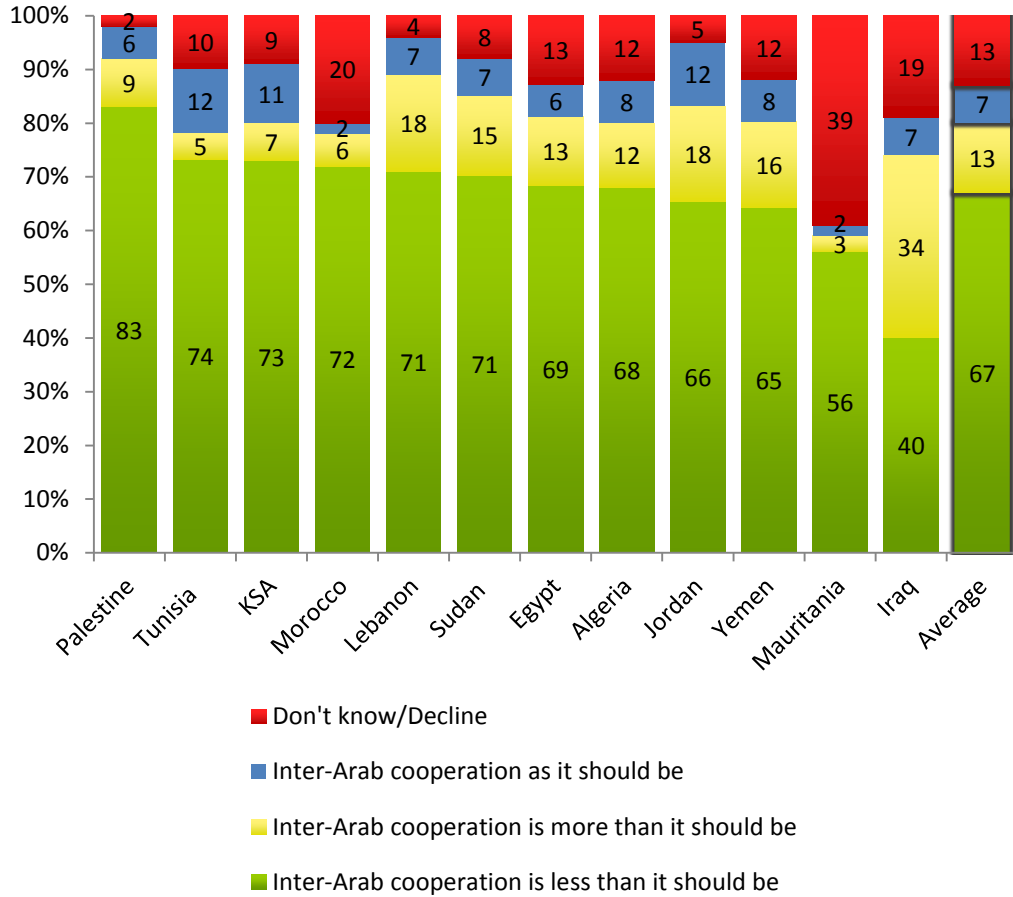
**Figure 51: Public opinion trends on attitudes towards the Iraqi cause as one for all Arabs or for Iraqis only**



### Cooperation Among Arabs

In terms of public opinion attitudes towards the reality of Arab cooperation, majorities in each of the twelve countries surveyed, ranging from two-thirds to three-quarters of respondents, expressed the view that current levels of cooperation do not meet citizens' expectations. The exception is for Iraqi public opinion, where only around 40% of the respondents think that the level of inter-Arab cooperation needs to be bolstered. The highest concentrations of those who believed that the level of inter-Arab cooperation was excessive were to be found in Lebanon and Jordan, where it did not exceed 18%. The proportion of respondents satisfied with the current level of inter-Arab cooperation ranged between 2% and 12%.

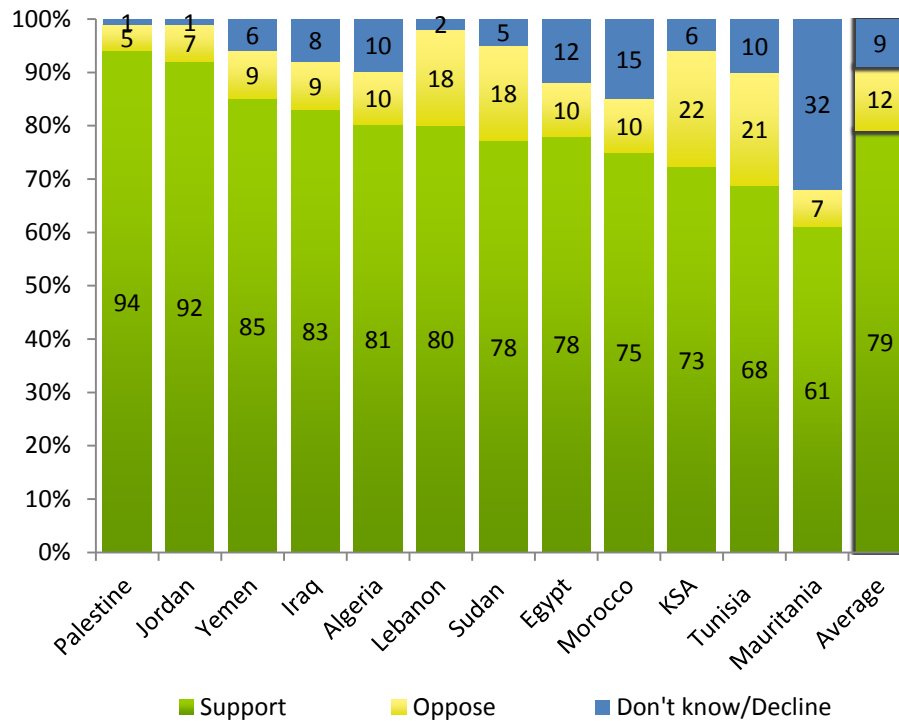
**Figure 52: Public opinion trends towards cooperation among Arabs**



The survey also sought respondents’ opinions on four possible measures related to inter-Arab cooperation: abolishing all restrictions on the movement of Arab commodities, removing obstacles on the travel of citizens, establishing a monetary system with a unified Arab currency, and creating a joint Arab military force in addition to national armies. The purpose of these questions was to examine attitudes towards the strengthening of cooperation between Arab countries.

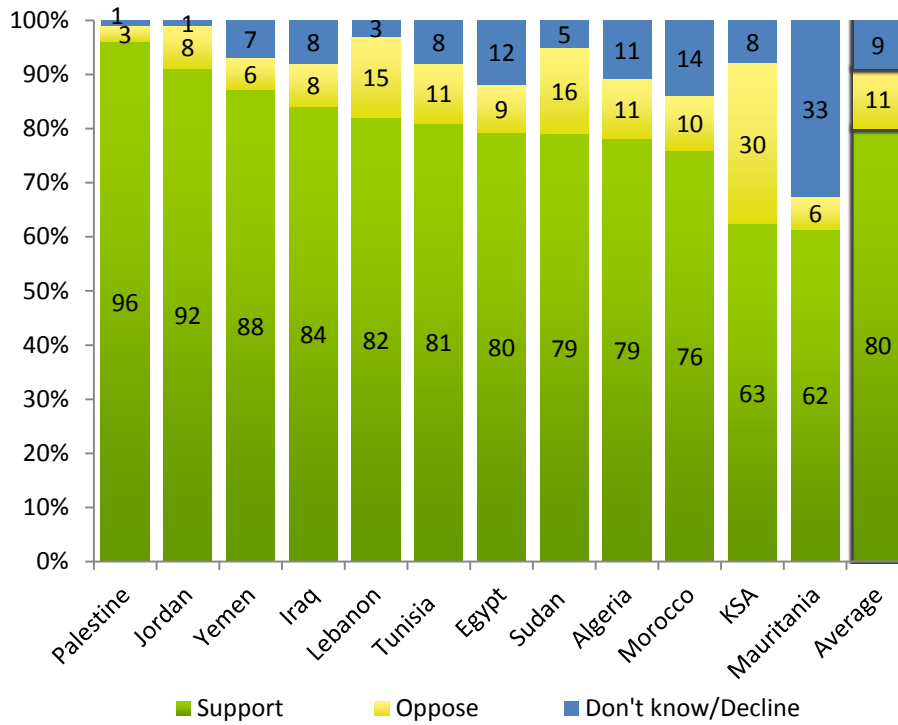
Results of the poll indicate that there is a near consensus among the citizens of the surveyed countries in support of lifting all customs restrictions and tariffs on the movement of Arab-made products and goods between Arab countries. Opposition to such a proposed measure never exceeded one-fifth of those whose opinions were surveyed. This was the case in Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Lebanon. In the other states surveyed, this proportion never exceeded 10%.

**Figure 53: Attitudes towards cancelling tariffs and other barriers that inhibit movement of Arab products between Arab countries**



The poll results indicate that there is a clear majority in all of the countries surveyed in support of the removal of the restrictions on the movement of Arab citizens. The highest proportion of those opposed to such a move never exceeded about 15%, as found in Lebanon and Sudan; the weighted average for the countries combined was 11%, which was reflected in the case of Algeria. The largest opposition to such a measure, however, was found among respondents in Saudi Arabia, where 30% voiced their opposition. Perhaps one of the main reasons for such a high rate compared to other countries is related to Saudi travel procedures, in addition to the subject of organizing residencies and sponsorships. This is evident when comparing the percentage of Saudi respondents who opposed freedom of movement between Arab states to the percentage of those opposing the free movement of goods, and the percentage of those opposing the establishment of joint military forces.

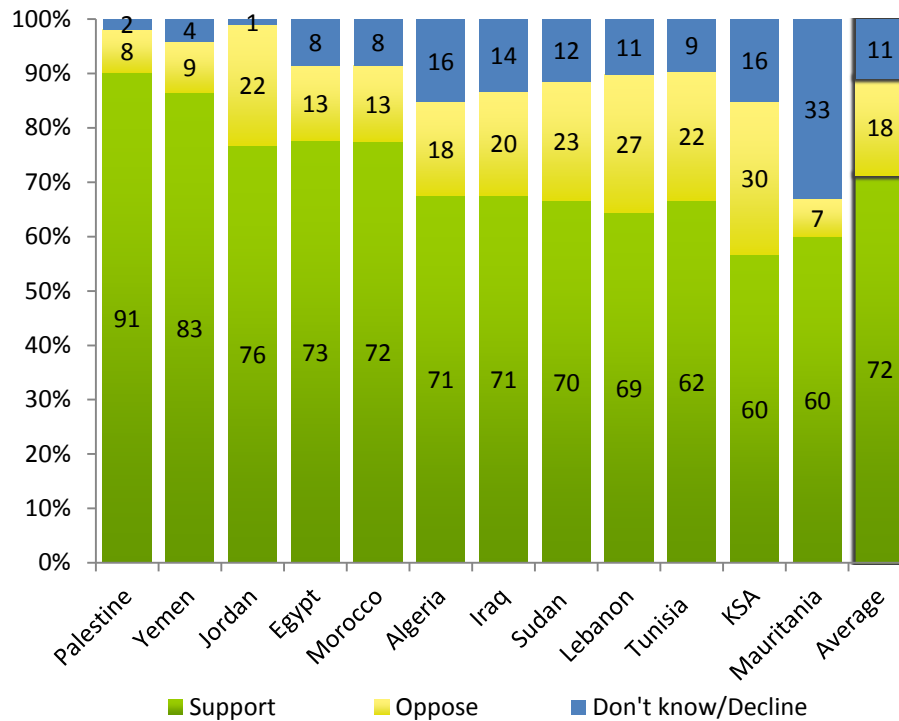
**Figure 54: Attitudes towards freedom to travel within Arab countries**



The majority of public opinion in all surveyed countries was in support of the establishment of a unified Arab monetary system that leads to a unified Arab currency. Despite the fact that a majority of respondents expressed support for such a move, it did not receive the same level of support as the free movement of individuals or of Arab-made commodities between Arab countries. The highest opposition to this is found among respondents from Lebanon and Saudi Arabia.

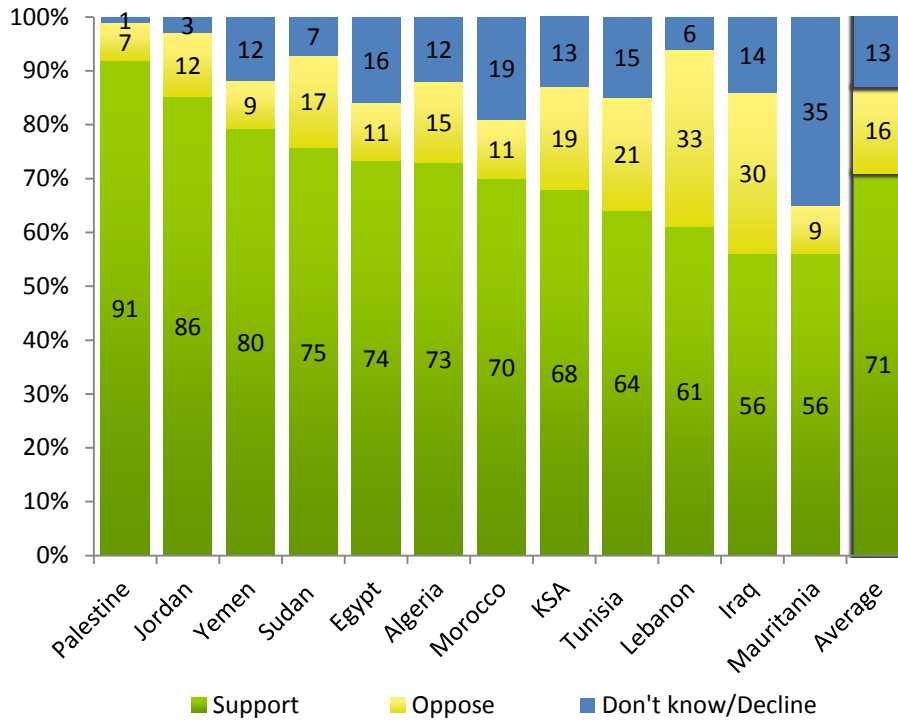


**Figure 55: Attitudes towards the creation of an Arab monetary system that leads to a single Arab currency**



The idea of establishing a joint Arab military force alongside national armies also gained the support of the majority of respondents throughout the various Arab countries surveyed. The percentage of respondents who opposed such a measure was less than 20%, except in Lebanon and Iraq, where this idea was opposed by roughly one-third of respondents in each of the two.

**Figure 56: Attitudes towards establishing joint military forces in addition to national armies**



**Countries that Pose the Greatest Threat to the Security of the Arab World**

The vast majority of public opinion in the Arab region (82%) was able to name one state that is considered a threat to the security of the Arab world. Results of the poll further show that there were not a significant percentage of respondents with considerable statistical weight who believed that the “Arab world” does not exist, or who refused to accept, if only in principle, the term “security of the Arab world”.

This suggests broad public support in the Arab countries for the idea of an “Arab world” as a realistic concept that exists and has its own security, which could be threatened by another country. Going further, it implicitly suggests the acceptance of a vision of the Arab world’s population being contained within one “nation” or “homeland”.

There is agreement among the citizens of Arab nations regarding which countries represent a threat to the security of the Arab world. Israel comes at the top of the list

as a (slim) majority of public opinion (51%), in the weighted average, agreed that it posed the biggest threat to the security of the Arab world. The United States comes in second place on this list, with 22% of respondents seeing it as the biggest threat to the security of the Arab countries, while Iran comes in a very distant third place with 5%.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Sudan, and Yemen stated that Israel was the biggest threat to Arab security, and about half of the respondents in Palestine identified the United States as the single biggest threat to Arab security.

**Table 9: States that pose the biggest threat to the security of the Arab world**

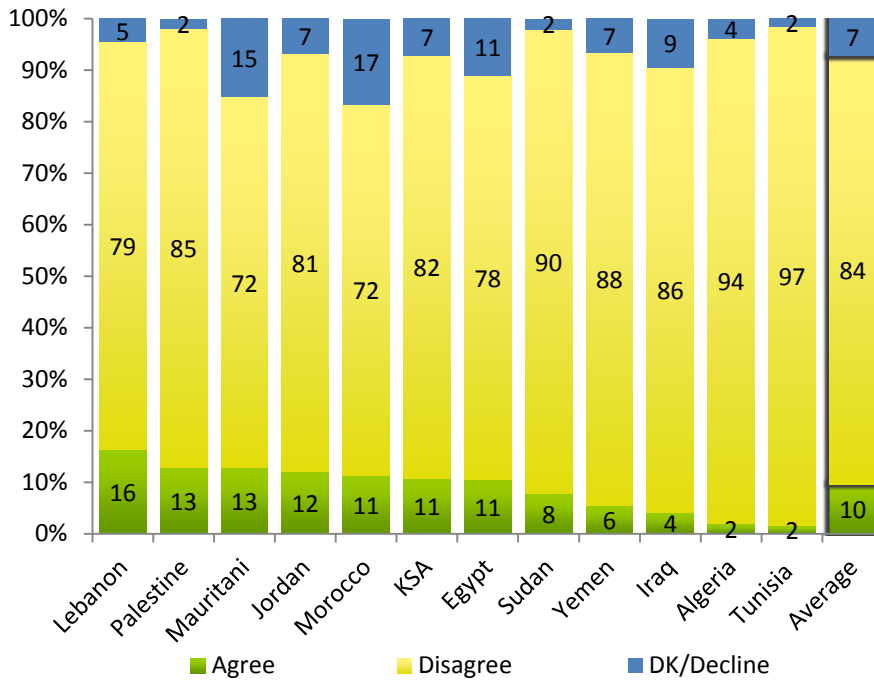
	Israel	America	Iran	Arab Countries	Other Countries	Other	Don't know
<b>Palestine</b>	38	46	5	1	2	1	7
<b>Tunis</b>	46	27	1	6	1	--	19
<b>Egypt</b>	58	24	1	1	--	--	16
<b>Iraq</b>	47	24	9	6	1	--	14
<b>Yemen</b>	62	23	4	1	--	--	10
<b>Sudan</b>	61	22	1	2	1	--	13
<b>Algeria</b>	44	22	--	1	1	--	31
<b>Jordan</b>	55	19	10	2	--	--	15
<b>Morocco</b>	48	18	2	3	2	--	27
<b>Lebanon</b>	61	17	10	3	--	--	9
<b>Mauritania</b>	36	15	--	--	--	2	48
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	62	13	8	1	--	--	16
<b>Average</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>

It is important to note how citizens in the Arab region view the recognition of Israel. Public opinion is in near agreement that their countries should not recognize Israel, at 84%, compared to 10% of Arab public opinion that would accept their countries' recognition of Israel. This falls in line with the consensus of public opinion on the related issues of the centrality and commonality of the Palestinian cause and the threat to Arab security posed by Israel.

There is a near-consensus in public opinion in each of the countries surveyed against the recognition of Israel. Opposition was highest among Tunisians and Algerians, 97% and 94% of whom, respectively, were opposed to recognition of Israel. It is noteworthy that a majority of respondents from countries that have signed peace agreements with

the Israelis, such as Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt do not agree with recognition of the Zionist state, and at percentages comparable with the overall trends throughout all of the surveyed countries.

**Figure 57: Public opinion towards Arab recognition of Israel**

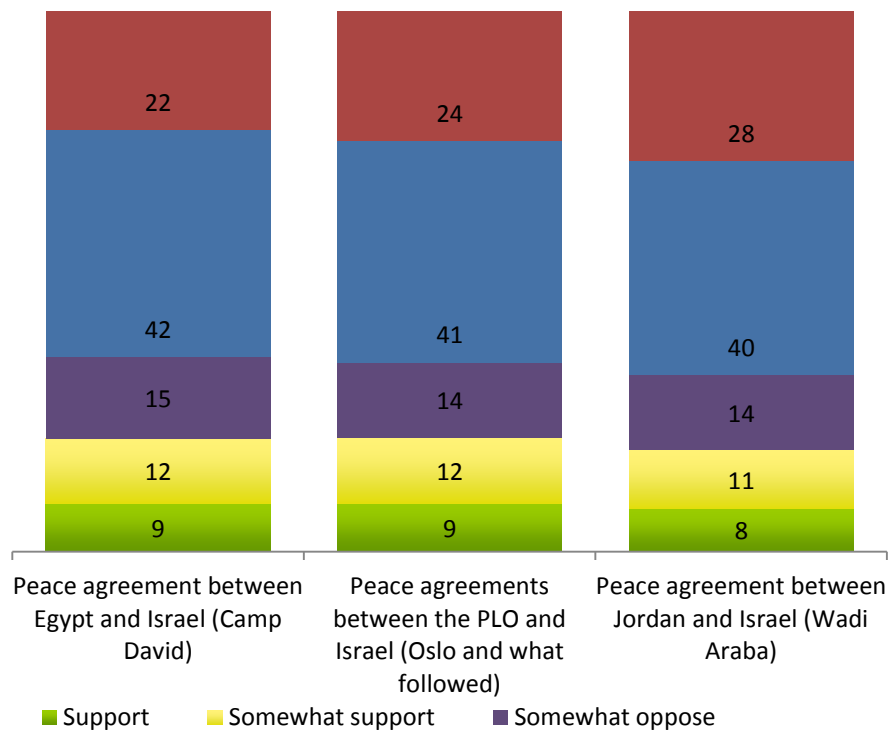


The Index poll included a series of questions that gauge the opinions of Arab citizens regarding their support for or opposition to the peace agreements signed between various Arab states and state-like bodies – Jordan, Egypt and the PLO – with the Israelis.

The proportion of the surveyed respondents as a whole in support of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt was 21%. The proportion of those opposed to this peace treaty (i.e., the Camp David Accords) was 57%, approaching triple the number of supporters, while the percentage of those who did not know or refused to answer the question was 22% of the respondents. Twenty-one percent of respondents were in support of the peace treaty between the PLO and Israel, while those opposing it accounted for 55% of the respondents, and 24% declined to express an opinion. The

level of support for the peace deal between Israel and Jordan was 19%, compared with 54% who opposed it, and 28% who did not express an opinion. This means that public opinion in the Arab region was not in support of the peace agreements signed by some Arab governments with Israel. The extent of opposition to each one of these agreements is almost identical, suggesting that the opposition to or support for these agreements is based on principles, regardless of what the texts of these agreements stipulate.

**Figure 58: Attitudes towards the peace agreements between Israel and various Arab states**



Our survey addressed a widely-debated topic in Arab countries, namely the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. A slim majority of Arab public opinion (55%) expressed a preference that the Middle East become a region free of nuclear weapons, compared to 29% who did not agree with this view, with 16% not expressing an opinion on this topic.

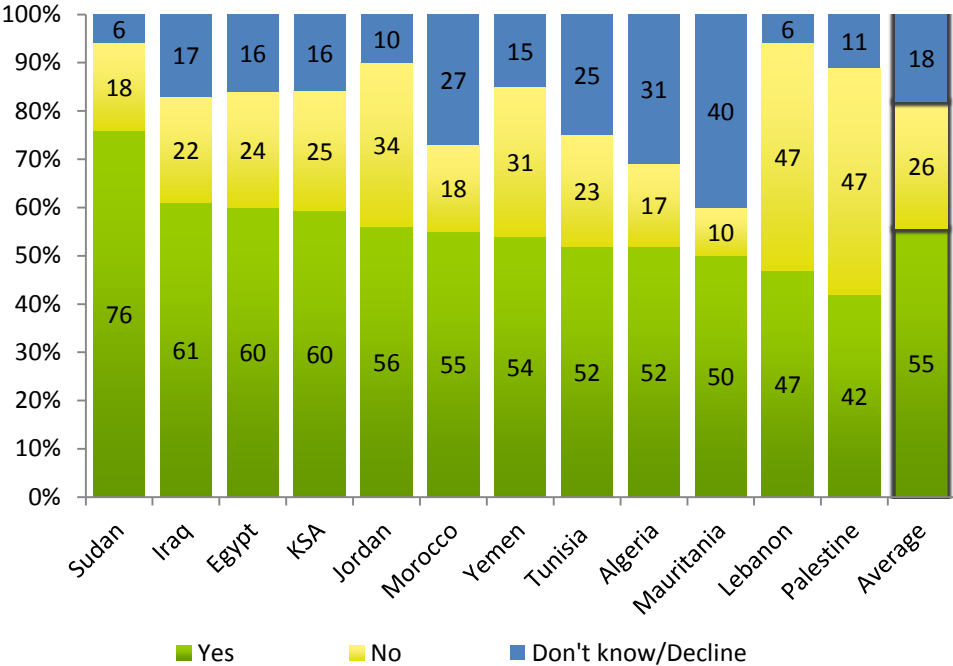
Algeria, Mauritania, and Morocco were the only countries where the survey was conducted in which there was not a clear majority in making the Middle East a nuclear-free zone. In Mauritania, only 41% supported the call for the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East (Mauritania also has the highest portion of those who refused to respond, at 40%), compared to 19% who were opposed to a region free of nuclear weapons. In Morocco, 47% of the respondents were in support of the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, compared to 27% who were opposed, and 26% who did not express an opinion.

**Table 10: Attitudes towards a Middle East free of nuclear weapons**

	Support	Oppose	Don't know / Refused to answer
<b>Jordan</b>	59	33	8
<b>Lebanon</b>	66	29	5
<b>Palestine</b>	54	39	8
<b>Yemen</b>	59	32	10
<b>Sudan</b>	55	41	4
<b>Morocco</b>	47	27	26
<b>Egypt</b>	59	25	16
<b>Algeria</b>	50	21	29
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	55	32	12
<b>Iraq</b>	68	17	15
<b>Tunisia</b>	52	29	20
<b>Mauritania</b>	41	19	40
<b>Average</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>

Despite the fact that there is consensus among the respondents of the Arab countries on having a Middle East free of nuclear weapons, the proportion in opposition to that stand out, notably in countries such as Sudan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, while the percentage of those who didn't have an opinion was highest in Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. This constellation of facts leads investigators to the conclusion that opposition to a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East is primarily linked to Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. In other words, opposition to the creation of a nuclear weapons-free Middle East is rooted in Israel's possession of such weapons (and therefore the belief that Arab states should have them, too).

**Figure 59: Support for the statement – “Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons justifies nuclear proliferation by other countries in the Middle East.”**



The above points to a broad trend in Arab public opinion that is both morally principled and nuanced in its approach to the question of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East region. This was especially evident in that the 69% who support keeping the Middle East free of nuclear weapons are in many cases the same group who agree that Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons justifies the pursuit of other countries to possess them too.

**Table 11: The percentage of those who support a nuclear-free Middle East but who believe that Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons justifies nuclear proliferation by other countries in the region**

	<b>%</b>
Israel's possession of nuclear weapons justifies the pursuit of other countries in the region to possess them.	<b>69</b>
Israel's possession of nuclear weapons does not justify the pursuit of other countries in the region to possess them.	<b>31</b>

These results indicate the opposition of Arab citizens, in principle, to the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, and cannot be taken out of context. These results are qualified by another factor, namely the continuation of Israel’s monopoly over nuclear weapons. An Arab citizen gives up his or her principled position against the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region in light of Israel’s monopoly on nuclear weapons technology, which an Arab citizen considers the biggest threat to his region’s security.

This trend is corroborated when comparing the attitudes of respondents who support their countries’ recognition of Israel with whether or not Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons justifies the pursuit of other countries in the region to possess them. Of those who are in favor of their countries recognizing the Israeli state, a clear majority of 67%, agree that this possession justifies the pursuit of nuclear weapons by other countries in the region.

**Table 12: Opinions among those who support diplomatic recognition of Israel to the statement – “Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons justifies the pursuit of other countries in the region to possess them.”**

	<b>(%)</b>
Israel's possession of nuclear weapons justifies the pursuit by other countries in the region to possess them	<b>67</b>
Israel's possession of nuclear weapons does not justify the pursuit by other countries in the region to possess them	<b>33</b>

The results of this poll indicate that citizens of Arab states regard themselves as being members of a single nation, albeit, in some cases, one with nuanced differences between its peoples. This belief is asserted in a variety of ways. More concretely, a majority of citizens in all countries surveyed consider the Palestinian, Sudanese, and



Iraqi causes as issues that concern all Arabs, not issues concerning the peoples of only those countries.

There is also broad agreement among all those surveyed that the Israelis and the United States are the two countries which pose the greatest threat to Arab citizens, to their own states, and to all Arab states in general. Arab public opinion also clearly enunciates here the desire for deeper, more extensive inter-Arab cooperation, economically, politically and militarily.