



# American Muslim Poll 2017: *Muslims at the Crossroads*

By Dalia Mogahed, ISPU *Director of Research*,  
and Youssef Chouhoud, ISPU *Fellow*



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 rarer 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.

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

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## Executive Summary

From early on in a deeply divisive presidential election cycle through the first weeks of a new administration, 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 rarer are their attitudes and behaviors systematically examined. To help narrow this knowledge gap, the following analysis of data from our American Muslim Poll 2017: *Muslims at the Crossroads* offers public officials, civil society stakeholders, and other interested parties a multi-dimensional portrait of the American Muslim community.

### ***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%). Yet this dearth of formal political engagement does not mean that Muslim 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 African American Muslims (more than 70%).

### ***Muslims are young and diverse, with lower socioeconomic status.***

Compared with other faith communities and the non-affiliated 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) household income.

### ***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, 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.



## ***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).

## ***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%).

## **Methodology**

ISPU created the questionnaire for this study and commissioned two firms to conduct the survey: Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS) for a nationally representative survey of self-identified Muslims and Jews, and Triton Polling & Research for a nationally representative survey of the general American public. From the Triton sample, researchers examined the views of self-identified Protestants, Catholics, and non-affiliated. A total of 2,389 interviews were conducted. ISPU owns all data and intellectual property related to this study.

SSRS conducted a survey of Muslims and Jews for ISPU from January 4 through January 19, 2017. SSRS interviewed 800 Muslim and 340 Jewish respondents. The sample for the study came from three sources. SSRS telephoned a sample of households that was pre-screened as being Muslim or Jewish in SSRS’s weekly national omnibus survey of 1,000 randomly selected respondents ( $n = 661$ ) and purchased a listed sample for Muslim and Jewish households in both landline and cell phone samples from Experian, a sample provider that flags specific characteristics for each piece of sample ( $n = 129$ ). SSRS’s omnibus survey completed half of all interviews with cell phone respondents, so prescreened respondents included those who had been originally interviewed on both landline telephones and cell phones. In an effort to supplement the number of Muslim interviews that SSRS was able to complete in the given time frame and with the amount of available prescreened sample, SSRS employed a Web-based survey and completed the final 350 Muslim interviews via an online survey with samples from a 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 data from this project are weighted to match estimates of the Jewish and/or Muslim populations determined from 3 years of data collected through the SSRS omnibus as well as estimates from the Pew Research Center’s 2011 survey of Muslim Americans. The telephone portion of respondents has a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of Muslims  $\pm 5.1\%$  and Jews  $\pm 6.5\%$ .

Triton live-agent surveys were conducted by interviewers in an in-house, state-of-the-art call center located near Bend, Oregon. All surveys incorporated standard statistical methods to select a representative sample of the target population. Triton conducted this telephone poll of the general public, on behalf of ISPU, by live interviews with respondents via landline telephones and cell

phones between January 4 and January 23, 2017, securing a sample size of 1,249 completed surveys with a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of  $\pm 2.8\%$ . The weighting applied was gender, age, region, and race.

For more details on polling methodology, visit [www.ispu.org/poll](http://www.ispu.org/poll).

## 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,<sup>1</sup> and even rarer are their attitudes and behaviors systematically examined. The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) 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 nonfaith) groups, including American Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and non-affiliated Americans.<sup>2</sup> 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.

***Our survey data were gathered between January 4 and January 23, 2017.***

## Insights

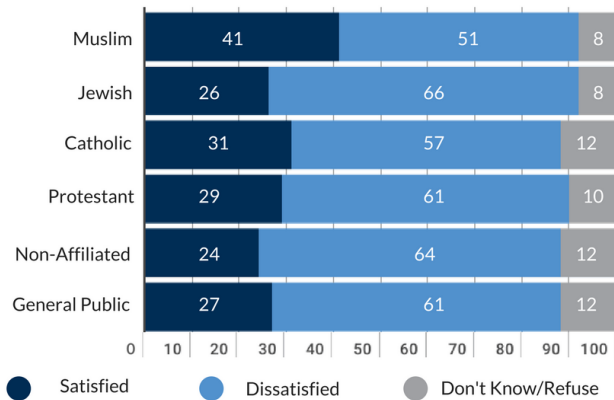
### The Nation: Engagement with Allies and Government

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

How did American Muslims process this recent period of political upheaval? Remarkably, we found that more Muslims report being satisfied with the country's current trajectory than any other major faith group or the non-affiliated (Figure 1). One mitigating factor driving this unexpected result could be that the survey was fielded just before president-elect Donald Trump took office, and so it was still unclear how closely his administration would reflect his campaign rhetoric. Still, this finding does track the consistent trend in recent polls reporting Muslims' optimism in the country outpacing that of other faith groups and the general public.<sup>3</sup> Notably, however, this sentiment is not uniform within the Muslim community, with the percentage of Asian American Muslims (54%) expressing this positive outlook nearly twice that of African American Muslims (28%), who echo the views of the larger African American<sup>4</sup> community (23%).

Despite their relative optimism, American Muslims were the least likely faith group (15%) to favor a Trump victory in the presidential election (Figure 2). Conversely, a slight majority of Muslims favored a Clinton victory, trailing only American Jews in their wish to see the Democratic candidate for president take office. Collectively, however, the

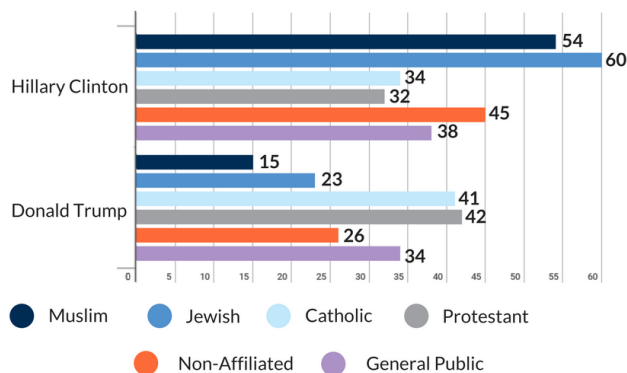
## Muslims Most Satisfied With Country



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

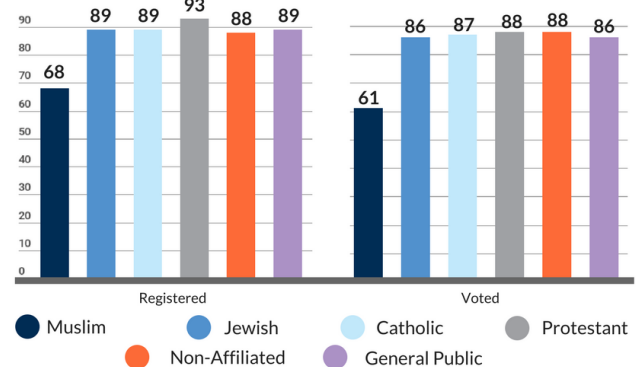
raw percentages indicate that American Muslims were among the least enamored with either of the two major party candidates, which perhaps explains why they were the least likely group to vote in the 2016 election (Figure 3). This finding is somewhat surprising because several indicators suggested there would be a large American Muslim turnout at the polls.<sup>5</sup> These included a clear sense of the stakes, numerous “Get Out the Vote” campaigns, and a well-formed preference against one of the two major party presidential candidates.

## Muslim and Jews Least Likely to Favor Trump Win



**FIGURE 2:** Who did you want to win the presidential election? (%) Base: Total Respondents

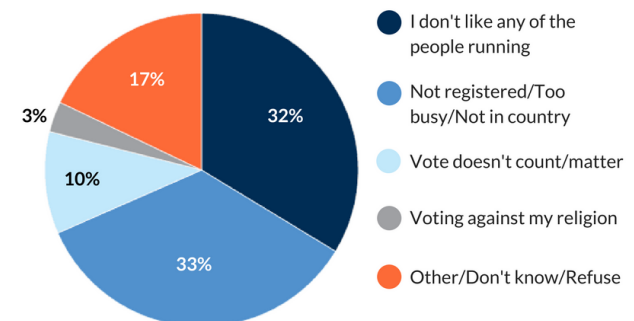
## Muslims Least Likely Faith Community to Vote



**FIGURE 3:** Are you registered to vote at your present address or not? (% Yes Shown) Base: Total Respondents who can legally vote in the United States. Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election? (% Yes Shown) Base: Total Respondents who can legally vote in the United States

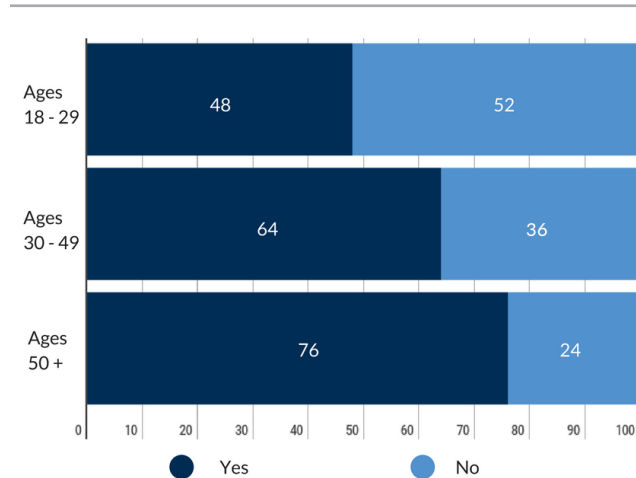
Even as the registration rate among Muslims noticeably ticked up (68% in the recent survey compared with 60% in ISPU’s American Muslim 2016 poll), it appears that the pull of dissatisfaction with the choices for president (one of the top reasons Muslim respondents provided for not casting a ballot; Figure 4) outweighed for many the push of increased mobilization efforts. Young people across faith communities are less likely to vote than their elders, and younger Muslims are no different (Figure 5). During the primaries, the majority of young Muslims preferred Senator Bernie Sanders for President, which may have further contributed to their dampened enthusiasm for the available choices. Asian American Muslims were the most likely ethnic group to have cast a ballot (Figure 6).

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



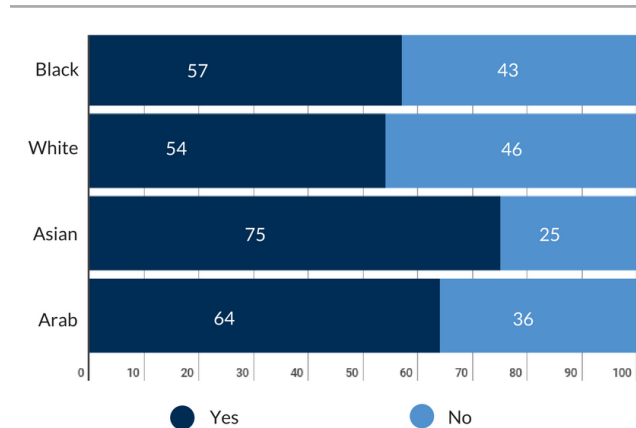
**FIGURE 4:** Can you please tell me why you did not vote in the 2016 presidential election? (Open end) Base: Total Respondents who did not vote in the 2016 presidential election

## Younger Muslims Least Likely to Vote



**FIGURE 5:** Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election? (%) Base: Total Respondents who can legally vote in the United States

## Asian Muslims Most Likely to Vote



**FIGURE 6:** Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election? (%) Base: Total Respondents who can legally vote in the United States

This dearth of formal political engagement among American Muslims does not mean that they are generally disengaged from domestic affairs. For instance, 44% of Muslims reported having worked with their neighbors to solve a community problem. Similarly, we found that Muslims are nearly as likely to support poverty alleviation in America as they are to donate to overseas causes (Table 1). Moreover, Muslims report the economy and bigotry—that is, two wholly domestic concerns—as the top two most important issues facing the country (Table 2).

## Houses of Worship Most Likely Recipient of Faith-Based Giving Across Faith Groups

	Muslim	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Non-Affiliated
Have you contributed money to a cause or institution associated with your faith community in the last year? Base: Total respondents.					
Have contributed money to a cause/institution associated with a faith community	42%	59%	69%	68%	38%
Which of the following have you contributed to? Base: Those who contributed money.					
Contributed to your house of worship	87%	79%	92%	92%	80%
Contributed to relief organizations for overseas relief efforts	52%	49%	39%	45%	31%
Contributed to relief organizations for domestic poverty alleviation	50%	56%	54%	53%	60%
Contributed to civil rights organizations dedicated to protecting the rights of people in your community	35%	36%	9%	16%	29%
Contributed to research organizations that study your faith community	24%	13%	3%	5%	3%

**TABLE 1:** Have you contributed money to a cause or institution associated with your faith community in the last year? Base: Total respondents. Which of the following have you contributed to? Base: Those who contributed money.

Given this concern for discrimination at home—which outpaces responses by any other faith community studied or the non-affiliated—it is not surprising that Muslims are among the most likely to donate to civil rights organizations, with 35% of those who give to religious causes reporting to have done so in the past year.<sup>6</sup>

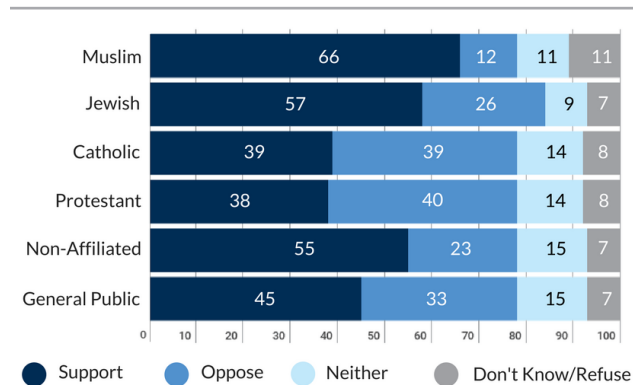
## Economy and Bigotry Continue to Top Muslim Priorities

	Muslim	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Non-Affiliated
Jobs/Economy	24%	17%	24%	18%	19%
Bigotry/Racism/Discrimination/Civil Liberties	23%	10%	7%	5%	5%
Healthcare/Education/Poverty	10%	11%	8%	11%	13%
National Security/Terrorism	6%	12%	13%	9%	5%
Foreign Policy/Foreign Affairs	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Immigration	2%	2%	5%	5%	2%
Global Warming/Climate Change	1%	6%	0%	1%	2%

**TABLE 2:** What do you think is the most important issue facing our country today? Base: Total Respondents

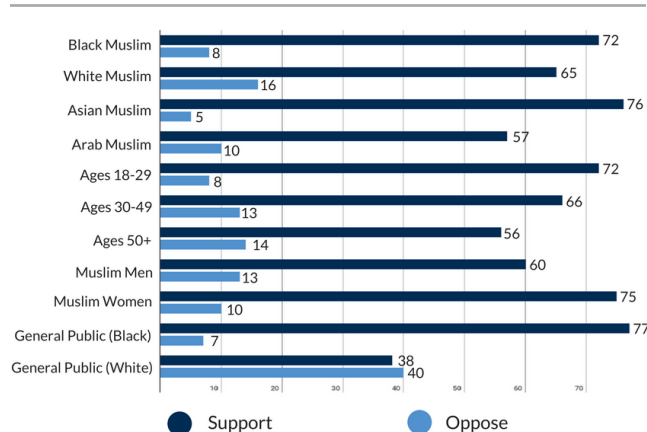
This sensitivity to civil liberties also translates into clear and robust support for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement across all Muslim ethnic groups (Figure 7). Young Muslims, Muslim women, and Asian Muslims report levels of support for BLM on par with Black Muslims and the larger African American community (Figure 8).

## Muslims Most Likely Faith Group to Support Black Lives Matter Movement



**FIGURE 7:** From what you've heard, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the Black Lives Matter movement? (%) Base: Total Respondents

## Black, Asian, Female, Young Muslims Most Supportive of Black Lives Matter Movement



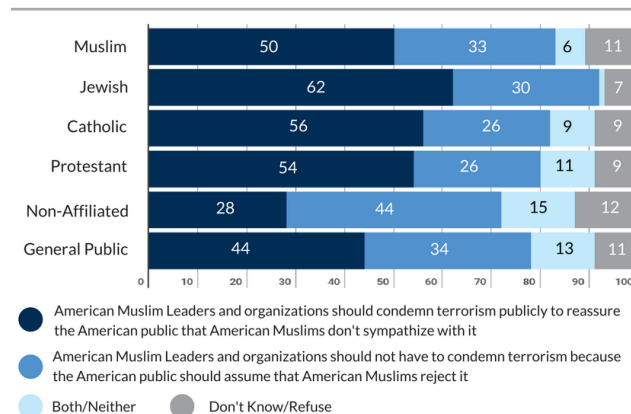
**FIGURE 8:** From what you've heard, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the Black Lives Matter movement? (%) Base: Total Respondents

## Muslims and the public are split on Muslim need to reassure the public on terrorism.

When it comes to political discourse on national security, however, Muslims appear to have strikingly similar views as Americans of other faiths, with a slight majority of respondents agreeing that “American Muslim leaders and organizations should condemn terrorism publicly to reassure the American public that American Muslims do not sympathize with it” (Figure 9). Notably, the general public appears to be less clear-cut on this matter, with nearly one quarter reporting that they did not have a substantive opinion on the issue.

Some critics have noted that to expect Muslims to condemn terrorism as a condition of absolving them of suspicion is a form of bigotry.<sup>7</sup> With most American faith groups still split on the question of the need for Muslim condemnation, the issue is not yet settled. This suggests there is room for civil rights advocates to reframe the conversation on American Muslim collective guilt.

## Muslims, Public Split on Muslim Need to Condemn Terrorism



**FIGURE 9:** Which comes closest to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right? (%) Base: Total Respondents

## The Community: Demographics and Diversity

### Muslims are young and diverse, with lower socioeconomic status.

The American Muslim demographic portrait is unique. First, Muslims are the youngest of our comparison groups, with more than one-third of the sample younger than 30 years of age (Figure 10). This characteristic likely mediates select descriptive findings in this population. That is, some of the attitudes and behaviors we describe in this report may be driven in large part by the relative youthfulness of American Muslims rather than any other distinguishing factor.

Second, American Muslims are the most ethnically and racially diverse faith group with no one background garnering a majority (Figure 11). This finding should further undercut the misguided tendency among some public officials and media portrayals to broad-brush American Muslims.



Third, Muslims are the most likely faith community in America to be foreign-born (50%). Thus, although the proportion of native-born Muslims may be on the rise (given traditional settlement patterns), the immigrant experience remains an important component of the American Muslim story (Figure 12). That said, it is by no means the entire story because Muslims have also been part of America since before the country's founding.<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, Muslims report far lower incomes compared with those of other faith communities (Figure 13). This general finding is in line with previous polling.<sup>9</sup> Again, however, the distribution within the community is not uniform, with African American Muslims more likely than other American Muslims to be in the lowest income category (Figure 14).

## Muslims America's Youngest Faith Community

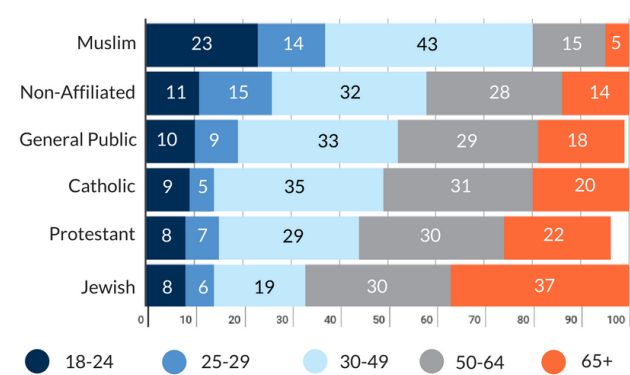


FIGURE 10: What is your age? Base: Total Respondents

## Muslims Most Ethnically Diverse Faith Community

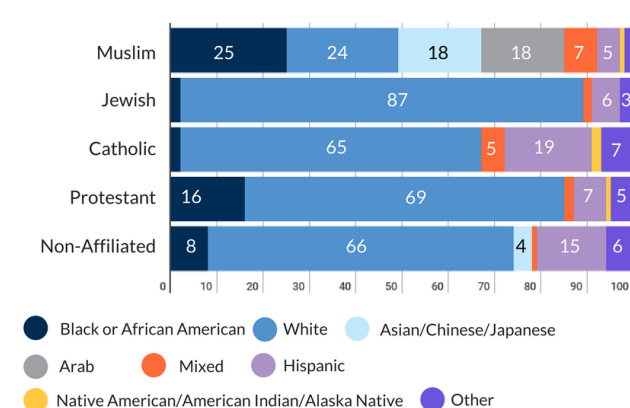


FIGURE 11: Are you of Hispanic origin or background? Base: Total Respondents. Do you consider yourself White, Black or African American, Asian, Arab, Native American, Pacific Islander, mixed race or some other race?

## Muslims Most Likely to Be Born Outside U.S.

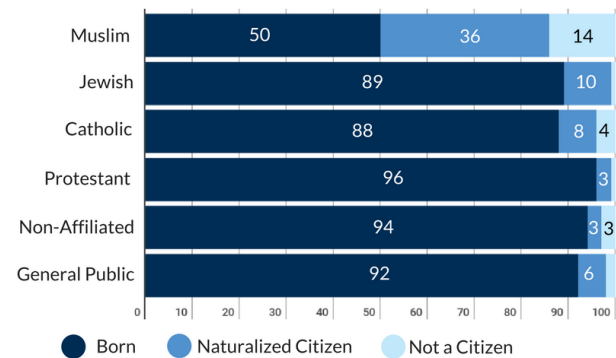


FIGURE 12: Were you born in the United states, or not? Base: Total Respondents. Are you a citizen of the United States, or not? Base: Total Respondents who were not born in the United States or don't know/refused to say if they were born in the United States

## Muslims Most Likely to Report Low Income

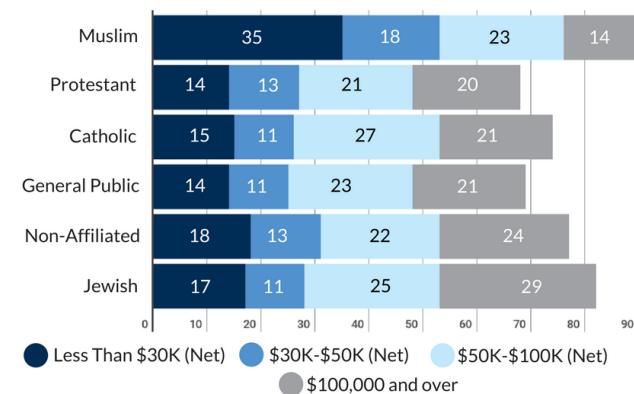


FIGURE 13: What is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes? Base: Total Respondents. Note: Numbers do not add up to 100% because remaining respondents did not provide a response to this question.

## Black, Arab Muslims Most Likely to Report Low Income

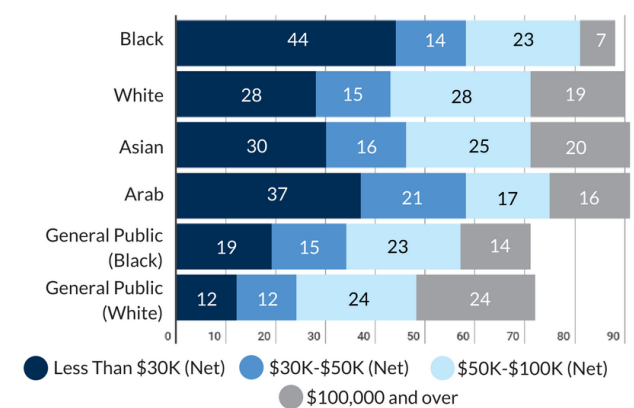
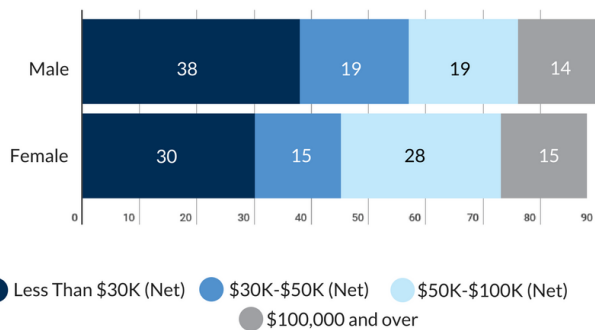


FIGURE 14: What is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes? (%) Base: Total Respondents. Note: Numbers do not add up to 100% because remaining respondents did not provide a response to this question.

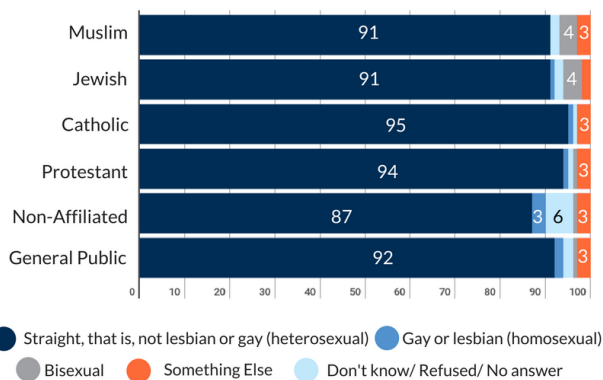
## Muslim Women More Likely than Muslim Men to Be Middle Class



**FIGURE 15:** What is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes? (%) Base: Muslims. Note: Numbers do not add up to 100% because remaining respondents did not provide a response to this question.

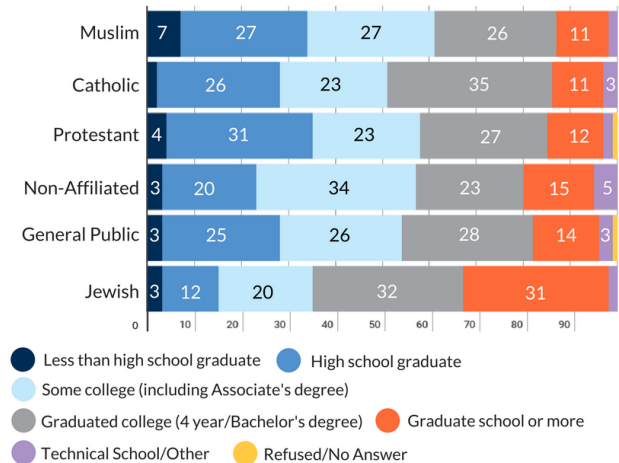
At the same time, American Muslims are indistinct from other communities in several ways. Muslims, for example, reported their sexual orientation as straight at a rate similar to that of all other subgroups (Figure 16). American Muslims are also comparable with Protestants and the general public in educational attainment (Figure 17). Notably, however, it is women who are pushing up the education distribution in the Muslim community (Figure 18).

## Nine in Ten Americans Identify as “Straight”



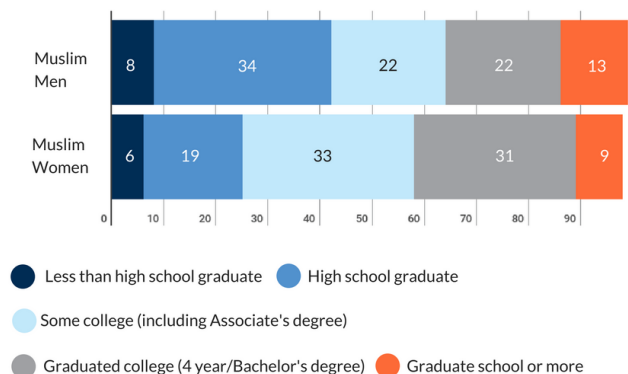
**FIGURE 16:** Do you think of yourself as: A. Straight, that is, not lesbian or gay; B. Gay or lesbian; C. Bisexual; or D. Something else? (%) Base: Total Respondents

## Muslim Education Level Similar to Christians



**FIGURE 17:** What is the last grade of school you completed? (%) Base: Total Respondents

## Muslim Women Surpass Men in Education



**FIGURE 18:** What is the last grade of school you completed? Base: (%) Total Respondents

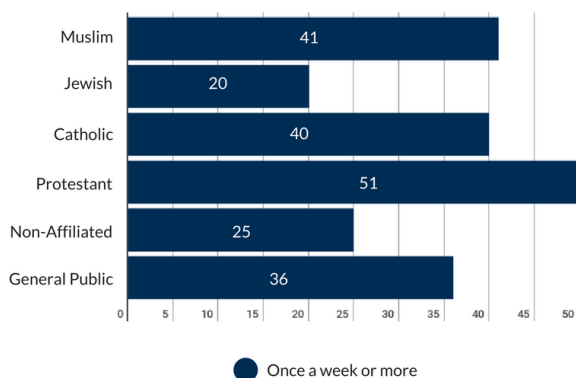
## Young Muslims attend religious services less often than elders, but more often than their generational peers from other faiths.

Last, Muslims and Catholics reported attending weekly religious services at equal rates (Figure 19). Delineating the results by age group, however, reveals a marked pattern. As Figure 20 shows, when Muslims are compared with the general public, the data indicate that younger Muslims, like their counterparts of other faiths, attend religious services less frequently than do 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 not represent alienation

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.

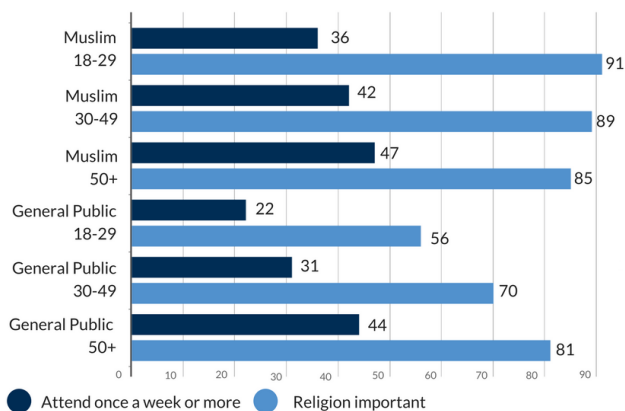
Honing in on the gender difference in mosque attendance, Figure 21 shows that men and women are statistically indistinguishable on this variable, further underscoring the need for the community's physical and financial resources to reflect this parity when it comes to designing and managing Muslim sacred space.<sup>10</sup>

## Muslims, Catholics Attend Religious Service with Equal Frequency



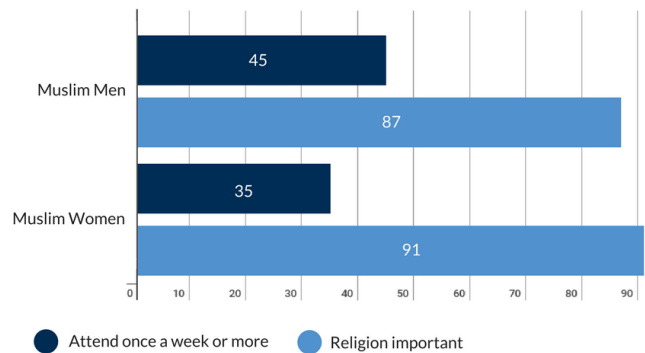
**FIGURE 19:** Aside from weddings and funerals how often do you attend religious services? (% Once a week or more shown) Base: Total Respondents

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



**FIGURE 20:** Aside from weddings and funerals how often do you attend religious services? (% Once a week or more shown) Base: Total Respondents. How important is religion to your daily life? (% Important shown) Base: Total Respondents

## Women, Men Similar in Mosque Attendance



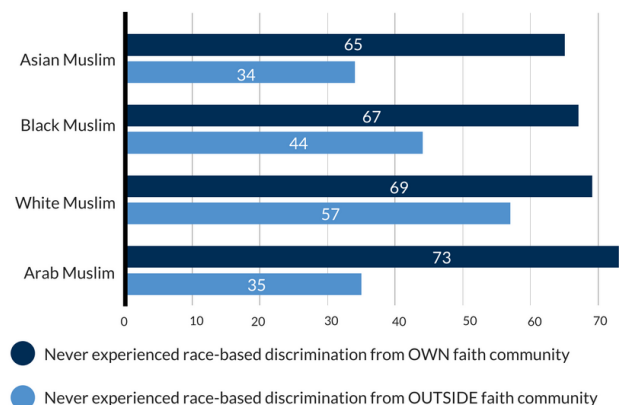
**FIGURE 21:** Aside from weddings and funerals how often do you attend religious services? (% Once a week or more shown) Base: Total Respondents. How important is religion to your daily life? (% Important shown) Base: Total Respondents

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

The data on race relations paint a generally bleak picture. The majority of non-White Muslims have experienced some race-based discrimination from outside their faith community in the last year (Figure 22). 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 within their own community, even if it occurs less frequently.

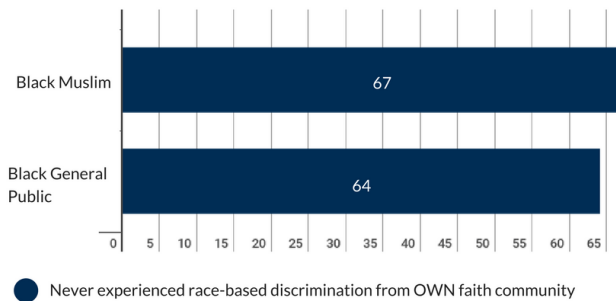
Intrareligious racism, however, is not unique to Muslims. Black Muslims are just as likely as Blacks in the general public to experience racism from within their faith community (Figure 23).

## Muslims Less Likely to Experience Racism from Other Muslims than from General Public



**FIGURE 22:** 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? (% Never Shown) Base: Total Respondents. How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination by someone OUTSIDE your faith community because of your race in the past year? (% Never Shown) Base: Total Respondents

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



**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? (% Never Shown) Base: Total Respondents

## The Family: Common and Unique Struggles

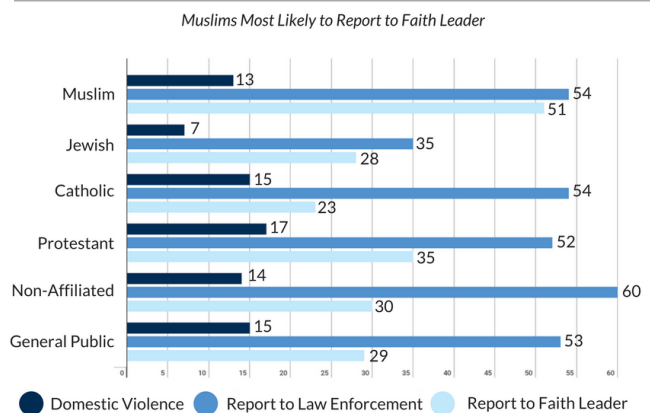
*Domestic violence occurs in the Muslim community as often as it does in Christian and non-affiliated communities, but Muslim victims are more likely to involve faith leaders.*

By focusing on the family, we highlight two areas of increasing concern—domestic violence and bullying—to illustrate how the American Muslim experience is both similar and set apart from other communities, and the implications of these findings.

Our data indicate that Muslims are generally as likely as any other faith/nonfaith group to report knowing a person in their community who was a victim of domestic violence. We also found that Muslims were just as likely to report the incident to law enforcement as anyone else, suggesting that there is no heightened stigma against doing so in this community (Figure 24). Still, only about half of these incidents are being reported to the authorities, suggesting the need for a general public awareness campaign on the importance of reporting family-based violence.

What makes Muslims unique is their significantly higher propensity to seek counsel with a faith leader when victimized by domestic violence. This is especially noteworthy in comparison with Protestants and Catholics, who are as likely as Muslims to frequent a house of worship and report religion as important, yet significantly less likely than Muslims to involve religious leaders in cases of domestic violence. This suggests that Muslim victims of domestic violence see it as a moral and religious issue as much as a legal one. It also means that it is imperative for imams to be trained<sup>11</sup> in how to handle the reporting of these incidents in a compassionate and effective manner.

## Domestic Violence Plagues Most Faith Communities Equally



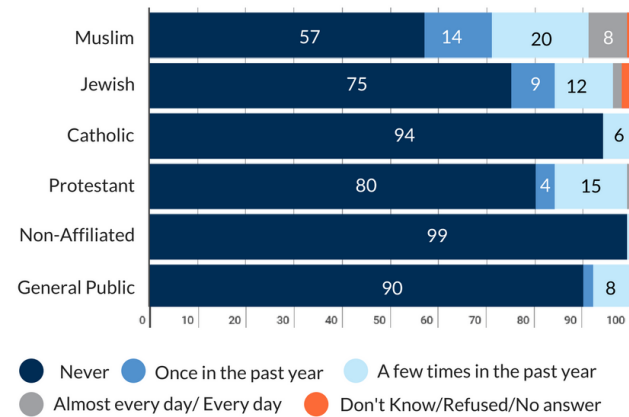
**FIGURE 24:** Do you know a person in your faith community who was the victim of violence from someone in his or her family in the past 12 months? By this we mean domestic violence. (%Yes) Base: Total Respondents. Did this person report the violence to law enforcement? (%Yes) Base: Total Respondents who know someone in their faith community who was a victim of domestic violence. Did this person report the violence to a religious or community leader in your faith community? (%Yes) Base: Total Respondents who know someone in their faith community who was a victim of domestic violence

## Two in five Muslim families report bullying of their children, sometimes by a teacher.

Contrary to the statistics on domestic violence, the data on bullying underscore an exceptional—and urgent—situation in the Muslim community. Muslims are nearly twice as likely as Jewish Americans and four times as likely as the general public to report that their school-age children have been bullied (Figure 25). Moreover, one quarter of these incidents involve a teacher or other school official (Figure 26), pointing to the need for better training and enforcement of antibullying protocols. Viewed in terms of broader societal trends, this finding also reveals the effect of normalizing hate.

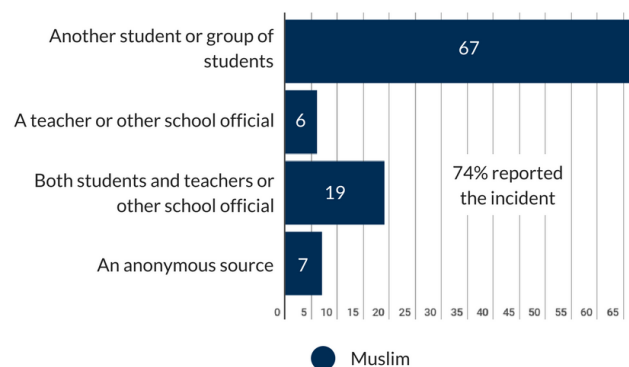


## Muslim Families Most Likely to Face Bullying



**FIGURE 25:** How often, if at all, have your children experienced bullying (insults or physical assaults) in the past year because of their religion at school? Base: Total Respondents who have children who attend a K-12 public school

## One in Four Muslim Bullying Incidents Involves a Teacher



**FIGURE 26:** 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

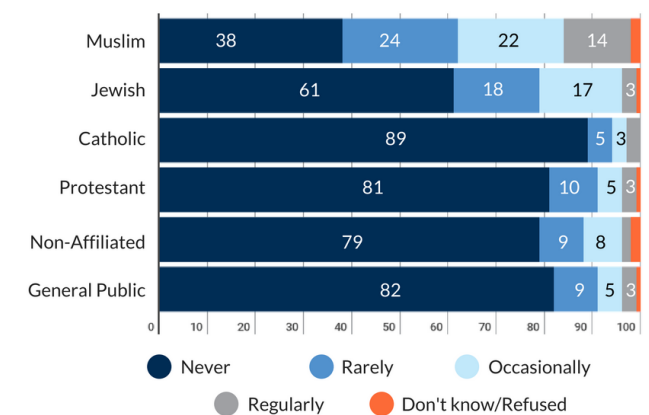
## The Individual: Trepidation and Resistance

### Many Muslims respond to discrimination with resilience and resistance

Finally, this report examines individual experiences, highlighting the effects of marginalization and acts of resilience in the Muslim experience. Not surprisingly, Muslims report high levels of religious discrimination, significantly surpassing the rates reported by all other groups (Figure

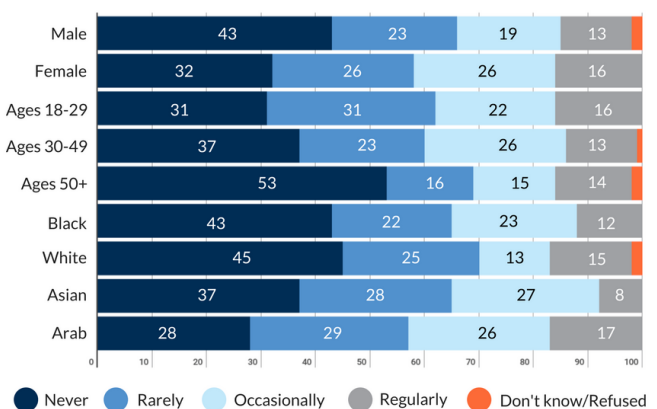
27). This discrepancy is especially pronounced for those who face such discrimination “regularly.” These rates are similar to those we found in ISPU’s 2016 poll, as is the fact that younger Muslims, women, and Arabs are the most likely to experience this religiously based discrimination (Figure 28).

## Muslims Most Likely Faith Community to Experience Religious Discrimination



**FIGURE 27:** How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? Base: Total Respondents

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

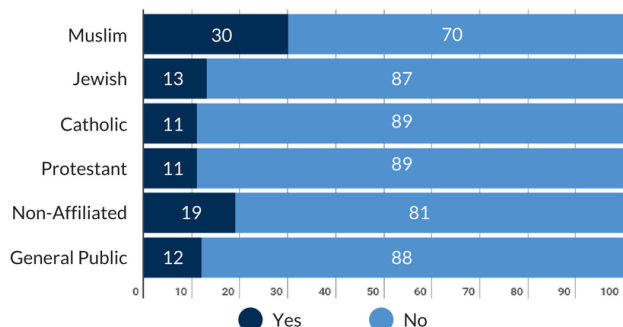


**FIGURE 28:** How often, if at all, have you personally experienced discrimination in the past year because of your religion? Base: Total Respondents

In line with these results, Muslims were also more than twice as likely as the general public to be stopped at the border for extra scrutiny (Figure 29). These two groups are also the most likely to report that their appearance when stopped made them easily identifiable as a member of their faith community (67% of Muslims and 32% of Jews), but virtually no Catholics or Protestants).

## Muslims Twice as Likely to Face Secondary Screening at Border

Nearly 7 in 10 Muslims stopped said their appearance easily identified them as a member of their faith community, compared with virtually none of those stopped in the general public.



**FIGURE 29:** Were you stopped at any time in the past year by US border officials for additional questioning upon your return from international travel? Base: Total Respondents who have traveled internationally in the past year

The presidential election weighed heavy on many Americans, with Muslims among the most likely to negatively react to the electoral outcome. Both Muslims and Jews reported higher levels of fear and anxiety due to the election results (Table 3). Eighteen percent of Muslims even made plans to leave the country “if it becomes necessary.” Yet, Muslims were also marginally the most likely to respond to the increased political uncertainty by upping their donations to organizations serving their faith community. Such fortitude is brought into starker relief if one focuses on Muslim women.

## Muslims, Jews Experience Most Fear, Anxiety After the 2016 Election

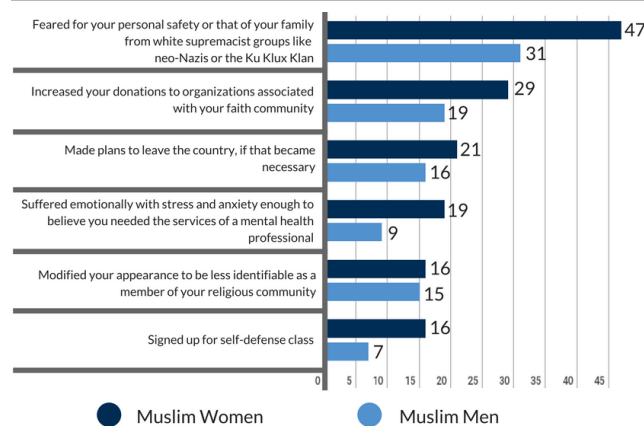
	Muslim	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Non-Affiliated
Feared for your personal safety or that of your family from white supremacist groups like neo-Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan	38%	27%	8%	11%	16%
Increased your donations to organizations associated with your faith community	23%	19%	14%	17%	19%
Made plans to leave the country, if it becomes necessary	18%	8%	7%	5%	12%
Joined, donated to or volunteered at a civic organization for the first time	18%	20%	14%	9%	11%
Modified your appearance to be less identifiable as a member of your religious community	15%	5%	2%	1%	1%
Suffered emotionally with stress and anxiety enough to believe you needed the services of a mental health professional	13%	9%	8%	6%	11%
Signed up for a self-defense class	11%	2%	3%	6%	1%
Decreased or decided against donating to an organization associated with your faith community	8%	7%	7%	5%	2%

**TABLE 3:** As a result of the outcome of the 2016 presidential elections have you done any of the following? (%Yes) Base: Total Respondents

## Muslim women bear the brunt of discrimination and do the most to address it.

Muslim women are more likely than their male counterparts to report discrimination. They are also more likely than Muslim men to report increased anxiety and fear for their personal safety in the wake of the 2016 election results. Despite experiencing more fear for their personal safety than 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 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 (Figure 30). Moreover, increased donations to Muslim organizations are largely driven by women (29% vs. 19%), who are also significantly more likely to sign up for a self-defense course than Muslim men (16% vs. 7%). It is also worth noting that Muslim women are overall more likely than Muslim men to voice support for the BLM movement (75% vs. 60%; see Figure 8). Thus, although it is clear that the presidential election has already had negative repercussions on the Muslim community, it is equally evident that many American Muslims have responded to this distress with resilience and resistance.

## Muslim Women Most Likely to Suffer, Take Action Post Election



**FIGURE 30:** As a result of the outcome of the 2016 presidential elections have you done any of the following? (%Yes) Base: Total Respondents

## Conclusion

The preceding analysis offered a rare comparative examination of attitudes and behaviors among American Muslims. It highlighted the variation both within this discrete community and across select faith groups and the non-affiliated. Our findings indicate several points of commonality between Muslims and other groups and areas where Muslim distinctiveness stands out. This detailed portrait provides a much-needed baseline both for communal deliberations and broader policy debates that directly affect the lives of American Muslims.

These days, a fact-based view of the world is being undermined on multiple fronts—from social media feeds, to political punditry, to the 140-character missives of our elected officials. To be sure, this situation does not bode well for the general functioning of a democracy. Yet it is potentially most deleterious to the livelihood and security of a society's vulnerable minority groups. After all, if fact is set aside, then prejudicial stereotypes often take its place. This makes empirical assessments, like the one we have offered here, all the more important to produce, promote, and support.

## Methodology

ISPU created the questionnaire for this study and commissioned two firms to conduct the survey: Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS) for a nationally representative survey of self-identified Muslims and Jews, and Triton Polling & Research for a nationally representative survey of the general American public. From the Triton sample, researchers examined the views of self-identified Protestants, Catholics, and those who were not affiliated with a faith. A total of 2,389 interviews were conducted. ISPU owns all data and intellectual property related to this study.

SSRS conducted a survey of Muslims and Jews for ISPU from January 4 through January 19, 2017. SSRS interviewed 800 Muslim and 340 Jewish respondents. Sample for the study came from three sources. SSRS telephoned a sample of households that was prescreened as being Muslim or Jewish in the SSRS weekly national omnibus survey of 1,000 randomly selected respondents ( $n = 661$ ) and purchased a listed sample for Muslim and Jewish households in both landline and cell phone frames from Experian, a sample provider that flags specific characteristics for each piece of sample ( $n = 129$ ). The SSRS omnibus survey completed half of all interviews with cell phone respondents, so prescreened

respondents included those who had originally been interviewed on both landline telephones and cell phones. To supplement the number of Muslim interviews SSRS was able to complete in the given time frame and with the amount of available prescreened sample, SSRS employed a Web methodology panel and completed the final 350 interviews with Muslims via an online survey with samples from a nonprobability panel. The data from this project are weighted to match estimates of the Jewish and/or Muslim populations determined from 3 years of data collected through the SSRS omnibus and estimates from the Pew Research Center's 2011 survey of Muslim Americans. The telephone portion of respondents has a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of Muslims  $\pm 5.1\%$  and Jews  $\pm 6.5\%$ .

Triton live-agent surveys were conducted by interviewers in an in-house, state-of-the-art call center located near Bend, Oregon. All surveys incorporated standard statistical methods to select a representative sample of the target population. Triton conducted this telephone poll of the general public, on behalf of ISPU, by live interviews with respondents via landline telephones and cell phones between January 4 and January 23, 2017, securing a sample size of 1,249 completed surveys with a margin of error at a 95% confidence level of  $\pm 2.8\%$ . The weighting applied was gender, age, region, and race.

For more details on polling methodology, visit [www.ispu.org/poll](http://www.ispu.org/poll).

## End Notes

- 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 See Dalia Mogahed and Fouad Pervez, "American Muslim Poll: Participation, Priorities, and Facing Prejudice in the 2016 Elections" (Washington, D.C: Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, 2016); Gallup, "Muslim Americans: Faith, Freedom, and the Future" (Abu Dhabi Gallup Center, 2011); and Pew Research Center, "Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism; Mainstream and Moderate Attitudes" (Washington, D.C: Pew Research Center, 2011).
- 4 For this study, our African American sample includes all who identify as such, including foreign-born Africans.
- 5 Youssef Chouhoud, "Why the Muslim Vote Will Be Crucial in This Election," *Altmuslim*, October 13, 2016, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/altmuslim/2016/10/why-the-muslim-vote-will-be-crucial-in-this-election/>.



# Institute *for* Social Policy *and* Understanding

RESEARCH MAKING AN IMPACT

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## About ISPU

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

For more information, please visit: [www.ispu.org](http://www.ispu.org).

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## End Notes, *continued*

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- 6 Respondents were to report on their giving in the past year, meaning the span of the past 12 months from the time of the survey interview.
  - 7 Max Fisher, "Stop Asking Muslims to Condemn Terrorism. It's Bigoted and Islamophobic," *Vox*, December 15, 2014, <http://www.vox.com/2014/12/15/7394223/muslims-condemn-charlie-hebdo>.
  - 8 Amir Hussain, "There Has Never Been an America without Muslims," *Religion & Politics*, January 30, 2017, <http://religionandpolitics.org/2017/01/30/there-has-never-been-an-america-without-muslims/>
  - 9 Mogahed and Pervez, "American Muslim Poll: Participation, Priorities, and Facing Prejudice in the 2016 Elections"; Gallup, "Muslim Americans: Faith, Freedom, and the Future"; Pew Research Center, "Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism; Mainstream and Moderate Attitudes."
  - 10 For a multifaceted, in-depth, and solutions-oriented examination of Muslim religious institutions, see ISPU's series, "Reimagining Muslim Spaces," <http://www.ispu.org/social-policy/reimagining-muslim-spaces/>.
  - 11 Several organizations work to provide education on the prevention of domestic violence, including The Peaceful Families Project, a nonprofit organization devoted to ending domestic violence in Muslim families by providing workshops and resources, including training imams. [www.peacefulfamilies.org](http://www.peacefulfamilies.org)