



Institute *for* Social Policy
and Understanding

RESEARCH MAKING AN IMPACT

AMERICAN MUSLIM POLL

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

2016-2020



**ISPU provides objective
research and education about
American Muslims to support
well-informed dialogue and
decision-making.**



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American Muslim Poll Fifth Anniversary Collection (2016–2020)

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Letter from the Executive Director

DEAR READER,

At the Paris World Fair in 1900, sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois led a team of Atlanta University students and alumni to design and hand draw 60 groundbreaking data visualizations explaining institutionalized racism to the world. Less than 40 years after the end of slavery in America, the prominently displayed exhibit greeted visitors upon entry, providing them with a nuanced understanding of the incredible challenges for and accomplishments of Black Americans. Du Bois and his team understood that accurate data shared in visually appealing ways can tell an irrefutable story that compels viewers to take action.

At the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), we endeavor to continue this sacred mission. Almost exactly 100 years later, ISPU's founders recognized the transformative power of research, just as Du Bois and his team did all those years ago. Yet, in 2002, in the context of an America where Muslims were front and center in the public square, little research or data existed on this much talked about, rarely heard from community.

Enter ISPU's American Muslim Poll.

Our poll has given American Muslims a collective voice. For five years, between 2016 and 2020, this publication has captured an annual snapshot of American Muslim experiences in all their diversity, as well as tracked trends over time. ISPU's poll has shown where our country has made progress toward thriving and equal communities and where we have work still to do. It has pointed toward solutions to some of our biggest challenges and helped prioritize limited community development resources. And it laid the foundation for greater understanding by providing a snapshot of an American community so often misunderstood.

As author Cathy O'Neil noted in her book *Weapons of Math Destruction*, "Most people who have the data are in power. And most people who are powerless do not have data." ISPU's American Muslim Poll goes some way to rectifying this imbalance, empowering American Muslim communities and indeed, all of us, with quality research.

So, we hope you feel that empowerment in this compilation of five years of American Muslim Polls. We extend our thanks to those who made it possible through their financial support, to the members of our Legacy Circle of Excellence, who are creating a strong foundation for this work to continue for years to come, and to our partners, advisors, scholars, staff, and board, all of whom make this work possible. Lastly, thank you to all those who read this research, and then use it to make our country a better place.

We know that facts are fuel for positive change. Our research guides, our facts illuminate, and through sharing this research, the ripple effects of change will last far into the future.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Meira Neggaz".

Meira Neggaz
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*ISPU remembers Dr. Emile Bruneau
and his profound contributions to
ISPU's American Muslim Poll and to his
scholarship "putting science to work for
peace" (1972–2020).*

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PREFACE



WE OFTEN HEAR about the “silent majority,” the vast swaths of people with no platform, no media coverage, and no megaphones. For American Muslims, it’s closer to a “silenced majority”—those left out of conversations about their own community. They are either demonized or ignored by a mainstream media that covered them more negatively than it did North Korea in 2015, a year the totalitarian state threatened the United States with nuclear annihilation. In fact, one study found that over the past 25 years, *The New York Times* portrayed Islam and Muslims more negatively than cancer and cocaine. Another study showed that in discussions about the so-called Muslim Ban, only 2% of the experts featured on network news to discuss its implications were actually Muslim.

Add to this the well-funded and deeply networked “Islamophobia Industry,” a \$200 million effort to manufacture misinformation about Muslims in America. Muslims only make up about 1% of the total U.S. population, so most Americans rely on the media to inform them about the American Muslim community. Since roughly half of Americans don’t know someone who is Muslim, and even fewer have Muslims as close friends, this steady stream of negative information can lead to misunderstandings and prejudice in even the most otherwise fair-minded person. This makes ordinary Americans more vulnerable to being manipulated by political actors who use fear and bigotry to justify self-serving policies, negatively impacting the quality of our democracy, eroding civil liberties, and paving the way for Islamophobic state action targeting American Muslims.

The dearth of sound information about American Muslims also impacts the growth and development of Muslim faith communities. First, Islamophobia, both individual and institutional, erects obstacles to American Muslims’ equality and ability to thrive. Second, Muslims are not immune to internalizing Islamophobic imagery and tropes about their own community. Third, when Muslim leaders lack sound research about the challenges and strengths of their communities, they cannot work as effectively to build and develop their community; they don’t know where to target resources, where the gaps in services lie, or which problems are systematic and which are specific to one space. These leaders also have no idea how severe a particular challenge faced by the community is compared to other faith communities. This gap in information results in some denying the problem on one hand, or exaggerating the problem on the other, buying into the false narrative of “Muslim pathology.” Neither is an effective approach to positive change.

A way was needed to understand American Muslim communities in a representative, rigorous, and responsive manner to foster understanding and build community. American Muslims needed a way to speak for themselves.

ISPU started its annual national survey of American Muslims in 2016. Right away, we knew it was critical that the survey not just poll Americans who are Muslim, but Americans of other faiths and no faith as well. We had to understand American Muslims’ perspectives within the context of their nation’s faith landscape, not as an isolated specimen. Our vision was a study that would serve both to educate the wider society on their Muslim neighbors and to inform Muslims themselves about their strengths and struggles.

We set out to create a study that would meet at least three requirements:

1. It needed to be rigorous and representative so policymakers, mainstream media, and Muslim organizations could rely on it to inform their work.
2. It needed to be responsive and relevant to the issues facing the nation as a whole, as well as the specific challenges and opportunities for American Muslims.

3. It needed to have reach. We needed to make sure the survey results received massive media coverage at the moment of release, while also building a long-term dissemination strategy through presentations, training workshops, infographics, and short videos.

Each year, our survey covered a variety of topics, both timely and enduring, and was carried out amid a unique national context, providing our readers a one-of-a-kind window into the lives of American Muslims.

American Muslim Poll 2016: Participation, Priorities, and Facing Prejudice in the 2016 Elections

In January 2016, our country was in the middle of a divisive election during which many candidates used xenophobia and racism to score political points. During this election, some political figures questioned whether someone could be both a devout Muslim and a patriotic American, while others suggested that mosques were places of radicalization. This study set out to inform a divisive and often misinformed national conversation about who Muslims were and what they believed. We discovered the following:

- Strong Muslim religious identity is linked to a strong American identity.
- More frequent mosque attendance is linked to greater civic engagement.
- Discrimination causes Muslims to be less optimistic about America, but it also pushes them to greater community engagement.
- Muslims reject violence more than other faith groups.

American Muslim Poll 2017: Muslims at the Crossroads

After the results of the 2016 elections, it was important to document the impact of this outcome on the mental health, identity, and sense of safety of American Muslims. Here is what we found:

- Muslims disproportionately felt the negative effects of the political climate.
- Muslims responded to prejudice with resilience and solidarity.
- Muslim women defied stereotypes while suffering and resisting the most.
- Although they are less politically engaged, Muslims are equally invested in the country's welfare.

American Muslim Poll 2018: Pride and Prejudice

In 2018, we introduced the Islamophobia Index, a systematic way to measure the degree to which the public agreed with five key anti-Muslim tropes. Here is some of what we discovered:

- The majority of Americans across faith and non-faith groups support Muslim civil rights.
- Islamophobia is not only bad for Muslims—it's bad for all Americans. Those who score higher on the Islamophobia Index are more likely to approve of discriminatory policies targeting Muslims (banning Muslims, surveilling mosques), agree to limiting democratic freedoms when the country is under threat (suspending checks and balances, limiting freedom of the press), and condone military and individual attacks on civilians.

American Muslim Poll 2019: Predicting and Preventing Islamophobia

In 2019, history was made when Representatives Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib became the first two Muslim women to be elected to Congress. We fielded our survey in the midst of the longest government shutdown in American history. And it was the one-year anniversary of the Supreme Court decision to uphold the third iteration of the Muslim Ban. This survey again measured the Islamophobia Index and examined the predictive and protective factors associated with anti-Muslim animus. Some of the top findings included the following:

- Despite dissatisfaction with the president, Muslims are the most likely group to express optimism with the direction of the country.
- Jews and Hispanic Americans are the most favorable toward Muslims, and white Evangelicals are the least.
- Knowing a Muslim, knowledge of Islam, and positive views of other minorities are linked to lower levels of Islamophobia.
- Support for the Muslim Ban does little to help political candidates with most voters.

American Muslim Poll 2020: Amid Pandemic and Protest

This survey took a snapshot of the American faith landscape just as the nation began a lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. This poll examines attitudes about the November election and political engagement, and continues to track the Islamophobia Index. Some of our most striking findings include the following:

- Muslim voter registration continues to climb but remains lower than other faith communities.
- Muslim political activity exceeds that of the general public.
- While support for President Trump rose, Muslims still prefer a Democratic president.
- Jewish opinions of Muslims have improved over the past three years.

ISPU's mission is to enable well-informed dialogue and decision-making regarding American Muslims. This poll is but one way we fulfill this mission. We hope this collection of findings from the first five years of American Muslim Polls serves as a reference for all those who wish to better understand not only Muslims in America, but all those who call this country home.



Dalia Mogahed
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AMERICAN MUSLIM POLL 2016



PARTICIPATION, PRIORITIES, AND FACING PREJUDICE IN THE 2016 ELECTIONS

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Summary

In early 2016, the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding conducted a survey of Muslims, Jews, Protestants, and Catholics to examine their attitudes on various issues from politics and religion, to violence and identity. What emerged from the results is a profile of a Muslim community that is both pious and patriotic, optimistic and weary of discrimination, similar to Jews in its politics, and much like Protestants in its religious practice.

Introduction

IN THE YEARS after the September 11th attacks in America, Muslims have been the subjects of frequent discussions but seldom among the participants. This attention often increases around elections as some political leaders use identity politics in their discourse and their policy proposals to target Muslims, as happened in the Ground Zero mosque discussions during the 2010 midterm elections, and the calls to close down mosques and ban all Muslims from entering the United States during the 2016 presidential campaign.

The rise and constant media coverage of the so-called Islamic State is often conflated with discussions about Islam itself, creating an environment of fear of Muslims among some Americans. One study found that 80% of news coverage about Islam and Muslims in the United States is negative, with armed militants, not religious leaders, representing the faith.¹ Roughly half of Americans say they don't know a Muslim² and the faith group is the least warmly regarded religious community in Amer-

ica. The lack of Muslim voices in the national discourse makes much of the discussion of the community speculative or worse. These combined factors work to create a climate in which the majority of American Muslims report some level of discrimination—the highest of any major faith group.

The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) offers a badly needed evidence-based contribution to this highly charged and often misinformed national conversation. Muslims were surveyed not as isolated specimens, but within the context of their country's faith landscape, along with Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. The survey examines the attitudes of these American faith groups on various topics from politics and religion, to violence and identity. What emerges is the profile of a Muslim community that is both pious and patriotic, optimistic and weary of discrimination, similar to Jews in its politics, and much like Protestants in its religious practice.

Results

In early 2016, the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding conducted a survey of Muslims, Jews, Protestants, and Catholics to examine their attitudes on various issues from politics and religion, to violence and identity.

What emerged from the results is a profile of a Muslim community that is both pious and patriotic, optimistic and weary of discrimination, similar to Jews in its politics, and much like Protestants in its religious practice.

Muslims are ethnically diverse, the majority favor Democrats

Muslims are the youngest and most racially diverse major religious community in America—the only community without a majority race. Within the Muslim population is a nearly equal percentage of four different racial/ethnic subgroups: white, Black, Asian, and Arab. Muslims are also by far the youngest faith community, with 36% of the population younger than 35 compared with roughly one quarter of Protestants, for example.

Most Muslims support a Democrat for president. Compared with the three other major faith groups, Hillary Clinton

finds her strongest support among Muslims (40%). Muslims are as likely as Jews (27% and 24%, respectively) to favor Bernie Sanders. Donald Trump, the Republican front-runner who has made a number of controversial remarks about Muslims, has his lowest support in this community (4%).

Muslims lean Democratic to a degree only eclipsed by the Jewish population and constitute the lowest share of Republicans of any religious group by a substantial margin.

Muslims Favor Democrats

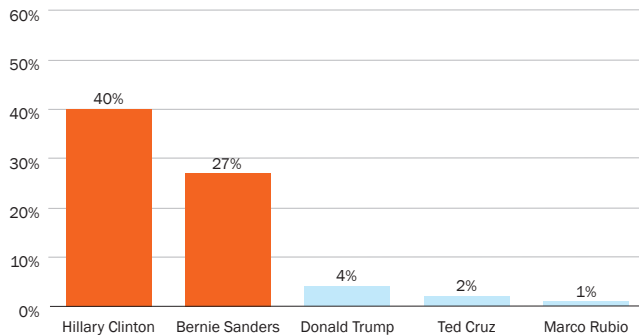


FIGURE 1: If the presidential election were held today, who would you want to win? Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2016

Muslims, Jews Most Likely to Identify as Democrat

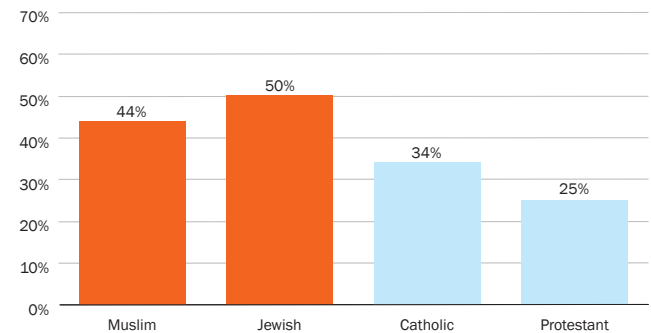


FIGURE 2: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent? (% Democrat shown) Base: Total respondents, 2016

For Muslims, economy, Islamophobia are top priorities for next president

Muslims, like other American faith groups, see the economy as a top priority for the next president. The most striking difference in priorities is, however, that Muslims are the only faith group to identify bigotry and civil rights as a priority (9%).

Muslims' Top Priorities Are Economy, Civil Rights, Education

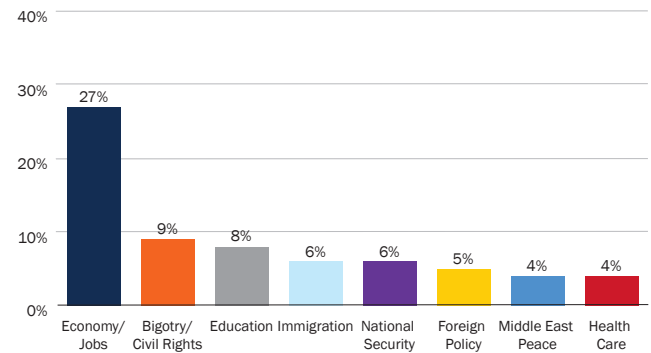


FIGURE 3: What is the most important policy priority on which you judge a candidate? (Open-ended, first response shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2016

Muslims report more religious discrimination than any other group

More than half of Muslims reported facing some level of discrimination in the past year because of their religion, with 18% reporting regular discrimination, the highest of any group.

Those who report regular discrimination were less likely to be optimistic about the country but more likely to engage in community activities. This suggests that Muslims respond to discrimination by becoming more proactive and involved rather than more isolated.

Muslims Report the Most Religious Discrimination

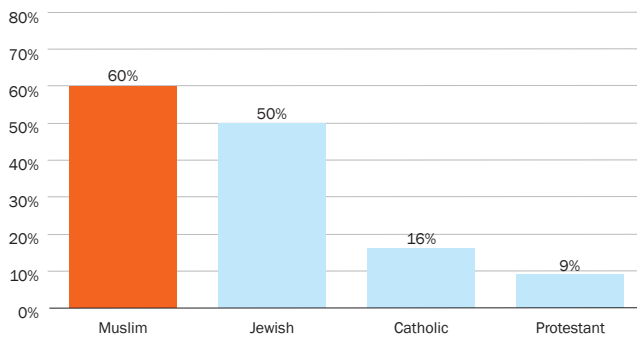


FIGURE 4: How often, if at all, have you experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total respondents, 2016

Muslims Reporting Religious Discrimination Less Optimistic, but More Engaged in Community

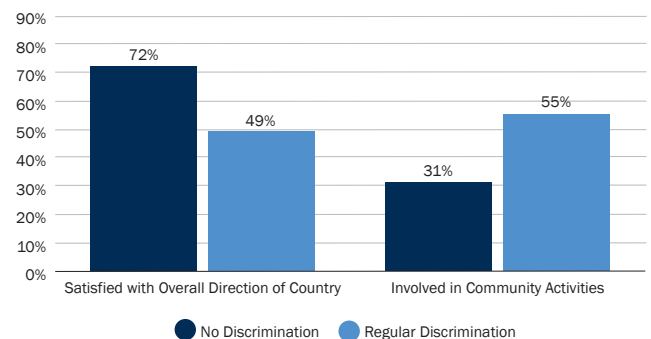


FIGURE 5: How often, if at all, have you experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) In the past 12 months, have you worked with other people from your neighborhood to fix a problem or improve a condition in your community or elsewhere? (% Yes shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2016

Muslims are equally engaged in community, less politically

Muslims are least likely to be politically engaged. Whereas 85% of Muslims who can legally vote say they plan on casting their ballot for the next president, only 60% are actually registered compared with at least 86% of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. This means that a full one fourth of Muslims who can legally vote and say they plan to vote still have not registered, resulting in the largest gap between the intention to participate and the readiness to do so. Roughly 15% of Muslims who are able to vote for the next president say they do not plan to—the largest of any faith group.

Muslims are as likely (statistically) as other religious groups, however, to cooperate with people in their neighborhoods to solve problems. This suggests that those who aim to increase Muslim political engagement would do well to start at the local level.

Muslims Equally Engaged in Community, Less Politically

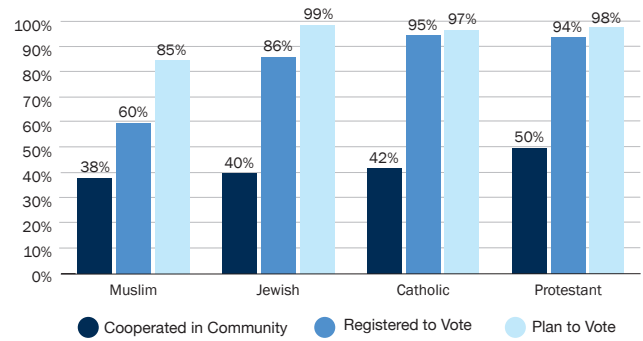


FIGURE 6: In the past 12 months, have you worked with other people from your neighborhood to fix a problem or improve a condition in your community or elsewhere? Are you registered to vote at your current address or not? Do you plan to vote in the 2016 presidential election? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2016

Mosque attendance is linked to civic engagement, not radicalization

American mosques made headlines when front-runner Republican candidate Donald Trump suggested that they be closed because they allegedly cause radicalization. We found that frequent mosque attendance has no correlation with attitudes toward violence against civilians, but it is linked with higher levels of civic engagement. Muslims who regularly attend mosques are more likely to work with their neighbors to solve community problems, be registered to vote, and plan to vote.

Frequent Mosque Attendance Linked to Greater Civic Engagement

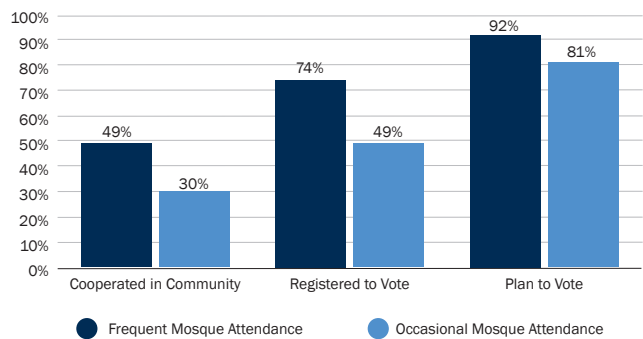


FIGURE 7: In the past 12 months, have you worked with other people from your neighborhood to fix a problem or improve a condition in your community or elsewhere? Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? Do you plan to vote in the 2016 presidential election? (% Yes shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2016

Stronger Muslim religious identity is linked to stronger American identity

Despite lower political engagement, Muslims are as likely as Protestants to have a strong American identity. Muslims are also as likely as other Americans to identify strongly with their faith.

Although a recent poll shows that a slight majority of

Americans say⁴ they do not believe Islam is compatible with American values, the data paint a different picture. Muslims who say their faith is important to their identity are more likely to say being American is important to how they think of themselves.

American Faith Groups Share Strong Religious and American Identities

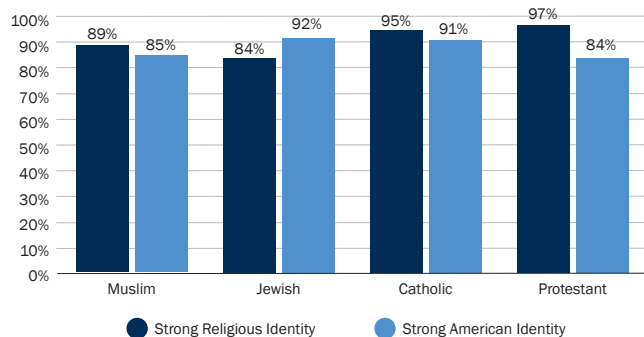


FIGURE 8: On a scale from 1 to 4, how important is being an American to the way you think of yourself, where 1 means not important at all and a 4 means very important? On a scale from 1 to 4, how important is your religion to the way you think of yourself, where a 1 means not important at all and a 4 means very important? (% Net important vs. net not important shown) Base: Total respondents, 2016

Muslims with Strong Religious Identities Are More Likely to Have Strong American Identities

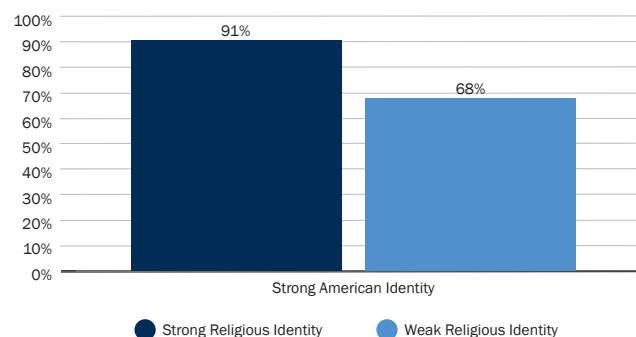



FIGURE 9: How important is being an American to the way you think of yourself: is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all? (% Net important vs. net not important shown); How important is your religion to the way you think of yourself, is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all? (% Net important vs. net not important shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2016

Muslims reject attacks on civilians

Muslims oppose military targeting and killing of civilians more than any other faith group, and are as likely as other faith groups to also oppose the same act of violence carried out by individuals or a small group. Muslims who

attend religious services more frequently or have a stronger religious identity do not differ in their views of civilian casualties by either a military or an individual from those who do not hold strong religious views. 

Muslims Most Likely Faith Group to Reject Military Attacks on Civilians

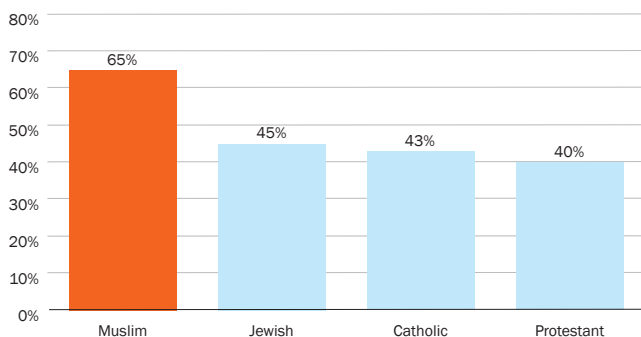


FIGURE 10: Some people think that for the military to target and kill civilians is sometimes justified, while others think that this kind of violence is never justified. Which is your opinion? (Never, sometimes, depends, don't know/refused). (% Never justified shown) Base: Total respondents, 2016

American Faith Groups Reject Individual Attacks on Civilians Equally

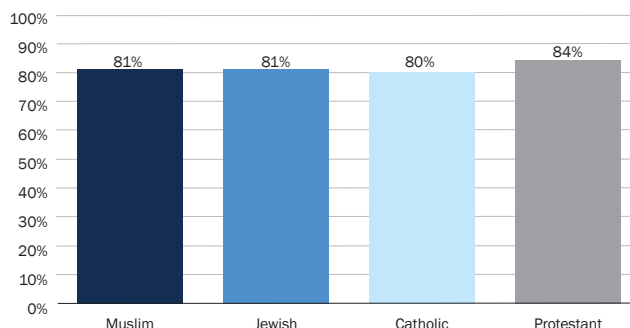


FIGURE 11: Some people think that for an individual or a small group of people to target and kill civilians is sometimes justified, while others think that this kind of violence is never justified. Which is your opinion? (Never, sometimes, depends, don't know/refused). (% Never justified shown) Base: Total respondents, 2016

Endnotes

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AMERICAN MUSLIM POLL 2017



MUSLIMS AT THE CROSSROADS

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Summary

American Muslims have been at the center of heated social and political debates. Rarely, however, are Muslims themselves centered as participants in these conversations, and even more rarely are their attitudes and behaviors examined systematically. As a contribution to filling this knowledge gap, the second American Muslim Poll is designed to help public officials, civil society stakeholders, and other interested parties gain a well-rounded understanding of the American Muslim community.

Introduction

FROM EARLY ON in a deeply divisive presidential election cycle until today, American Muslims have been at the center of heated social and political debates. One byproduct of this increased salience is an uptick in negatively charged rhetoric and discriminatory acts. Conversely, there has also been an outpouring of support and solidarity (particularly following the election of Donald Trump) aimed not just at Muslims already in the United States but also toward those who yearn to make America their home. Common across all of these discourses, actions, and reactions, however, is the frequent relegation of Muslims to subjects of consideration. Rarely are Muslims active participants in political dialogue,¹ and even more rarely are their attitudes and behaviors systematically examined. The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)'s American Muslim Poll 2017: Muslims at the Crossroads helps narrow this wide knowledge gap.

In line with ISPU's core mission, this analysis of the 2017 poll data is designed to help public officials, civil society stakeholders, and other interested parties gain a multi-dimensional understanding of the American Muslim community. We do this in three ways. First, we provide key demographic figures that complement the sparse data on American Muslims. These include tallies of age, race/

ethnicity, education, income, and sexual orientation. Second, moving beyond these raw numbers, we elaborate relationships of interest between key variables. These preliminary observations on, for example, education by gender and discrimination by race/ethnicity, will make for more informed contemporary conversations and future research. Third, we compare American Muslim responses with those of other major American faith (and non-faith) groups, including American Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and non-affiliated Americans.² Such a cross-group analysis is truly exceptional because few surveys exist that simultaneously gather meaningful data on this mix of populations. This comparison thus provides an empirical foundation for discussions on Muslim "exceptionalism."

The report is organized into four sections corresponding to different levels of analysis. Starting with the broadest view, the first section is dedicated to issues of intercommunal relations and American Muslim political engagement. Thereafter, we examine intracommunal issues, focusing on race relations and institutional engagement. Next, we turn to the family, presenting statistics on domestic violence and bullying. Finally, we elaborate individual-level experience, highlighting positive and negative fallout from the election.

Results

Muslims are satisfied with the country's trajectory, despite the vast majority being displeased with the outcome of the presidential election

Forty-one percent of Muslims report being satisfied with the country's current trajectory, a higher percentage than any other major faith group or those who are not affiliated with a faith. This optimism belies the relatively small proportion of Muslims (15%) who favored a Donald Trump presidency. Indeed, a substantial segment of Muslim respondents (roughly 30%) did not favor either of the two

major party candidates, with only a slim majority (54%) supporting a Hillary Clinton presidency.

In large part, due to widespread dissatisfaction with the options presented to them, American Muslims were the least likely group in our survey to vote (61%) or be registered to vote (68%).

Muslims Most Satisfied with Country

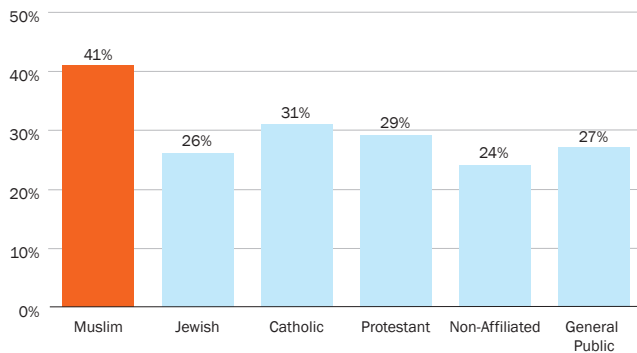


FIGURE 1: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with ways things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Muslims and Jews Least Likely to Favor Trump Win

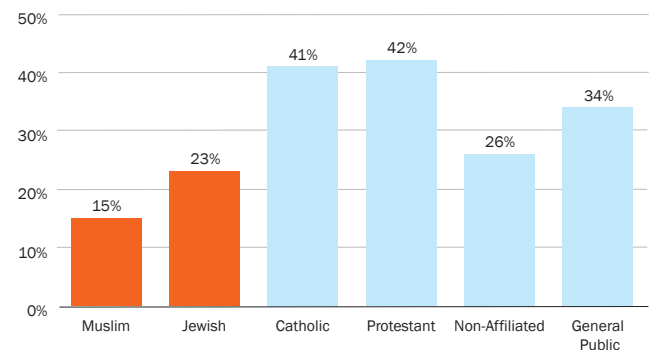


FIGURE 2: Who did you want to win the [2016] presidential election? (% Favored Donald Trump shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Muslims Least Likely to Register to Vote

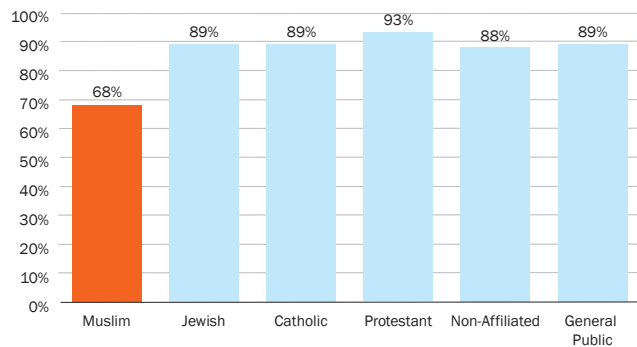


FIGURE 3: Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2017

Muslims Least Likely to Vote

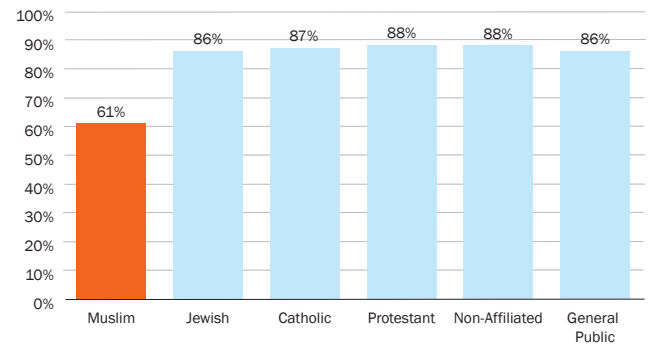


FIGURE 4: Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2017

Dissatisfaction with Choices, Indifference, Not Theology, Top Reason for Muslims' Low Vote

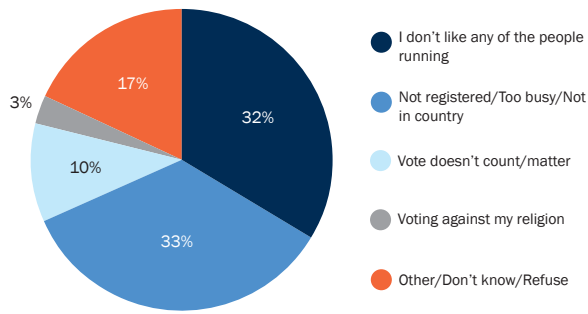


FIGURE 5: Can you please tell me why you did not vote in the 2016 presidential election? (Open ended) Base: Total Muslim respondents who did not vote in the 2016 presidential election, 2017

Younger Muslims Least Likely to Vote

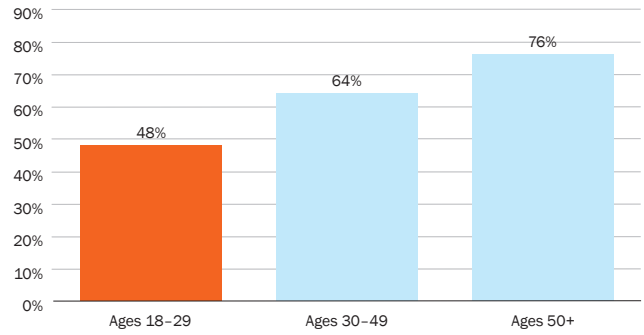


FIGURE 6: Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election? (% Yes shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2017

Asian Muslims Most Likely to Vote

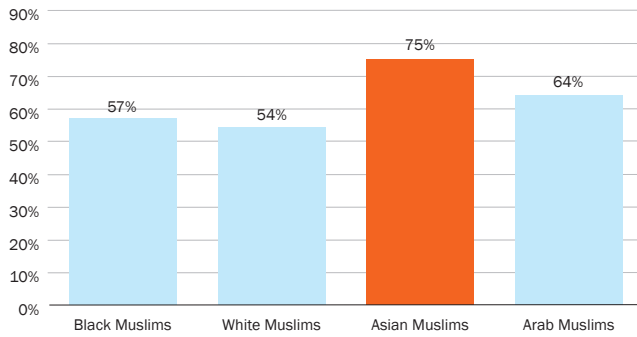


FIGURE 7: Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election? (% Yes shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2017

Muslims are the most likely faith group to support Black Lives Matter

The dearth of formal Muslim political engagement does not mean that Muslims are generally disengaged from domestic concerns. For instance, 44% reported working with their neighbors to solve a community problem. Also along these lines, one of the top concerns for Muslims is discrimination at home. This sentiment translates into

35% of those who donate to a Muslim cause donating to civil rights organizations, as well as robust (66%) support for the Black Lives Matter movement. This is especially true among young Muslims, Muslim women, and Asian and Black Muslims (more than 70%).

Muslims Most Likely Faith Group to Support Black Lives Matter Movement

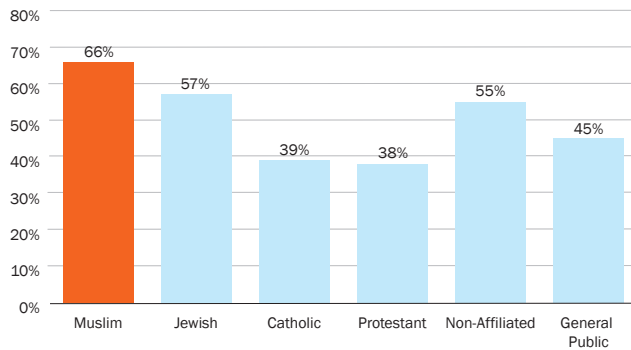


FIGURE 8: From what you've heard, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the Black Lives Matter movement? (% Net support shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Black, Asian, Young, Female Muslims Most Supportive of BLM

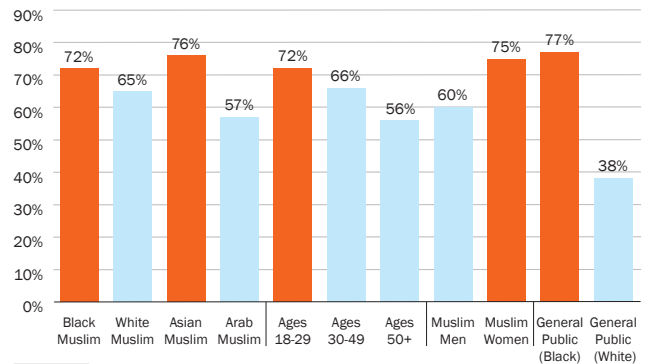


FIGURE 9: From what you've heard, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the Black Lives Matter movement? (% Net support shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Muslims are young and diverse, with lower socioeconomic status

Compared with other faith communities and non-affiliated Americans in our study, American Muslims are the youngest, with more than one third younger than 30 years of age. American Muslims are the most ethnically and racially diverse faith group with no single background garnering a majority. Half of Muslims were born in the United

States; thus, immigration continues to be a significant part of the American Muslim story. Although comparable to the general public in terms of educational attainment, Muslims (35%) are significantly more likely than any other faith group (18% or less) to report low (less than \$30,000) annual household income.

Muslims America's Youngest Faith Community

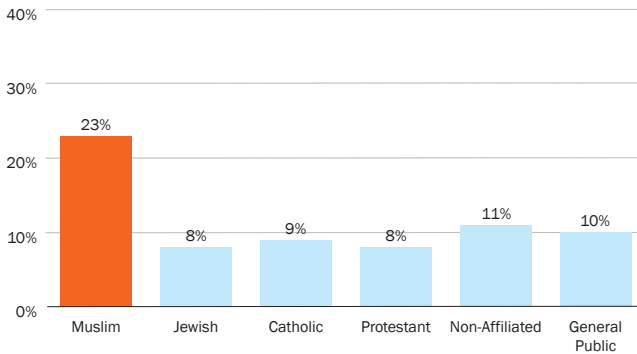


FIGURE 10: What is your age? (% Age 18–24 shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Muslims Most Ethnically Diverse Faith Community

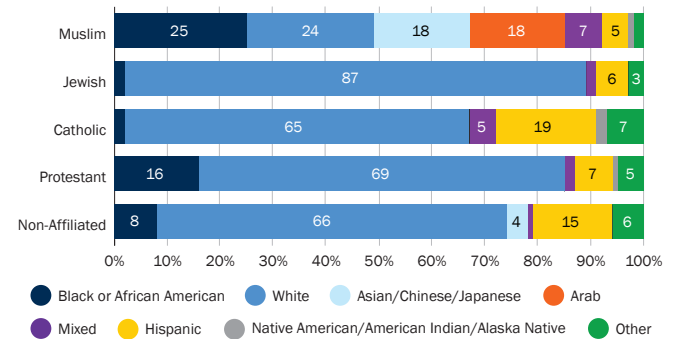


FIGURE 11: Are you of Hispanic origin or background? Do you consider yourself white, Black or African American, Asian, Arab, Native American, Pacific Islander, mixed race, or some other race? Base: Total respondents, 2017

Most Muslims Are Americans by Birth or Naturalization

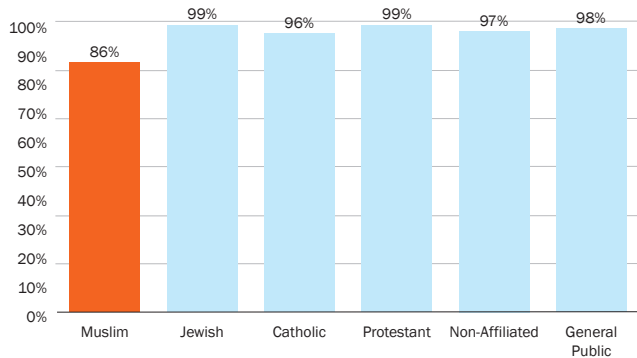


FIGURE 12: Were you born in the United States, or not? Base: Total respondents, 2017; Are you a citizen of the United States, or not? Base: Total respondents who were not born in the U.S. or don't know/refused to say if they were born in the U.S., 2017 (% Net born in the U.S. or a U.S. citizen shown)

Half of American Muslims Are Native Born

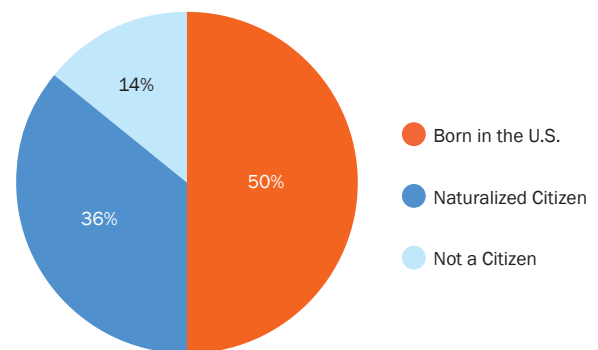


FIGURE 13: Were you born in the United States, or not? Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2017; Are you a citizen of the United States, or not? Base: Total Muslim respondents who were not born in the U.S. or don't know/refused to say if they were born in the U.S., 2017

Muslims Most Likely to Report Low Income

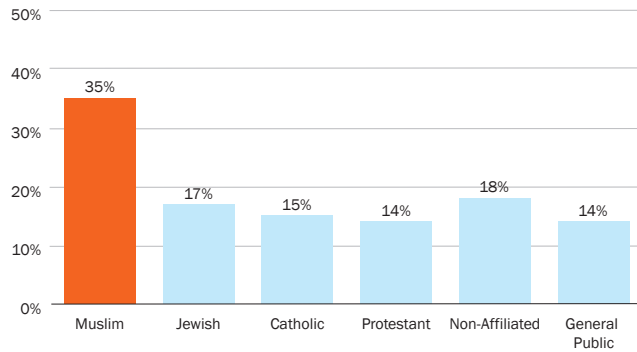


FIGURE 14: What is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes? (% That net less than \$30K shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Black, Arab Muslims Most Likely to Report Low Income

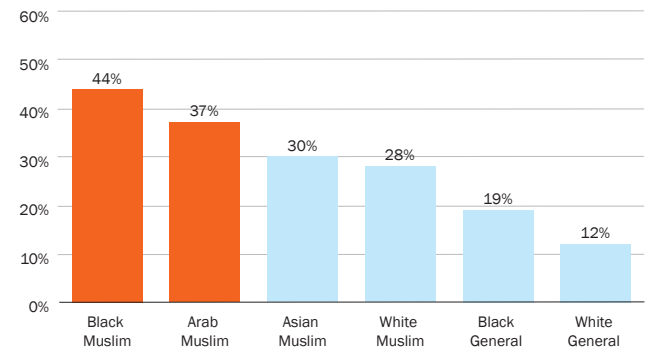


FIGURE 15: What is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes? (% That net less than \$30K shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Muslim Women More Likely Than Muslim Men to Be Middle Class

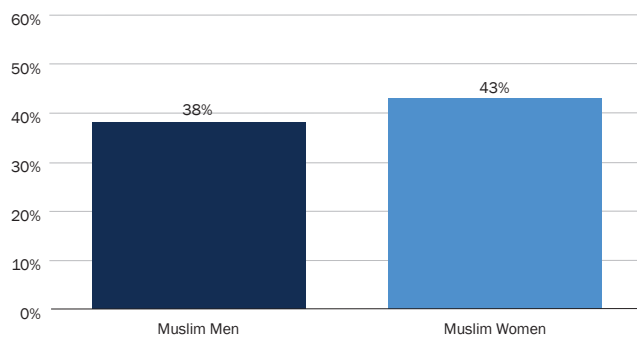


FIGURE 16: What is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes? (% That net \$30K-\$100K shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2017

Nine in Ten Americans Identify as “Straight”

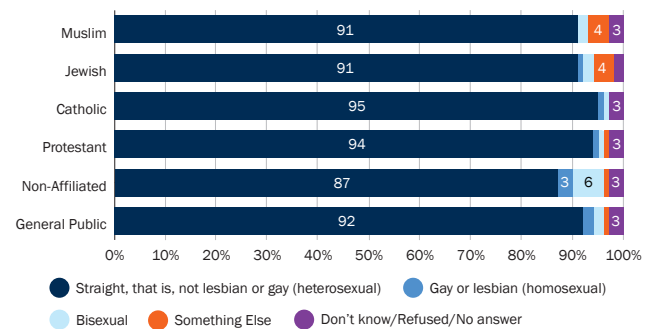


FIGURE 17: Do you think of yourself as: A. Straight, that is, not lesbian or gay; B. Gay or lesbian; C. Bisexual; or D. Something else? Base: Total respondents, 2017

Muslims, Christians Similar in Level of Education

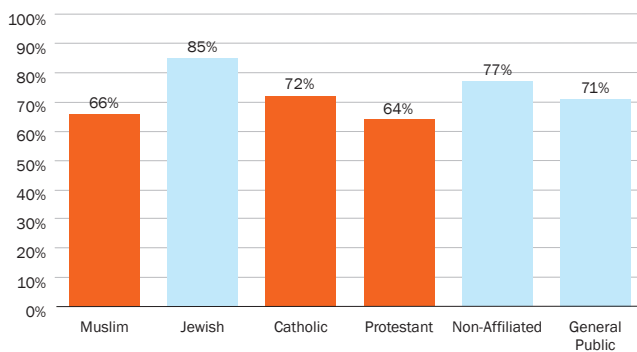


FIGURE 18: What is the last grade of school you completed? (% Some post-high school education) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Muslim Women Surpass Men in Education

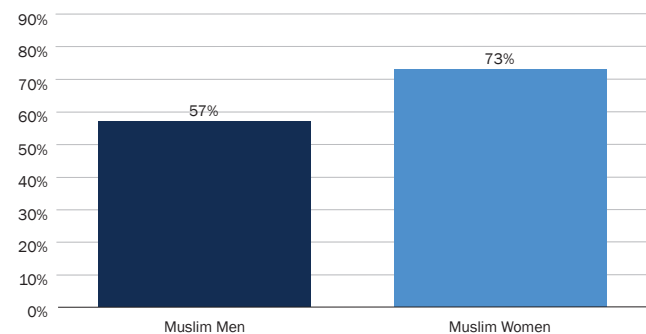


FIGURE 19: What is the last grade of school you completed? (% Some post-high school education) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2017

Young Muslims attend religious services less often than elders, but more often than their generational peers from other faiths

Muslims and Catholics reported attending weekly religious services at equal rates. When Muslims are compared with the general public, younger Muslims, like their counterparts of other faiths, attend religious services less frequently than older Muslims. Yet, not only is this drop-off less pronounced in the Muslim sample, it does not appear to be a function of the reduced importance of religion in a person's life. This suggests that lower levels of mosque attendance among younger Muslims may represent alienation not from their faith, but rather from the institutions that represent it. It may also reflect that young people often have less flexible jobs, making attending noon-time Friday congregational prayer more difficult.

Men and women are statistically indistinguishable when it comes to mosque attendance, underscoring the need for the community's physical and financial resources to reflect this parity when it comes to designing and managing Muslim sacred spaces.³

Muslims, Catholics Attend Religious Service with Equal Frequency

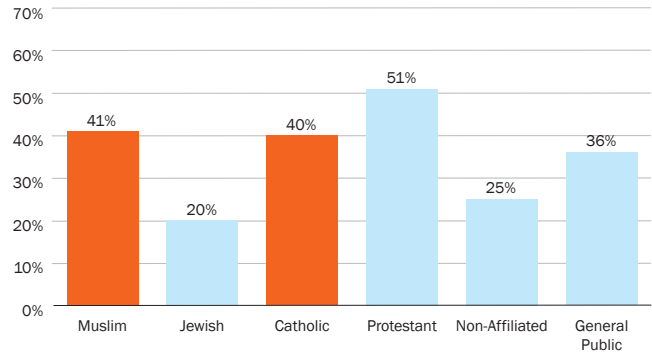


FIGURE 20: Aside from weddings and funerals how often do you attend religious services? (% Once a week or more shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

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

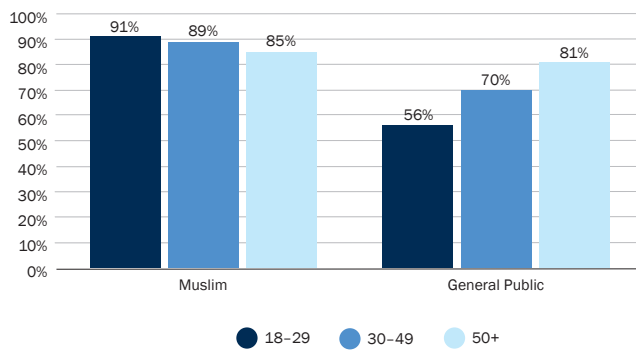


FIGURE 21: How important is religion to your daily life? (% Important shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Women, Men Similar in Mosque Attendance

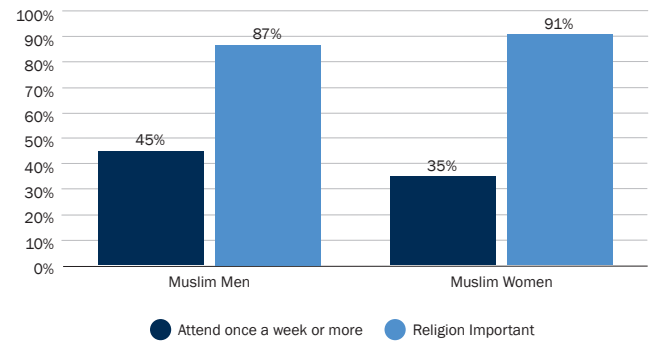


FIGURE 22: Aside from weddings and funerals how often do you attend religious services? (% Once a week or more shown) How important is religion to your daily life? (% Important shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2017

Non-white Muslims face racism inside their faith community, and even more from the public

The majority of non-white Muslims have experienced some race-based discrimination from outside their faith community in the last year. A minority of Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds also report experiencing racism from other Muslims in the same period. This underscores the fact that as Muslims work to combat discrimination in the broader society, they must not neglect this challenge with-

in their own community, even if it occurs less frequently.

Intrareligious racism, however, is not unique to Muslims. Black Muslims are just as likely as Black Americans in the general public to experience racism from within their faith community.

Muslims Less Likely to Experience Racism from Other Muslims Than from General Public

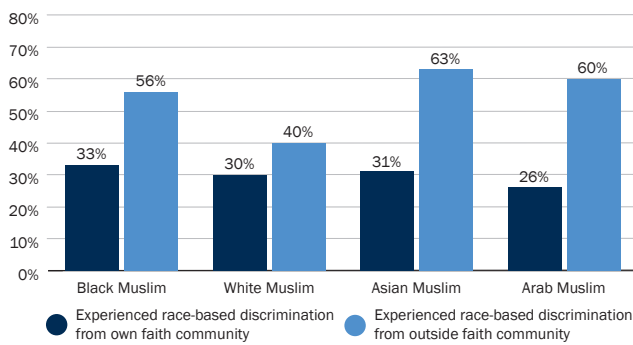


FIGURE 23: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination by another member of your faith community because of your race in the past year? How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination by someone outside your faith community because of your race in the past year? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2017

Across Faiths, Black Americans Equally Likely to Experience Racism from Own Faith Community

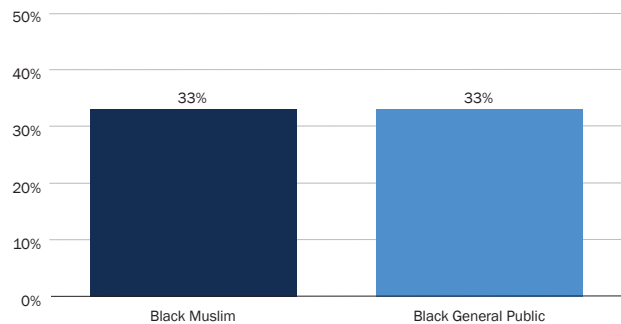


FIGURE 24: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination by another member of your faith community because of your race in the past year? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total Black respondents, 2017

Domestic violence occurs in the Muslim community as often as it does in Christian and non-affiliated communities, but Muslim victims are more likely to involve faith leaders

Among Muslims, 13% said they knew someone in their faith community who was a victim of domestic violence, similar to 15% of Catholics, 17% of Protestants, 14% of non-affiliated Americans, and 15% of the general public, with 7% of Jews saying the same. Among Muslims who knew of a domestic violence incident in the past year,

half said the crime was reported to law enforcement (a rate comparable to other groups and the general public). American Muslim respondents reported that a faith leader was informed of the domestic violence about half the time, a significantly higher rate than any other faith group.

Domestic Violence Plagues Most Faith Communities Equally

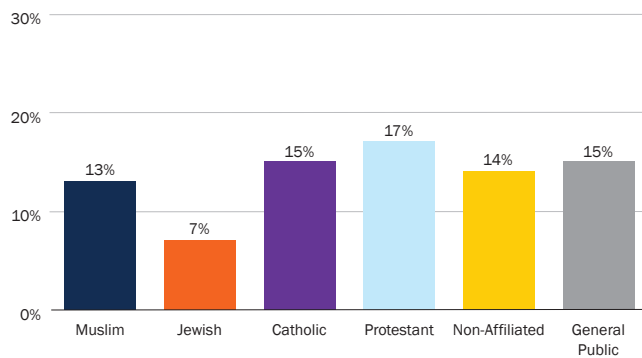


FIGURE 25: Do you know a person in your faith community who was the victim of violence from someone in his or her family in the past 12 months? By this, we mean domestic violence. (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Muslims Most Likely to Report Domestic Violence to Faith Leader

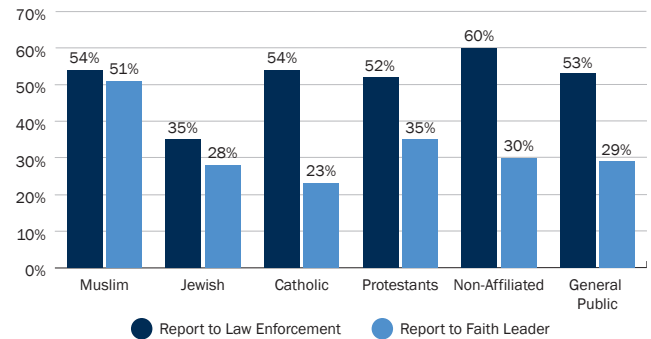


FIGURE 26: Did this person report the violence to law enforcement? Did this person report the violence to a religious or community leader in your faith community? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who know someone in their faith community who was a victim of domestic violence, 2017

Bullying is a major problem for Muslim children; religious discrimination is a major problem for all ages

Muslims are nearly twice as likely to report bullying among their school-age children as Jewish Americans (42% vs. 23%) and four times as likely as the general public (10%). Of these incidents, one quarter involved a teacher or other school official.

The majority (60%) of American Muslims report some level of religious discrimination over the past year, significantly

surpassing the rates reported by all other groups (ranging from 38% among Jews to 11% among Catholics). Younger Muslims, women, and Arabs are the most likely to experience prejudice based on their religion. These discriminatory encounters extend to interactions with government officials in that Muslims are significantly more likely than any other group to face secondary screening at border crossings (30% vs. 12% among the general public).

Muslim Families Most Likely to Face Bullying

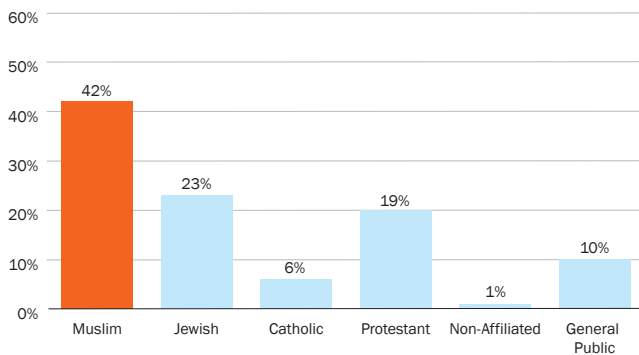


FIGURE 27: How often, if at all, have your children experienced bullying (insults or physical assaults) in the past year because of their religion at school? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total respondents who have children who attend a K-12 public school, 2017

One in Four Muslim Bullying Incidents Involves a Teacher

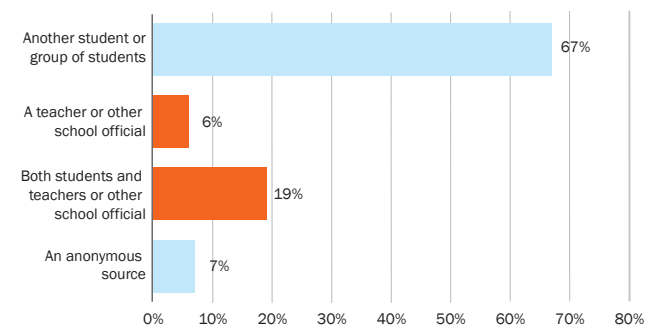


FIGURE 28: Who has bullied your child? Base: Total Muslim respondents who have children who attend a K-12 public school and child has experienced bullying at school in the past year because of their religion, 2017

Muslims Most Likely Faith Community to Experience Religious Discrimination

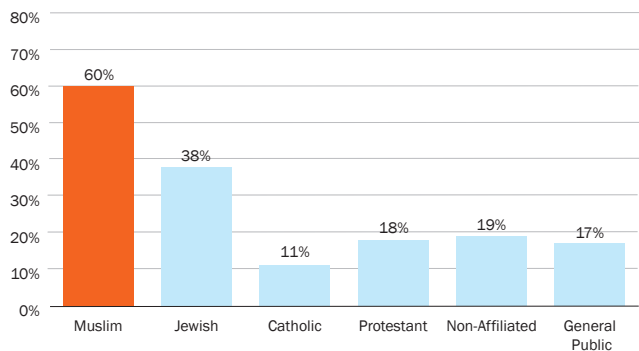


FIGURE 29: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

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

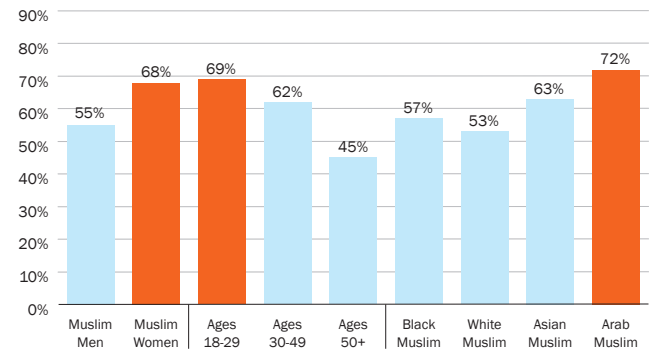


FIGURE 30: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2017

Muslims Twice as Likely to Face Secondary Screening at Border

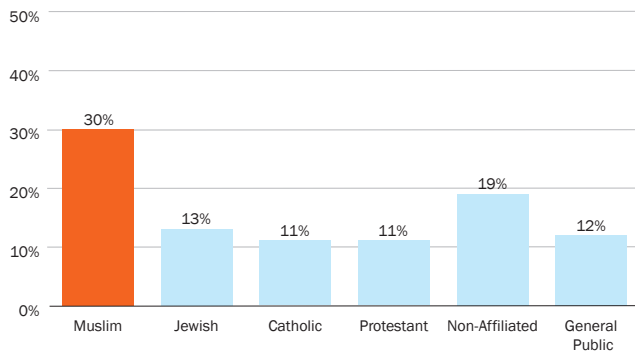


FIGURE 31: Were you stopped at any time in the past year by U.S. border officials for additional questioning upon your return from international travel? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who have traveled internationally in the past year, 2017

Muslims distressed, yet resilient following presidential election

Both Muslims and Jews reported higher levels of fear and anxiety than other faith groups due to the election results, with 38% of Muslims and 27% of Jews expressing fear for their safety from white supremacist groups, compared with 8% and 11% of Catholics and Protestants, respectively. Nearly one fifth of Muslims even made plans to leave the country “if it becomes necessary.”

Along with increased apprehension, Muslims, especially women, responded to the election results with perseverance. Despite Muslim women experiencing more fear for

their personal safety than Muslim men (47% vs. 31%) and suffering emotional trauma at a higher rate than their male counterparts (19% vs. 9%), Muslim women are no more likely than Muslim men to alter their appearance to be less identified as a member of their faith group in response, with roughly 15% of both Muslim men and women saying that they did so. Moreover, increased donations to Muslim organizations in the wake of the 2016 elections is largely driven by women (29% vs. 19%), and women are also significantly more likely to sign up for a self-defense course than Muslim men (16% vs. 7%).

Muslim Women More Likely Than Men to Suffer Post Election

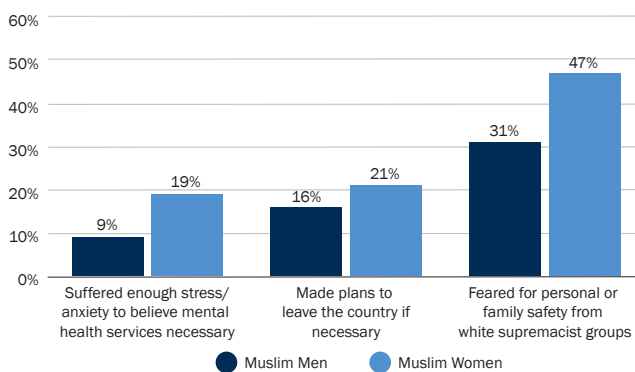


FIGURE 32: As a result of the outcome of the 2016 presidential elections have you done any of the following? (% Yes shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2017

Muslim Women More Likely Than Men to Take Action Post Election

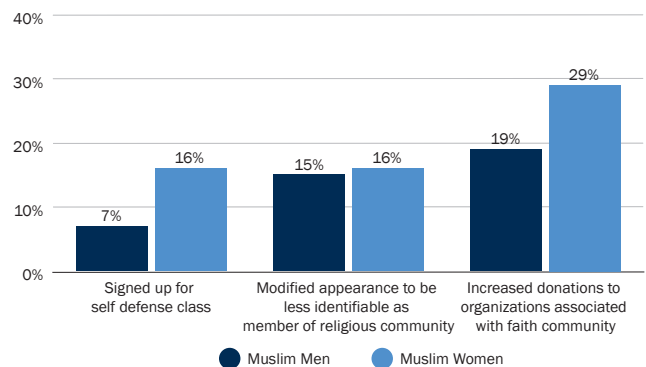


FIGURE 33: As a result of the outcome of the 2016 presidential elections have you done any of the following? (% Yes shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2017

Muslims, Jews Experience the Most Fear, Anxiety Post 2016 Election

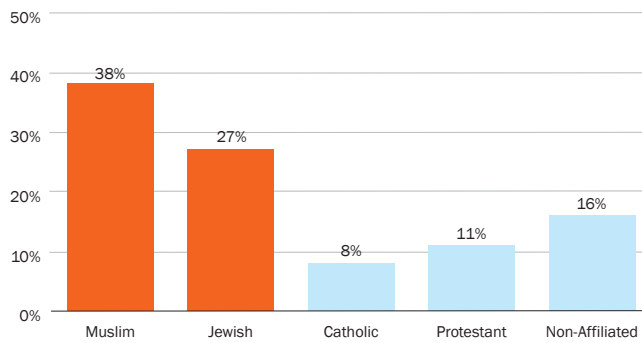


FIGURE 34: As a result of the outcome of the 2016 presidential elections have you... feared for your personal safety or that of your family from white supremacist groups like neo-Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017

Muslims Respond to Prejudice with Resilience

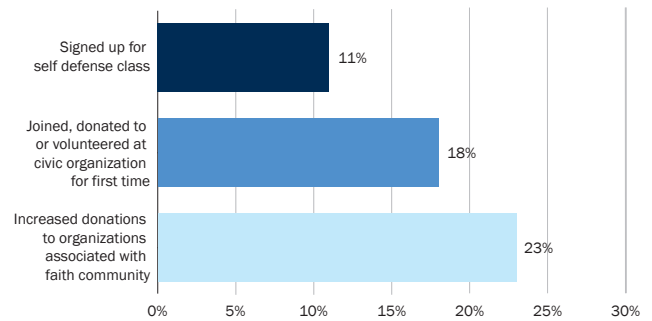


FIGURE 35: As a result of the outcome of the 2016 presidential elections have you done any of the following? (% Yes shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2017

Endnotes

1. See, for example, Khaled Beydoun, “Why Can’t Muslims Talk about the Muslim Ban on US TV?” Islamophobia Research & Documentation Project, February 14, 2017, <https://irdproject.com/cant-muslims-talk-muslim-ban-us-tv/>.
2. Religious communities such as Hindus, Buddhists, and others outside the four largest are too small a percentage of the general public to include in our analysis.
3. For a multifaceted, in-depth, and solutions-oriented examination of Muslim religious institutions, see ISPU’s, “Reimagining Muslim Spaces” series at www.ispu.org/social-policy/reimaginingmuslim-spaces/.

Digging Deeper



How American Minorities Responded to Hostility

Latino Americans in the general public and Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds hold similar views of the current political climate.

DECEMBER 18, 2017 | BY [YOUSSEF CHOUHOUD](#)

When it comes to racial discrimination, both within and outside faith communities, our findings show that Black Americans and Hispanic Americans in the general population and Muslims in our separate U.S. sample all reported similar experiences, on average. How, then, do these communities compare in their responses to racism and the increasingly hostile environment for minorities since the 2016 election?


One of the most prominent movements for racial justice in recent years is Black Lives Matter (BLM). National polls find that a majority of Americans do not support BLM, with sharp divides along race and partisanship. ISPU similarly polled a sample of the general public and, separately, American Muslims on their views of BLM, asking whether

they strongly opposed, somewhat opposed, somewhat supported, or strongly supported the movement.

Figure 1 presents the reported level of support for BLM (scaled 0–1) among Black Americans and Hispanic Americans in the general public and a discrete sample of American Muslims. Most notably, the results indicate that Muslims overall (of which 25% are Black) and Black Americans in the general public are statistically indistinguishable in their support for BLM. This is likely the first poll to report such parity—typically Black Americans far outpace all other groups when it comes to backing BLM. The significantly lower level of support among Hispanic Americans (which is statistically on par with white respondents from the general public) highlights this general

trend while also underscoring the need to critically examine, rather than assume, minority attitudes and behavior.

Another discrepancy across minority groups is also evident in their preferred presidential candidate in the 2016 election. There is a clear preference for Hillary Clinton across the three groups we profile. There is a sharp division, however, when it comes to support for Donald Trump. Muslims (15%) are nearly four times more likely to report a preference for a Trump presidency than Black Americans (4%). Hispanic Americans far outpace both groups, with nearly a quarter preferring Trump over all other candidates (24%). Of course, such support within any one of these groups pales in comparison to the clear majority of white voters that cast a ballot for Donald Trump in the election. To emphasize, there remains a noticeably wide base of consensus across the three minority groups in our analysis, overall. Yet, we should be mindful not to presume across the board support for any one policy or candidate.

We also investigated what personal actions our respondents took following the 2016 presidential elections, given the campaign's charged rhetoric and potentially detrimental policy implications, especially for some of the groups studied. Figure 2 once again compares the responses of Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Muslims to a set of five yes/no questions. Distress is slightly higher among Hispanic Americans in the general population and Muslims, with similar percentages among both groups reporting anxiety in the wake of the election and contemplating leaving the country, should it become necessary. These shared experiences may be a result of both communities being comprised of large numbers of immigrants. Indeed, American Muslims and Latinos began uniting to combat Trump's immigration policies right from the start of his administration. Thus, even as minorities are finding more general commonality amid an increasingly hostile social and political atmosphere, particular issues will naturally arise where mutual benefit is more clear cut and cooperation more forthcoming. 

Muslims and Black Americans in General Public Support Black Lives Matter at Similar Rates

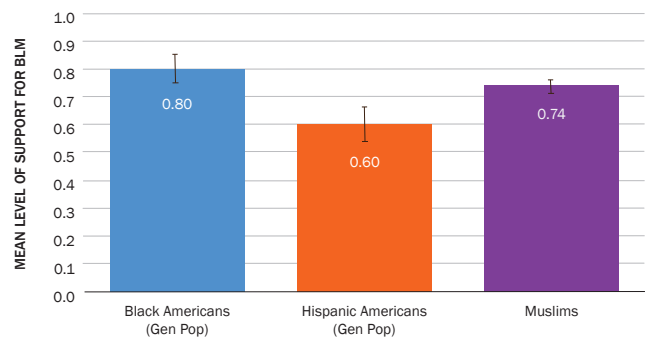


FIGURE 1: Base: Black, Hispanic, and Muslim respondents, 2017

Muslims and Hispanics in General Public Marginally More Likely to Experience Distress from Election of Donald Trump

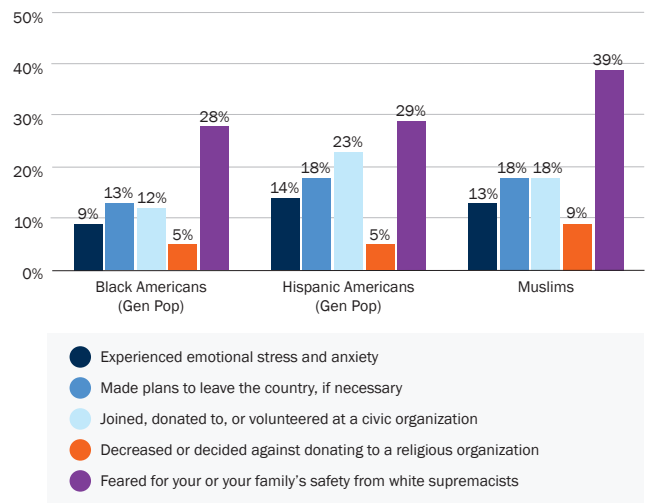


FIGURE 2: Base: Black, Hispanic, and Muslim respondents, 2017

NOTE: Black and Hispanic Muslims are included in the Muslim sample.

Muslims Disproportionately Feel Negative Effects of Political Climate



42% of Muslims with children in K-12 school report bullying of their children because of their faith. And in **1 in 4** of these incidents, a teacher or other school official is reported to have been involved.



Muslims are more than **twice as likely** (30%) as Jews (13%), Catholics, and Protestants (11%) to be stopped at the border for additional screening.



Muslims are the most likely faith community to report religious-based discrimination in the past year (**60%**). This compares with 38% of Jews and less than 20% among all other groups surveyed.



Muslims (**38%**) and Jews (**27%**) are most likely to express fear for their personal safety or that of their family from white supremacist groups as a result of the 2016 elections.

67% of Muslims stopped at a U.S. border say they were easily identified as a member of their faith group, compared with 32% of Jews and none in other groups.



The majority of non-white Muslims (**56%** of Black Muslims, **60%** of Arab Muslims, and **63%** of Asian Muslims) report some frequency of race-based discrimination in the last year.

Muslims Respond to Prejudice with Resilience and Solidarity



Muslims are the most likely faith group (**66%**) to support the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. This compares with roughly 58% of Jews and non-affiliated Americans, and less than 39% of Catholics and Protestants.



Muslims are **most likely** to consider bigotry and civil rights the most important issues facing our country today.



23% of Muslims increased their giving to organizations associated with their faith community and 18% joined, donated to, or volunteered at a civic organization for the first time as a result of the 2016 elections.

AMERICAN MUSLIM POLL 2018



PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

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Summary

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.

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 voters¹ 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 two years ago (2016² and 2017³).

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.⁴ 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

Muslims are less satisfied with the direction of the country compared with previous years, but they are 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 non-affiliated Americans, 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).

Muslim Satisfaction with Direction of Country Declined over Time

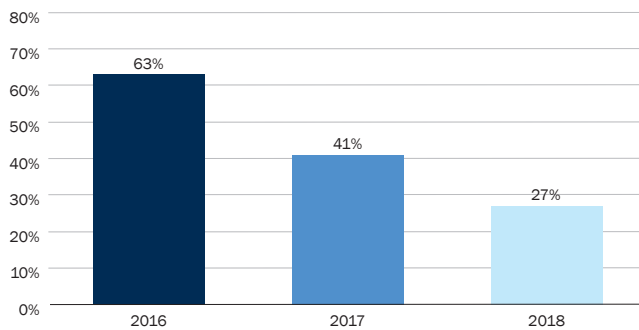


FIGURE 1: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2016, 2017, 2018

Muslim Women, Black Muslims Least Satisfied with Direction of Country

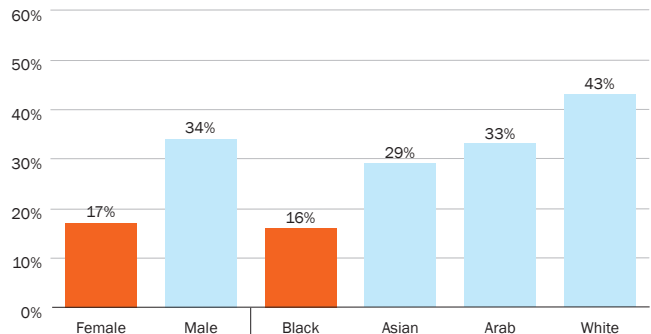


FIGURE 2: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2018

Muslims and Non-Affiliated Least Likely to Approve of Trump

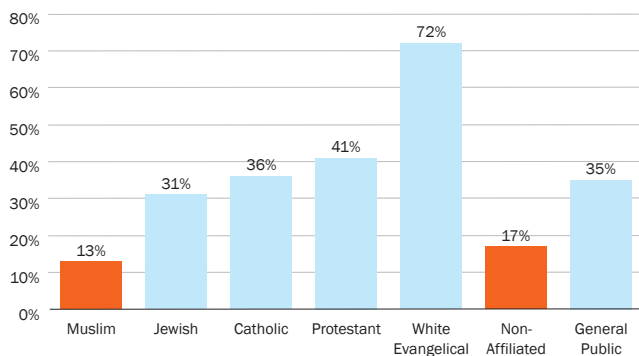


FIGURE 3: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president? (% Approve shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

Muslim Voter Registration Climbs

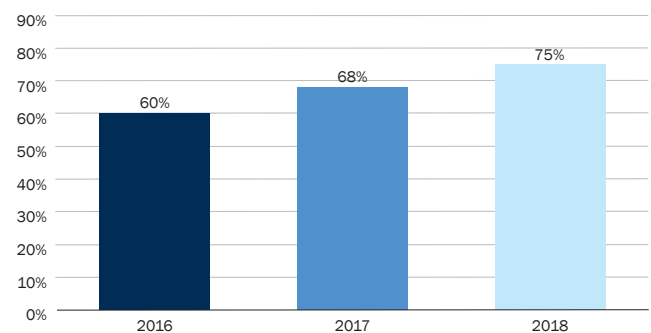


FIGURE 4: Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who can legally vote in the United States, 2016, 2017, 2018

Muslims among most likely to reject violence

When we asked participants to consider targeting civilians with a military strike, Muslims were the least likely to feel that such an action is ever justified (26%). 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.

We also asked respondents about the legitimacy of individuals or small groups violently targeting civilians. 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).

Muslims Most Likely to Reject Military Attacks on Civilians

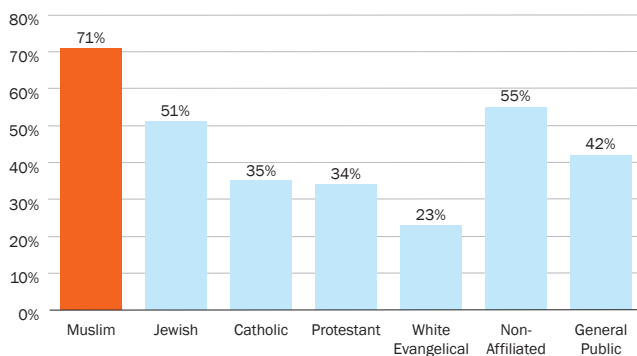


FIGURE 5: Some people think that for the military to target and kill civilians is sometimes justified, while others think that this kind of violence is never justified. Which is your opinion? (% Never justified shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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

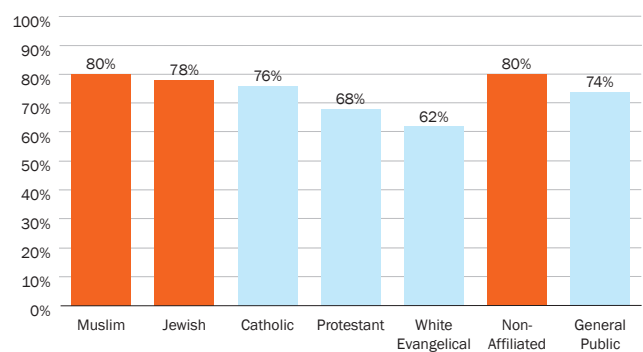


FIGURE 6: Some people think that for an individual or a small group of people to target and kill civilians is sometimes justified, while others think that this kind of violence is never justified. Which is your opinion? (% Never justified shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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 non-affiliated Americans 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).

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

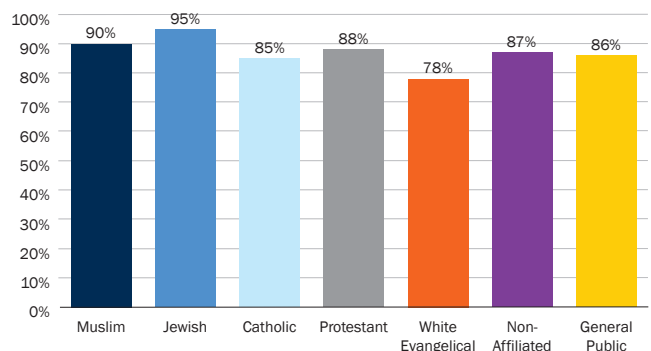


FIGURE 7: I want to live in a country where no one is targeted for their religious identity. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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

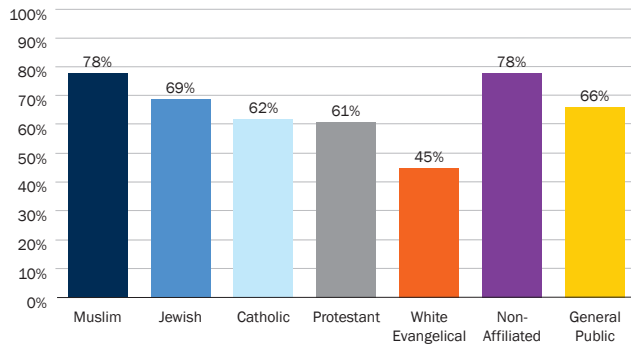


FIGURE 8: The negative things politicians say regarding Muslims are harmful to our country. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

Most Americans Oppose Banning the Building of Mosques

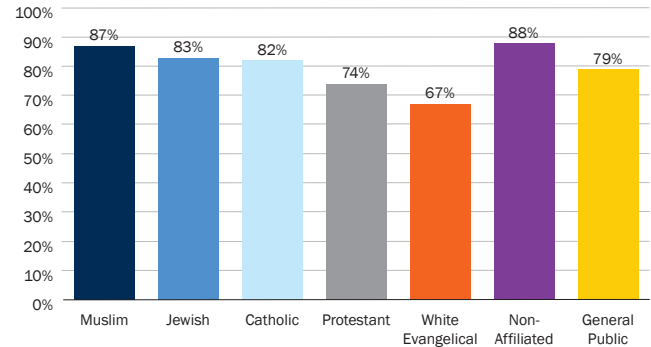


FIGURE 9: Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose banning the building of mosques in the U.S.? (% Net oppose shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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

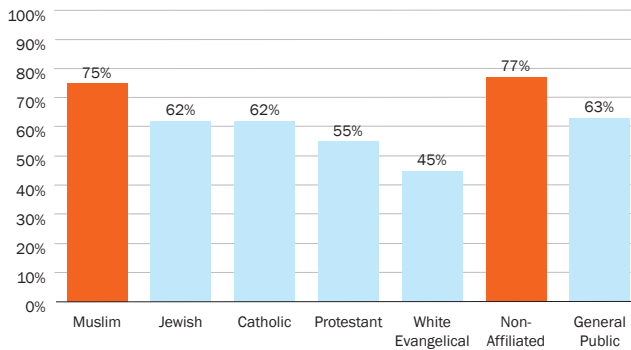


FIGURE 10: Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose a surveillance program targeting mosques in the U.S.? (% Net oppose shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

Muslims and Non-Affiliated Most Likely to Oppose Muslim Ban

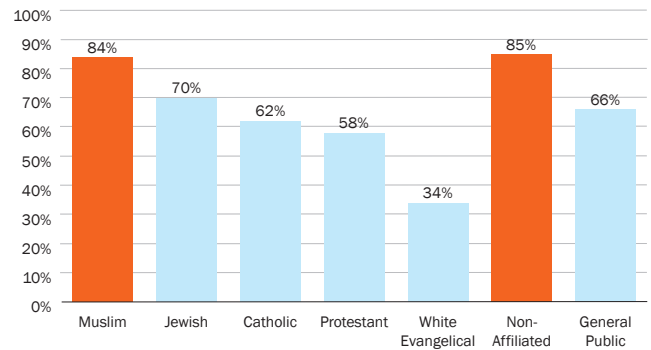


FIGURE 11: Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose a ban on visas to Muslims wanting to enter the U.S.? (% Net oppose shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

Most Americans Believe Muslims Committed to Well-Being of America

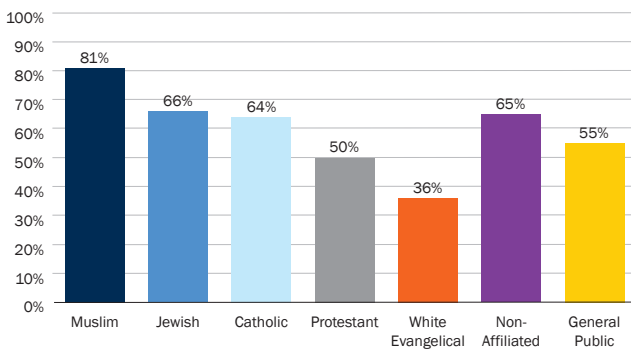


FIGURE 12: Most Muslims living in the United States are committed to the well-being of America. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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

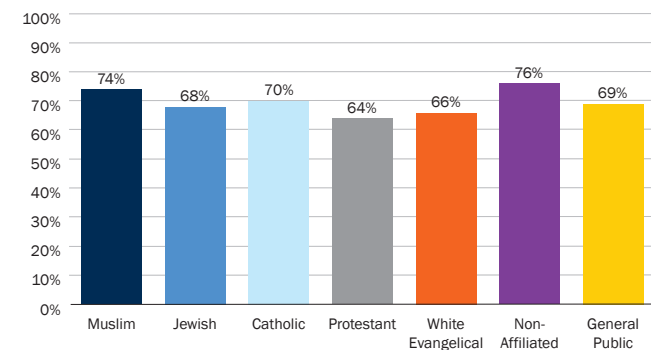


FIGURE 13: Most Muslims living in the United States are no more responsible for violence carried out by a Muslim than anyone else. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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.⁵

We surveyed and scored⁶ Americans across a spectrum of religious affiliations, from non-affiliated Americans (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.

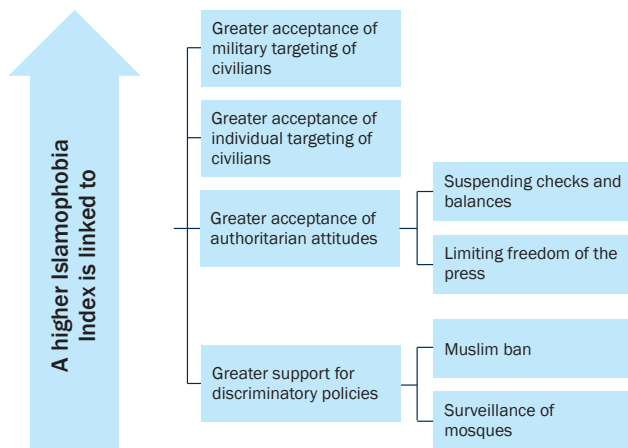


FIGURE 14: A high Islamophobia Index

Islamophobia Index 2018

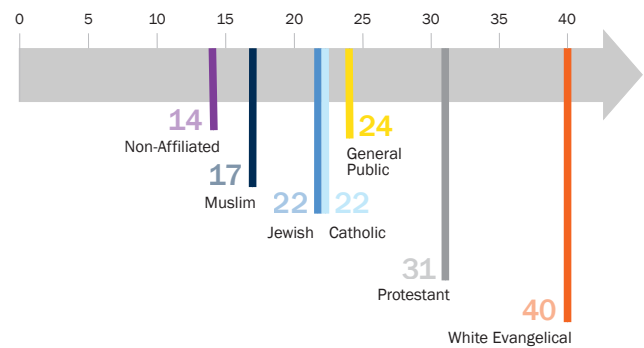


FIGURE 15: Scores on the 2018 Islamophobia Index Base: Total respondents, 2018

American Muslims continue to report experiencing more religious discrimination than other faith groups

A higher proportion of Muslims (61%) than any other faith group (or the non-affiliated groups) report experiencing religious discrimination. Women, Arabs, and young people 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 Muslim men vs. 52% of Muslim women) with this view, there were no significant age or race differences.

Muslims Experience the Most Religious Discrimination

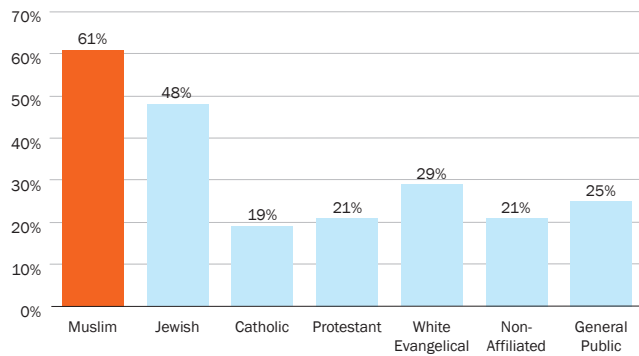


FIGURE 16: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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

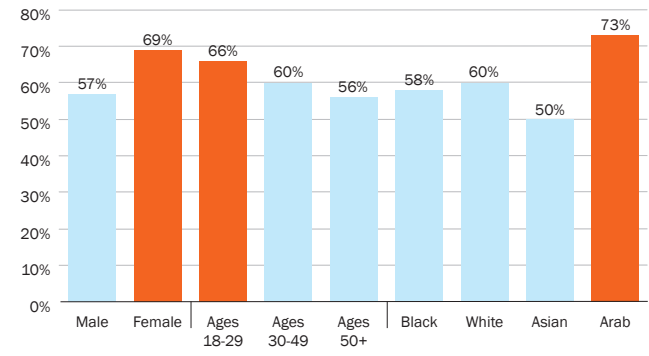


FIGURE 17: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Net experienced discrimination shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2018

Muslim Women, Young People Most Likely to Experience Racial Discrimination

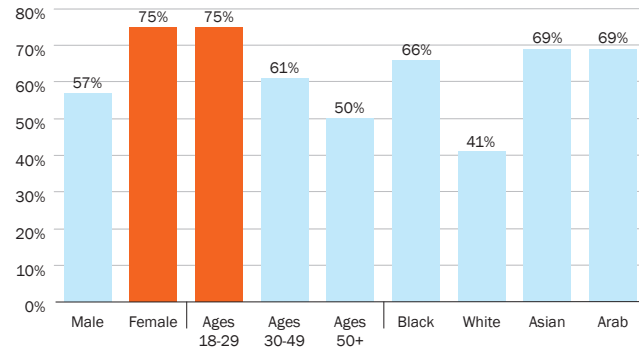


FIGURE 18: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your race? (% Net experience discrimination shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2018

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

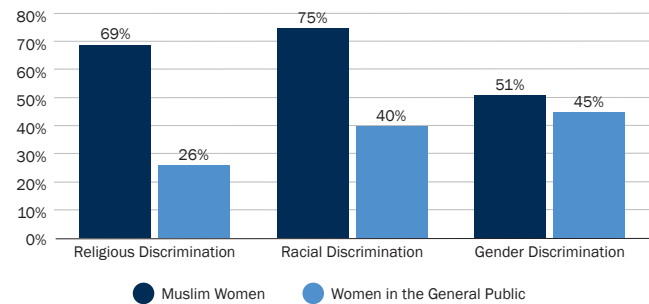


FIGURE 19: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your race? How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your gender? (% Net ever experienced shown) Base: Total female respondents, 2018

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

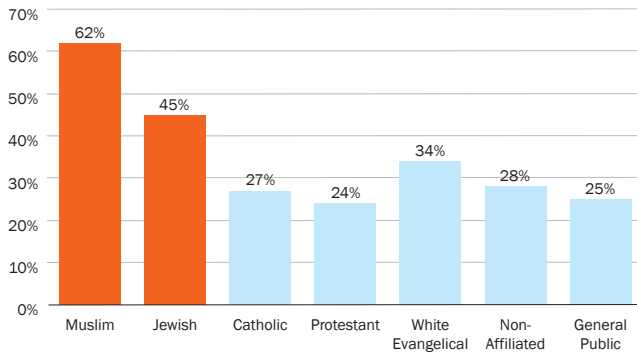


FIGURE 20: Most people associate negative stereotypes with my faith identity. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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 head cover? 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 head cover because someone else required it of them made up 1%.

Muslim Women Most Likely to Wear Identifying Religious Symbol

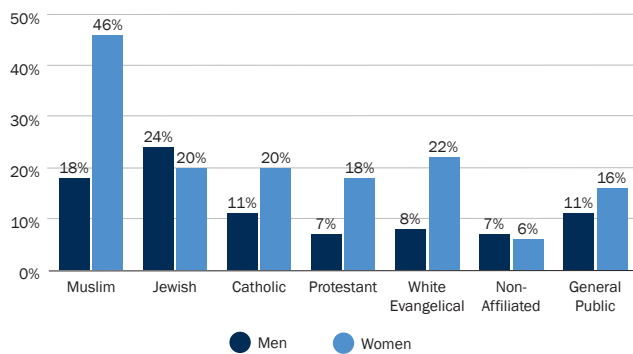


FIGURE 21: How often do you wear a visible symbol that makes your faith identity known to others, for example a head cover or hijab, skullcap, kippah, yarmulke, turban, or visible cross, in public? (% All of the time shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

Piety, Identity Top Reasons for Hijab

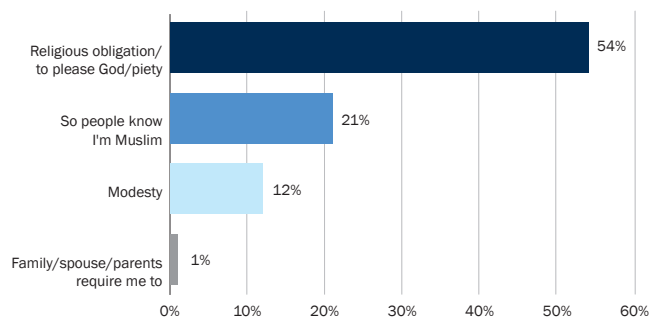


FIGURE 22: Can you please tell me why you wear this symbol? Base: Female Muslim respondents who wear a visible faith symbol that makes their faith identity known to others, 2018

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 Americans 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.”⁷

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.⁸
- 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.

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

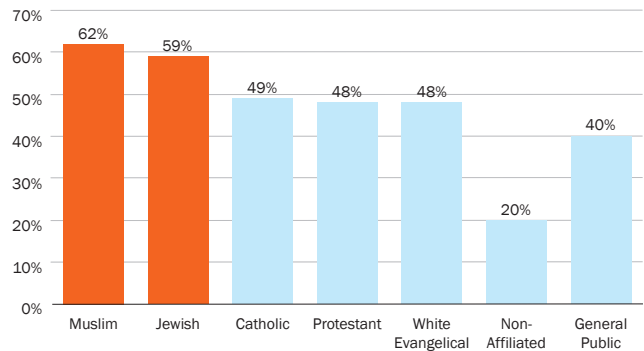


FIGURE 23: When I hear that a member of my faith community committed an act of violence, I feel personally ashamed. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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

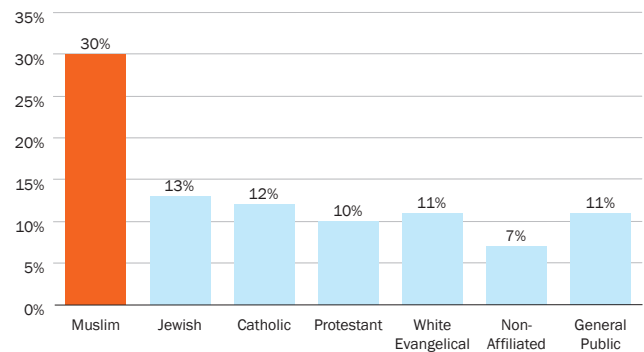


FIGURE 24: I believe my faith community is more prone to negative behavior than other faith communities. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018

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.⁹ 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.¹⁰
- 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.”¹¹

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.¹²

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”¹³ 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.

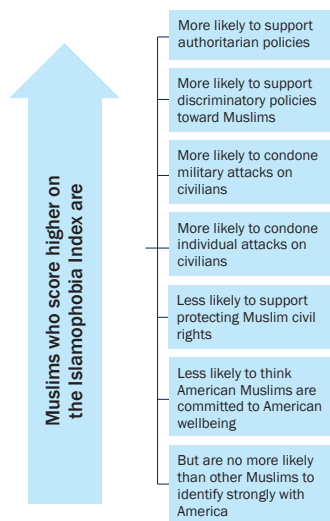


FIGURE 25: Muslims who score high on the Islamophobia Index

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 (84%).

Most Americans agree that their faith is important to the way they think of themselves. Muslims are more likely than Jews, Catholics, non-affiliated Americans, 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,¹⁴ 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,

Americans of All Backgrounds Consider American Identity Important

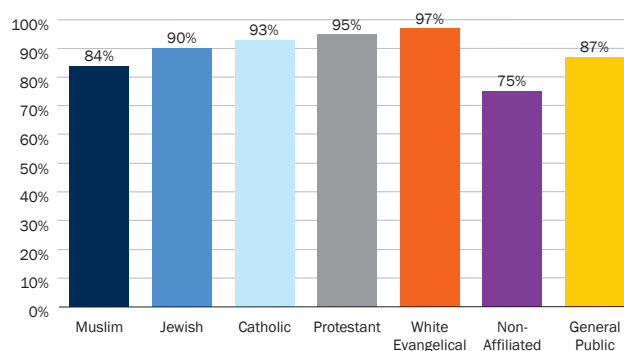


FIGURE 26: How important is being an American to the way you think of yourself, is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all? (% Net important shown) Base: Total respondents who are U.S. citizens, 2018

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

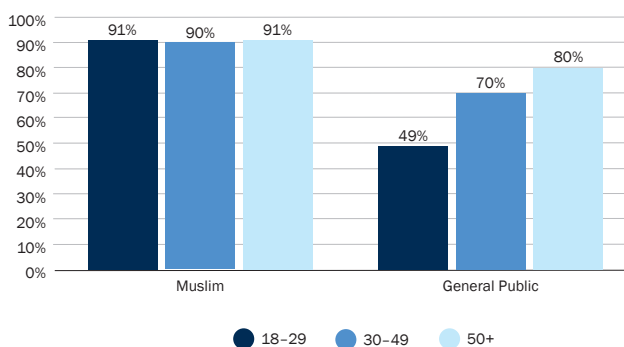
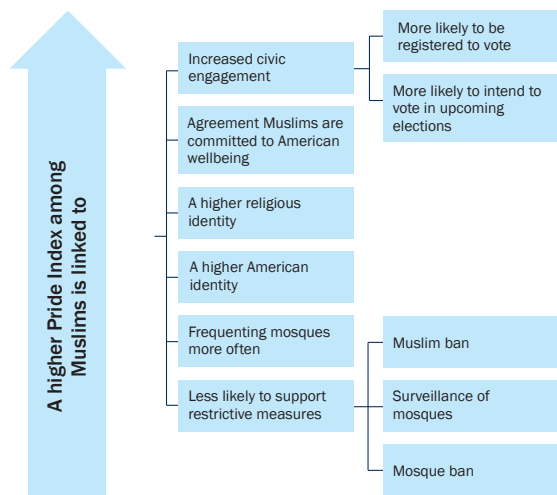


FIGURE 27: How important is your religion to the way you think of yourself, is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all? (% Net important shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018




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. 

FIGURE 28: A high Pride Index

Endnotes

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Digging Deeper



To Have and to Hold: Interfaith Marriage Just as Common among Muslim Americans as Christians

JANUARY 29, 2019 | BY [YOUSSEF CHOUHOUD](#)

Across all faith groups, interfaith marriage is becoming increasingly common in America. This pattern is partly a function of the broad acceptance of interracial marriage beginning in the Civil Rights era and a decreasing adherence to organized religions in the last several decades (some estimates reporting the percentage of religiously unaffiliated Americans has more than quadrupled since 1990). Recently married Americans who consider themselves Jews are four times more likely to marry someone outside their faith as Jewish Americans who married before 1970.

Are Muslims following the same trajectory? Naomi Schaefer Riley, who wrote a groundbreaking book on the topic, opens her 2013 Washington Post opinion piece with an assertive answer: “When it comes to intermarriage, Muslims are becoming the new Jews.”

We examine this claim using data from the 2018 American Muslim Poll. Figure 1 compares the percentage of interfaith marriage among discrete religious groups and the non-affiliated. American Muslims are statistically just as likely as Catholics, Protestants, and white Evangelicals to marry outside their faith, yet fall slightly below the rate among Jews.

However, when including those who report they are cohabiting with a person of another faith alongside those who intermarried, the rate of Muslims in interfaith relationships (20%) is statistically on par with American Jews (29%). While the percentage of Muslims in this broader category still trails that of Jews, there is demographic evidence to suggest that the two rates will continue to converge over time.

Who is more likely to religiously intermarry among Amer-

ican Muslims? Figure 2 compares the percentages of interfaith relationships across four key demographics. Intuitively, one would think that those born in the U.S. would be more likely than their foreign-born counterparts to intermarry but, statistically, these two groups are indistinguishable.

When you take cohabitation into account, however, that is when these two groups meaningfully diverge with native-born Muslims being nearly three times as likely to be in an interfaith relationship as those born outside the U.S.

A similar dynamic plays out in terms of race/ethnicity. Whereas non-Black and Black respondents are statistically just as likely to religiously intermarry, the rate of interfaith marriage and cohabitation sets Black respondents, who are more likely to be in interfaith relationships, apart. There is no clear explanation for this divergence, but it is likely driven in part by the most surprising (and surprisingly strong) correlate in our analysis.

Among the factors examined, college education offered the clearest dividing line. Both in terms of marriage-only and marriage or cohabitation, those who hold a college degree were significantly less likely than their less-educated counterparts to be involved in an interfaith relationship. The basis for this association is not evident. It could be that Muslims who enter college are already predisposed to marry within their faith, or perhaps the college environment offers particular resources that encourage intra-religious relationships (such as organizations, like the Muslim Students Association that reinforce one's Muslim identity or, alternatively, offer opportunities to meet fellow Muslims).

The final demographic category, sex, evidences a statistically significant distinction between men and women engaged in any form of interfaith relationship, with men being more likely to be in an interfaith marriage or cohabiting relationship. When looking at interfaith marriage alone, however, the gap is no longer significant. This statistical parity is nonetheless noteworthy given the majority scholarly opinion on the impermissibility of interfaith marriage for Muslim women. Collectively, these findings indicate that we have only scratched the surface of a rich research topic. ◆

Muslims as Likely as Christians to Marry Outside Their Faith

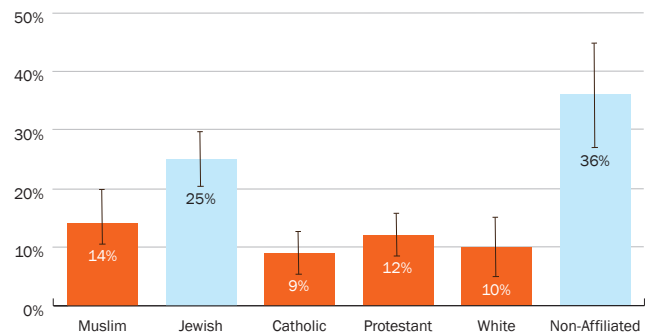


FIGURE 1: Does your partner or spouse share the same religion as you? (% No shown) Base: Total married respondents, 2018

Native-Born, Black, Non-College-Educated Muslims Are More Likely to Be in Interfaith Relationships

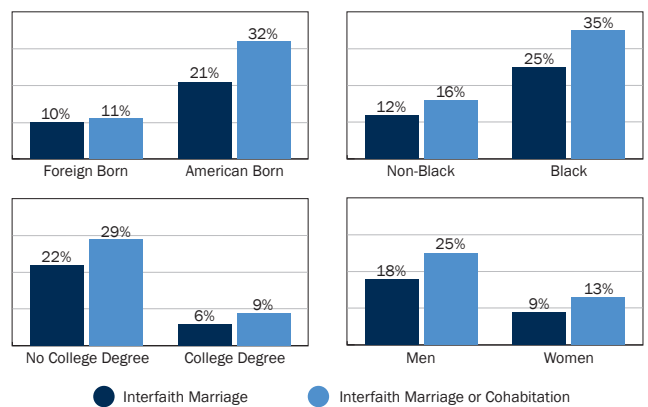


FIGURE 2: Does your partner or spouse share the same religion as you? (% No shown) Base: Muslim respondents married or living with a partner, 2018

Eight Insights into American Muslim Giving

1 Religion Motivates Giving

Muslims are most likely to be motivated to contribute to charitable causes by their sense of religious duty (**17%**) and the feeling that those with more should help those with less (**20%**). Among the general public, only 10% report religious obligation as their motivation for giving.



2 Muslims Give to Muslim and Non-Muslim Institutions Equally

American Muslims are equally likely to contribute to causes or institutions within their faith community (**53%**) and those outside of their faith community (**52%**).



3 Muslims Give Lower Dollar Amounts Than Other Americans

In the year preceding the survey, **20%** of Muslims gave less than \$100, compared with 10% of Jews, 9% of Catholics, 8% of Protestants, 7% of white Evangelicals, and 12% of the general public. Most Muslims (43%) gave between \$100 and \$1,000.



4 Domestic Poverty Matters to Muslims

When American Muslims give to causes or institutions outside their faith community, domestic poverty is most important charitable cause to them (**81%**). In fact, Muslims are more likely than all other groups to give to domestic poverty alleviation outside of their faith community (81% vs. 55%–72%).



5 Muslims and Evangelicals Lead Overseas Relief

At **58%**, Muslims are more likely than all other faith groups (32%–46%), except white Evangelicals (62%), to donate to overseas relief causes or institutions outside of their faith community.



6 Muslims More Likely to Give to Civil Rights Organizations

American Muslims are more likely than other groups to give to civil rights organizations dedicated to protecting the rights of those outside their faith community (**42%** of Muslims vs. 29% of Protestants and 27% of white Evangelicals). Similarly, Muslims are also the most likely faith group to fund civil rights organizations that protect members of their own faith community (**48%** vs. 27% of the general public).

7 Muslims' Giving to Houses of Worship Similar to Other Faith Groups

When it comes to giving to their houses of worship, American Muslims are on par with other faith groups, with **89%** contributing to their houses of worship.



8 Muslims Give to Community Research More Than Other Americans

American Muslims are one of the most likely groups to contribute to research organizations that study their community (**28%** vs. 10% of the general public). However, it is still the least funded area of work, despite the clear need for high-quality research.



AMERICAN MUSLIM POLL 2019

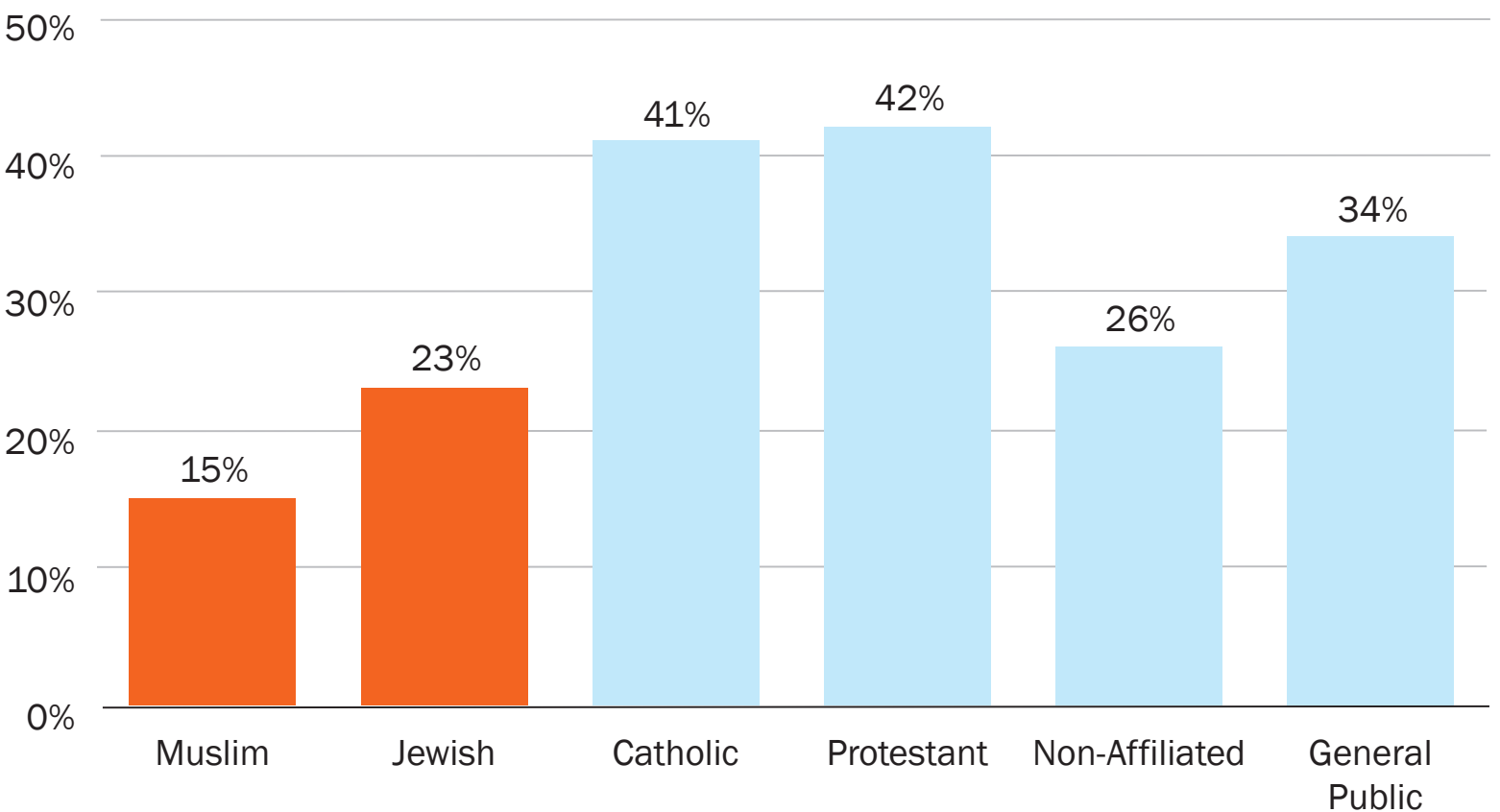


FIGURE 2: *Who did you want to win the [2016] presidential election? (% Favored Donald Trump shown) Base: Total respondents, 2017*

PREDICTING AND PREVENTING ISLAMOPHOBIA

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Partners	America Indivisible, CAIR, Engage, ISNA, Khalil Center, MPower Change, Muslim Mental Health, Muslim Public Affairs Council, No Muslim Ban Ever Campaign, Poligon Education Fund, Stanford Muslim Mental Health Lab

Summary

ISPU's fourth annual poll informs national conversations with the voices of everyday Americans. Researchers, policymakers, and the public have access to key insights and analysis into the attitudes and policy preferences of American Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, white Evangelicals, the non-affiliated, and the general public. For the second year, in partnership with Georgetown University's The Bridge Initiative, we track the National American **Islamophobia Index**, measuring how much the public endorses anti-Muslim tropes. New this year: Our researchers examine protective factors against Islamophobia, as well as data-driven recommendations for those working to elevate American Muslim civic engagement and for those combating anti-Muslim bigotry.

Introduction

TRIUMPHS AND TRIBULATIONS punctuated the year leading up to ISPU's fourth annual poll of American religious communities. In June 2018, the Supreme Court upheld a fourth iteration of the travel ban, which allows vast immigration restrictions for travelers from Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen. Five of these seven nations are majority Muslim. In their scathing dissent of the majority decision, Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg said the ruling "leaves undisturbed a policy first advertised openly and unequivocally as a 'total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States' because the policy now masquerades behind a façade of national-security concerns."

Later that year, Ilhan Omar, a hijab-wearing former refugee originally from Somalia, and Rashida Tlaib, a Palestinian American, were the first Muslim women elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, each taking her oath on her personal Quran.

Analysts have credited the record-breaking voter turnout of the 2018 midterms for bringing Omar and Tlaib to Congress in an election that saw a number of "firsts," mostly Democratic women of color and LGBTQ individuals. These Freshman lawmakers make up a new class of members of Congress who ran on some of the most progressive and anti-establishment platforms seen in years, and gave Democrats a majority in the House.

This new Congress witnessed the longest government shutdown in history (lasting from December 22, 2018, to January 25, 2019) over President Donald Trump's demand for \$5 billion to complete a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, leaving large swaths of the American public without income for five weeks.

As women shattered the glass ceiling of Congress in record numbers, the #MeToo movement continued to race forward, bringing attention to sexual misconduct long normalized and left unacknowledged in the corporate sector, media, and government. It also brought attention to sexual misconduct within religious communities. This includes the Muslim community, where a new grassroots organization called FACE (Facing Abuse in Community

Environments) began to investigate and document cases of alleged abuse in an effort to raise awareness and demand accountability.

It was against this backdrop that ISPU conducted its fourth annual 2019 poll of American faith and non-faith groups.

How were Americans of varying faith backgrounds feeling about the direction of the country in the midst of a government shutdown? In a year where voter turnout broke records, how likely were Americans who are Muslim to participate in the midterm election compared to other groups? More importantly, what factors predict their participation? Does a candidate's support for the so-called Muslim ban help or hurt their run for public office? And with whom do Muslims find the greatest political common ground? How common are unwanted sexual advances from a faith leader in each religious community? And how likely is it that these alleged transgressions are reported to law enforcement or community leadership?

We also continue our annual measure of the Islamophobia Index with the Bridge Initiative, a measure of the level of public endorsement of anti-Muslim tropes. Have levels of Islamophobia in America increased, decreased, or stayed the same? Last year, we examined the impact of Islamophobia on society, discovering that higher levels of anti-Muslim sentiment are linked to greater acceptance of violence against civilians, authoritarian policies, and anti-Muslim discrimination. This year, we sought to explore the drivers of Islamophobia. What predicts lower or higher anti-Muslim views? And with whom do Muslims find the greatest support?

We conclude our study with a set of data-driven recommendations for those working to elevate American Muslim civic engagement and for those combating Islamophobia. In light of the horrific massacre of 50 worshipers in a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, on March 15, 2019, by a man reciting every anti-Muslim trope in our index, these recommendations seem ever more urgent.

We hope this report continues to inform our national conversation with the voices of ordinary people.

Results

In January 2019, the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding conducted a survey of American Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, including white Evangelicals, and the non-affiliated, to examine their views on politics, religion, sexual and religious violence, minorities, and other

faith groups. Our findings show that American Muslims are multi-dimensional; they share many characteristics with other faith groups and non-affiliated Americans and, yet, are unique. They are disappointed with some aspects of their country and express hope in others.

Muslims least likely to approve of president, but more likely to express optimism with the direction of the country

We found that only 16% of American Muslims approve of the job Donald Trump is doing as president, the lowest of all groups surveyed. While other groups tallied between 24% and 50%, the majority of white Evangelicals (73%) reported approval of the president and highlighted a deep rift between the two religious groups. Among Muslims, white Muslims (29%) and those who are 30–49 years old (19%) are more likely to approve of Donald Trump than all others.

Despite the low opinion of the performance of the president, 33% of Muslims conveyed optimism about the fu-

ture trajectory of the nation, more than any other faith group or unaffiliated Americans surveyed. While white Muslims (43%) are more likely than Black Muslims (20%) to be upbeat, Muslim women (70%) are more likely than Muslim men (58%) to be pessimistic about the future. We find Muslims' overall positivity remarkable given the fact that all other groups surveyed registered a sharp decline in their satisfaction with the way things are going in the country. We posit that Muslim and Democratic gains in the 2018 midterm elections and the continued resistance to Trump's anti-immigration policies are responsible for Muslims' confidence.

Muslims Least Likely to Approve of President's Performance

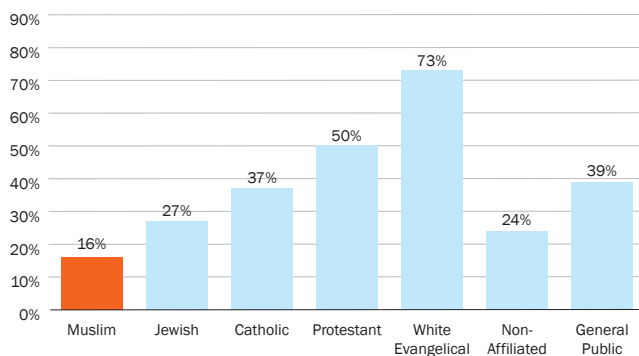


FIGURE 1: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president? (% Approve shown) Base: Total respondents, 2019

Muslim Approval of President's Job Has Declined Sharply since 2016

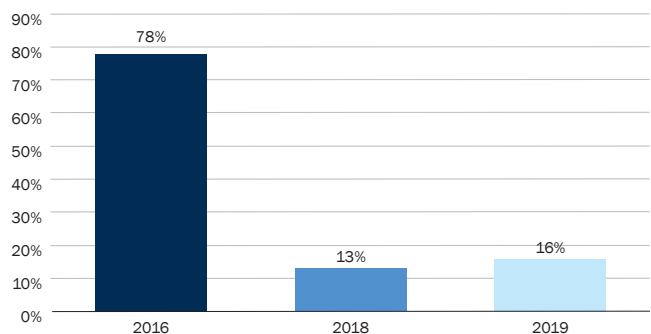


FIGURE 2: Do you approve or disapprove of the way [Barack Obama / Donald Trump] is handling his job as president? (% Approve shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2016, 2018, 2019

All Faith Groups, Except Muslims, Declined in Satisfaction with Direction of Country over Past Year

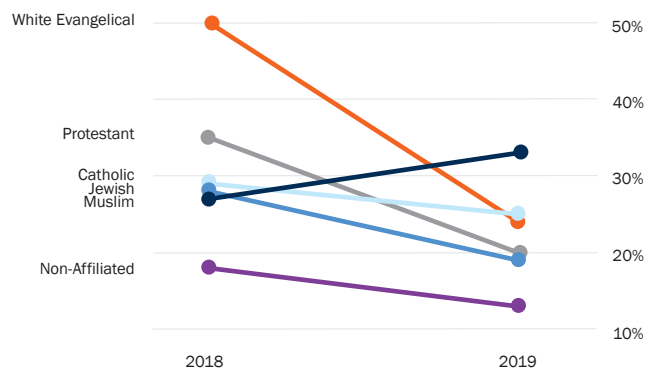


FIGURE 3: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018, 2019

Muslim Satisfaction with Direction of Country Has Declined since 2016

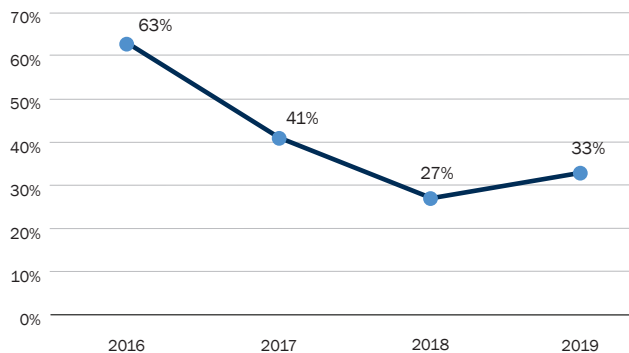


FIGURE 4: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

Muslims who vote overwhelmingly favor Democrats

Our findings show that Muslims directed their frustration with the administration at the polls and voted overwhelmingly in favor of Democratic candidates. Three quarters of Muslims (76%) cast their ballots for Democrats, a trend mirrored among the Jewish Americans (69%) we surveyed, as well as Black (91%) and Hispanic Americans (66%) more generally. Among Muslims, support for Democrats remains consistent with age as opposed to the general public where it decreases: 83% of Muslims aged 50 and older vote for Democrats in contrast with 44% of their generational peers in the general public.

Muslims and Jews Most Likely to Have Voted for a Democrat in 2018 Midterms

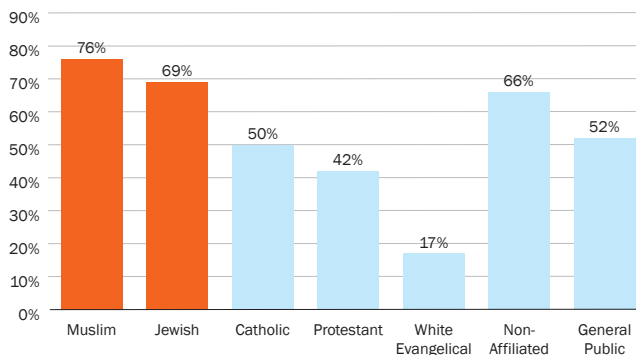


FIGURE 5: If you voted for a Member of Congress this November, did you vote for a Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate? (% Who voted Democrat shown) Base: Total respondents who can legally vote in the U.S. and voted in the November 2018 midterm elections, 2019

Though growing, Muslim voter registration and engagement still lags behind other groups

Despite being higher than in 2016 (60%), only 73% of eligible Muslim voters report being registered to do so, the least likely in our 2019 sample (85%–95%).¹ Overall, Muslims’ voter eligibility is 80%, which is less than the other groups in our survey and this gap may persist because 47% of American Muslims are not native-born. The voter registration gap is most pronounced among Muslim young adults (aged 18-29), only 63% of whom report being registered to vote compared to 85% of their peers in the general population. Muslim voter engagement further suffers due to the inconsistency of Muslim voters who express their intentions to vote (83%) but show up at the polls in fewer numbers (59%), either due to lack of choice of candidates or distrust in the electoral system. Despite these large gaps, Muslims contested in the 2018 mid-term elections in unprecedented numbers, recording as many as 131 wins at local and state levels, and securing three Congressional positions.

Muslims Least Likely to Be Registered to Vote in 2019

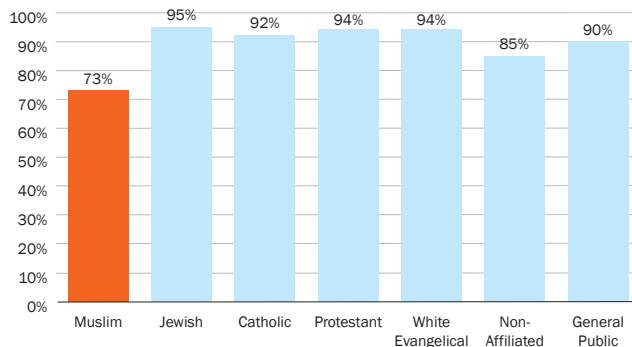


FIGURE 6: Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2019

More Muslims Registered to Vote Than in 2016

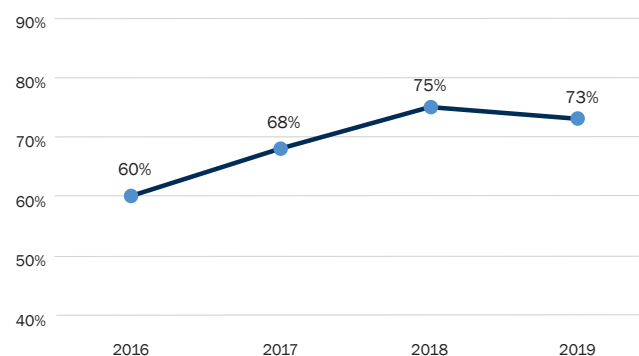


FIGURE 7: Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? (% Yes shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

Not All Muslims Who Intend to Vote Show up at the Polls

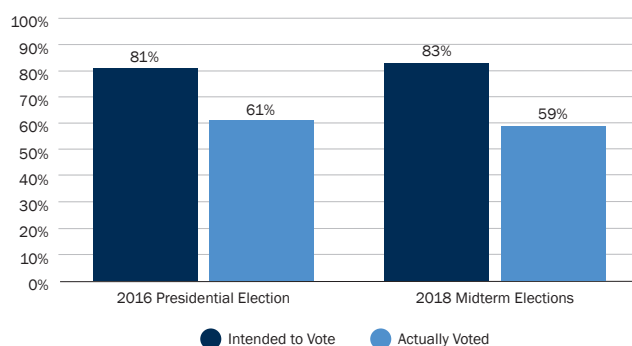


FIGURE 8: Do you plan to vote in the 2016 presidential election? Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election? Do you plan to vote in the November 2018 midterm elections? Did you vote in the November 2018 midterm elections? Base: Total Muslim respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

Muslim local engagement with elected officials a predictor of voter participation more broadly

We found that some expected factors such as higher income and older age, as well as religious attendance as previously reported in ISPU polls, hold true as predictors of voter participation for Muslims as they do for other Americans. However, in the case of Muslims, contacting a local elected official emerged as the single strongest determinant of voter participation. We also found that Muslims are the group least likely to communicate with local and federal elected officials, with only 21% of Muslim men and 20% of Muslim women reporting communication with a local official.

Income, Age, Mosque Attendance, and Local Political Engagement Predict Voter Participation among Muslims

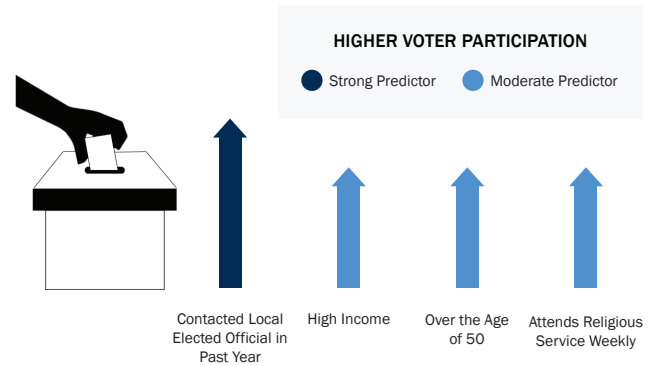


FIGURE 9: Did you vote in the November 2018 midterm elections?
Base: Total Muslim respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2019

We used linear regression and held key variables constant (including demographics, political party identification, and political ideology) to isolate the effect of each variable of interest. For the effect size of the variable, “strong” in this case represents a shift in the predicted probability of a midterm vote by 20% or more and “moderate” indicates a shift between 10% and 20%.

Support for Muslim ban does little to help candidates with most voters

Sixty-one percent of Muslims, 53% of Jews, and 56% of non-affiliated Americans report that a candidate’s endorsement of the Muslim ban would decrease their support for that individual. While white Evangelicals (44%) are the most likely of any group to say a candidate’s endorsement of the Muslim ban would increase their support of that candidate, a majority of even this faith group saw the issue as either decreasing their support (19%) of such a candidate or making no difference (37%). The plurality of the general public (44%) say a candidate’s endorsement of a Muslim ban would decrease their support, while 21% say it would increase their support. Thirty-four percent of the general public say it would make no difference to them whether or not a candidate supported the Muslim ban.

Endorsement of Muslim Ban Does Little to Help Candidates with Most Voters

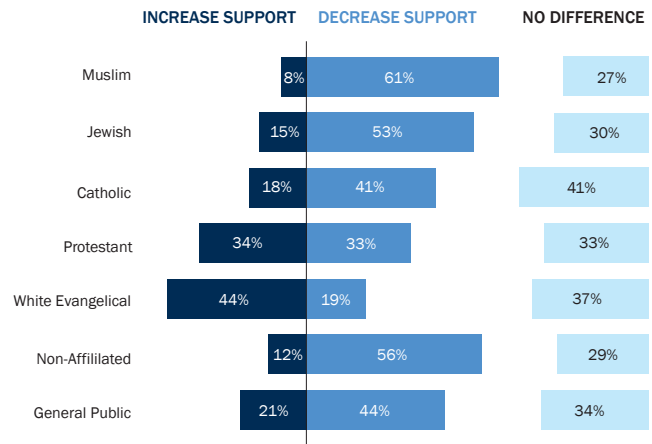


FIGURE 10: Does a candidate’s support of President Trump’s travel ban on citizens from five predominantly Muslim countries, a policy sometimes referred to as the “Muslim ban,” increase your support, decrease your support, or not make a difference to your support for this candidate? Base: Total respondents, 2019

Muslims profess more private religious devotion, less public religious assertiveness

We found that Muslims (71%) and white Evangelicals (82%) are the most likely to say religion is very important in their daily lives, more than all other faith groups and non-affiliated Americans. Despite facing higher levels of religious discrimination than other groups, Muslims hold steady to their faith. Forty-three percent of Muslims attend religious services once a week or more, on par with Protestants (49%) but less frequently than white Evangelicals (64%). More Muslims (78% of men and 79% of women) report satisfaction with the way things are done in their house of worship than the general public (62%).

Muslims are more likely to be privately devout—derive meaning and purpose from their faith (63%) and draw on their faith to forgive someone who has hurt them deeply (54%)—than all groups surveyed except white Evangelicals (75% and 63%).

However, Muslims are less likely to publicly assert their religious beliefs such as take unpopular stands to defend their faith (36%) or wish to use their faith as a source of

law (33%) than white Evangelicals (58% and 54%). Muslims (55%) have a sense of linked fate,² that is, to believe that their fate is tied to that of their coreligionists, as much as Protestants (55%) and white Evangelicals (57%), but less than Jews (69%). Though it can be reasonably expected that greater personal spiritual engagement would translate into greater public assertion of faith, Muslims are highest on dimensions that reflect private spirituality and lower on the one that requires public risk, likely because of the threat of religious discrimination, which Muslims continue to report at higher frequencies (62%) than any other faith group (43% or less).

In comparison, white Evangelicals are high both on private and public dimensions of religiosity, with faith playing a central role in their personal lives as well as what they wish to see in their society. Jews are low on private measures of spiritual engagement such as frequency of religious services, but higher on public assertion of their faith identity and a sense of a linked fate with co-religionists.

White Evangelicals Most Likely to Say Their Religion Should Be a Source of American Law

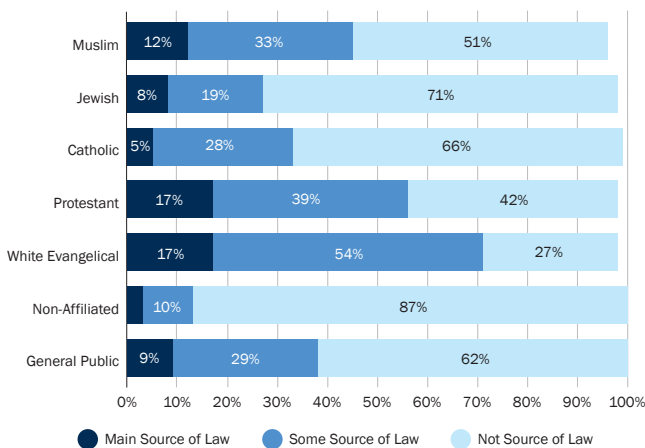


FIGURE 11: I am going to read you a few statements, please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view: Your religion should be the MAIN source of American law. Your religion should be a source of American law but not the only source. Your religion should NOT be a source of American law. Base: Total respondents, 2019

White Evangelicals Most Likely to Be Both Privately and Publicly Religious

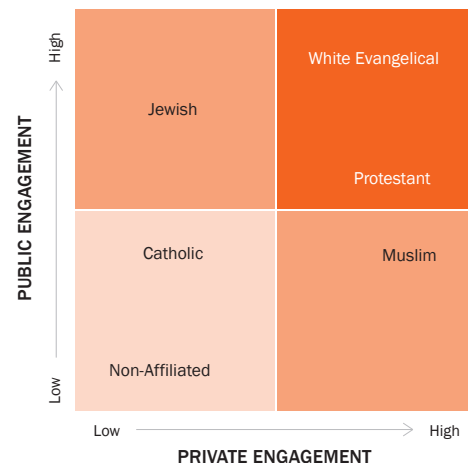


FIGURE 12: This table is a summary of the authors' observations regarding where different American faith communities land on the two dimensional spectrum of public and private religious engagement.

Muslims most likely to report religious, gender, and sectarian discrimination

As reported in our prior polls, Muslims are the most likely group to report experiencing religious discrimination (62%). Muslim women report higher levels of discrimination (68%) than men (55%). Second to Muslims, 43% of Jews report religious discrimination, while 36% of white Evangelicals report experiencing it. With 40% registering experiences of sectarianism, Muslims are the group most likely to have sectarian discrimination within their ranks as compared to other groups surveyed.

Our data show that 41% of Muslim women experience gender discrimination from within their community, the highest of any group examined. However, the misogyny they suffer from the public at large is still greater at 52%. Muslim women are also more likely to report gender discrimination from the public than are any other group of women surveyed (36% or less).

Though unwanted sexual advances from a faith leader equally prevalent across communities, Muslims most likely group to report to law enforcement

Unwanted sexual advances from a faith leader are equally prevalent among all groups we surveyed. All groups are also equally likely to report such advances to members of the community. However, Muslim victims of sexual

crimes are most likely to speak up against perpetrators and more likely (54%) to involve law enforcement in such matters than other groups in our study.

Unwanted Sexual Advances from Faith Leader Equally Prevalent across Faith Groups

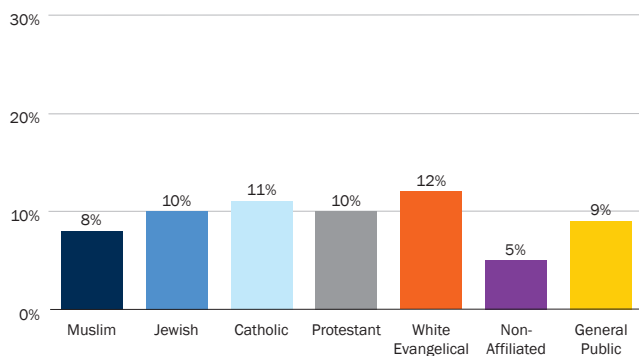


FIGURE 13: Do you know anyone personally in your faith community who has been the victim of unwanted sexual advances from a faith leader in your religious community? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents, 2019

All Groups, Except Muslims, More Likely to Report Unwanted Sexual Advances from Faith Leader to Community Leadership Than Law Enforcement

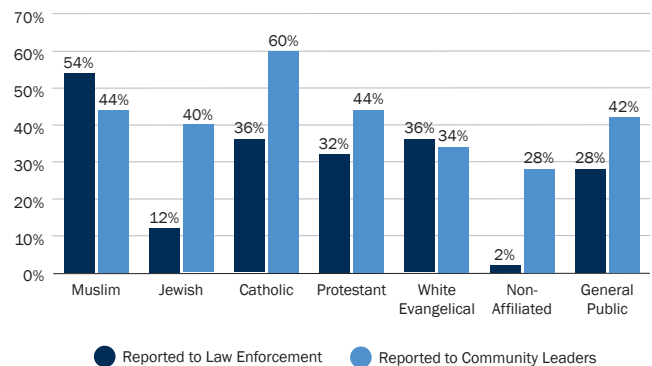


FIGURE 14: Did this person report the incident to law enforcement? Did this person report the incident to a religious or community leader in your faith community? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who know anyone personally in their faith community who has been the victim of unwanted sexual advances from a faith leader in their religious community, 2019

Islamophobia Index inches up

A measure of the level of public endorsement of five negative stereotypes associated with Muslims in America, our Islamophobia Index inched up from 24 in 2018 to 28 in 2019. The Islamophobia Index calculates reported levels of agreement with the following statements:

- A. Most Muslims living in the United States are more prone to violence than others.
- B. Most Muslims living in the United States discriminate against women.
- C. Most Muslims living in the United States are hostile to the United States.
- D. Most Muslims living in the United States are less civilized than other people.
- E. Most Muslims living in the United States are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims

Jews and Hispanic Americans are most favorable toward Muslims and White Evangelicals are least

Of all faith groups apart from Muslims, Jews score the lowest on the Islamophobia Index. A majority (53%) of Jews report having positive views of Muslims with 13% reporting negative views. In contrast, white Evangelicals score the highest on the Islamophobia Index with as many as 44% holding unfavorable opinions about Muslims, which is twice as many as those who hold favorable opinions (20%).

Analyzed by race, Hispanic Americans are five times as likely to hold favorable opinions of Muslims as they are to have negative attitudes (51% vs. 10%). In comparison, white Americans are almost as likely to hold favorable as unfavorable opinions (33% vs. 26%), whereas 40% have no opinion. Black Americans are seven times as likely to hold positive opinions (35%) as negative views (5%) of Muslims, but the majority report having no opinion (51%).

Jews Have Lowest Levels of Islamophobia, White Evangelicals Highest

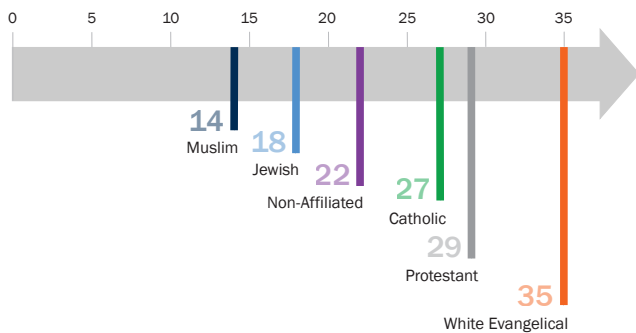


FIGURE 15: Scores on the 2019 Islamophobia Index Base: Total respondents, 2019

Jews Most Favorable toward Muslims, White Evangelicals Least

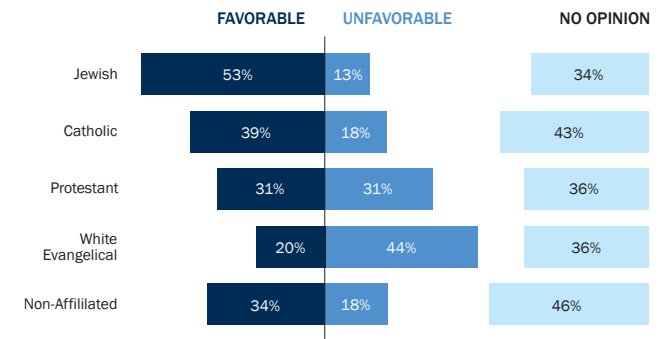


FIGURE 16: For each group you recognize, please tell me if you have a favorable, unfavorable, or no opinion of that group: Muslims. Base: Total respondents who are not Muslim, 2019

Hispanic Americans Have Lowest Levels of Islamophobia

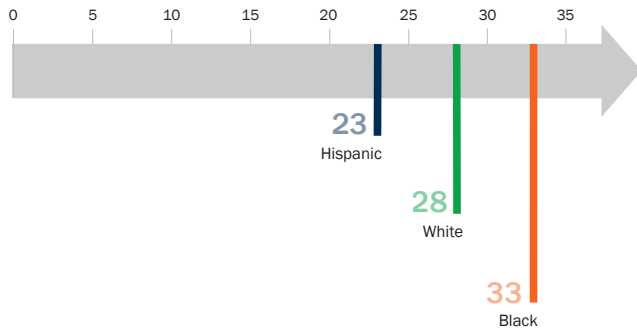


FIGURE 17: Scores on the 2019 Islamophobia Index Base: Total Black, white, and Hispanic respondents in the general public, 2019

Hispanic Americans Most Favorable toward Muslims

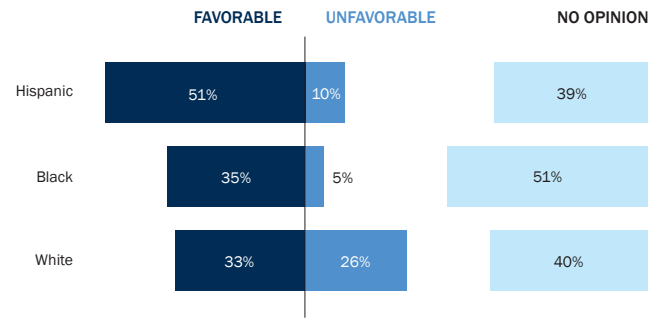


FIGURE 18: For each group you recognize, please tell me if you have a favorable, unfavorable, or no opinion of that group: Muslims. Base: Total Black, white, and Hispanic respondents in the general public, 2019

Jews and Muslims Mirror Views of Each Other

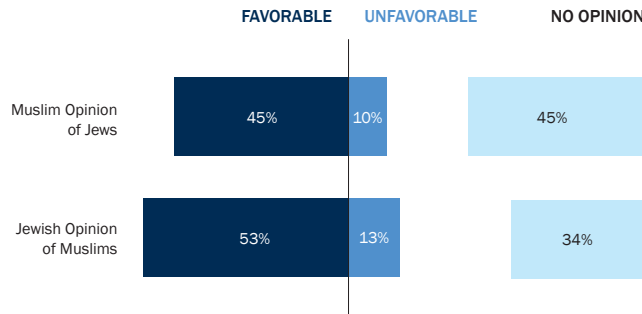


FIGURE 19: For each group you recognize, please tell me if you have a favorable, unfavorable, or no opinion of that group: Muslims, Jews. Base: Total Muslim and Jewish respondents, 2019

Muslims View Evangelicals More Favorably Than Evangelicals View Muslims

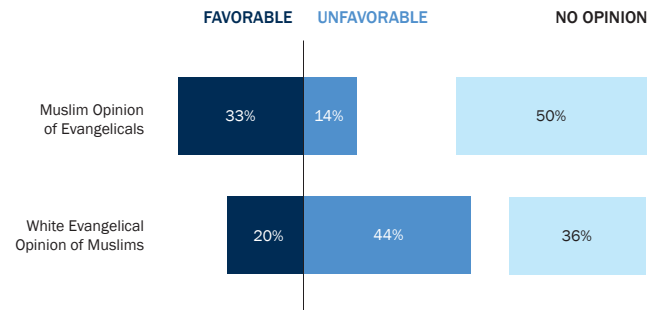


FIGURE 20: For each group you recognize, please tell me if you have a favorable, unfavorable, or no opinion of that group: Muslims, Evangelicals. Base: Total Muslim and white Evangelical respondents, 2019

Knowing a Muslim linked to lower Islamophobia

Our analysis reveals that knowing a Muslim personally is among several protective factors against Islamophobia. When a Muslim is a close friend, Islamophobia is further reduced. We found that three in four Jews know a Muslim, about half of the general public know a Muslim, but only about one in three among white Evangelicals know an American who is Muslim.

Other predictors of lower Islamophobia include Democratic leanings; knowledge about Islam; favorable views of Jews, Black Americans, and feminists; and higher income. To a lesser extent, negative views of Evangelicals are significantly linked to a lower score on the Islamophobia Index (less Islamophobia), though the correlation is weak. Notably, respondents' nativity, sex, age, education, and religiosity have no bearing on Islamophobia. ♦

Jews Most Likely to Know a Muslim, White Evangelicals Least Likely

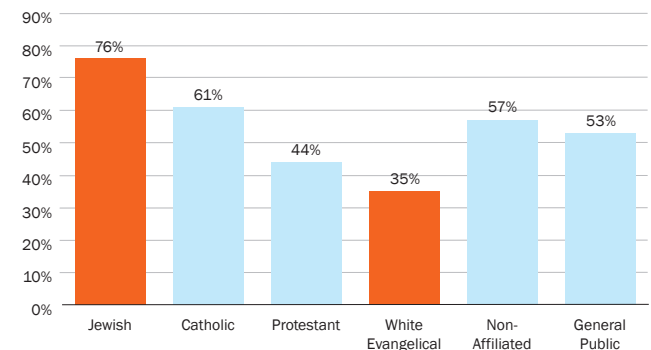


FIGURE 21: Do you happen to know a Muslim personally, or not? (Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who are not Muslim, 2019

Those with a Close Muslim Friend Score Far Lower on Islamophobia Index Than Those Who Do Not Know a Muslim

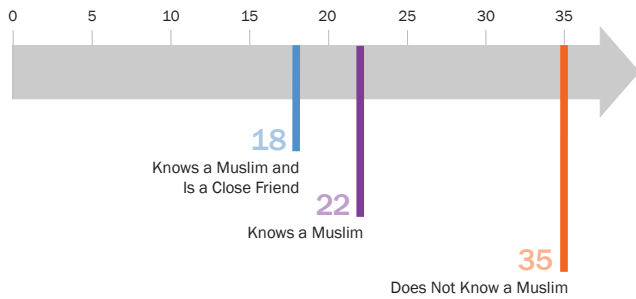


FIGURE 22: Do you happen to know a Muslim personally, or not? Are there any Muslims you are close enough friends with that you would call them if you needed help? (Mean score on Islamophobia Index shown) Base: Total respondents, 2019

Those Who Know a Muslim Twice as Likely to Be Favorable toward Muslims Than Those Who Do Not

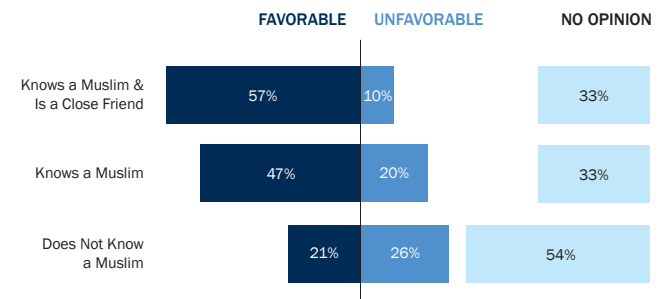


FIGURE 23: For each group you recognize, please tell me if you have a favorable, unfavorable, or no opinion of that group: Muslims. Base: Total respondents, 2019

Being a Democrat, Knowledge about Islam, and Favorable Views of Other Minorities Linked to Lower Islamophobia

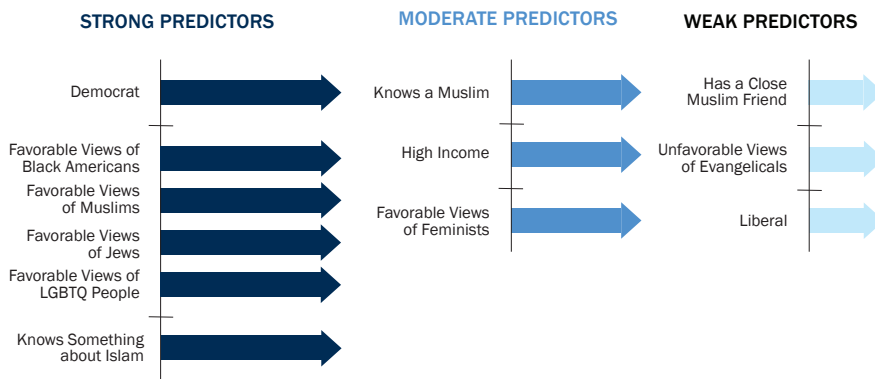


FIGURE 24: Our analysis tested a battery of variables to determine which were linked to higher or lower scores on the Islamophobia Index. We used linear regression and held key variables constant (including demographics, political party identification, and political ideology) to isolate the effect of each variable of interest. For the effect size of the variable, “strong” in this case represents a shift in the Islamophobia scale by 10 points or more; “moderate” indicates a shift from 5 points up to 10; and a “weak” effect means that the shift is less than 5 points.

Endnotes

1. While these numbers are higher than national voter registration numbers, they reflect the typical reported numbers in national polls, where the sample often reflects a more civically engaged population. For the purpose of a comparison across faith communities, these numbers should be seen as a comparative benchmark rather than a figure competing with national voter registration numbers. Allyson L. Holbrook and Jon A. Krosnick, “Social Desirability Bias in Voter Turnout Reports: Tests Using the Item Count Technique,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 37–67.
2. Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Digging Deeper



The Majority of Muslims Believe Poverty Is the Result of Bad Circumstances, Not Bad Character

NOVEMBER 26, 2019 | BY [YOUSSEF CHOUHOUD](#)

Last year, ISPU highlighted the difficult economic circumstances that many American Muslims face. We found that Muslims were the most likely faith community to report low income, with one third of Muslim households in America at or below the federal poverty level, making a combined annual income of less than \$30,000. Data from the 2019 American Muslim Poll indicate that the previous finding was not anomalous, as 37% of Muslim households in the latest survey report incomes below \$30,000 as compared to 26% in the general public (Figure 1).

What Do American Muslims Believe about the Cause of Poverty?

American Muslims' objective economic conditions compared to those of the general public only tell part of the story. Subjective perspectives on the causes of economic difficulty and assessment of their own personal finances

can also be quite informative. For example, studies have shown that one's belief in the root cause of poverty can strongly predict certain policy preferences.¹ Those who believe that poverty is primarily due to circumstances beyond one's control are more likely to support redistributive policies than those who feel that individuals experiencing poverty are primarily responsible for their own economic condition. With regards to the role of religion, we find that even though Muslims who frequently attend religious services feel less poor, belief in the source of poverty is unassociated to this or any other metric of religiosity. Similarly, we found that sex, age, race, income level, and education don't predict how a person views the source of poverty. The only significant predictors of whether or not Muslims believe that societal factors primarily drive poverty are political ideology and party identification, with conservatives and Republicans more likely to assign blame to the individual for their economic standing.

American Muslims are significantly more likely than the general public to believe that poverty is primarily due to circumstances beyond one's control vs. an individual's bad choices (Figure 1). When this issue is broken down by religious affiliation, however, Muslims are squarely aligned with most other groups with only Catholics and, to a greater extent, white Evangelicals holding a majority view that poverty is the result of individual actions.

Do Poor Muslims Feel Poor?

In terms of personal finances, Muslims' subjective self-assessments are on average more positive than their objective conditions would indicate. When asked to classify their financial situation, Muslims are no less likely than any other group (with the exception of American Jews) to provide a rating of "good" or "excellent" despite being significantly more likely to earn a low income. Moreover, Muslims living in low income households make up a larger share of those rating their financial situation positively (22%) when compared to the general public (8%) (Figure 2).

Although this fascinating finding requires further research to tease out the determinants and implications, one factor that we found significantly contributes to positive self-assessment among Muslims is weekly mosque attendance (controlling for income, race/ethnicity, age, and sex). Thus, religiosity continues to partly structure Muslim attitudes and perceptions even at a time when political and social identities are the prime movers of public opinion. ◆

¹ See, e.g., Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Thomas Piketty, "Social Mobility and Redistributive Politics," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 110, no. 3 (August 1, 1995): 551–84; Eliot R. Smith and James R. Kluegel, *Beliefs about Inequality: Americans' Views of What Is and What Ought to Be* (New York: Aldine Transaction, 1986).

Muslims More Likely Than General Public to Believe Societal Circumstances Are the Primary Cause of Poverty

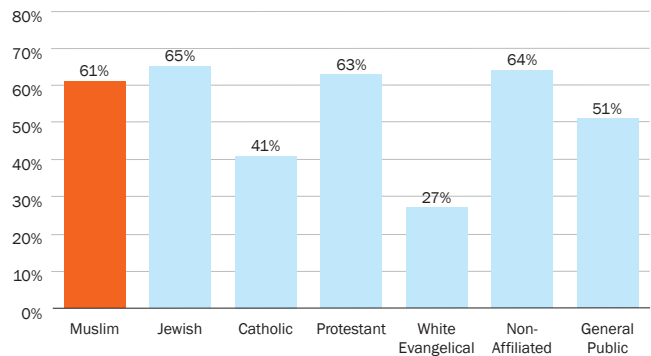


FIGURE 1: In your opinion, which is the bigger cause of poverty today, that people are not doing enough to help themselves out of poverty OR that circumstances beyond their control cause them to be poor? (% Circumstances beyond their control shown) Base: Total respondents, 2019

Muslims More Likely Than General Public to Provide Higher Subjective Assessments of Their Financial Situation Relative to Objective Income Levels

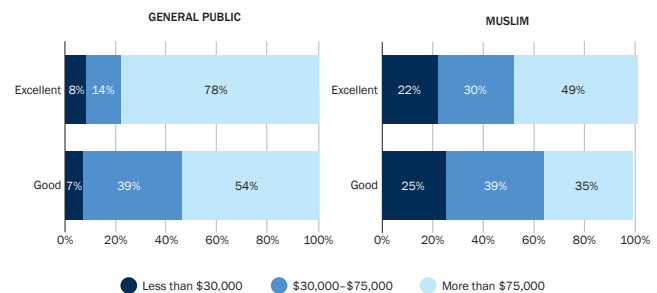


FIGURE 2: How would you rate your own financial situation today? Would you say it is excellent, good, only fair, or poor? Base: Total respondents, 2019

Four Data-Driven Ways to Combat Islamophobia

Build coalitions with other impacted communities

Among the strongest predictors of lower Islamophobia are favorable regard for Black Americans, Jews, and LGBTQ+ individuals, with favorability toward feminists also a moderate predictor of less anti-Muslim bigotry. This suggests that **Islamophobia is just one branch on a bigger tree of bigotry. Combat Islamophobia in coalition** with other impacted communities. Work to end racism and religious bigotry more generally.



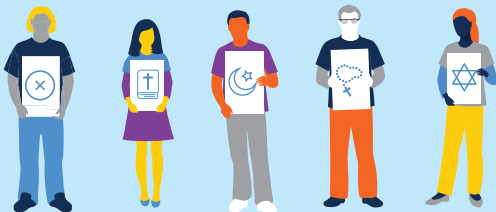
Keep demystifying Islam

Knowing something about **Islam** is an even **stronger** predictor of **lower Islamophobia** than is knowing a Muslim personally. It is therefore not enough to humanize Muslims as people or make Muslim friends. It is still important to also **educate the public on the faith** that unites Muslims.



Do more than "Interfaith"

While participating in interfaith dialogue is commendable for its own good, our data suggests that **Islamophobia** is more **politically driven** through ideology and partisanship than religiously driven. Our data shows **religiosity is not a driver of Islamophobia**. This is why it is important to reach out to **diverse groups** and communities, **across racial, class, and cultural divides**, to people of all faiths and no faith, rather than just those typically involved in interfaith engagement, who tend to be white and middle class.



Make Muslim friends

Simply **knowing a Muslim** cuts one's likelihood of negative perceptions **in half**. Create opportunities for **face-to-face** human interaction between people of different religious and cultural backgrounds while **cooperating for the greater good**.



Four Data-Driven Ways to Increase Muslim Political Impact

Build from the ground up

Work to **increase local civic engagement** as a driver to increase political participation at the state and federal level. Muslim Americans who engaged a **local elected official** in the past year were more likely to not only be **registered to vote**, but to also have **voted in the 2018 midterm** election. This was not the case (surprisingly) with Muslims who engaged their congressional representative, underscoring the importance of starting local.



Mobilize at mosques

Like other Americans, those who identify as Muslims and **attend a religious service** at least once a week are also **more likely to have voted** in the midterms. This suggests that **mosques**, like churches and other houses of worship, **are spaces for mobilizing** communities toward **greater civic participation**.¹



Build coalitions with natural allies

Muslim Americans looking to increase their political impact should **form coalitions** with others working for the same goals. Other **religious minorities** as well as **people of color** are more likely to already have an established relationship with Muslims and often share broad political goals of an **inclusive** and **strong** America.



Focus on younger and economically disadvantaged voters

Muslims who are the **least likely** to be **registered to vote** are **young** (18-29) and **poor**. Yet, both groups make up a **disproportionately large segment** of the American Muslim population compared to the general public, resulting in **large gains** in voter participation if they were engaged.



¹For a case study on how a mosque mobilizes Americans who are Muslims to greater civic participation see: Understanding Effective Civic Engagement | The Muslim Community Association of the San Francisco Bay Area: A Case Study.

AMERICAN MUSLIM POLL 2020



Photo by Syed Yaqeen

AMID PANDEMIC AND PROTEST

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Acknowledgments	Thank you to the RISE Together Fund (a Proteus Fund initiative), Democracy Fund, El-Hibri Foundation, and Pillars Fund for making this report possible.
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Summary

ISPU's fifth annual poll showcases American Muslim perspectives within the context of their nation's faith landscape. Fielded during a national lockdown due to COVID-19, American Muslim Poll 2020: Amid Pandemic and Protest provides researchers, policymakers, and the public insights and analysis into the attitudes and policy preferences of American Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, white Evangelicals, the non-affiliated, and the general public. For the third year, we track the National American **Islamophobia Index**, measuring how much the public endorses anti-Muslim tropes. New this year: our researchers track five years of American Muslim civic engagement trends, examine the level of support for faith activists to form coalitions with social and political groups, and present new research on structural Islamophobia.

Introduction

THIS YEAR'S American Muslim Poll, the fifth annual survey of its kind, released shortly before a critical election, was meant to be historic. But when we began planning for its release, we could not have imagined just how historic. Our fielding period was March 17 to April 22, the first four weeks of a country-wide shutdown in the wake of spiking cases of COVID-19. During this time, Americans' lives changed dramatically as schools closed and many nonessential workers were instructed to work from home. Others continued essential work such as sanitation, grocery staffing, medical care, and transportation. And still others lost their jobs or had hours drastically reduced. Places of worship closed their doors, travel came to a screeching halt, and, for many, life as we know it changed completely.

The fielding dates occurred just months before another historic event: the massive uprising in pursuit of racial justice after the murder of George Floyd. On May 25, Derek Chauvin, a white Minneapolis police officer, killed George Floyd, a handcuffed Black man in his custody, by holding his knee against Floyd's neck for almost nine minutes until he died. Chauvin, who had 18 prior complaints against him, has been charged with second-degree murder. In the months since, the streets of hundreds of cities across the United States have been filled with massive protests demanding an end to police brutality and widespread systemic racial bias and societal inequity. This uprising is occurring in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that disproportionately impacts Black and Latino Americans.

This one-of-a-kind poll is a snapshot of the attitudes and perceptions of the American public, including underrepresented religious minorities such as American Muslims and Jews, during this unprecedented moment in American history. The 2020 study reveals not only the presidential preferences of a diverse pool of American voters ahead of a critical election, but their perhaps surprising preferences regarding political alliances and political engagement beyond the ballot box.

For the third year in a row, we report on the Islamophobia Index, a measure of public endorsement for anti-Muslim tropes. This year, these attitudes were recorded mere months before an election where the incumbent has been widely seen as fomenting anti-Muslim sentiment as an electoral strategy, both with rhetoric and administration policies like the Muslim Ban.

This year's poll also tracks the impact of four years of a Trump presidency on American religious minorities, namely Muslims and Jews. These two groups are often pitted against each other, but are both targeted by a newly emboldened white supremacist movement. New data provides insight into how this affects Muslim-Jewish relations.

We hope this research will inform and illuminate how we understand this historical moment for our country, as well as the impact of the past four years on how we view our nation and each other.

Results

In March 2020, during the 2020 primary elections and in the early days of the global COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide shutdowns, the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) conducted its fifth annual survey of the American general public and faith groups, including

Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Protestants (including white Evangelicals), and the non-affiliated. Our findings shed light on progress made over the last five years, especially in civic engagement, as well as challenges that persist for each of these faith communities.

Muslims remain more satisfied than the general public with the direction of the country

American Muslims are more likely than the general public and the non-affiliated to report being satisfied with the direction the country is taking (37% vs. 27% and 16%, respectively). Muslim satisfaction is on par with that of other faith groups (32–42% among Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and white Evangelicals). Looking over the past five years, we find that aside from a peak of 63% in 2016 and a low in 2018 of 27%, Muslims' satisfaction with the

country has mostly held steady with 41% reporting satisfaction in 2017, compared to 37% in 2020. Within the Muslim community, white Muslims (46%) are more likely than Black Muslims (28%), and Muslim men (41%) are more likely than Muslim women (31%) to report satisfaction with the direction of the country, reflecting the racial and gender trends of the country overall.

Muslims More Likely Than General Public to Be Satisfied with Direction of Country

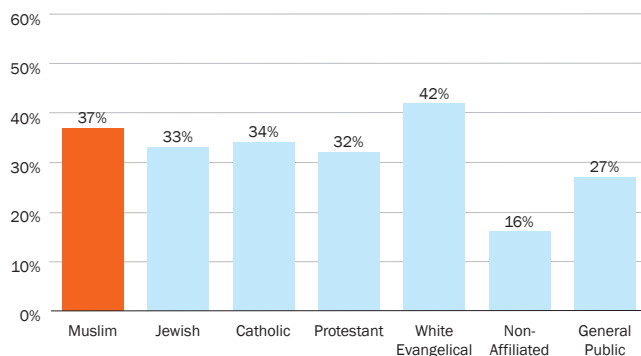


FIGURE 1: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) Base: Total respondents, 2020

Muslim Satisfaction Steady over Past Two Years

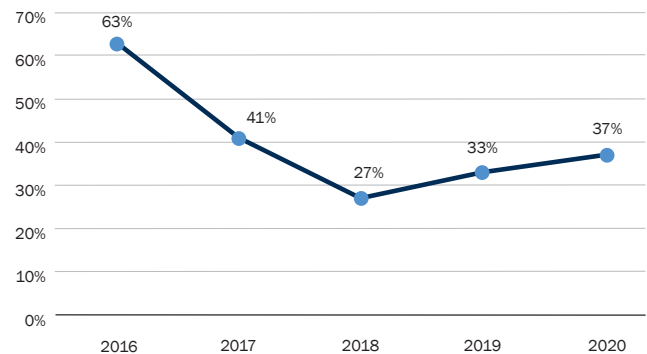


FIGURE 2: Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today? (% Satisfied shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2016–2020

Though higher than previous years, Muslim approval of President Trump remains lower than other groups

Among Muslims, approval of President Trump’s job performance has increased from 13% in 2018 and 16% in 2019 to 30% in 2020. This is in contrast to the general public, for whom approval of President Trump has remained stable (35% in 2018 and 39% in 2019 and 2020). Again, we find gender and racial group differences in approval ratings. About one third of Muslim men (34%) approve of Trump, compared with one quarter of Muslim women (24%). Half of white Muslims (50%) approve of President Trump, compared with one fifth to one quarter of non-white Muslims (20% of Black Muslims, 21% of Arab Muslims, and 27% of Asian Muslims).

The racial breakdown in Trump’s approval within the Muslim community mirrors differences found among the general public; white Americans (48%) approve of the president more than their non-white counterparts (e.g., approval was 16% among Black Americans and 24% among Hispanic Americans). Nonetheless, American Muslim approval of President Trump is lower than other groups surveyed (30% of Muslims vs. 44% of Catholics, 46% of Protestants, 70% of white Evangelicals, and 39% of the general public).

Muslim Approval of President among Lowest Measured

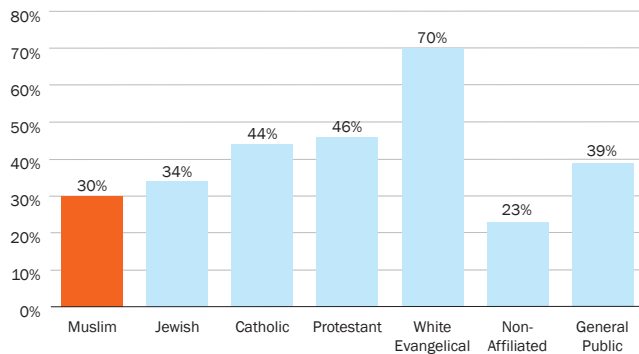


FIGURE 3: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president? (% Approve shown) Base: Total respondents, 2020

White Muslims Most Likely to Approve of Trump Performance as President

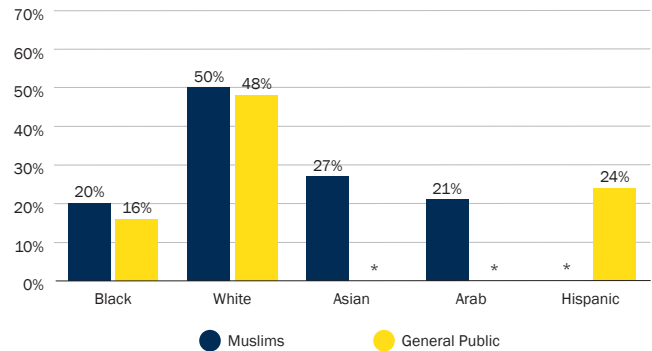


FIGURE 4: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president? (% Approve shown) Base: Total respondents, 2020 * Sample too small to report

Muslims continue to make gains in voter registration, but remain lower than other groups

In 2020, 78% of eligible Muslims report being registered to vote, a continued upward trend since 2016 (60%). In other words, the proportion of eligible Muslim voters who are not registered to vote has decreased by roughly half from 39% in 2016 to 21% in 2020. We also find fewer “insha’Allah voters” (those who intend to vote in an upcoming election but have not registered to do so) in 2020, where 78% are registered to vote and 81% say they plan to vote, a difference of only 3% between intentions and action (planning to vote and registering). In 2016, in contrast, 60% were registered to vote while 81% said they planned to vote, a difference of 21%. The number of voters who do not plan to vote remains constant at about 15% (14% in 2016 and 16% in 2020).

Muslim Voter Registration Still Lags behind Other Groups

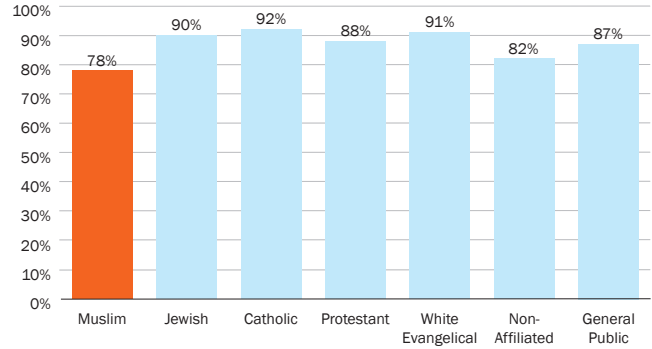


FIGURE 5: Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? (% Yes shown) Base: Total respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2020

Unregistered Muslim Voters Drop by Half

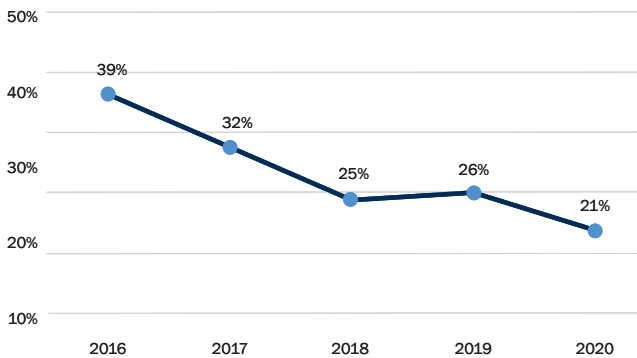


FIGURE 6: Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? (% No shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2016–2020

Gap between Intention to Vote and Voter Registration Narrows among Muslims

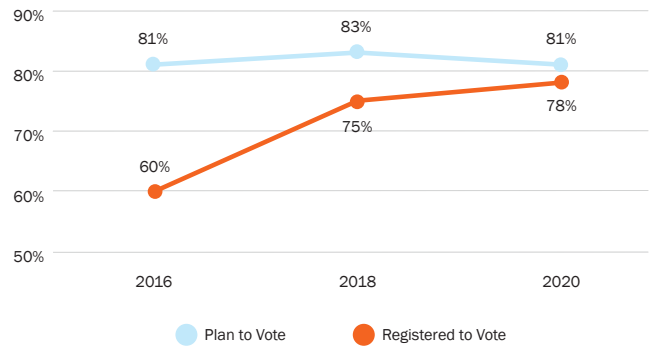


FIGURE 7: Do you plan to vote in the (year) (presidential/midterm) election? (% Yes shown) Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? (% Yes shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents who can legally vote in the U.S., 2016, 2018, 2020

Muslims exceed or are on par with general public in political activity beyond voting

Nearly one quarter of Muslims attended a town hall meeting in the year prior to the survey (22%), compared with 15% of Protestants, 12% of white Evangelicals, 14% of the non-affiliated, and 15% of the general public. Muslims and Jews (both at 16%) are the most likely to volunteer for a political campaign in the past year, compared with 5% of Catholics, 8% of Protestants, 9% of white Evangelicals, 4% of the non-affiliated, and 7% of the general public. Finally, we asked survey respondents if they made a financial contribution to a political campaign in the past year. Muslims are on par with other groups; 21% of Muslims, 18% of Catholics, 21% of Protestants, 18% of white Evangelicals, 19% of the non-affiliated, and 19% of the general public reported that they made a campaign contribution. Jews were the most likely at 35%.

Muslims among Most Likely to Attend Town Hall Meeting

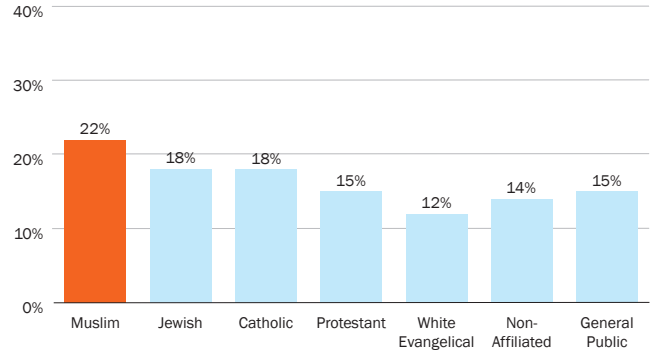


FIGURE 8: Which of the following actions have you taken in the past 12 months? (% Attended a town hall meeting shown) Base: Total respondents, 2020

Muslims, Jews Most Likely to Volunteer for a Political Campaign

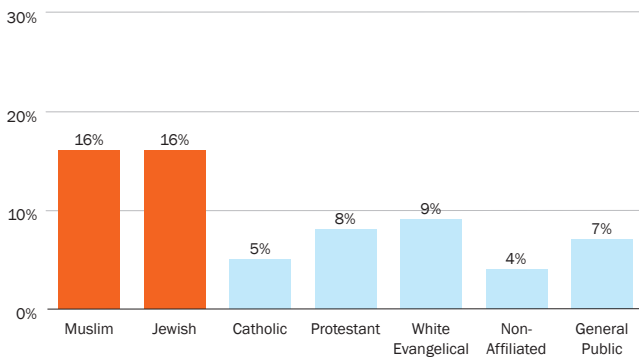


FIGURE 9: Which of the following actions have you taken in the past 12 months? (% Volunteered for a political campaign shown) Base: Total respondents, 2020

Muslims on Par with General Public in Political Campaign Contributions

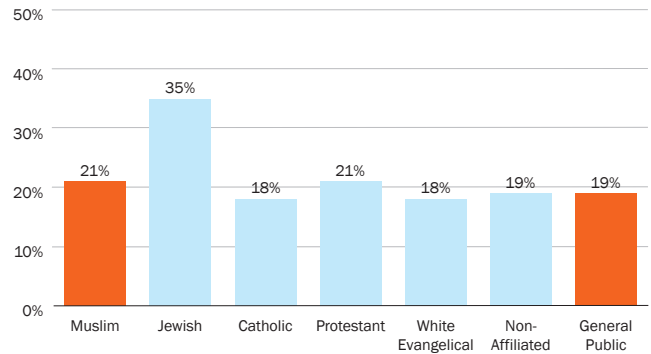


FIGURE 10: Which of the following actions have you taken in the past 12 months? (% Contributed money to a political campaign shown) Base: Total respondents, 2020

When assessing presidential hopefuls, Muslim support for Trump as next presidential election winner has climbed, but remains lower than all other candidates

Our survey field dates (March 17–April 22, 2020) occurred during a hotly contested Democratic primary and included the exit of Senator Bernie Sanders from the contest (April 8, 2020). As was the case in 2016, in 2020 American Muslims prefer a Democrat over a Republican for president (51% selected a Democrat as their candidate of choice, and 16% chose a Republican). Muslims (28%) are more likely than the general public (19%) to be undecided with respect to presidential vote choice. During the primary season, Muslims split their support among Democratic candidates: 29% report supporting Bernie Sanders, and 22% support Joe Biden. Among Muslims, 14% selected Trump as their candidate of choice in 2020, compared with 4% in 2016. Again, we find the relatively higher percentage in favor of Trump as the next president may be driven by the 31% of white Muslims who chose Trump, compared with 6–8% of non-white Muslims.

Muslims and the non-affiliated are the least likely to select Trump as their candidate of choice (14% of Muslims and 16% of the non-affiliated vs. 27% of Jews, 34% of Catholics, 39% of Protestants, 61% of white Evangelicals, and 30% of the general public).

Muslim Preference for Trump Has Increased but Remains Relatively Low

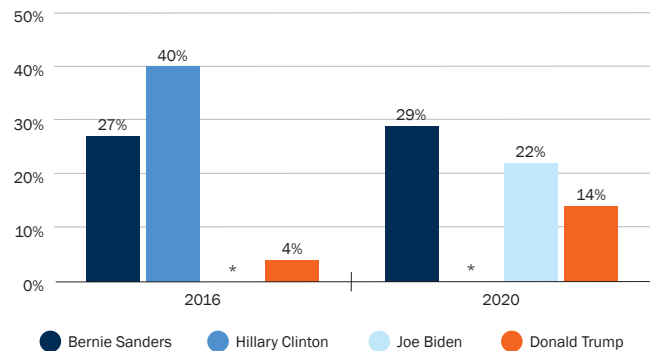


FIGURE 11: If the presidential election were held today, who would you want to win? Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2016, 2020

* Candidate did not run

Muslim Trump supporters similar to the president's supporters in the general public

We used regression analysis to better understand Muslim and general public Americans who prefer Trump as their presidential candidate in 2020. We find similarities between the two groups. In terms of political leanings, both Muslim and general public Trump supporters are more likely to identify as Republican, oppose coalition building between their faith community and Black Lives Matter, support coalition building between their faith community and political conservatives on religious liberty issues, and prioritize the economy as their most important policy issue. Additionally, both groups of Trump supporters

are more likely to identify as white. Notably, Muslim and general public Trump supporters are also more likely to endorse anti-Muslim tropes.

Some variables of note that had no predictive power for both groups include support or opposition for coalition building between their faith community and pro-life or LGBTQ groups, the respondent's gender, or their religious practice. Interestingly, support for Trump among Muslims and the general public is not predicted by religiosity.

Muslims most likely to favor coalition building with Black Lives Matter

Months before the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent protests, nearly two thirds of Muslims (65%) express support for activists in their faith community to build coalitions with Black Lives Matter (BLM), compared with 54% of Jews, 42% of Catholics, 37% of Protestants, 30% of white Evangelicals, and 44% of the general public. Among Muslims, women (74%), youth (72% of 18–29-year-olds), and Black (72%) and Arab (62%) Muslims are more likely than men (58%), elders (56% of those 50+ years old), and white (58%) and Asian (58%) Muslims to support building such coalitions. Of all the political groups respondents were asked about building coalitions with, Muslims show the greatest support for coalition building with Black Lives Matter (65% with BLM vs. 49% with political conservatives on religious liberty issues, 47% with pro-life groups, and 39% with LGBTQ groups).

Muslims Most Likely to Support Coalition Building with Black Lives Matter

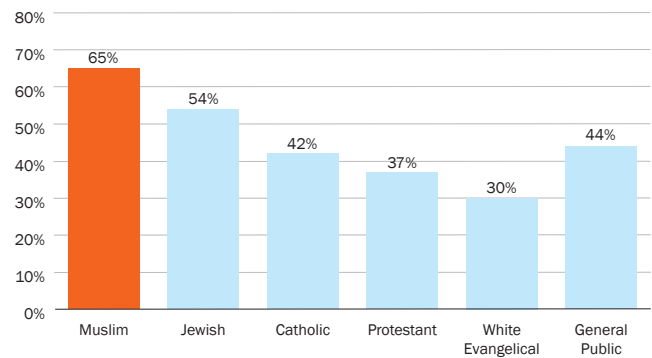


FIGURE 12: Some activists in your faith community have sought to build political coalitions with others who may share their political goals. Would you support politically working with... Black Lives Matter? (% Yes shown) Base: Respondents with a faith community, 2020

Younger Muslims Most in Favor of Black Lives Matter Coalition Building

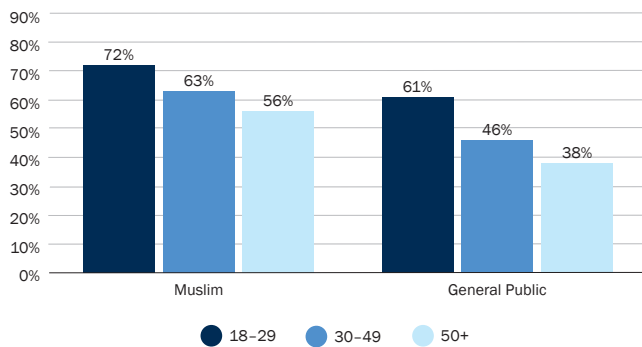


FIGURE 13: Some activists in your faith community have sought to build political coalitions with others who may share their political goals. Would you support politically working... Black Lives Matter? (% Yes shown) Base: Respondents with a faith community, 2020

Black, Arab Muslims Most in Favor of Black Lives Matter Coalition Building

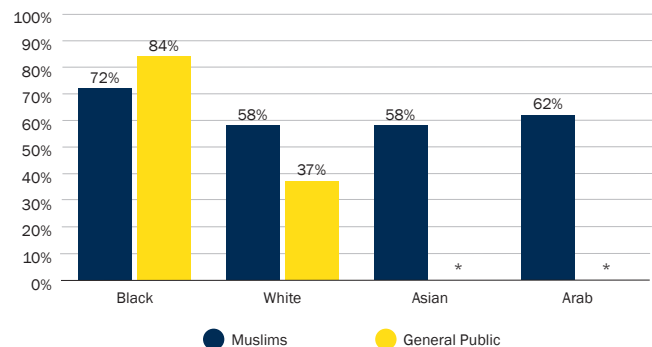


FIGURE 14: Some activists in your faith community have sought to build political coalitions with others who may share their political goals. Would you support politically working... Black Lives Matter? (% Yes shown) Base: Respondents with a faith community, 2020

* Sample too small to report

Muslims split on coalition building with LGBTQ groups, on par with Catholics

Fifty-five percent of Muslims oppose forming political alliances with LGBTQ activists, similar to Catholics (61%). Opposition to such alliances is even more widespread among the general public (62%), Protestants (69%), and white Evangelicals (82%). Younger Muslims (48%

of 18–29-year-olds) are more likely to support coalition building with LGBTQ groups, compared with older Muslims (38% of 30–49-year-olds and 26% of those 50+ years old). This same age trend exists in the general public.

Muslims on Par with Catholics, General Public in Support of Coalition Building with LGBTQ Groups

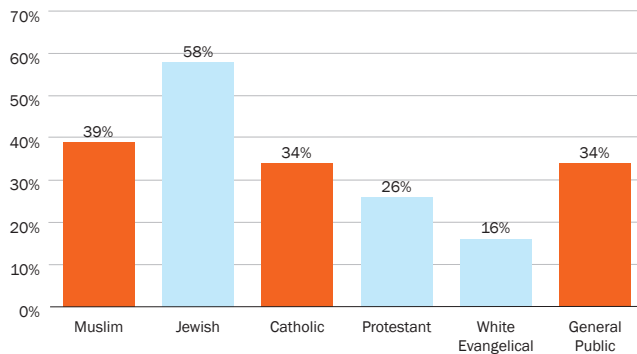


FIGURE 15: Some activists in your faith community have sought to build political coalitions with others who may share their political goals. Would you support politically working with... LGBTQ activists? (% Yes shown) Base: Respondents with a faith community, 2020

Younger Muslims More Likely to Support Building Coalitions with LGBTQ Groups, Mirroring General Public

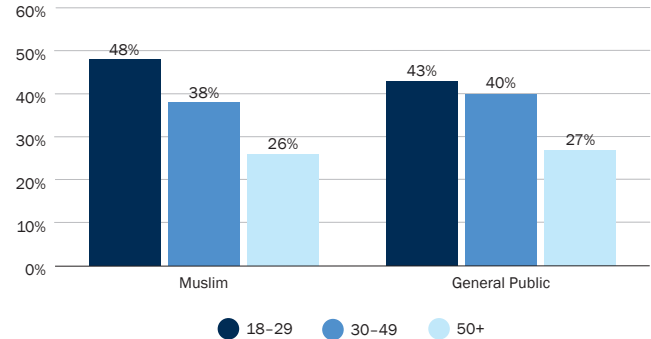


FIGURE 16: Some activists in your faith community have sought to build political coalitions with others who may share their political goals. Would you support politically working... LGBTQ activists? (% Yes shown) Base: Respondents with a faith community, 2020

Muslims similar to white Evangelicals in support for coalition building on religious liberty issues and with pro-life groups

Muslims and white Evangelicals are split in their support for allying with political conservatives on religious liberty issues (49% of Muslims and 53% of white Evangelicals favor vs. 47% of Muslims and 46% of white Evangelicals oppose). White Muslims (56%) favor such coalitions more than Asian (42%) and Arab (35%) Muslims.

Forty-seven percent of Muslims favor coalition building with pro-life groups while 46% oppose. Muslims show greater support than Jews (21%), Catholics (36%), and the general public (40%). White Muslims (57%) are more likely than Asian (40%) and Arab (41%) Muslims to support pro-life coalitions.

Muslims, White Evangelicals Most Likely to Support Building Coalitions for Religious Liberty

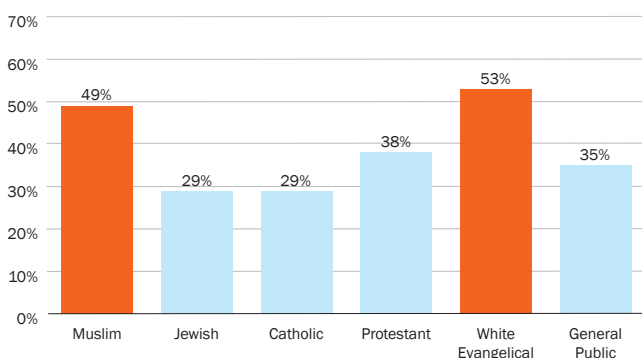


FIGURE 17: Some activists in your faith community have sought to build political coalitions with others who may share their political goals. Would you support politically working with... political conservatives on religious liberty issues? (% Yes shown) Base: Respondents with a faith community, 2020

Muslims Split in Support of Coalition Building with Pro-Life Activists

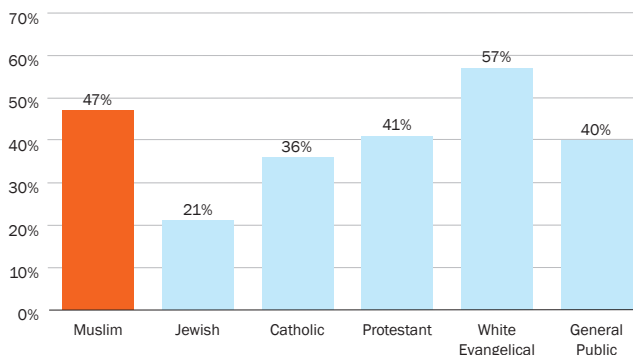


FIGURE 18: Some activists in your faith community have sought to build political coalitions with others who may share their political goals. Would you support politically working with... pro-life activists? (% Yes shown) Base: Respondents with a faith community, 2020

For Muslims, political leanings predict preferences for coalition building but religiosity does not

We used regression analysis to identify predictors of support for coalition building with four political groups: BLM, LGBTQ activists, religious liberty groups, and pro-life organizations.

Partisanship and ideology are significantly associated with coalition building in expected ways, while religiosity has no predictive power. For Muslims and the general public, identifying as a Democrat is associated with more support for Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ coalition building. For Muslims only, Democratic affiliation is also associated with lower support for pro-life coalition building. For Muslims and the general public, liberal (vs. conservative) political views are associated with greater support for LGBTQ coalition building and less support for religious liberty coalition building. Among Muslims, liberal political ideology is linked to greater support for Black Lives Matter coalition building, while for the general public it is associated with lower support for pro-life coalitions.

For Muslims, the only other variables that significantly predict support or opposition to coalition building are gender (women are more likely to support Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ coalitions), age (older Muslims are less likely than the youngest to support LGBTQ coalitions), and race (white Muslims are more likely than Arab Muslims to support coalition building on religious liberty issues). Notably, for Muslims as well as the general public, religiosity is not significantly associated with support for coalition building with any political groups.

Among the general public, support for coalitions follows expected demographic patterns. One striking finding, however, was that endorsement of anti-Muslim tropes is associated with lower support for building coalitions with Black Lives Matter, underscoring how anti-Black racism and Islamophobia are linked.

Political Leanings, Not Religious Practice, Predict Coalition Support among Muslims

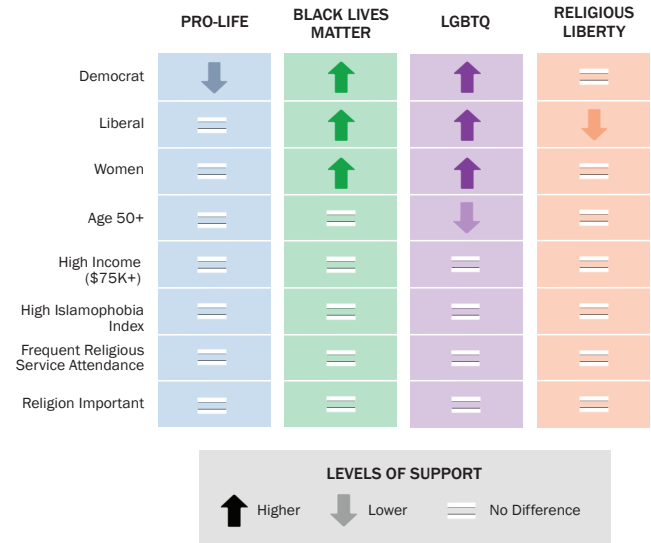


FIGURE 19: Some activists in your faith community have sought to build political coalitions with others who may share their political goals. Would you support politically working with... pro-life activists? Black Lives Matter? LGBTQ activists? political conservatives on religious liberty issues? Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2020

We used linear regression to test a battery of variables to determine which were linked to higher or lower support for faith activists building coalitions with political groups.

Over the past three years, Jewish endorsement of anti-Muslim tropes has declined

On the Islamophobia Index, a measure of the level of public endorsement of five negative stereotypes associated with Muslims in America, the general public scored 27 (on a scale of 0 to 100), on par with 28 in 2019. The Islamophobia Index calculates reported levels of agreement with the following statements:

1. Most Muslims living in the United States are more prone to violence than others.
2. Most Muslims living in the United States discriminate against women.
3. Most Muslims living in the United States are hostile to the United States.
4. Most Muslims living in the United States are less civilized than other people.

5. Most Muslims living in the United States are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims

Muslims (20 on the index), Jews (16), and the non-affiliated (21) averaged lower on the Islamophobia Index, compared with Catholics (29), Protestants (30), white Evangelicals (34), and the general public (27). Among Muslims, Islamophobia increased between 2019 and 2020 (14 vs. 20), but the 2020 measure is on par with the 2018 level of 17, perhaps suggesting a rising tide of internalized Islamophobia among segments of the Muslim community.

Most notable is the consistent decline in Islamophobia among Jewish Americans from 22 in 2018 to 18 in 2019 to 16 in 2020.

Islamophobia Index: Jews, Non-Affiliated on Par with Muslims

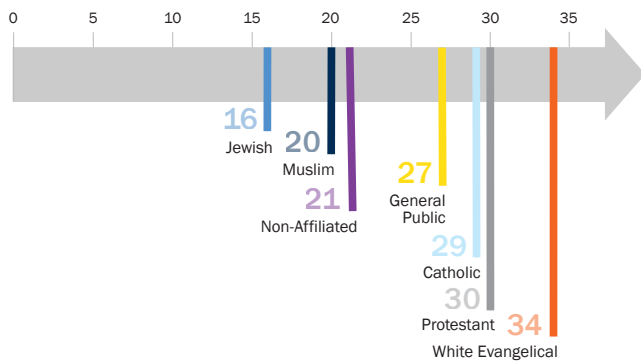


FIGURE 20: Scores on the 2020 Islamophobia Index Base: Total respondents, 2020

Jews Less Likely to Endorse Anti-Muslim Stereotypes since 2018

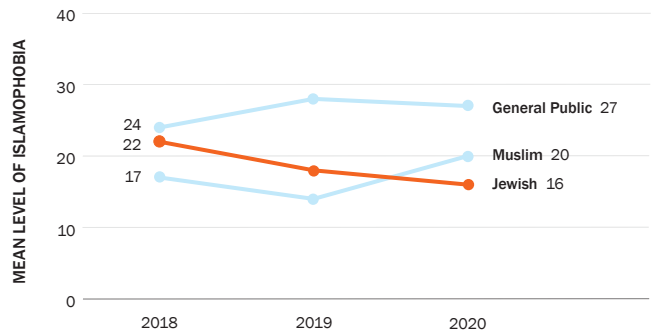


FIGURE 21: Scores on Islamophobia Index Base: Total respondents, 2018, 2019, 2020

Upon examination of the five stereotypes that comprise the Islamophobia Index, we find that Jews report less agreement that most Muslims are prone to violence than other people (15% in 2018 vs. 8% in 2020), that most Muslims are hostile to the United States (13% in 2018 vs. 6% in 2020), and that most Muslims are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims (16% in 2018 vs. 6% in 2020). Jews remain low in their agreement that Muslims are less civilized than other people (6% in both years). Finally, in 2020, Jews are more likely to reject the notion that Muslims discriminate against women (44% disagreed in 2016, compared with 64% who disagreed in 2020).

Jews Less Likely to Endorse Anti-Muslim Stereotypes

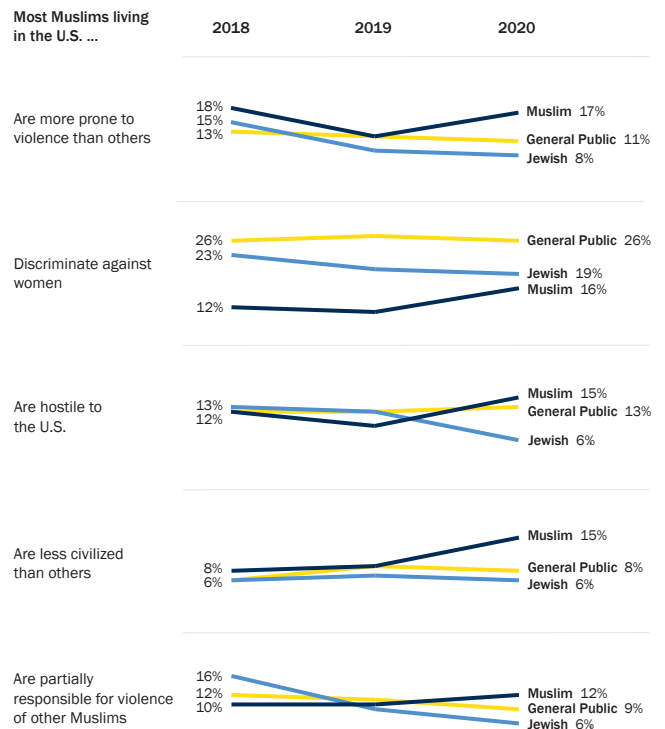


FIGURE 22: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements in regard to most Muslims living in the United States. (% Net agree shown) Base: Total respondents, 2018, 2019, 2020

For the general public, political ideology and party affiliation predicts Islamophobia while religiosity does not

We used regression analysis to identify predictors of Islamophobia for the general public and for Muslims. For the general public, holding a conservative political ideology and/or identifying as a Republican are associated with higher levels of endorsement of anti-Muslim tropes. Other factors associated with higher Islamophobia include less than a college education, lower income, being older (50+ years old), and reporting religious discrimination. Race and religiosity do not emerge as significant predictors of Islamophobia for the general public.

Interestingly, for Muslims, experience with religious discrimination is associated with being more likely to endorse anti-Muslim tropes. In fact, no other factors proved significant for Muslims. Looking more closely at experience with religious discrimination among Muslims, we find that white Muslims are most likely to report “regularly” experiencing religious discrimination (22% of white Muslims vs. 8–12% of non-white Muslims). Islamophobia is particularly high among this 22% of white Muslims.

White Muslims More Likely Than Arab, Asian Muslims to Say They Experience Religious Discrimination Regularly

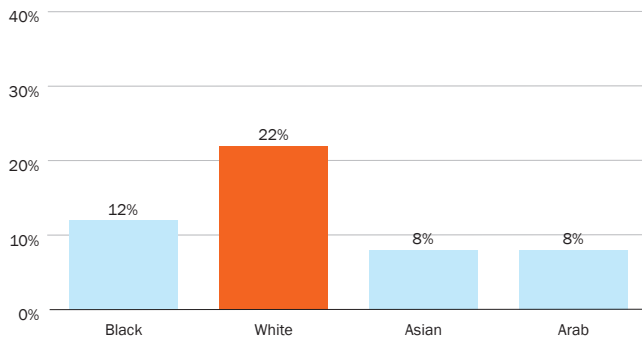


FIGURE 23: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Regularly experienced shown) Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2020

White Muslims Reporting Regular Discrimination More Likely to Endorse Anti-Muslim Stereotypes

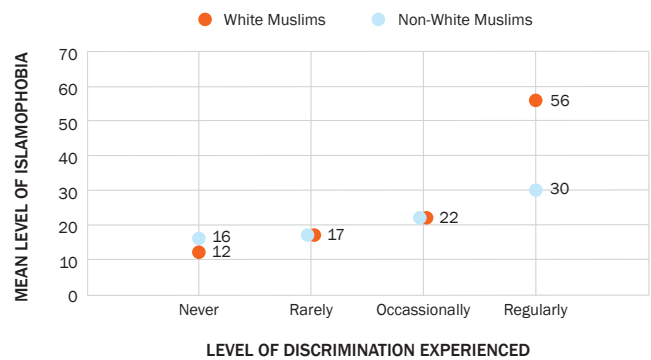


FIGURE 24: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? Base: Total Muslim respondents, 2020

For Muslims, experience with religious discrimination remains high

In 2020, Muslims and Jews are most likely to report experiencing any religious discrimination (60% of Muslims and 58% of Jews, compared with 26% of Catholics, 29% of Protestants, 43% of white Evangelicals, 27% of the non-affiliated, and 33% of the general public). Over the

past five years, Muslim experiences with religious discrimination have remained steady, ranging from 60% to 62%. Reported experiences with religious discrimination among Jews, in contrast, have increased over time from 38% in 2017 to 58% in 2020.

Majority of Muslims, Jews Report Experiencing Religious Discrimination

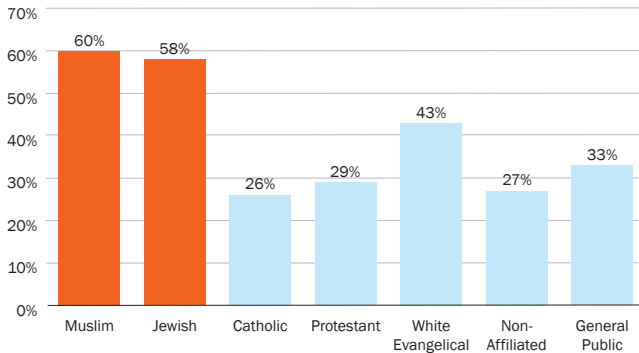


FIGURE 25: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Net experienced shown) Base: Total respondents, 2020

Over Past Five Years, Frequency of Religious Discrimination Unchanged for Muslims

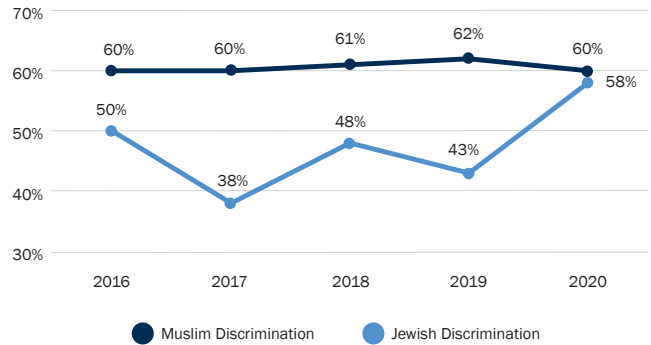


FIGURE 26: How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? (% Net experienced shown) Base: Total Muslim, Jewish respondents, 2016–2020

Muslims are more likely than other groups to experience religious discrimination in institutional settings

We asked those who reported experiencing any religious discrimination about places where the discrimination may have occurred. Muslims are more likely than Jews and the general public to face religious discrimination in institutional settings such as at the airport (44% vs. 2% of Jews and 5% of the general public), when applying for jobs (33% of Muslims vs. 5% of Jews and 8% of the general public), in interactions with law enforcement (31% of Muslims vs. 2% of Jews and 8% of the general public), and when receiving healthcare services (25% of Muslims vs. 5% of Jews and the general public).

Muslims are also more likely to face discrimination on an interpersonal level such as at a restaurant or other public place (49% vs. 30% of Jews and 23% of the general public) and when interacting with peers at work or school (42% of Muslims vs. 22% of Jews and 24% of the general public). Muslims, Jews, and the general public are equally likely to experience religious discrimination from family and friends (30%, 27%, and 33%, respectively).

Unlike prior years, Muslim men are as likely as Muslim women to experience religious discrimination, in general and by setting.

Muslims More Likely Than Others to Experience Institutional Religious Discrimination

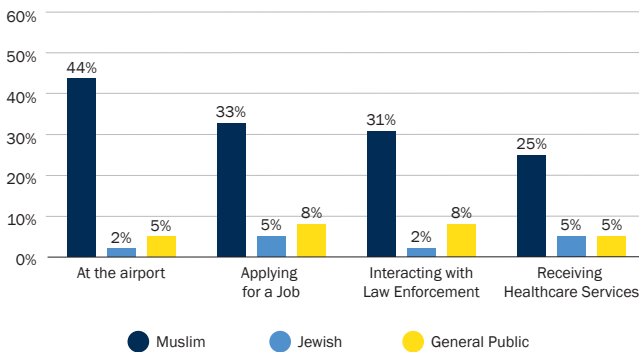


FIGURE 27: For each of the following situations, please tell me if you experienced religious discrimination in the last year. How about...? (% Yes shown) Base: Respondents who experienced religious discrimination in the past year, 2020

Muslims More Likely to Experience Interpersonal Religious Discrimination in Public, Work, School

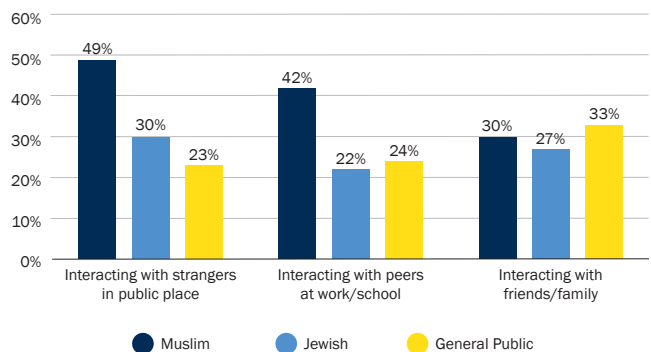



FIGURE 28: For each of the following situations, please tell me if you experienced religious discrimination in the last year. How about...? (% Yes shown) Base: Respondents who experienced religious discrimination in the past year, 2020

Half of Muslim families report religious-based bullying, twice as likely as the general public

We asked respondents with children in K–12 public schools if they had ever experienced bullying (insults or physical assaults) at school in the past year because of their religion. Half of Muslim parents (51%) surveyed reported that their kids experienced religious-based bullying in 2020, compared with 27% of parents among the general public. The 51% of Muslim families who experienced religious-based bullying is statistically on par with 42% reported by Muslims in 2017. When asked who bullied their child, 30% of Muslims indicated that a teacher or other school official was the source of the bullying, and 69% reported that the bully was a student or group of students. Respondents were asked to select all who bullied their child. 

Muslim Families Twice as Likely as General Public to Say Kids Bullied for Faith

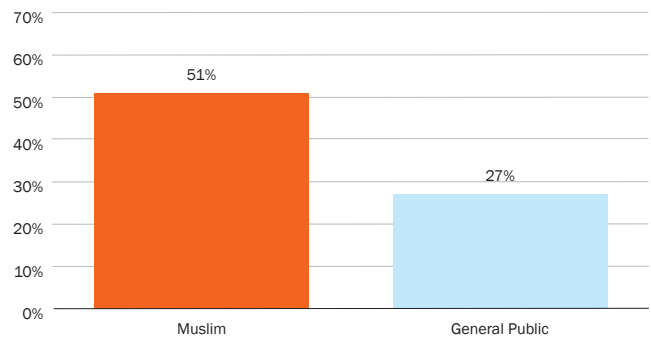


FIGURE 29: How often, if at all, have your children experienced bullying, such as insults or physical assaults in the past year because of their religion at school? (% Net experienced shown) Base: Respondents with children who attend a K–12 public school, 2020

THE POWER OF POLLS



AT ISPU, we take our tagline of *Research Making an Impact* seriously. We want our research to move beyond the pages of a report and into the hands of those that make change. Our American Muslim Poll is a key part of that mission. Over the years, the data from our survey has impacted the work of policymakers, journalists, teachers, mosque leaders, community activists, and so many others working to make this country a better place for all. Why do Americans need survey research like ours, and why is it so important? Here are a few examples of times when our poll made all the difference.

1. Polls show whether a problem is systemic or simply anecdotal.

“It happened to a brother... cousin... friend of a friend.” We often hear personal stories about bigotry or injustice, but without the data to back up these anecdotes, they often don’t have the substance to make those in power listen. This is exactly what happened when we surveyed Americans about religious-based bullying. In 2017, our survey discovered that 42% of Muslim families had at least one child who was bullied at school in the last year because of their faith. And in a quarter of those cases, the bully was a teacher or an administrator.

Data like this puts anecdotal accounts into context, helping decision-makers decide if a problem is a one-off or widespread. In this case, we heard directly from a top reporter, who was trying to get their media outlet to do a major story about anti-Muslim bullying in American schools. But they were getting pushback from their editor, who didn’t believe the problem was frequent enough to warrant a trend piece. That story almost didn’t happen—until this reporter found our data proving how prevalent and disproportionate the problem was nationally and how important this story was to tell. After seeing the research, the editor’s initial reluctance gave way to full support. Weeks later, an excellent segment aired, addressing bullying of Muslim children and informing millions of Americans.

2. When narratives misdiagnose a problem, surveys reveal the truth.

Just because many people assume something to be true, doesn’t mean that is actually the case. Survey research can help us identify common misconceptions and help us get closer to understanding the truth. For example, there is a narrative perpetuated by U.S. media that American Muslims and Jews are at odds with one another. The data from our 2019 poll, however, paints a different picture. We found that American Jews and Muslims are far more likely to hold favorable than unfavorable views of each other, and while roughly half of the general public knows an American who is Muslim, that portion among American Jews is three in four. In fact, our 2020 survey showed that Islamophobia among Jewish Americans has been steadily declining over the past three years, with Jews’ score on the Islamophobia Index on par with that of Muslims.

This data was especially relevant back in March 2019, when remarks from a then-newly elected Rep. Ilhan Omar (MN) catalyzed a national debate and culminated in a historic bipartisan Congressional resolution condemning Islamophobia and anti-semitism. Jeanine Pirro, one of Fox News’ star hosts, questioned on air whether Congresswoman Omar’s Muslim religious beliefs stand in opposition to the U.S. Constitution and suggested that the Congresswoman’s faith was antagonist to Jews, giving voice to long-held stereotypes about Muslim-Jewish enmity. Our data on Muslim-Jewish relations was a critical fact informing this discussion and was a jumping off point for several articles sharing our survey’s insight, with *Salon* writing, “These findings are especially noteworthy given Trump’s efforts to incite conflict between the Muslim and Jewish communities.”

3. Polls uncover trends that influence policy and activism.

Data is a critical part of sound decision-making, especially among those who are actively working to make positive change. Over the years, we've found our numbers on Muslim civic engagement are particularly helpful for those working to increase Muslim political engagement. For example, in 2016, our survey discovered that only 60% of eligible American Muslims were registered to vote—that's significantly less than any other American faith community. Syed Ashraf and Mohib Ullah had been on the front lines of the grassroots effort to change this statistic for years. Both are co-chairs of the ADAMS Civic Engagement (ACE) committee at the ADAMS Center mosque in Sterling, Virginia. The ACE team found out early on that presenting their ideas for increased civic engagement to their community was difficult without documented evidence. In Mohib's words, ISPU's data point gave them a voice that validated their statements.

Bolstered by ISPU's recommendations, the ADAMS Center committee enhanced voter registration efforts; encouraged voter turnout using phone banks; created coalitions with local civic and interfaith groups; and set up candidate forums at their mosque. And their efforts ultimately paid off. Not only did voter registration and participation increase in their community in 2017, but the community and their elected officials are more engaged with each other. And other mosques in their area followed suit, establishing their own civic engagement teams.

4. Effective polls put numbers into context, correcting misperceptions and providing surprising insight.

Our American Muslim Poll surveys Muslims alongside Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and non-affiliated Americans, so we can compare attitudes across religious groups. It is incredibly important that Muslims not be examined as isolated specimens but rather as members of a diverse faith landscape.


This becomes particularly relevant when examining Americans' acceptance of violence. According to a 2015 study of American television media conducted by Media Tenor, Muslim "protagonists," i.e., individuals portrayed as representing Islam, were most often armed militants, where as those representing other faiths were religious leaders. The same study found that 90% of new coverage about Muslims and Islam is negative. These media portrayals have the power to warp perceptions about Muslims absent personal experience—which we know many American do not have.

Data gleaned from our research, on the other hand, directly contradicts these biased portrayals. 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. That's the kind of stat we shared when we were invited to present our research with a group of Hollywood screenwriters in 2018. We equipped them to create rich, humanizing characters that go beyond the "bad Muslim terrorist" or "good Muslim FBI informant," and to represent American Muslims more accurately.

5. Polls provide communities the opportunity to address problems and implement data-driven recommendations.

Data can help communities make smart decisions, guiding them to make improvements that positively affect their members. Our 2017 survey asked American Muslims for some of the details of their faith and religious practice, which uncovered interesting results. We found that Muslim women are just as likely as Muslim men to attend the mosque, and unlike the general public, younger Muslims are as likely as their elders to say religion is important to their daily lives. These are important findings because, despite the importance they place on their faith, Muslim women and young people often report not feeling welcome in mosques.

It's numbers like these that helped mosque leaders at the Muslim Community Association (MCA) of Ann Arbor push for positive change in their Muslim space. The data from our 2017 survey, as well as the recom-

mendations from our Reimagining Muslim Spaces study, helped MCA improve their mosque experience for everyone, including women, young people, and all racial/ethnic groups. One attendee commented, “In the past year, the mosque has transformed.” All this because of the power of research. 

METHODOLOGY



SPU CREATED the questionnaire for all five studies included in this report and owns all data and intellectual property related to these studies.

In 2016, 2017, and 2018, ISPU commissioned two firms to conduct the surveys: Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS) for a nationally representative survey of Muslims and Jews, and Triton Polling & Research for a nationally representative survey of the general American public. In 2019 and 2020, ISPU commissioned SSRS to conduct both a nationally representative survey of self-identified Muslims and Jews and a nationally representative survey of the general American public.

Triton live-agent surveys were conducted by interviewers in an in-house, state-of-the-art call center located outside of Bend, Oregon. Triton conducted these telephone polls of the general public by live interviews with respondents via landline telephones and cell phones. All surveys incorporated standard statistical methods to select a representative sample of the target population. In 2016, the weighting applied was gender, age, and region. In 2017 and 2018, the weighting applied was gender, age, region, and race.

The SSRS samples for the studies came from multiple sources. SSRS telephoned a sample of households that was prescreened as being Muslim or Jewish in SSRS's weekly national omnibus survey of 1,000 randomly selected respondents (2016: N = 550; 2017: N = 661; 2018: N = 803; 2019: N = 648; 2020: N=639) as well as purchasing a listed sample for Muslim and Jewish households in both landline and cell phone frames from sample providers that flag specific characteristics for each piece of sample (2016: N = 171; 2017: N=129; 2018: N=127; 2019: N=133; 2020 N=71). In an effort to supplement the number of Muslim interviews they were 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 Muslim interviews via an online survey with samples from a nonprobability panel (a panel made up of respondents deliberately [not randomly] chosen to represent the demographic make-up of the community in terms of age, race, and socio-economics).

The survey data are weighted using a base weight to: 1) adjust for the fact that not all survey respondents were selected with the same probability and 2) account for non-response across known demographic parameters for the Jewish and Muslim adult populations. Following application of the above base weight, the full sample was post-stratified and balanced by key demographics such as age, race, gender, region, education, marital status, number of adults in the household, voter registration, and political party identification within the Jewish and Muslim portions of this study, separately, for the Jewish and Muslim U.S. adult population 18 years of age and older. The sample was also adjusted by the distribution of phone usage of the Jewish and/or Muslim population (that is, by the proportion of those who are cell phone only, landline only, and mixed users). The data are weighted to match estimates of the Jewish and/or Muslim populations determined from data collected through the SSRS Omnibus as well as estimates from the Pew Research Center.


In 2019 and 2020, SSRS used their sample in the probability panel to administer the general population portion of the surveys (2019: N = 1,108; 2020: N=933). These are respondents who have completed a survey through the SSRS omnibus and signed up for the probability panel. In an effort to balance out the general population probability panel, SSRS interviewed 104 non-Internet respondents through the omnibus survey, which uses a fully replicated, stratified, single-stage, random-digit-dialing (RDD) sample of landline telephone households and randomly generated cell phone numbers (2019: N=104; 2020: N=82). Sample telephone numbers are computer-generated and loaded into online sample files accessed directly by the

computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. For the general population sample, the data are weighted to provide nationally representative and projectable estimates of the adult population 18 years of age and older.

The SSRS weighting process takes into account the disproportionate probabilities of household and respondent selection due to the number of separate telephone landlines and cell phones answered by respondents and their households, as well as the probability associated with the random selection of an individual household member. The second stage of the weighting balanced the demographic profile of the sample to target population parameters. The sample was balanced to match estimates derived from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). The population parameters used for post-stratification are age (18–29, 30–49, 50–64, 65+), gender, Census region (Northeast, North Central, South, West), education (less than high school, high school graduate, some college, four-year college or more), race/ethnicity (white non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, other non-Hispanic), phone usage (cell phone only, dual frame, landline only, no phone), Internet use (no Internet and Internet), and religion (Catholic, White Evangelical, and other).

Analysis

In 2016, researchers used general population responses to examine the views of self-identified Protestants and Catholics. In 2017, researchers used this data to examine the views of self-identified Protestants, Catholics, and non-affiliated Americans—those who do not identify with any faith community. In 2018 and 2019, researchers examined the views of self-identified Protestants (parsing out white Evangelicals), Catholics, and non-affiliated Americans. White Evangelicals are routinely studied in religion survey research as a separate subgroup due to their unique social and political characteristics.

In our analysis, we make comparisons among gender, age, and racial groups. For race comparisons among the Muslim sample, we do not include Hispanic Americans in the racial comparisons due to small sample size. In the general public, we exclude Asian Americans due to small sample size. All statistically significant findings in these reports are based on a 95% confidence interval. 

A detailed methodology report for each survey year is available at www.ispu.org/poll.

Year-Specific Statistics

2016

Total interviews conducted: 1,848
Muslim respondents: 515 (106 via online survey)
Jewish respondents: 312
General population respondents: 1,021
SSRS field dates: January 18–27, 2016
Triton field dates: January 18–30, 2016
Margin of error: The telephone portion of respondents has a margin of error at 95% confidence level of Muslims $\pm 6.9\%$, Jews $\pm 7\%$, and general population $\pm 3.1\%$.

2017

Total interviews conducted: 2,389
Muslim respondents: 800 (350 via online survey)
Jewish respondents: 340
General population respondents: 1,249
SSRS field dates: January 4–19, 2017
Triton field dates: January 4–23, 2017
Margin of error: The telephone portion of respondents has a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of Muslims $\pm 5.1\%$, Jews $\pm 6.5\%$, and general population $\pm 2.8\%$.

2018

Total interviews conducted: 2,481
Muslim respondents: 802 (350 via online survey)
Jewish respondents: 478
General population respondents: 1,201
SSRS field dates: January 8–24, 2018
Triton field dates: January 8–24, 2018
Margin of error: The telephone portion of respondents has a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of Muslims $\pm 5.7\%$, Jews $\pm 5.5\%$, and general population $\pm 2.8\%$.

2019

Total interviews conducted: 2,376
Muslim respondents: 804 (383 via online survey)
Jewish respondents: 360
General population respondents: 1,212
SSRS field dates: January 8–25, 2019
Margin of error: The survey has a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of Muslims $\pm 4.9\%$, Jews $\pm 7.6\%$, and general population $\pm 3.6\%$.

2020

Total interviews conducted: 2,167
Muslim respondents: 801 (441 via online survey)
Jewish respondents: 351
General population respondents: 1,015
SSRS field dates: March 17–April 22, 2020
Margin of error: The survey has a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of Muslims $\pm 4.8\%$, Jews $\pm 7.2\%$, and general population $\pm 3.7\%$.





Institute *for* Social Policy *and* Understanding

RESEARCH MAKING AN IMPACT

ISPU provides objective research and education about American Muslims to support well-informed dialogue and decision-making. Founded in 2002, ISPU is a leading producer of solution-seeking research. ISPU is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that builds understanding and strengthens communities by laying a foundation of facts. As the only organization of its kind, ISPU is the go-to source for anyone seeking information about Muslims in America and issues that impact them. ISPU has offices both in Dearborn, Michigan, and Washington, D.C.

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