
THE AMERICAN DIVIDE: HOW WE VIEW ARABS AND MUSLIMS

August 22, 2012



I. Attitudes toward Arabs and Muslims

Please tell me if your overall opinion of each of the following groups is Very Favorable, Somewhat Favorable, Somewhat Unfavorable, Very Unfavorable – or you are Not Familiar Enough to make a judgment.

| Religion/Group | | Total | Dem | Rep | Independent | 18-29 | 65+ | Obama Voter | Romney Voter |
|------------------------|-------------|-------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----|-------------|--------------|
| Presbyterian | Favorable | 76 | 72 | 83 | 73 | 60 | 87 | 74 | 82 |
| | Unfavorable | 8 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 21 | 5 | 11 | 4 |
| Jewish | Favorable | 74 | 72 | 75 | 76 | 70 | 81 | 75 | 75 |
| | Unfavorable | 11 | 10 | 12 | 9 | 16 | 6 | 9 | 11 |
| Baptist | Favorable | 74 | 73 | 78 | 71 | 62 | 82 | 72 | 78 |
| | Unfavorable | 14 | 14 | 13 | 17 | 26 | 10 | 17 | 11 |
| Roman Catholic | Favorable | 72 | 71 | 74 | 71 | 63 | 80 | 72 | 74 |
| | Unfavorable | 17 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 25 | 12 | 17 | 16 |
| Born Again/Evangelical | Favorable | 60 | 55 | 71 | 53 | 51 | 70 | 52 | 70 |
| | Unfavorable | 28 | 22 | 19 | 32 | 35 | 22 | 36 | 19 |
| Buddhist | Favorable | 57 | 60 | 46 | 65 | 64 | 52 | 66 | 47 |
| | Unfavorable | 21 | 15 | 33 | 13 | 21 | 22 | 13 | 31 |
| Hindu | Favorable | 52 | 56 | 45 | 56 | 59 | 47 | 61 | 42 |
| | Unfavorable | 22 | 16 | 34 | 18 | 25 | 23 | 15 | 33 |
| Mormon | Favorable | 52 | 45 | 58 | 54 | 47 | 62 | 48 | 58 |
| | Unfavorable | 30 | 35 | 29 | 27 | 37 | 23 | 36 | 26 |
| Arab American | Favorable | 49 | 56 | 33 | 57 | 56 | 46 | 60 | 36 |
| | Unfavorable | 31 | 20 | 48 | 24 | 27 | 30 | 20 | 44 |
| Muslim American | Favorable | 48 | 56 | 35 | 53 | 58 | 45 | 62 | 34 |
| | Unfavorable | 33 | 23 | 47 | 29 | 29 | 35 | 21 | 46 |
| Sikh | Favorable | 45 | 50 | 36 | 49 | 47 | 48 | 53 | 38 |
| | Unfavorable | 24 | 16 | 35 | 22 | 27 | 23 | 15 | 35 |
| Arab | Favorable | 41 | 48 | 27 | 48 | 50 | 37 | 51 | 30 |
| | Unfavorable | 39 | 29 | 53 | 33 | 34 | 39 | 29 | 50 |
| Muslim | Favorable | 40 | 49 | 26 | 44 | 53 | 30 | 53 | 25 |
| | Unfavorable | 41 | 29 | 57 | 36 | 34 | 48 | 29 | 57 |

1. Arabs, Muslims, Arab Americans, and American Muslims have the lowest favorable/highest unfavorable ratings among the groups covered.

2. Muslims were the only group with a net unfavorable rating.

3. Note that one in five Americans were either unfamiliar with or not sure of their attitudes toward these communities.

4. Sikhs and Mormons also fare poorly, but in the case of Sikhs, one in four Americans are “unfamiliar” or “not sure”.
5. There is a deep generational divide, which is reflected in a partisan divide.
6. Younger Americans (18-25) rate Arabs and Muslims up to 17 points higher than the older generation. They also rate Arab Americans and American Muslims higher as well.
7. Younger Americans rate Catholics and the various Protestant denominations covered in the survey almost 20 points lower than do older Americans (65+). The younger group also rates Mormons 15 points lower.
8. This is reflected in a deep partisan divide and even more so in a division between those who describe themselves as Obama or Romney voters. For example, note how the ratings given to Arabs and Muslims by Obama and Romney voters are mirror reflections of each other. While Obama voters give Arabs a net 51%/29% favorable rating and Muslims a net 53%/29% rating; Romney voters give Arabs a 30%/50% net unfavorable rating and Muslims a 25%/57% unfavorable rating.
9. Democrats and Obama voters give **no group** a net negative rating. Republicans and Romney voters **only** give strong negative ratings to Arabs, Muslims, Arab Americans, and American Muslims.

II. Attitudes by race

| Religion/Group | | White | Non-White |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Arab | <i>Favorable</i> | 38 | 51 |
| | <i>Unfavorable</i> | 42 | 28 |
| Muslim | <i>Favorable</i> | 36 | 50 |
| | <i>Unfavorable</i> | 44 | 30 |
| Arab American | <i>Favorable</i> | 46 | 55 |
| | <i>Unfavorable</i> | 33 | 23 |
| Muslim American | <i>Favorable</i> | 45 | 58+-- |
| | <i>Unfavorable</i> | 36 | 23 |

1. There is also a racial divide in attitudes toward Arabs, Muslims, Arab Americans, and American Muslims.

2. Favorable attitudes toward Arabs, Muslims, Arab Americans, and American Muslims are significantly higher among African American, Hispanic, and Asian Americans.

III. Arab Americans and American Muslims Working in the Government

A. If an Arab American were to attain an important position of influence in government, would you feel confident that person would be able to do the job, or would you feel that any ethnic loyalty would influence their decision-making?

| Arab American | Total | Dem | Rep | Obama Voter | Romney Voter | Undecided Voter | White | Non-White |
|--|-------|-----|-----|-------------|--------------|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| <i>Confident they could do their job</i> | 42 | 50 | 32 | 56 | 27 | 39 | 40 | 48 |
| <i>Their ethnicity would influence their decision making</i> | 32 | 25 | 41 | 21 | 48 | 25 | 36 | 22 |
| <i>Not sure</i> | 26 | 25 | 27 | 24 | 25 | 36 | 25 | 30 |

B. If a Muslim American were to attain an important position of influence in government, would you feel confident that person would be able to do the job, or would you feel that their religion would get influence their decision-making?

| Arab American | Total | Dem | Rep | Obama Voter | Romney Voter | Undecided Voter | White | Non-White |
|--|-------|-----|-----|-------------|--------------|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| <i>Confident they could do their job</i> | 38 | 50 | 25 | 54 | 21 | 37 | 37 | 44 |
| <i>Their ethnicity would influence their decision making</i> | 38 | 27 | 51 | 23 | 57 | 33 | 42 | 28 |
| <i>Not sure</i> | 23 | 23 | 24 | 22 | 22 | 30 | 22 | 29 |

1. Voters, as a whole, are divided as to whether Arab Americans and American Muslims, if appointed to a government post, could do the job without their ethnicity or religion influencing their work. Again there is a deep partisan divide on this question.

2. By a two to one ratio, Democrats and Obama voters are confident that Arab Americans and American Muslims could do the job, but a strong majority of Republicans and Romney voters fear that their ethnicity or religion of members of these communities would influence their work.

3. Once again, age plays a significant role.

IV. Do You Know Arabs or Muslims?

Do you personally know anyone who is Arab or Muslim?

| Response | Total | Dem | Rep | Obama Voter | Romney Voter | Undecided Voter | White | Non-White |
|----------|-------|-----|-----|-------------|--------------|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| Yes | 29 | 27 | 31 | 32 | 26 | 28 | 27 | 35 |
| No | 59 | 60 | 60 | 55 | 63 | 58 | 62 | 49 |
| Not sure | 12 | 14 | 9 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 11 | 16 |

| Religion/Group | | Yes | No |
|-----------------|-------------|-----|----|
| Arab | Favorable | 56 | 34 |
| | Unfavorable | 38 | 43 |
| Muslim | Favorable | 57 | 32 |
| | Unfavorable | 36 | 46 |
| Arab American | Favorable | 65 | 42 |
| | Unfavorable | 27 | 44 |
| Muslim American | Favorable | 65 | 42 |
| | Unfavorable | 29 | 37 |

1. Most Americans say they do not know any Arabs or Muslims; but the 30% who do have significantly more favorable attitudes toward Arabs, Muslims, Arab Americans, and American Muslims.
2. The ratio of those who say they do not know any members of these communities to those who say they do, is two to one. Only among younger Americans is there a majority who say they know any Arabs or Muslims. Three quarters of older Americans do not know any.
3. Among those Americans who say they know any Arabs or Muslims, two-thirds have favorable attitudes toward Arab Americans and American Muslims. Among those who do not know any Arabs and Muslims, attitudes are evenly divided

JZ Analytics conducted an online survey of 1052 US Likely Voters between 8/15/12 thru 8/16/12. Based on a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error for 1052 is +/- 3.1 percentage points.