



American Muslim Poll 2018: *Pride and Prejudice*

*Featuring the First-Ever National
American Islamophobia Index*



ISPU's annual poll charts the attitudes and policy preferences that animated the last tumultuous year in America, lays the groundwork for tracking key shifts in the future, and offers the public, policymakers, and researchers rare depth and breadth of analysis. New this year: Created in partnership with Georgetown University's Bridge Initiative, the Islamophobia Index is a scale that measures anti-Muslim prejudice in America.

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For more information about the study, please visit: <http://www.ispu.org/poll>

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American Muslim Poll 2018: *Pride and Prejudice*

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Executive Summary

Much has changed over the past year in America, and much still remains uncertain. This year, ISPU's annual poll charts the attitudes and policy preferences that animated this tumultuous period—what Americans take pride in and to what degree they hold prejudice—and lays the groundwork for tracking key shifts in the future. American Muslim Poll 2018 takes on this charge while continuing to offer the public, policymakers, and researchers rare depth and breadth of analysis.

Results

Muslims Are Less Satisfied with the Direction of the Country vs. Previous Years, but More Politically Engaged

American Muslims (27%) are just as likely as the general public overall (29%) to report satisfaction with the country's current trajectory. Among Muslims, this is down from 41% in 2017 and 63% in 2016 reporting satisfaction with the direction of the nation.

Across all faith groups and the non-affiliated, however, Muslims (13%) are the least likely to approve of Donald Trump's performance in office. This disapproval is more likely to be channeled electorally as 75% of the Muslims in our survey report being registered to vote (an increase of 7 percentage points over last year's tally, which itself was 8 percentage points higher than the 2016 mark).

The Majority of Americans across Faith and Non-faith Groups Support Muslim Civil Rights

The vast majority of respondents "want to live in a country where no one is targeted for their religious identity," with tallies ranging from 78% to 95%. The majority (63% among the general public) also say they oppose surveilling U.S. mosques. Similar percentages across faith groups and the non-affiliated oppose the so-called "Muslim ban" while a higher number of respondents

oppose banning the building of mosques in the U.S. (79% among the general public).

The Minority of the Public with More Negative Views of Muslims, as Measured by the Islamophobia Index, Are More Likely To:

- Approve of discriminatory policies targeting Muslims,
- Agree to limiting democratic freedoms when the country is under threat, and
- Condone military and individual attacks on civilians.

This year's survey introduces ISPU's annual **Islamophobia Index (II)**, an additive scale ranging from 0 to 100 that measures anti-Muslim prejudice in America (with 0 as the lowest level of prejudice and 100 as the highest). The Islamophobia Index measures the endorsement of anti-Muslim stereotypes (violent, misogynist), perceptions of Muslim aggression toward the United States, degree of Muslim dehumanization (less civilized), and perceptions of Muslim collective blame (partially responsible for violence), all of which have been shown to predict public support for discriminatory policies toward Muslims.¹

We surveyed and scored² Americans across a spectrum of religious affiliations, from non-affiliated (14) and Muslims (17) on one end expressing the lowest levels of Islamophobia to white Evangelicals (40) on the other end who express some of the highest levels of Islamophobia.

Islamophobia Index

Most Muslims living in the United States... (% Net agree shown)	Muslim	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	White Evangelical	Non-Affiliated	General Public
Are more prone to violence	18%	15%	12%	13%	23%	8%	13%
Discriminate against women	12%	23%	29%	30%	36%	18%	26%
Are hostile to the United States	12%	13%	9%	14%	23%	8%	12%
Are less civilized than other people	8%	6%	4%	6%	10%	1%	6%
Are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims	10%	16%	11%	12%	14%	8%	12%
Index (0 min – 100 max)	17	22	22	31	40	14	24

TABLE 1: Most Muslims living in the United States are more prone to violence than other people. Most Muslims living in the United States discriminate against women. Most Muslims living in the United States are hostile to the United States. Most Muslims living in the United States are less civilized than other people. Most Muslims living in the United States are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

We found that higher scores on the Islamophobia Index are associated with 1) greater acceptance of targeting civilians, whether it is a military or individual/small group that is doling out the violence, 2) greater acquiescence to limiting both press freedoms and institutional checks following a hypothetical terror attack, and 3) greater support for the so-called “Muslim ban” and the surveillance of American mosques (or their outright building prohibition).

American Muslims Continue to Report Experiencing More Religious Discrimination Than Other Faith Groups

Muslim Women More Likely to Suffer from Race and Religion-based Discrimination Than Gender-based Discrimination

A higher proportion of Muslims (61%) than any other faith group (or the non-affiliated groups) report experiencing religious discrimination. Women, Arabs, and the young are the most likely members of the community to experience religious discrimination. Muslim women (75%) also report experiencing more racial discrimination than women in the general public (40%), whereas Muslim women and those in the general public are on par in terms of gender discrimination. For Muslim women, racial (75%) and religious (69%) discrimination occur more often than gender discrimination (51%).

Roughly equal percentages of Muslims say they either strongly agree or somewhat agree that “most people associate negative stereotypes with my faith identity” (62%) and report experiencing some frequency of religious discrimination (61%). While Muslim women were more likely than men to “strongly agree” (31% of men vs. 52% of women Muslims) with this view, there were no significant age or race differences.

Piety, Identity Top Reasons Given for Wearing Hijab

Though Muslim women are the most likely group studied to feel stigmatized, they are also the most likely to wear “a visible symbol that makes their faith identity known to others.” Of Muslim women, 46% say they wear a visible symbol to mark their faith in public all the time, 19% some of the time, and 35% none of the time. There was no significant age or race difference.

Why do Muslim women wear a headcover? The most frequent responses centered around an intention for following a religious obligation or being pleasing to God (54%), so others know they are Muslim (21%), and for modesty (12%). Those that said they wore a headcover because someone else required it of them made up 1%.

Some Muslims Have Internalized Islamophobic Views

Endorsing anti-Muslim caricatures and assigning collective blame to the community for the actions of individuals is normally thought of as an issue among Americans who are not Muslim. However, like other minority groups who suffer from internalized stigmatization, our study found that Muslims (roughly one in ten) sometimes adopt popular stereotypes about their own community.

The Islamophobia Index among Muslims

As stated earlier, Muslims score a 17 on the Islamophobia Index, compared to non-affiliated at 14, Jews and Catholics at 22, the general public at 24, Protestants at 31, and white Evangelicals at 40.

Muslims tended to rate the community more positively on topics that can be assessed from personal experience (such as whether or not Muslims discriminate against women or are hostile to the U.S.), but their ratings were as negative as the general public on topics that are only possible to judge based on media portrayals (such as Muslims being violent).

Muslims Mirror False Public Perception Regarding Muslims and Violence

Muslims are more likely to agree with the sentiment that Muslims are “more prone to violence than other people” (18%) than non-affiliated Americans (8%) or the general public (13%). Muslims are as likely as Catholics (12%), Protestants overall (13%), Jews (15%), and white Evangelicals (23%) to hold this view about themselves. What explains this finding? Is it that Muslims are simply as impacted by media portrayals of their community as are others, or are they “admitting” some measurable reality? This finding warrants deeper discussion.

Muslims in America reject violence more than other Americans.

- According to our 2018 survey, Muslims are more likely than the general public to reject violence against civilians by the military as well as by an individual or small group (see Figures 5 and 6).
- According to Pew’s 2017 survey of Muslim Americans, “Although both Muslim Americans and the U.S. public as a whole overwhelmingly reject violence against civilians, Muslims are more likely to say such actions can *never* be justified. Three-quarters of U.S. Muslims (76%) say this,

compared with 59% of the general public. Similar shares of Muslims (12%) and all U.S. adults (14%) say targeting and killing civilians can ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’ be justified.”³

Most American terrorist fatalities are at the hands of white supremacists.

- According to a study conducted by Professors Charles Kurzman and David Schanzer, the majority of American fatalities at the hands of extremists are from right-wing terrorists, not from extremists acting in the name of Islam.⁴
- The same study also found that law enforcement agencies ranked anti-government extremists as a greater threat than Al Qaeda or like-minded terrorist organizations.

So how do we explain Muslim assessments of their own community being prone to violence as no different than those of other Americans and sometimes even higher? The media may have something to do with it since virtually no American Muslim has personal experience with a Muslim terrorist. According to Kurzman and Schanzer, “since 9/11, an average of nine American Muslims per year have been involved in an average of six terrorism-related plots against targets in the United States.” Other studies have also found that these individuals are rarely part of the mainstream mosque communities and are being radicalized online.⁵ Since there are several million American Muslims, the probability that a member of the community actually knows someone personally involved in violence is next to zero. Instead, like everyone else, American Muslims are getting their perception of Muslims and violence from the media, not personal experience.

U.S. Media Portrays Muslims as More Prone to Violence Than Other People

- According to the ISPU report *Equal Treatment?: Measuring the Legal and Media Responses to Ideologically Motivated Violence in the United States*, someone perceived to be Muslim and accused of a terror plot will receive **seven and half times** the media coverage as someone not perceived to be Muslim.⁶
- According to a 2017 Georgia State University study, “Controlling for target type, fatalities, and being arrested, attacks by Muslim perpetrators received, on average, 357% more coverage than other attacks.”⁷

- A 2015 study conducted by Media Tenor found that the “protagonists,” i.e., individuals portrayed as representing Islam were most often armed militants, where as those representing other faiths were religious leaders.⁸

American Muslims’ perceptions of their own community’s supposed propensity for violence is testimony to the power of media portrayals to warp perceptions about a people absent personal experience with the topic at hand (in this case violence).

Should Anti-Muslim Sentiment among Muslims Be Celebrated?

People of a Muslim background who endorse anti-Muslim generalizations have at times been cast as “heroes”⁹ in the media. Many times they are portrayed as more “anti-terrorism,” “pro-democracy,” or passionately “patriotic” than the majority of Muslims they malign. But none of this is consistent with the evidence.

As discussed earlier, a higher Islamophobia Index (II) score in the general public is linked to a number of outcomes. Our research shows that Muslims with a higher II score are no different.

Muslims who score higher on the II are:

- More likely to support discriminatory policies toward Muslims
- More likely to support authoritarian policies
- More likely to condone military attacks on civilians
- More likely to condone individual attacks on civilians
- Less likely to support protecting Muslim civil rights
- Less likely to think American Muslims are committed to American well-being
- But no more likely than other Muslims to identify strongly with America

Islamophobia among Muslims is not patriotism, as it is not linked to a stronger American identity. It is not about being passionately against terrorism, as it is actually linked with *more* support for attacks on civilians. It is not about being “pro-democracy,” as it is actually linked with more support for authoritarianism and policies that violate the constitution. Islamophobic Muslims are just like Islamophobic people of any faith. The data does not support affording them favor over anyone else who expresses the same prejudice.

Despite Feeling Stigmatized, Most Muslims Identify Strongly with America and Express Pride, Happiness in Their Faith Identity

The vast majority of Americans of all backgrounds studied say being an American is important to the way they think of themselves. Despite being much more likely to report feeling looked down upon and discriminated against by fellow Americans and despite the rise of a president who has made anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies a hallmark of his campaign and administration, Muslims are as likely as the general public and more than unaffiliated Americans to say they value their American identity (81%).

Most Americans agree that their faith is important to the way they think of themselves. Muslims are more likely than Jews, Catholics, the non-affiliated, and the general public, and as likely as Protestants and white Evangelicals to express this sentiment.

Where Muslims are unique is in the community’s young people (18–29) who are far more likely than their cohorts in the general public to say their religion is important to the way they think of themselves. We found that 91% of Muslims between the age of 18 and 29 say their religion is important to the way they think of themselves, no different than older Muslims (50+). This is significantly different from their age cohorts in the general public who are far less likely (49%) than their elders (80%) to say that their faith is important to the way they think of themselves. Though a segment of all faith groups leaves the faith with which they were raised, including Muslims,¹⁰ so far American Muslim young people are less likely to follow this national trend.

As we found in earlier studies, a higher religious identity correlates with a higher American identity among all Americans, especially Muslims.

Despite the Perceived Costs, Most Muslims See Their Faith as an Asset to Their Lives and to Their Country

Islam is not just a source of identity for Muslims, it is also a source of psychological well-being and pride. Muslims are among the most likely faith community to say their faith identity is a source of happiness in their lives (85%), with white Evangelicals as the only group more likely (94%) to say the same about their own faith. Muslims (85%) are among the most likely to say their co-faithful contribute a great deal to society. Muslims (86%) are as proud to be identified as members of their faith

community as are Jews (87%), Catholics (85%), and Protestants (83%) despite the perceived stigma associated with the Muslim faith.

A regression analysis found that the more likely it is that Muslims agree with these three “pride” measures (the “Pride Index”), the more likely it is that they are civically engaged, identify strongly with being an American, and endorse the idea that Muslims are committed to America’s well-being. They are also more likely (unsurprisingly) to say religion is important to them, frequent a mosque, and say their religion is important to the way they think of themselves. As expected, a higher “pride” score among Muslims is also linked to less support for restrictive measures aimed at the Muslim community (restricting Muslims from entering the country, surveillance of mosques, and banning the building of mosques). And far more Muslims are proud of rather than prejudiced toward their community.

Methodology

ISPU created the questionnaire for this study and commissioned two firms to conduct the survey: Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS) for a nationally representative survey of self-identified Muslims and Jews and Triton Polling & Research for a nationally representative survey of the general American public. From the Triton sample, researchers examined the views of self-identified Protestants (parsing out white Evangelicals), Catholics, and the non-affiliated. A total of **2,481** interviews were conducted. ISPU owns all data and intellectual property related to this study.

SSRS conducted a survey of Muslims and Jews for ISPU from January 8 to January 24, 2018. SSRS interviewed 802 Muslim and 478 Jewish respondents. The sample for the study came from three sources. SSRS telephoned a sample of households that were prescreened as being Muslim or Jewish in SSRS’s weekly national omnibus survey of 1,000 randomly selected respondents ($n = 803$) and purchased a listed sample for Muslim and Jewish households in both landline and cell phone samples from Experian, a sample provider that flags specific characteristics for each piece of a sample ($n = 127$). SSRS’s omnibus survey completed 60% of all interviews with cell phone respondents, so prescreened respondents included those who had been originally interviewed on both landline and cell phones. In an effort to supplement the number of Muslim interviews that SSRS was able to complete in the given time frame and with the amount of available prescreened sample, SSRS

employed a web-based survey and completed the final 350 Muslim interviews via an online survey with samples from a non-probability panel (a panel made up of respondents deliberately [not randomly] chosen to represent the demographic makeup of the community in terms of age, race, and socio-economics). The data from this project are weighted to match estimates of the Jewish and/or Muslim populations determined from three years of data collected through the SSRS omnibus as well as estimates from the Pew Research Center’s 2017 survey of Muslim Americans. The telephone portion of respondents has a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of Muslims $\pm 5.7\%$ and Jews $\pm 5.5\%$.

Triton live-agent surveys were conducted by interviewers in an in-house, state-of-the-art call center located near Bend, Oregon. All surveys incorporated standard statistical methods to select a representative sample of the target population. Triton conducted this telephone poll of the general public, on behalf of ISPU, by live interviews with respondents via landline telephones and cell phones between January 8 and January 24, 2018, securing a sample size of 1,201 completed surveys with a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of $\pm 2.8\%$. The weighting applied was gender, age, region, and race.

For more details on polling methodology, visit www.ispu.org/poll.

Introduction

One year into the Trump presidency, Americans have witnessed three iterations of a so-called “Muslim ban,” had their president retweet three inflammatory videos portraying Muslims as monsters originally posted by one of Britain’s most anti-Muslim fringe political parties, and heard him say a rally involving Nazis and Confederate symbols where one counter-protester was killed had “good people.” Anti-Muslim hate crimes have been on the rise since 2015 and 2016, a campaign year when then-candidate Trump said, “Islam hates us,” and have surpassed 2001 in the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes, according to the FBI.

One year into a Trump presidency, Americans of all backgrounds also crowded airports to protest a travel ban on people from a number of Muslim-majority nations. The Women’s March, co-organized by four women, including Linda Sarsour, a visibly Muslim woman, became the largest demonstration ever in America. And hijab-wearing Olympic fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad was immortalized with a Barbie doll.

The same year also saw a special election for Senate in Alabama, resulting in a win for Democrat Doug Jones over Republican Roy Moore, a first for Democrats in that state since 1992, and a race in which the turnout of Black voters¹¹ was key for victory.

Still, many will rightly point out that while President Trump has leveraged anti-Muslim sentiment, he did not invent it. American Muslims have reported more religious discrimination than any other faith community since we began measuring three years ago (2016¹² and 2017¹³).

In this report, we set out to measure the level of public anti-Muslim sentiment in its most impactful manifestations and, in collaboration with Georgetown's The Bridge Initiative, developed the first-ever **Islamophobia Index (II)**, which we plan to track annually.

We aimed to assess how a higher II is linked to:

- Approval of discriminatory policies targeting Muslims
- Approval of violence targeting civilians
- Approval of authoritarian policies

At the same time, we wanted to measure the public's support for Muslim civil rights and American pluralism after a tumultuous year that challenged both.

While anti-Muslim sentiment is usually thought of as a problem among Americans who are not Muslim, no study exists (to our knowledge) that explores to what degree Muslims themselves have internalized their own stigmatization and have been socialized to endorse negative stereotypes targeting their own community. This report fills this gap by measuring the II among Muslims themselves, as well as the degree to which Muslims have accepted ideas of collective blame, shame, and alienation.

This survey doesn't stop at shame however. It also measures pride, joy, and confidence in one's faith identity across communities and how these sentiments are linked to civic engagement and national identity.

Finally, the poll explores the views of Muslim women, who the so-called "Muslim ban" purportedly seeks to protect from their own community by mandating the tracking of "honor killings." The legislation does not clearly define either these crimes or the purpose of tracking them distinct from domestic violence, other than to allege that Muslims are more prone to violence against women than other communities, a notion unsupported by the evidence.¹⁴ What in reality are American Muslim

women's biggest challenges and fears? How do they feel about their faith and community? If they wear hijab, what are their reasons for doing so?

We believe this report is a much-needed contribution to a national conversation about American Muslims that rarely includes them.

Results

One Year into a Trump Presidency, Muslim Satisfaction with the Way Things Are Going in the Country Is Down but Voter Registration Up

In 2017, one of the more surprising findings from ISPU's poll was the relative optimism that Muslims expressed, reporting the highest level of satisfaction with the country's trajectory across all major faith groups and the non-affiliated. We hypothesized that perhaps this pattern was a function of the timing of the survey, with fielding taking place mostly prior to Donald Trump taking office and with the possible harm he could do still limited to just that: a possibility. In 2018, with nearly a year of the Trump presidency in the books, however, respondents have a solid sense of his administration's agenda.

Muslim Satisfaction with Direction of Country Declined Over Time

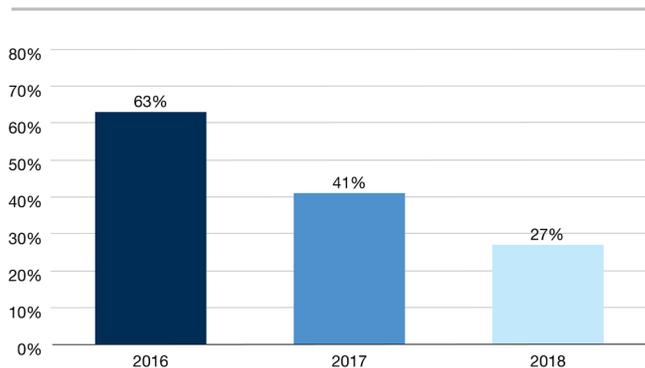


FIGURE 1: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents

It is somewhat remarkable, then, that—given multiple attempts to institute a so-called "Muslim ban," the rescinding of DACA, and the moving of America's embassy in Israel to Jerusalem (to name just a few controversial actions affecting this community)—Muslims (27%) remain just as likely as the general public (29%) to report being satisfied with the way things are going in the U.S. To be sure, however, this is a marked decrease from last year's tally when 41% of Muslims were satisfied

with the country's direction. Also, as was the case last year, this aggregated percentage masks significant differences of opinion within the Muslim community. For instance, Muslim men (34%) are twice as likely to give a positive response as Muslim women (17%). Similarly, white Muslims (43%) are nearly 2.5 times more likely than Black Muslims (16%) to be satisfied with America's trajectory, while Asians (29%) and Arabs (33%) both straddle the sample's mean.

Muslim Women, Black Muslims Least Satisfied with Direction of Country

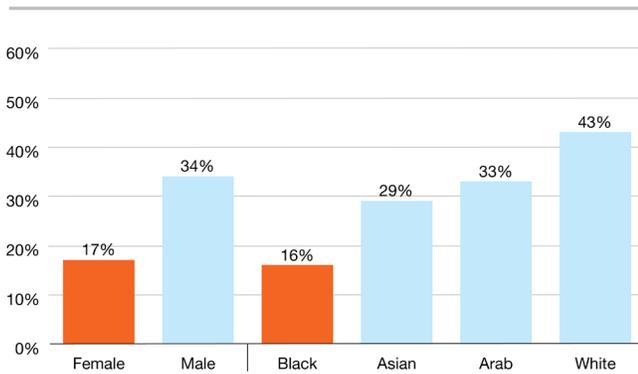


FIGURE 2: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents

When we gauged opinion toward President Trump specifically (Figure 3), a different pattern emerged. Muslims (13%) and the non-affiliated (17%) are the least likely groups to approve of President Trump's job performance. Both Jews (31%) and Catholics (36%) are right around the general public average (35%), with Protestants offering slightly higher approval ratings (41%). At a level all their own, however, are white Evangelicals, 72% of whom approve of Donald Trump's performance in office. Thus, Muslims are the sole group whose general satisfaction outpaces their approval of Trump's first term in office. This discrepancy suggests either a higher baseline satisfaction among American Muslims and/or a lower weighting of the president's actions when considering how satisfied they are with the way things are going overall.

Muslims and Non-Affiliated Least Likely to Approve of Trump

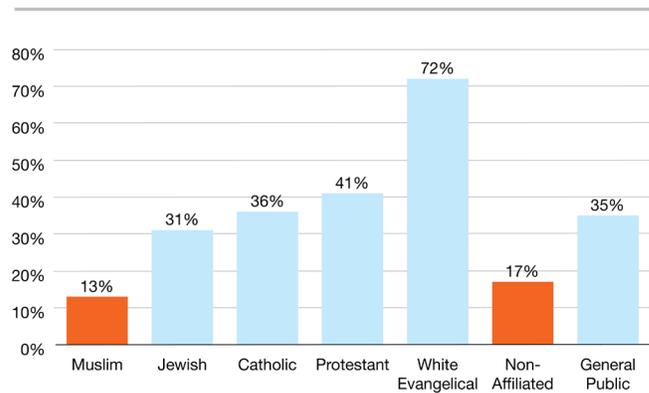


FIGURE 3: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president? (% Approve shown) Base: Total respondents

In addition to anxiety and anger, the response to the Trump presidency, especially among women and minority groups, has also featured a call to action—one particularly focused on the ballot box. Are Muslims prepared to heed this call? We found that across all major faith groups, American Muslims remain the least likely to be registered to vote at 75% (fully 15 percentage points below Jewish and Christian respondents). This proportion has been steadily trending upward, however, increasing by 25% from the 2016 tally (Figure 4). Owed largely to this uptick in registration, the proportion of “Inshallah Voters” (that is, those Muslims who plan to vote in an upcoming fall election but are not yet registered to do so) is down to 8%, from 25% in 2016.

Muslim Voter Registration Climbs

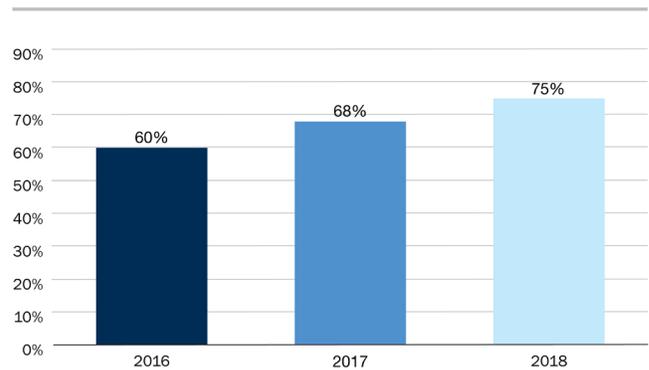


FIGURE 4: Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who can legally vote in the United States

Muslims among Most Likely to Reject Violence

Particularly since 9/11 (but certainly extending to well before then¹⁵), Muslims have been commonly associated with violence.¹⁶ Our data, however, run counter to this narrative. When we asked respondents to consider targeting civilians with a military strike, Muslims were the least likely to feel that such an action is ever justified (26%) (Figure 5). White Evangelicals are by far the least likely to outright disavow what is, effectively, a war crime, with less than one-quarter responding that it is never justified. About half the general public believes that, under certain conditions, a military action can be executed against civilian targets, but this tally masks a range of opinion. African Americans in the broader sample, for instance, report similar responses to Muslims on this question.

Muslims Most Likely to Reject Military Attacks on Civilians

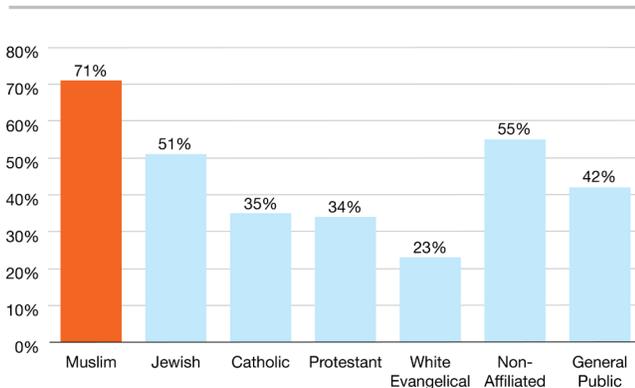


FIGURE 5: Some people think that for the military to target and kill civilians is sometimes justified, while others think that this kind of violence is never justified. Which is your opinion? (% Never justified shown) Base: Total respondents

We also asked respondents about the legitimacy of individuals or small groups violently targeting civilians (Figure 6). Here, too, Muslims buck the negative expectation, with 80% reporting that such an action is never justified (as much or more than any other major faith group or the non-affiliated across our samples). All respondents were generally more likely to offer unqualified repudiation of non-state actors violently targeting civilians, though more than a third of white Evangelicals still consider such actions as conditionally justified.

Muslims, Jews, and Non-Affiliated Most Likely to Reject Individual Attacks on Civilians

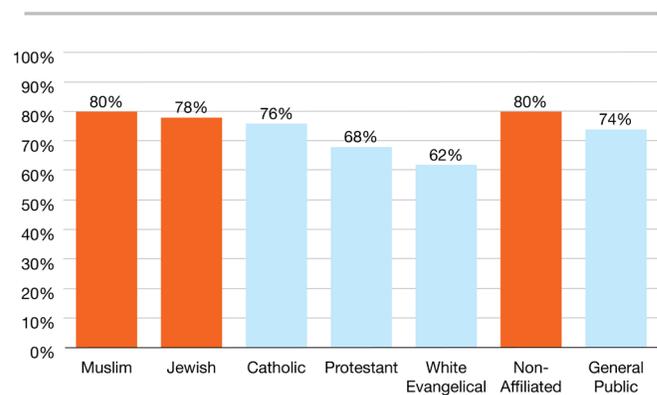


FIGURE 6: Some people think that for an individual or a small group of people to target and kill civilians is sometimes justified, while others think that this kind of violence is never justified. Which is your opinion? (% Never justified shown) Base: Total respondents

Tolerance for Authoritarianism Varies among Americans of Different Faiths

Because interest has recently increased in the role of authoritarian attitudes as a driver of American political behavior,¹⁷ we included two measures that tap this disposition. First, we asked to what extent respondents felt the press should be censored in the aftermath of a terror attack (Figure 7). Jews and the non-affiliated were most likely to respond negatively to this scenario, and a majority of the general public would oppose placing such limitations on press freedom. This general pattern does not hold for Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants, however, with about a third of respondents in each group at least somewhat agreeing that free speech should be curtailed in the wake of a terror attack. Even controlling for other relevant factors,¹⁸ we found that those more willing to

Non-Affiliated and Jews Least Likely to Support Censorship of Press in Wake of Terror Attack

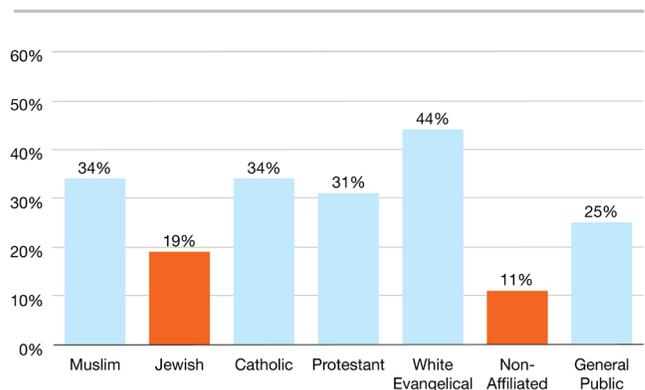


FIGURE 7: When our country is threatened in the wake of a terror attack, there should be limits placed on the press's criticism of government. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

limit free speech in this scenario were also more likely to support each of the (arguably unconstitutional) policy proposals we outline in the next section.

Second, we gauged the willingness of respondents to suspend institutional checks and balances following a terror attack (Figure 8). The non-affiliated were far and away the least likely to support such measures (8%). At the other end of the spectrum, once again, were white Evangelicals, with nearly four in ten agreeing that we should pave the way for more unilateral powers if the U.S. is attacked. The remaining groups are more or less on par with support in the general public (21%).

Non-Affiliated Least Willing to Suspend Government Check and Balances

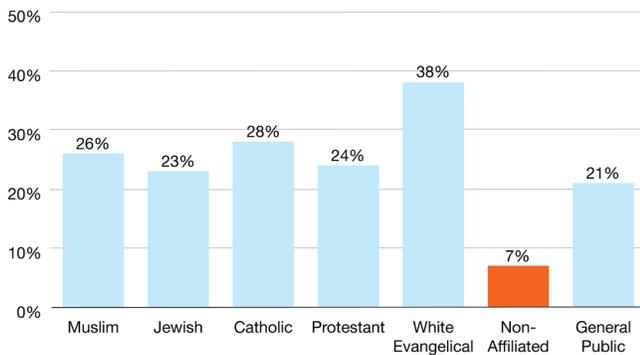


FIGURE 8: When our country is threatened in the wake of a terror attack, we should suspend some of the governmental required checks and balances. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

Most Americans Support Muslim Civil Rights

While policy views can shift depending on the political context, regard for core principles tends to be more stable. To that end, the American public remains steadfast in their commitment to the country’s fundamental freedoms. A majority of all American religious communities say they want to live in a country where no one is targeted for their religious beliefs, including 95% of Jews, 90% of Muslims, 88% of Protestants, 87% of the non-affiliated, 85% of Catholics, and 78% of white Evangelicals. Most Americans (83% of the general public) support protecting the civil rights of American Muslims (at least in principle), including 89% of white Evangelicals—a larger margin than Catholics (78%) and Protestants as a whole (80%). Moreover, a majority of almost all groups studied, led by Muslims and the non-affiliated (78% each), agree that “the negative things politicians say regarding Muslims is harmful to our country.” The outlier on this question were white Evangelicals, less than half of whom (45%) agree with the statement.

Most Americans Want to Live in a Country Where No One Is Targeted for Religious Identity

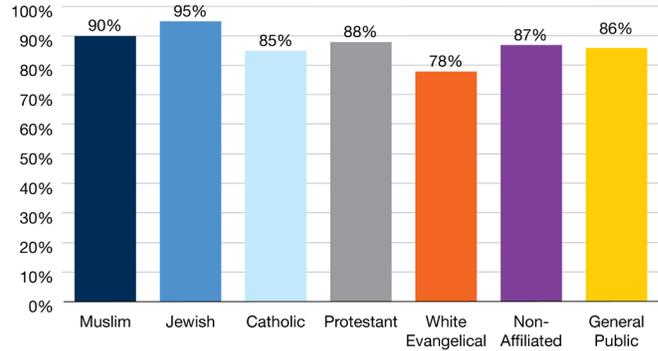


FIGURE 9: I want to live in a country where no one is targeted for their religious identity. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

Most Americans Believe Negative Political Rhetoric Toward Muslims Is Harmful to U.S.

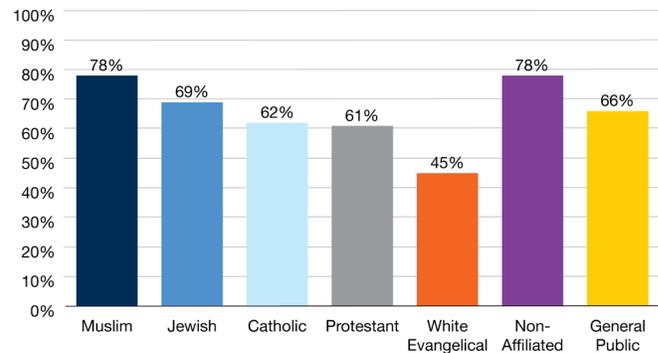


FIGURE 10: The negative things politicians say regarding Muslims is harmful to our country. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

Most Americans Oppose Banning the Building of Mosques

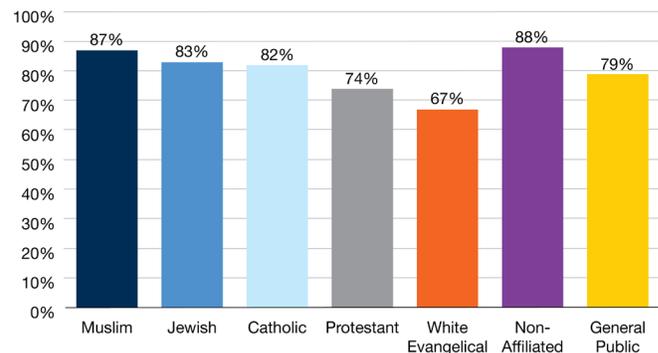


FIGURE 11: Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose banning the building of mosques in the US? (% Net oppose shown) Base: Total respondents

These principles have been put to the test since the start of the Trump presidency. A number of policies once thought politically beyond the pale have moved firmly into the realm of possibility. One such proposal is the outright banning of new mosques in the U.S. Despite the general rise of anti-Muslim sentiment in recent years, however, this measure still seems too extreme for most Americans with clear majorities across the board in opposition (Figure 11). When it comes to the prospect of surveilling mosques, the same pattern mostly holds (with the marginal exception of white Evangelicals), yet respondents within each group are noticeably less willing to oppose this practice (Figure 12).

Muslims and Non-Affiliated Most Likely to Oppose Surveilling U.S. Mosques

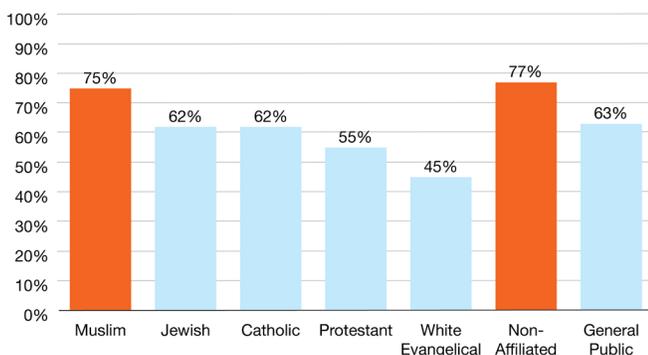


FIGURE 12: Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose a surveillance program targeting mosques in the US? (% Net oppose shown) Base: Total respondents

Without a doubt the most salient policy toward Muslims since the start of the Trump presidency has been the (as of this writing, partially enacted) immigration ban. Our survey outlined a stronger variant of the proposed legislation with a broader ban, an idea voiced by Trump himself when he was a candidate. When asked whether they would support or oppose banning Muslims (as a group, not just nationals of certain Muslim-majority countries) from obtaining visas to enter the U.S., majorities in most faith groups (excluding white Evangelicals) and the non-affiliated opposed such a measure (Figure 13).

Muslims and Non-Affiliated Most Likely to Oppose Muslim Ban

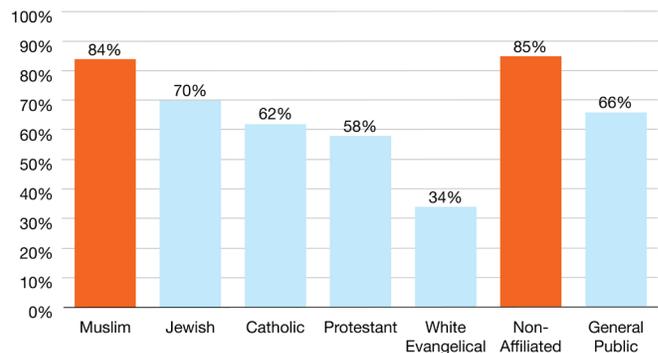


FIGURE 13: Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose a ban on visas to Muslims wanting to enter the United States? (% Net oppose shown) Base: Total respondents

One curious finding across these controversial policy proposals is the support they receive from a small but consistent minority of Muslims. Indeed, non-affiliated Americans and Muslims are no different in their likelihood to support any of the three policies we surveyed. Interpreting these results (which seem to clearly run counter to self-interest) comes down to whether Muslims sincerely hold these beliefs or are offering the responses that they feel are social desirable—though, certainly, either of these scenarios is troubling.

The vast majority of those surveyed are firmly against proposals that target and limit the rights of Muslims in the U.S. Along these same lines, we found that clear majorities across most major faith groups and the non-affiliated feel that Muslims are committed to America's well-being. As Figure 14 shows, however, the percentage of Muslims who feel this way far outpaces that of any other group. Conversely, though not surprisingly (given the findings throughout this report), white Evangelicals significantly lag behind all other groups on this metric.

Along these same lines, Americans generally agree that “most Muslims living in the United States are *not* more responsible for violence carried out by a Muslim than anyone else.” This perspective that runs counter to assumptions of collective guilt is most endorsed by Muslims and the non-affiliated (74% and 76%, respectively). All other faith groups are right at the average for the general public (69%).

Majorities in the general public are also sensitive to the troubles Muslims face as a religious minority. Majorities across the board (with the slight exception of white Evangelicals) agree that “most Muslims in the United

Most Americans Believe Muslims Committed to Well-being of America

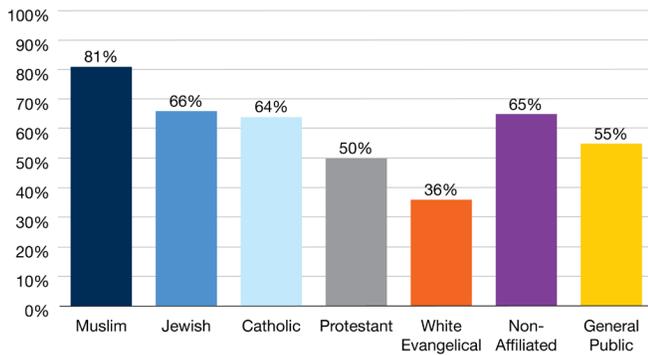


FIGURE 14: Most Muslims living in the United States are committed to the wellbeing of America. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

Most Americans Believe Muslims No More Responsible for Violence Carried Out by a Muslim

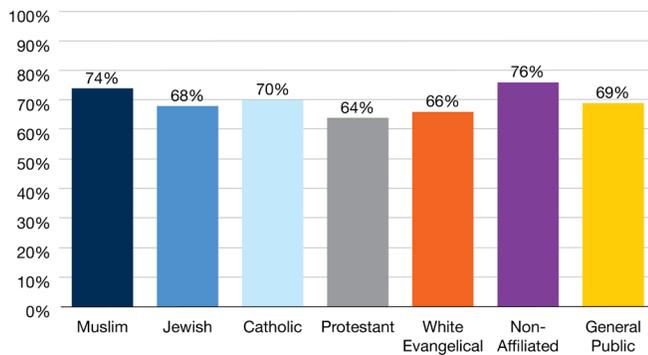


FIGURE 15: Most Muslims living in the United States are no more responsible for violence carried out by a Muslim than anyone else. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

Most Americans Believe Muslims Face Discrimination Because of Their Faith

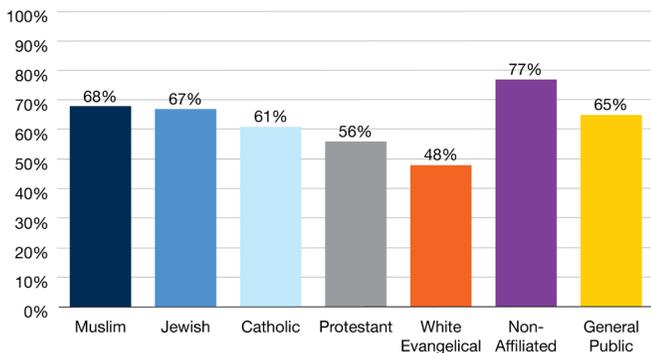


FIGURE 16: Most Muslims living in the United States are victims of discrimination because of their faith. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

States are victims of discrimination because of their faith” (Figure 16). Indeed, Jews (67%), Catholics (61%), and the general public (65%) are just as likely as Muslims (68%) to express this opinion, whereas the non-affiliated (77%) are actually the most likely to do so. Within the Muslim sample, Black Muslims (77%) are more likely than Arab Muslims (60%) and Asian Muslims (62%) to agree, though no more likely to report religious discrimination themselves. This is noteworthy because 73% of Arab Muslims themselves report experiencing some level of religious discrimination vs. 58% of Black Muslims.

Anti-Muslim Sentiment Linked to Approval of Violence, Authoritarianism, and Discriminatory Policies

One of the more conspicuous elements of our current political moment is the willingness of some elected officials to demonize whole segments of American society, particularly minority groups. Anti-Muslim rhetoric has featured prominently in this phenomenon, from the president to state and local officials. Some in positions of political power have made incendiary statements about Muslims and Islam.¹⁹ To track the extent to which these sentiments are informing public opinion, this year’s poll introduces ISPU’s Islamophobia Index.

We asked respondents a battery of five questions that reflect common prejudices toward Muslims. Table 1 shows the proportion of each major faith group and the non-affiliated that “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree” with the corresponding statement. The item that elicits the strongest agreement within both the general public (26%) and Jewish oversample (23%) is the claim that most American Muslims discriminate against women. Notably, this item is also the lone viewpoint for which Muslims (12%) rate significantly lower than any other subgroup. Looking at the overall tallies by faith group, a higher percentage of white Evangelicals report holding unfavorable views of Muslims across the board.

Answers to this battery were used to construct an additive scale that measures overall anti-Muslim sentiment.²⁰ The resulting Islamophobia Index provides a single metric that is easy to understand, compare, and track over time. The Islamophobia Index measures the endorsement of anti-Muslim stereotypes (violent, misogynist), perceptions of Muslim aggression toward the United States, degree of Muslim dehumanization (less civilized), and perceptions of Muslim collective blame (partially responsible for violence), all of which have been shown to predict public support for discriminatory policies toward Muslims.²¹

Islamophobia Index

Most Muslims living in the United States... (% Net agree shown)	Muslim	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	White Evangelical	Non-Affiliated	General Public
Are more prone to violence	18%	15%	12%	13%	23%	8%	13%
Discriminate against women	12%	23%	29%	30%	36%	18%	26%
Are hostile to the United States	12%	13%	9%	14%	23%	8%	12%
Are less civilized than other people	8%	6%	4%	6%	10%	1%	6%
Are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims	10%	16%	11%	12%	14%	8%	12%
Index (0 min – 100 max)	17	22	22	31	40	14	24

TABLE 1: Most Muslims living in the United States are more prone to violence than other people. Most Muslims living in the United States discriminate against women. Most Muslims living in the United States are hostile to the United States. Most Muslims living in the United States are less civilized than other people. Most Muslims living in the United States are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

Non-affiliated respondents are lowest on the index, on par with those in the Muslim sample. At the other end of the spectrum are Protestants, particularly white Evangelicals, while Jews and Catholics hover around the general public average.

Beyond serving as an informative standalone reference, the Islamophobia Index can be marshaled to reveal relationships to other variables of interest. Figure 17 reveals that, controlling for a suite of relevant demographic variables,²² we found that higher scores on the Islamophobia Index are associated with 1) greater acceptance of targeting civilians, whether it is a military or individual/small group that is doling out the violence, 2) greater acquiescence to limiting both press freedoms and institutional checks following a hypothetical terror attack, and 3) greater support for the so-called “Muslim ban” and the surveillance of American mosques (or their outright building prohibition). So, in sum, those who hold prejudicial views of Muslims are more likely to justify war crimes and terrorism, feel it is necessary to limit democratic freedoms when under threat, and find it prudent to limit access to, or civil liberties within, the United States on the basis of religious affiliation.

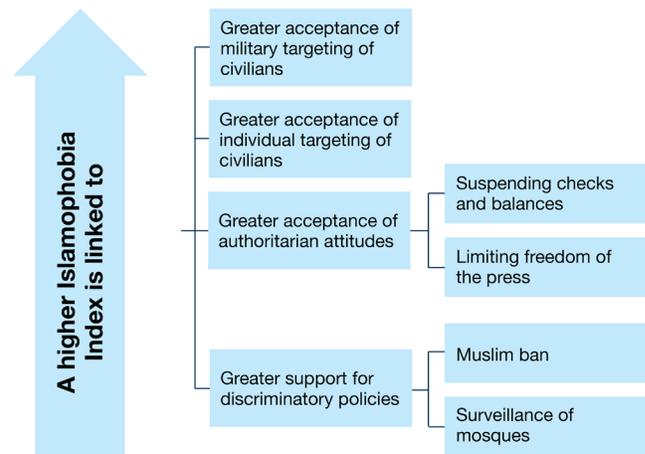
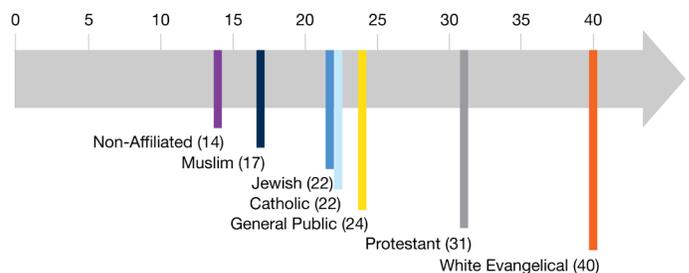


FIGURE 17: A high Islamophobia Index



SCALE 1: We surveyed and scored Americans across a spectrum of religious affiliations, from non-affiliated and Muslims on one end expressing the lowest levels of Islamophobia to white Evangelicals on the other end who express some of the highest levels of Islamophobia.

The Impact of Islamophobia on Muslims: Reported Discrimination, Internalized Shame

Perceived anti-Muslim sentiment in the general public can impact American Muslims in a number of ways. The most direct perhaps is religious discrimination, where Muslims are the most likely faith community studied to report experiencing religious discrimination for the third year in a row. Muslims are more than twice as likely to report religious discrimination than the general public, including Catholics and white Evangelicals. The majority of Muslims (61%) report having experienced some frequency of religiously based discrimination in the past year, compared to less than 30% of all other groups and the general public as a whole. While higher than other groups, it has not changed significantly from years past. Nearly half of Jews (48%), however, also report experiencing religious discrimination, underscoring the link between Islamophobia and antisemitism.

Muslims Experience the Most Religious Discrimination

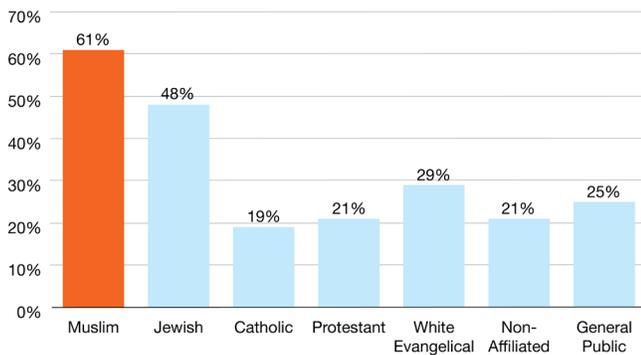


FIGURE 18: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total respondents

As we found in previous surveys, women are more likely to report religious discrimination than men (69% of women vs. 57% of men—more on this later). Arabs (73%) are more likely to report this type of discrimination than are Black (58%), white (60%), or Asian Muslims (50%). This suggests a conflation of Arab and Muslim identity in the public imagination where Arabs are more likely to be identified and linked to negative Muslim stereotypes.

Racial Discrimination

Most Muslims do not identify as white, so it may not be surprising that Muslims are as likely to report racial discrimination (64%) as religious discrimination (61%). Again, women are far more likely to report racial discrimination than men (75% vs. 57%). Non-white Muslims are equally likely to report discrimination because of their race (roughly two-thirds of Black, Asian, and Arab Muslims). Young Muslims (age 18–29) are more likely (75%) than older Muslims (age 50+) (50%) to report race-based discrimination. Non-white Muslims, women, and young Muslims are roughly as likely as Black Americans in the general public (75%) to report some frequency of race-based discrimination. However, it is worth noting that Black Americans, whether Muslim (18%) or in the general public (16%) are more likely to report experiencing this kind of discrimination “regularly” than young or non-Black Muslims (less than 10%).

Muslim Women, Arabs, Young People Most Likely to Experience Religious Discrimination

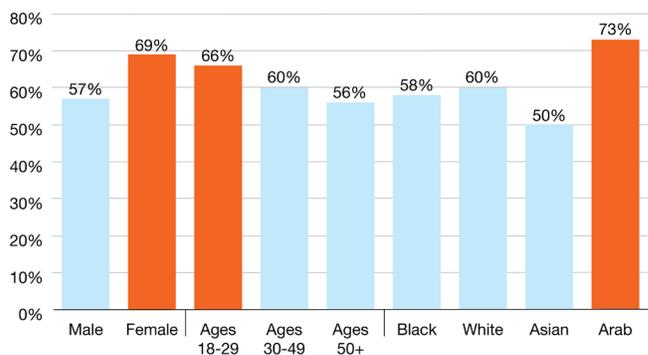


FIGURE 19: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Net experienced discrimination shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents

Muslim Women, Young People Most Likely to Experience Racial Discrimination

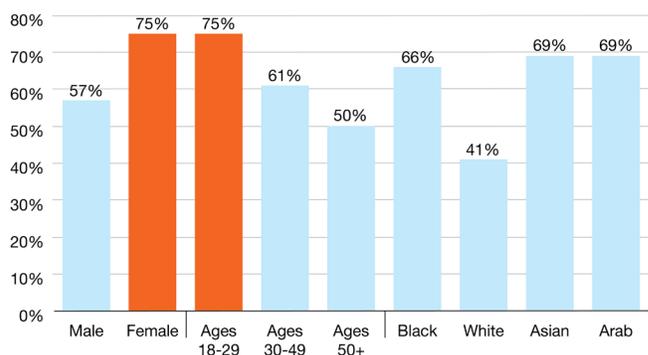


FIGURE 20: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your race? (% Net experience discrimination shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents

The majority of white Muslims (58%), like the majority of whites in the general public (71%), report experiencing no race-based discrimination in the previous year.

In trying to understand why women of all backgrounds consistently reported more religious and racial discrimination than men, we looked at distinctive dress. Muslim women (46%) are more likely than Muslim men (18%) to report wearing a symbol that makes their religious identity visible “all of the time.” We expected that for this reason Muslim women were a greater target for religious and even race-based discrimination. However, when we compared Muslim women who wear such a distinctive symbol “all of the time” to those Muslim women who say they “never” wear one, we found no difference in reported frequency of either type of discrimination. What did explain the difference was largely nativity. Native-born Muslims are far more likely than their foreign-born counterparts to report discrimination, and Muslim women are more likely than their male co-religious counterparts to be native-born (57% vs. 45%).

Native-Born More Likely Than Foreign-Born Muslims to Report Religious, Racial, and Gender Discrimination

	Muslims born in US	Muslims born outside US	Difference of statistical significance (Y/N) at (p<0.05)?
Ever experienced religious discrimination	74%	49%	Y
Ever experienced racial discrimination	74%	54%	Y
Ever experienced gender discrimination	49%	25%	Y
Most Muslims in the US are victims of discrimination because of their faith (Agree net)	77%	59%	Y

TABLE 2: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your race? How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your gender? (% Ever shown) Most Muslims living in the United States are victims of discrimination because of their faith. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents

These trends suggest that native-born Muslims are more sensitive to perceived microaggressions than their foreign-born counterparts who may not see the same actions as offensive. It may also signal a greater sense of expectations of equality on the part of native-born Muslims of all backgrounds.

Muslim Women More Likely to Report Religious and Racial Discrimination Than Discrimination Based on Gender

This insight is especially noteworthy for anyone advocating on behalf of Muslim women in regards to their community’s assumed exceptional misogyny. Muslim women are more likely than their male counterparts to either have post-high school education (65% vs. 51%) or be native-born (57% vs. 45%). They are also more likely to report religiously based (69%) and race-based (75%) discrimination than discrimination based on gender (51%), and they report gender-based discrimination on par with women in the general public (45%). Where Muslim women stand out from their gender peers in the general public is that they are far more likely to report racial (75% vs. 40%) and religious discrimination (69% vs. 26%).

Muslim women are also less likely than women in other faiths to agree that “most Muslims in the U.S. discriminate against women” (10% vs. 24%). Though women of all backgrounds report gender-based discrimination (and Muslim women are no different), Muslim women’s more frequent complaint is discrimination based on race and religion, ironically both *fueled* by unsubstantiated claims of exceptional Muslim misogyny. Anyone hoping to help Muslim women would do well to work on the problems these women say are their biggest challenges—Islamophobia and racism—in addition to including Muslim women in the struggle for all women’s fair treatment.

Muslim Women Experience More Religious, Racial Discrimination but Same Level of Gender Discrimination as Women in General Public

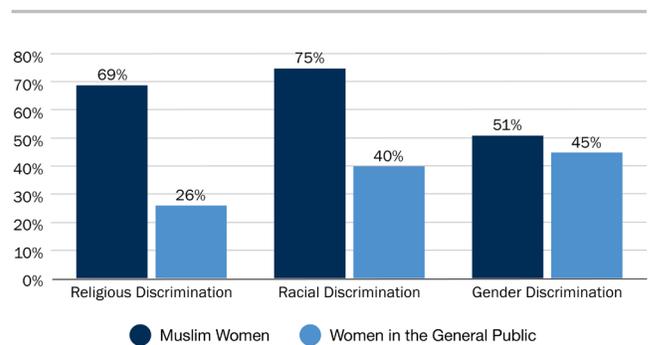


FIGURE 21: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your race? How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your gender? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total female respondents

Muslims Most Likely to Say Public Perceives Their Faith Negatively, Especially Muslim Women

Roughly equal percentages of Muslims say they either strongly agree or somewhat agree that “most people associate negative stereotypes with my faith identity” (62%) as report experiencing some frequency of religious discrimination (61%). While Muslim women were more likely than men to “strongly agree” (31% of men vs. 52% of women Muslims) with this view, there were no age or race differences.

This compares to 34% of white Evangelicals and roughly a quarter of all other groups who either strongly or somewhat agree that most people associate negative stereotypes with their faith community. As with religiously based discrimination, Jews were more likely (45%) than Christians (or non-affiliated Americans) to hold this perception.

Muslims and Jews Most Likely to Believe Others Negatively Stereotype Their Faith

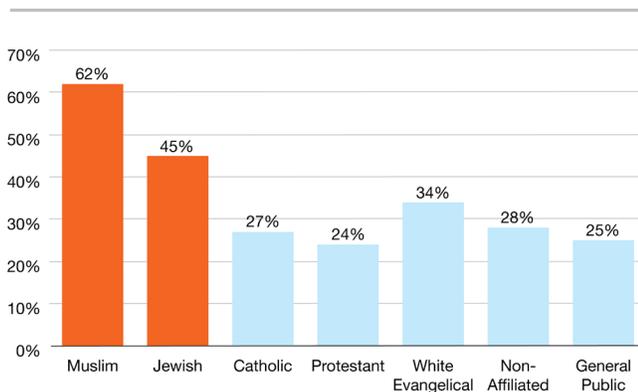


FIGURE 22: Most people associate negative stereotypes with my faith identity. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

Roughly a third of Muslims agree: “Most people want me to feel ashamed of my faith identity.”

Though most Muslims (86%) express pride in their faith identity, they are the most likely group studied to agree that others want them to feel shame for that identity (30% of Muslims vs. 12% of Jews, 16% of non-affiliated, and 4–6% of Christian groups). Muslim women are more likely than men (36% vs. 25%) to hold this view. There were no significant age or race differences.

Piety, Identity Top Reasons Given for Wearing Hijab

Though Muslim women are the most likely group studied to feel stigmatized, they are also the most likely to wear “a visible symbol that makes their faith identity known to others.”

How often do you wear a visible symbol that makes your faith identity known to others, for example a headcover or hijab, skullcap, kippah, yarmulke, turban, or visible cross in public?

Of Muslim women, 46% say they wear a visible symbol to mark their faith in public all the time, 19% some of the time, and the 35% none of the time. There was no significant age or race difference.

Muslim Women Most Likely to Wear an Identifying Religious Symbol

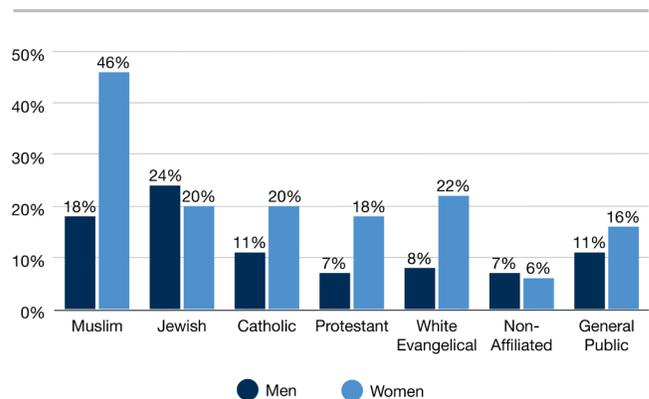


FIGURE 23: How often do you wear a visible symbol that makes your faith identity known to others, for example a headcover or hijab, skullcap, kippah, yarmulke, turban, or visible cross, in public? (% All of the time shown) Base: Total respondents

Why do Muslim women wear a headcover? The most frequent responses centered around an intention for following a religious obligation or being pleasing to God (54%), so others know they are Muslim (21%), and for modesty (12%). Those that said they wore a headcover because someone else required it of them made up 1%.

Piety, Identity Top Reasons for Hijab

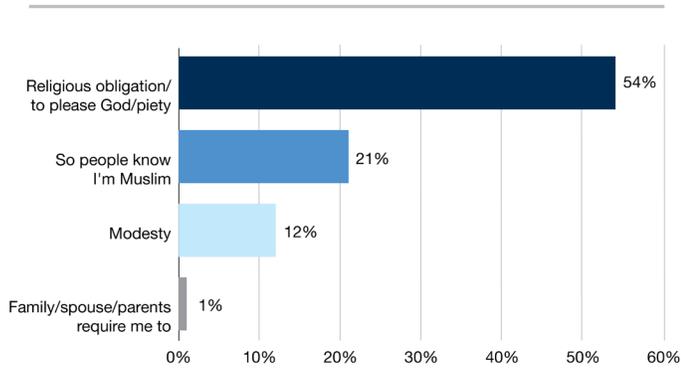


FIGURE 24: Can you please tell me why you wear this symbol? Base: Female Muslim respondents who wear a visible faith symbol that makes their faith identity known to others

What happens to a community when so many of its members feel stigmatized by the public and discriminated against?

This was one of the questions we hoped to answer with this survey. If the majority of American Muslims feel that most people associate negative stereotypes with their faith identity and have experienced discrimination themselves, how does this same community see themselves in this context? To what degree have they internalized their own perceived oppression? Do they identify strongly with their country? With their faith? Do they express pride in their faith identity?

Internalized Islamophobia Examined

Endorsing anti-Muslim caricatures and assigning collective blame to the community for the actions of individuals is normally thought of as an issue among Americans who are not Muslim. However, like other minority groups who suffer from internalized stigmatization, our study found that Muslims are not immune from adopting popular stereotypes about their own community in some cases.

On Shame

When I hear that a member of my faith community committed an act of violence, I feel personally ashamed.

The majority of Muslims (62%) and Jews (59%) say they agree strongly or somewhat that they feel personal shame when they hear that a member of their faith community committed an act of violence, but less than half of Christians (and only 20% of non-affiliated Americans) say the same. Among Muslims, 44% “strongly agree” with this sentiment, compared to roughly a third of other faith groups, and 29% of the general public. While no

age or gender differences exists among Muslims on this topic, Arab Muslims stand out with 76% agreeing (53% strongly agree) vs. the agreement of 61% of Black and white Muslims and 66% of Asian Muslims.

Muslims and Jews Most Likely to Feel Personally Ashamed of Violence Committed by Co-Religionists

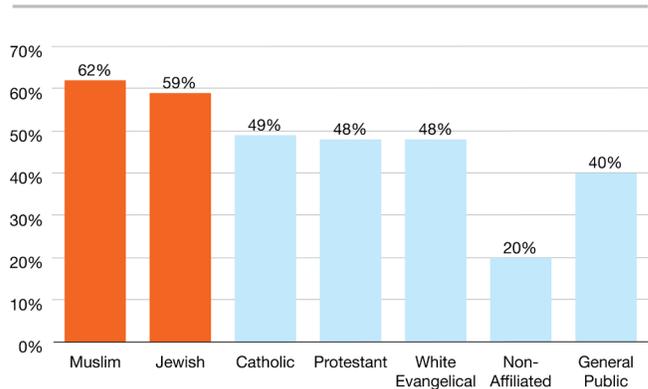


FIGURE 25: When I hear that a member of my faith community committed an act of violence, I feel personally ashamed. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

I believe my faith community is more prone to negative behavior than other faith communities.

Muslims are the most likely group studied (30%) to agree that they believe their faith community is more prone to negative behavior than other faith communities vs. 13% of Jews, 12% of Catholics, 10% of Protestants, 11% of white Evangelicals, and 7% of non-affiliated Americans who say the same. There were no gender, age, or race differences among Muslims.

Muslims Most Likely to Believe Co-Religionists Are More Prone to Negative Behavior

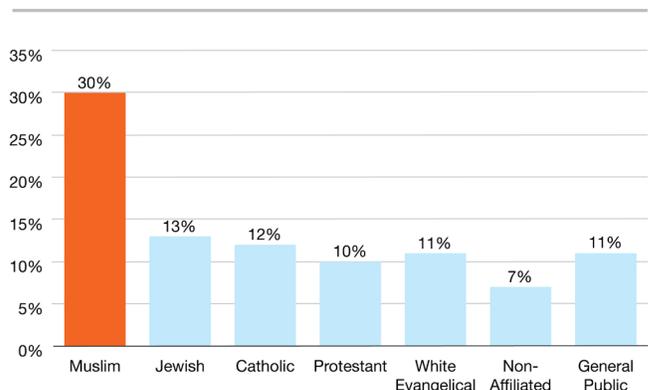


FIGURE 26: I believe my faith community is more prone to negative behavior than other faith communities. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

Being a member of my faith community makes me feel out of place in the world.

Despite the majority of Muslims reporting some frequency of discrimination (61%), agreeing that most Americans hold negative stereotypes about their community (62%) and that their community faces discrimination (68%), less than a quarter (23%) say their faith makes them feel out of place in the world. This is only slightly higher than Jews (16%), white Evangelicals (14%), and non-affiliated Americans (15%). And despite bearing the brunt of discrimination (see Figure 20), Muslim women and young Muslims were no more likely than other Muslims to express this sentiment.

I often hide my faith identity for fear of prejudice.

We might expect Muslims to hide their religious identity in light of their perceived prejudice they face. However, Muslims (20%) are not significantly more likely to report doing so than Jews (15%) or non-affiliated (17%) Americans. All three groups are significantly more likely to report hiding their religious identity (or lack thereof) for fear of prejudice than are Christian groups (1–4%) and the general public (7%). Again, there were no gender, age, or race differences among Muslims in this measure.

The Islamophobia Index among Muslims

As stated earlier, the Islamophobia Index measures the endorsement of anti-Muslim stereotypes (violent, misogynist), perceptions of Muslim aggression toward the United States, degree of Muslim dehumanization (less civilized), and perceptions of Muslim collective blame (partially responsible for violence), all of which are linked to public support for discriminatory policies targeting Muslims.²³

Muslims Mirror False Public Perception Regarding Muslims and Violence

Muslims are more likely to agree with the sentiment that Muslims are “more prone to violence than other people” (18%) than is the general public (13%) or non-affiliated Americans (8%). Muslims are as likely as Jews (15%), Catholics (12%), Protestants overall (13%), and white Evangelicals (23%) to hold this view about *themselves*. What explains this finding? Is it that Muslims are simply as impacted by media portrayals of their community as are others, or are they “admitting” some measurable reality? This finding warrants deeper discussion.

Muslims in America reject violence more than other Americans.

- According to our 2018 survey, Muslims are more likely than the general public to reject violence against civilians by the military as well as violence carried out by an individual or small group (see Figures 5 and 6).

Islamophobia Index

Most Muslims living in the United States... (% Net agree shown)	Muslim	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	White Evangelical	Non-Affiliated	General Public
Are more prone to violence	18%	15%	12%	13%	23%	8%	13%
Discriminate against women	12%	23%	29%	30%	36%	18%	26%
Are hostile to the United States	12%	13%	9%	14%	23%	8%	12%
Are less civilized than other people	8%	6%	4%	6%	10%	1%	6%
Are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims	10%	16%	11%	12%	14%	8%	12%
Index (0 min – 100 max)	17	22	22	31	40	14	24

TABLE 1: Most Muslims living in the United States are more prone to violence than other people. Most Muslims living in the United States discriminate against women. Most Muslims living in the United States are hostile to the United States. Most Muslims living in the United States are less civilized than other people. Most Muslims living in the United States are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

- According to Pew's 2017 survey of Muslim Americans, "Although both Muslim Americans and the U.S. public as a whole overwhelmingly reject violence against civilians, Muslims are more likely to say such actions can *never* be justified. Three-quarters of U.S. Muslims (76%) say this, compared with 59% of the general public. Similar shares of Muslims (12%) and all U.S. adults (14%) say targeting and killing civilians can 'often' or 'sometimes' be justified."²⁴

Most American terrorist fatalities are at the hands of white supremacists.

- According to a study conducted by Professors Charles Kurzman and David Schanzer, the majority of American fatalities at the hands of extremists are from right-wing terrorists, not from extremists acting in the name of Islam.²⁵
- The same study also found that law enforcement agencies ranked anti-government extremists as a greater threat than Al Qaeda or like-minded terrorist organizations.

So how do we explain Muslim assessments of their own community being prone to violence as no different than those of other Americans and sometimes even higher? The media may have something to do with it since virtually no American Muslim has personal experience with a Muslim terrorist. According to Kurzman and Schanzer, "since 9/11, an average of nine American Muslims per year have been involved in an average of six terrorism-related plots against targets in the United States." Other studies have also found that these individuals are rarely part of the mainstream mosque communities and are being radicalized online.²⁶ Since there are several million American Muslims, the probability that a member of the community actually knows someone personally involved in violence is next to zero. Instead, like everyone else, American Muslims are getting their perception of Muslims and violence from the media, not personal experience.

Does the U.S. Media Portray Muslims as More Prone to Violence than Other People?

- According the ISPU report *Equal Treatment?: Measuring the Legal and Media Responses to Ideologically Motivated Violence in the United States*, someone perceived to be Muslim and accused of a terror plot will receive **seven and half times** the media coverage as someone not perceived to be Muslim.²⁷

- According to a 2017 Georgia State University study, "Controlling for target type, fatalities, and being arrested, attacks by Muslim perpetrators received, on average, 357% more coverage than other attacks."²⁸
- A 2015 study conducted by Media Tenor found that the "protagonists," i.e., individuals portrayed as representing Islam were most often armed militants, where as those representing other faiths were religious leaders.²⁹

American Muslims' perceptions of their own community's supposed propensity for violence is testimony to the power of media portrayals to warp perceptions about a people absent personal experience with the topic at hand (in this case violence.)

This comes into sharper focus when we examine Muslim perceptions of their community's treatment of women.

Muslim Men and Women Significantly Less Likely Than Others to Agree That Muslims Discriminate against Women

Muslim treatment of women is something that Muslims can attest to from first-hand experience, unlike terrorism. And here Muslims (12%) are significantly less likely than any other group (18% of non-affiliated Americans, 23% of Jews, 26% of the general public, 29% of Catholics, 30% of Protestants, and 36% of white Evangelicals) to agree that "most Muslims discriminate against women." Muslim women (10%) and Muslim men (13%) are not significantly different in this regard.

Muslims as Likely as General Public to Agree that "Most Muslims Are Hostile to the United States"

The vast majority of Muslims (81%) agree that "most Muslims living in the United States are committed to the well-being of America," so this poll demonstrates that "most Muslims living in the United States" are not hostile to the United States. However, a minority of people in each group studied believes American Muslims are hostile to their country. According to our survey, 8% of non-affiliated, 9% of Catholics, 12% Muslims as well as the general public, 13% of Jews, 14% of Protestant, and 23% white Evangelicals hold this view.

Muslims Similar to Others on Dehumanization and Collective Blame of Muslims

Muslims are no different than any group on their agreement that “most Muslims are less civilized than other people” (8%), except non-affiliated Americans (1%) who are *less* likely than Muslims to agree with this. The dehumanization of Muslims and casting of the community as backwards is a hallmark of some liberal and conservative media alike, and Muslims are just as likely to consume those sources as anyone else.

On the topic of collective guilt, one in ten Muslims agrees that “most Muslims living in the United States are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims,” on par with all other groups studied except Jews (16%). A significant minority of American Muslims have internalized collective blame for acts of extremists they’ve never met, or at least assigned that blame to the collective. This is also demonstrated by the fact that Muslims (62%) are more likely than any other faith community to say that they feel personal shame when they hear that a person from their community has committed an act of violence.

Should Anti-Muslim Sentiment among Muslims Be Celebrated?

While this may seem like a strange question, people of a Muslim background but who endorse anti-Muslim generalizations, are often cast as “heroes”³⁰ in the media. Many times they are portrayed as more “anti-terrorism,” “pro-democracy,” or passionately “patriotic” than the majority of Muslims that they malign. But none of this is consistent with the evidence.

As discussed earlier, a higher Islamophobia Index (II) in the general public is linked to a number of correlated perspectives. Our research shows that Muslims with a higher II score are no different.

Muslims who score higher on the II are:

- More likely to support discriminatory policies toward Muslims
- More likely to support authoritarian policies
- More likely to condone military attacks on civilians
- More likely to condone individual attacks on civilians
- Less likely to support protecting Muslim civil rights
- Less likely to think American Muslims are committed to American well-being
- But no more likely than other Muslims to identify strongly with America

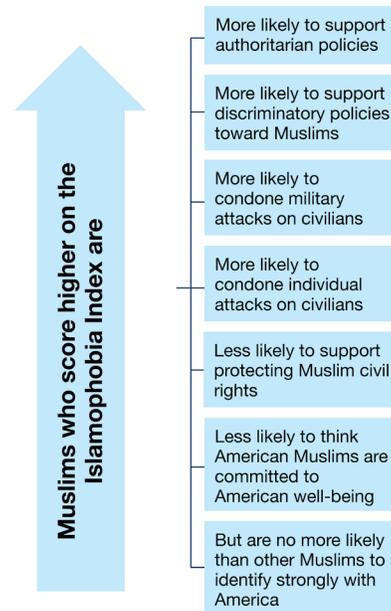


FIGURE 27: Muslims who score high on the Islamophobia Index

Islamophobia among Muslims is not patriotism, as it is not linked to a stronger American identity. It is not about being passionately against terrorism, as it is actually linked with *more* support for attacks on civilians. It is not about being “pro-democracy,” as it is actually linked with more support for authoritarianism and policies that violate the constitution. Islamophobic Muslims are just like Islamophobic people of any faith. The data does not support affording them favor over anyone else who expresses the same prejudice.

Despite Feeling Stigmatized, Most Muslims Identify Strongly with America and Express Pride, Happiness in Their Faith Identity

Americans of All Backgrounds Consider Their American Identity Important

The vast majority of Americans of all backgrounds studied say being an American is important to the way they think of themselves. Despite being much more likely to report feeling looked down upon and discriminated against by fellow Americans and despite the rise of a president who has made anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies a hallmark of his campaign and administration, Muslims are as likely as the general public and more than non-affiliated Americans to say they value their American identity.

However, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and white Evangelicals are slightly more likely than Muslims (and non-affiliated Americans, as well as the general public) to say the same.

Americans of All Backgrounds Consider American Identity Important

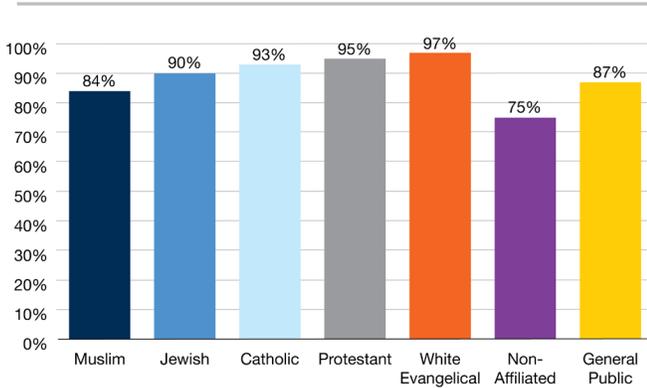


FIGURE 28: How important is being an American to the way you think of yourself, is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all? (% Net important shown) Base: Total respondents who are American citizens

This slightly lower American identity compared to other faith groups is driven by the fact that Muslims are younger and, to a lesser extent, are non-white. When we examined this question by age and race, we find that younger Muslims (18–29) (78%) are no different from their generational counterparts in this regard (81%), compared to older Muslims (50+) (91%). We also see that people of color in the general public (80% of Blacks and Hispanics) are similar to 85% of Blacks, 86% of Asians, and 91% of Arabs in the Muslim community. White Muslims (92%) and white members of the general public (90%) are also no different.

Young and Old Muslims Alike Say Faith Important to Identity

Most Americans agree that their faith is important to the way they think of themselves. Muslims are more likely than Jews, Catholics, the non-affiliated, and the general public, and as likely as Protestants and white Evangelicals to express this sentiment.

How Muslims are unique is in the community's young people (18–29), who are far more likely than their cohorts in the general public to say their religion is important to the way they think of themselves. We found that 91% of Muslims between the ages of 18 and 29 say their religion is important to the way they think of themselves, no different than older Muslims (50+). This is significantly different from their age cohorts in the general public who

are far less likely (49%) than their elders (80%) to say that their faith is important to the way they think of themselves. So far, American Muslim young people have not followed national trends of leaving religion.

The group that has more in common with their counterparts in the general public are Black Muslims. Nearly all (95%) of Black Muslims say their faith is important to how they think of themselves, compared to 79% of white Muslims. Likewise, 88% of Blacks in the general public say the same, compared to 69% of whites in the general public.

Unlike Age Peers, Young Muslims as Likely as Older Muslims to Say Religion Important to Identity

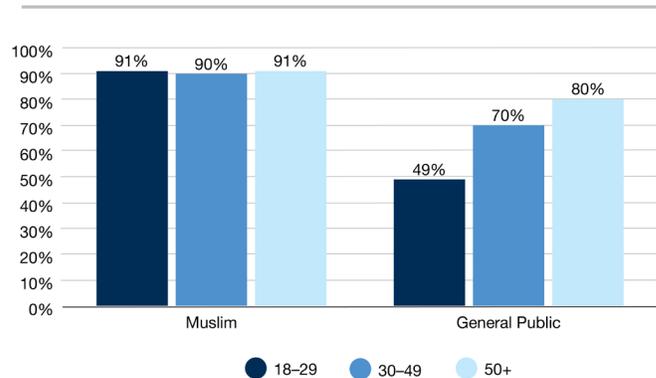


FIGURE 29: How important is your religion to the way you think of yourself, is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all? (% Net important shown) Base: Total respondents

Just as noteworthy is where we did *not* find differences in religious identification among Muslims: there were no differences between men and women, and there were no differences between those born in the U.S. and those born abroad. This also holds true for identifying as being an American. American-born Muslims are no different from their foreign-born counterparts (who are citizens) in how they identify with being an American.

As we found in earlier studies, a higher religious identity correlates with a higher American identity among all Americans, especially Muslims.

Despite the Perceived Costs, Muslims See Their Faith as an Asset to Their Lives and to Their Country

Islam is not just a source of identity for Muslims, it is also a source of psychological well-being and pride. Muslims are among the most likely faith community to say their faith identity is a source of happiness in their lives (85%),

with white Evangelicals as the only group more likely (94%) to say the same about their own faith. There is no gender differences though one could argue women bear additional “costs” for their faith identity in the form of reported discrimination. Again, young Muslims (84%) are as likely as older Muslims (88%) to agree, unlike their age cohorts (44%) in the general public.

Members of my faith community contribute a great deal to society.

Muslims (85%) are among the most likely to say their co-faithful contributes a great deal to society. Jews (91%) and white Evangelicals (95%) are more likely than Muslims to say their faith community contributes a great deal to society, but Muslims surpass Catholics (78%), Protestants (79%), non-affiliated (44%), and the general public (71%). Young Muslims are far more likely than their age peers in the general public to express this kind of confidence (82% vs. 53%) again with no age difference among Muslims.

I am proud to be identified as a member of my faith community.

Muslims (86%) are as proud to be identified as members of their faith community as are Jews (87%), Catholics (85%), and Protestants (83%) despite the perceived stigma associated with the Muslim faith. The only group that surpasses Muslims (and everyone else) in this regard is white Evangelicals (95%). There were no race, age, or gender differences among Muslims. And, as with the other “pride” variables, young Muslims (86%) are more likely to express pride than their generational peers (53%) in the general public.

A regression analysis found that the more likely it is that Muslims agree with these three “pride” measures, what we have identified as the “Pride Index,” the more likely it is that they are civically engaged, identify strongly with being an American, and endorse the idea that Muslims are committed to America’s well-being. They are also more likely (unsurprisingly) to say religion is important to them, frequent a mosque often, and say that their religion is important to the way they think of themselves. As expected, a higher “pride” score among Muslims is also linked to less support for restrictive measures aimed at the Muslim community, such as restricting Muslims from entering the country, surveilling mosques, and banning the building of mosques. And far more Muslims are proud of rather than prejudiced toward their community, and that’s good for everyone.

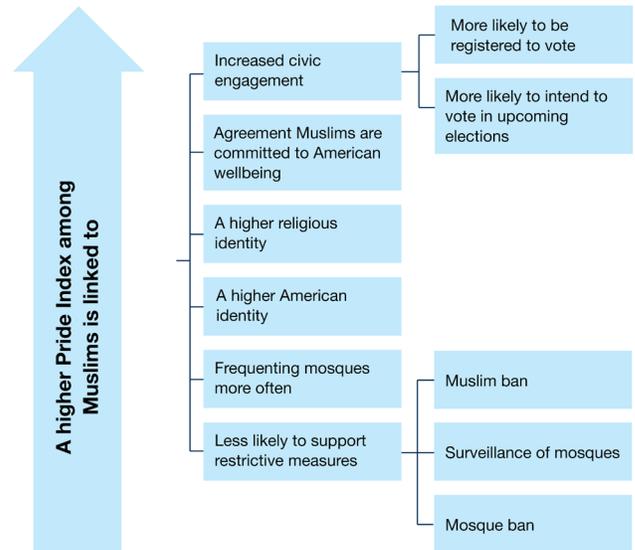


FIGURE 30: A high Pride Index

Pride Index

My faith identity/ community... (% Net agree shown)	Muslim	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	White Evangelical	Non- Affiliated	General Public
Is a source of happiness	85%	72%	73%	81%	94%	34%	68%
Contributes to society	85%	91%	78%	79%	95%	44%	71%
Makes me proud	86%	87%	85%	83%	95%	37%	72%
Index	87	86	82	85	93	58	78

TABLE 3: I see my faith identity as a source of happiness in my life. Members of my faith community contribute a great deal to society. I am proud to be identified as a member of my faith community. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents

Conclusion

Our research examines the “pride and prejudice” among American Muslims regarding their own faith community, and how those views compares to the public at large. By creating both an “Islamophobia” and “Pride” Index, we are able to provide a more robust measure of both than with single items, while also assessing how each broad sentiment links to important outcomes like civic engagement, support for authoritarian and discriminatory policies and the targeting of civilians by the military and individual actors. In future research, we plan to continue to track the Islamophobia Index among all faith groups studied and dig more into possible “protective factors,” which were beyond the scope of the current report.

Methodology

ISPU created the questionnaire for this study and commissioned two firms to conduct the survey: Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS) for a nationally representative survey of self-identified Muslims and Jews and Triton Polling & Research for a nationally representative survey of the general American public. From the Triton sample, researchers examined the views of self-identified Protestants (parsing out white Evangelicals), Catholics, and the non-affiliated. A total of **2,481** interviews were conducted. ISPU owns all data and intellectual property related to this study.

SSRS conducted a survey of Muslims and Jews for ISPU from January 8 to January 24, 2018. SSRS interviewed 802 Muslim and 478 Jewish respondents. The sample for the study came from three sources. SSRS telephoned a sample of households that were prescreened as being Muslim or Jewish in SSRS’s weekly national omnibus survey of 1,000 randomly selected respondents ($n = 803$) and purchased a listed sample for Muslim and Jewish households in both landline and cell phone samples from Experian, a sample provider that flags specific characteristics for each piece of a sample ($n = 127$). SSRS’s omnibus survey completed 60% of all interviews with cell phone respondents, so prescreened respondents included those who had been originally interviewed on both landline and cell phones. In an effort to supplement the number of Muslim interviews that SSRS was able to complete in the given time frame and with the amount of available prescreened sample, SSRS employed a web-based survey and completed the final 350 Muslim interviews via an online survey with samples

from a non-probability panel (a panel made up of respondents deliberately [not randomly] chosen to represent the demographic makeup of the community in terms of age, race, and socio-economics). The data from this project are weighted to match estimates of the Jewish and/or Muslim populations determined from three years of data collected through the SSRS omnibus as well as estimates from the Pew Research Center’s 2017 survey of Muslim Americans. The telephone portion of respondents has a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of Muslims $\pm 5.7\%$ and Jews $\pm 5.5\%$.

Triton live-agent surveys were conducted by interviewers in an in-house, state-of-the-art call center located near Bend, Oregon. All surveys incorporated standard statistical methods to select a representative sample of the target population. Triton conducted this telephone poll of the general public, on behalf of ISPU, by live interviews with respondents via landline telephones and cell phones between January 8 and January 24, 2018, securing a sample size of 1,201 completed surveys with a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of $\pm 2.8\%$. The weighting applied was gender, age, region, and race.

For more details on polling methodology, visit www.ispu.org/poll.

Endnotes

- 1 See Nour Kteily and Emile Bruneau, "Backlash: The Politics and Real-World Consequences of Minority Group Dehumanization," *Personal and Social Psychology Bulletin* 43, no. 1 (2017): 87–104 by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc.; Emile Bruneau, Nour Kteily, and Emily Falk, "Interventions Highlighting Hypocrisy Reduce Collective Blame of Muslim for Individual Acts of Violence and Assuage Anti-Muslim Hostility," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 44, no. 3 (2018): 430–48; and Nour Kteily, Emile Bruneau, and Gordon Hodson, "They See Us as Less Than Human: Metadehumanization Predicts Intergroup Conflict via Reciprocal Dehumanization," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 110, no. 3 (2016): 343–70.
- 2 For each item, the responses were assigned values from 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5). Each respondent's answers to the five-question battery were then added together to form an index (Cronbach's Alpha=.83) ranging from 5 to 25. For ease of presentation, this total was then rescaled from 0 to 100. We controlled for race/ethnicity, age, gender, income, education, and political party identification.
- 3 Pew Research Center, "U.S. Muslims Concerned about Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream," July 26, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/terrorism-and-concerns-about-extremism/#muslim-americans-even-more-likely-than-general-public-to-say-targeting-and-killing-civilians-is-never-justified>.
- 4 Charles Kurzman and David Schnazer, "The Growing Right-Wing Terror Threat," *New York Times*, June 16, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/16/opinion/the-other-terror-threat.html>.
- 5 Juleyka Lantigua-Williams, "How Police and Muslims Can Get Along," *The Atlantic*, January 14, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/01/how-police-and-muslims-can-get-along/458817>.
- 6 Kumar Rao and Carey Shenkman, *Equal Treatment?: Measuring the Legal and Media Responses to Ideologically Motivated Violence in the United States* (Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, 2018), <https://www.imv-report.org>.
- 7 Erin M. Kearns, Allison Betus, and Anthony Lemieux, *Why Do Some Terrorist Attacks Receive More Media Attention Than Others?* (Georgia State University, 2017, updated 2018).
- 8 Media Tenor, "U.S. TV Primetime News Prefers Stereotypes: Muslims Framed Mostly as Criminals," November 21, 2013, <http://us.mediatenor.com/en/library/speeches/259/us-tv-primetime-news-prefer-stereotypes>.
- 9 Rich Lowry, "Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Hero for Our Time," *Politico Magazine*, March 25, 2015, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/03/ayaan-hirsi-ali-a-hero-for-our-time-116404>.
- 10 Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," May 12, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape>.
- 11 Brian Naylor, "Black Votes Matter: African-Americans Propel Jones To Alabama Win," *NPR*, December 13, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/12/13/570531505/black-votes-matter-african-americans-propel-jones-to-alabama-win>.
- 12 Dalia Mogahed and Fouad Pervez, *American Muslim Poll: Participation, Priorities, and Facing Prejudice in the 2016 Elections*, (Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, 2016), <https://www.ispu.org/poll>.
- 13 Dalia Mogahed and Youssef Chouhoud, *American Muslims Poll: Muslims at the Crossroads* (Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, 2017), <https://www.ispu.org/poll>.
- 14 Dalia Mogahed and Youssef Chouhoud, *American Muslims Poll: Muslims at the Crossroads* (Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, 2017), https://www.ispu.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/AMP_2017-24.jpg.
- 15 Jack Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2014).
- 16 For example, a 2006 Pew poll found that 40–60% of respondents in the U.S. and several Western European countries chose "violent" as a characteristic they associated with Muslims. Pew Research Center, *Europe's Muslims More Moderate: The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other* (Washington, D.C: Pew Global, 2006), 16.
- 17 See, e.g., Amanda Taub, "The Rise of American Authoritarianism," *Vox*, March 1, 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/3/1/11127424/trump-authoritarianism>.
- 18 In addition to key demographics and political party identification, we included respondents' scores on the Islamophobia Index in our statistical model. Authoritarian attitudes toward press freedom remaining significantly correlated with support for the so-called "Muslim ban," surveilling American mosques, and the banning of new mosques in the United States.
- 19 Hannah Allam and Talal Ansari, "State and Local Republican Officials Have Been Bashing Muslims. We Counted.," *BuzzFeed News*, April 10, 2018, https://www.buzzfeed.com/hannahallam/trump-republicans-bashing-muslims-without-repercussions?utm_term=.epqXR07RL#.qw4GLg2LW.
- 20 For each item, the responses were assigned values from 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5). Each respondent's answers to the five-question battery were then added together to form an index (Cronbach's Alpha=.83) ranging from 5 to 25. For ease of presentation, this total was then rescaled from 0 to 100.
- 21 See Nour Kteily and Emile Bruneau, "Backlash: The Politics and Real-World Consequences of Minority Group Dehumanization," *Personal and Social Psychology Bulletin* 43, no. 1 (2017): 87–104 by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc.; Emile Bruneau, Nour Kteily, and Emily Falk, "Interventions Highlighting Hypocrisy Reduce Collective Blame of Muslim for Individual Acts of Violence and Assuage Anti-Muslim Hostility," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 44, no. 3 (2018): 430–48; and Nour Kteily, Emile Bruneau, and Gordon Hodson, "They See Us as Less Than Human: Metadehumanization Predicts Intergroup Conflict via Reciprocal Dehumanization," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 110, no. 3 (2016): 343–70.
- 22 More specifically, we controlled for race/ethnicity, age, gender, income, education, and political party identification.
- 23 See endnote 1.

End Notes, *continued*

- 24 Pew Research Center, “U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream,” July 26, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/terrorism-and-concerns-about-extremism/#muslim-americans-even-more-likely-than-general-public-to-say-targeting-and-killing-civilians-is-never-justified>.
- 25 Charles Kurzman and David Schnazer, “The Growing Right-Wing Terror Threat,” *The New York Times*, June 16, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/16/opinion/the-other-terror-threat.html>.
- 26 Juleyka Lantigua-Williams, “How Police and Muslims Can Get Along,” *The Atlantic*, January 14, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/01/how-police-and-muslims-can-get-along/458817>.
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- 30 Rich Lowry, “Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Hero for Our Time,” *Politico Magazine*, March 25, 2015, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/03/ayaan-hirsi-ali-a-hero-for-our-time-116404>.



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ISPU conducts objective, solution-seeking research that empowers American Muslims to develop their community and fully contribute to democracy and pluralism in the United States. Since 2002, ISPU has been at the forefront of discovering trends and opportunities that impact the American Muslim community. Our research aims to educate the general public and enable community change agents, the media, and policymakers to make evidence-based decisions. In addition to building in-house capacity, ISPU has assembled leading experts across multiple disciplines, building a solid reputation as a trusted source for information for and about American Muslims.

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