
THE AMERICAN DIVIDE: HOW WE VIEW ARABS AND MUSLIMS

August 23, 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 Americans, Hispanics, 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?

Muslim 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 the 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

Attitudes toward Arabs, Muslims, Arab Americans, and Muslim Americans by those who know and those who do not anyone who is Arab or Muslim.

Religion/Group		Yes, I know	No, I don't know
Arab	<i>Favorable</i>	56	34
	<i>Unfavorable</i>	38	43
Muslim	<i>Favorable</i>	57	32
	<i>Unfavorable</i>	36	46
Arab American	<i>Favorable</i>	65	42
	<i>Unfavorable</i>	27	44
Muslim American	<i>Favorable</i>	65	42
	<i>Unfavorable</i>	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

IV. Appendix

Response		All			Democratic			Republican		
		2003	2010	2012	2003	2010	2012	2003	2010	2012
Arabs	<i>Favorable</i>	46	43	41	50	57	48	42	28	27
	<i>Unfavorable</i>	35	40	39	29	30	29	42	68	53
Muslims	<i>Favorable</i>	47	35	40	55	54	49	41	12	26
	<i>Unfavorable</i>	32	55	41	33	34	29	40	85	57

JZ Analytics conducted an online survey of 1,052 US likely voters between 8/15/12 and 8/16/12. Based on a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error for 1,052 is +/- 3.1 percentage points.