



How miserable are we? CATO's Misery Index finds that US is ... eh

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Ever mindful of the dismal science, Steve Hanke, director of the Troubled Currencies Project at the Cato Institute, released his "[World Misery Index](#)" Friday, and has miserable news for the United States.

Ranked from most-miserable (1) to least-miserable (109), and based on the ability of the 109 featured countries to "lower inflation, unemployment, and lending rates, while increasing gross domestic product (GDP) per capita," Hanke placed the United States at number 66, edging out Romania but trumped by Hungary.

Using 2013 data, the largest contributing factor to the United States' miserable score was unemployment, which was high [above 7% for half of 2013](#) (and currently stands at 5.9%), according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The least miserable country in the world is Switzerland, according to the index. And our upstairs neighbor, Canada, beat the United States by 30 spots. Syria won the honor of the world's most miserable country with the largest contributing factor being consumer prices. General death, tyranny, chemical weapons, airstrikes, internal and external terror and instability were not included as direct factors in making the index.

But take this with a bit of skepticism. People are made happy or miserable by more than just lending rates.

According to the [UN's World Happiness Report 2013](#), the United States is the world's seventeenth happiest country—still topped by Canada and Switzerland—not bad in a ranking of 156 countries.

Using data from 2010 through 2012, the UN's happiness index included national averages of positive and negative emotional experience, the amount of smiling, the amount of worry, the amount of anger, as well as economic factors in a country.

Still sucks to be in Syria, though, which ranked 148 out of 156. Togo, which did not report satisfactory data to be included in Hanke's misery index, was the least-happy country in the UN ranking.

h/t [Zenon Evans at Reason](#)