



START

U.S. Muslim Opinions about ISIS, the Syrian Conflict and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

*Results of a Fall 2016 Internet Poll of 216 U.S.
Muslims*

*Report to the Office of University Programs,
Science and Technology Directorate,
U.S. Department of Homeland Security*

June 2017

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
*A Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Center of Excellence
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About This Report

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About START

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is supported in part by the Science and Technology Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through a Center of Excellence program led by the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. For more information, contact START at infostart@start.umd.edu or visit www.start.umd.edu.

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Executive Summary

Our sixth U.S. Muslim Internet poll was conducted from October 28 to November 7, 2016; the poll was completed by 216 participants thought to be representative of the U.S. Muslim adult population. Questions included opinions of Islamic State, opinions about the Syrian conflict and the Syrian refugee crisis, and opinions relating to the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. Results indicate that U.S. Muslims continue to hold very negative opinions of suicide bombing and of ISIS, and endorse allowing more Syrian refugees into the United States. Radical opinions about ISIS and about suicide bombing were negatively correlated with endorsement of a United Nation of Islam. Radical opinions were positively correlated with an Alienation scale that measured participants' perception of isolation and social rejection. Compared with Wave 5, there were no significant changes in radical opinions, opinions about the Syrian conflict, or opinions about a "United States of Islam." Possible implications for these findings are considered in the discussion section.

Introduction

The research presented here is a continuation of a research project ongoing since 2012 that aims to explore the efficacy and utility of Internet polling as a tool to access opinions and attitudes of U.S. Muslims. Five previous waves of surveys were carried out prior to Wave 6, which is the focus of this report. The survey instrument used in Wave 6 included most of the same questions asked in Wave 5, with the addition of a single question about the November 2016 U.S. presidential election. Appendix B shows the complete survey as programmed for internet participants.

Survey Methodology

Sixth wave participants were 216 U.S. Muslims. Eighty-seven participants had participated in earlier waves of the poll as part of the Knowledge Network panel and were contacted again for the Wave 6 poll. The remaining 127 participants were first-time participants from an “opt-in sample.”

Survey Procedures

This survey, like previous surveys carried out under this research project, were carried out by the firm GfK, using its KnowledgePanel.[®] Unlike Internet convenience panels, that include only individuals with Internet access who volunteer themselves for research, KnowledgePanel recruitment has used dual sample frames (telephone and postal mail) to construct the existing panel. The target population is non-institutionalized adults age 18 and over residing in the United States who identify as Muslim. The current survey (Wave 6) was deployed between October 28, 2016 and November 7, 2016. Appendix A provides more information regarding sampling and survey procedures.

Demographics

Gender

Eighty-four participants (39%) were male, and 130 (61%) were female.

Age

Participants' average age was 38.0 years old (SD=13.2). Participants between 18 and 29 years old numbered 60 (28%); 94 (44%) were between 30 and 44 years old; 44 (21%) were between 45 and 59 years old, and (8%) were over 60 years old.

Education

About half of participants (105, 49%) had either a bachelor's degree or higher; 77 (36%) attended some college; 20 (9%) finished high school; and the remaining 12 (6%) had not graduated high school.

Race/Ethnicity

A plurality of participants (80, 37%) identified themselves as “White, non-Hispanic;” 70 (33%) said they were “Other, non-Hispanic;” 37(17%) said they were Black, non-Hispanic; 21 (10%) said they were Hispanic; and 6 (3%) said they were of mixed lineage.

Household Income and Employment

Participants were mostly middle class. Sixty-three participants (29%) reported household income of less than 35,000 per year; 68 participants (32%) reported income between 35,000 and 75,000 per year, and the remaining 83 (38%) reported income over 75,000 per year.

Most participants were working, either as a paid employee (126, 59%) or self-employed (14, 7%). The remaining 74 (34%) were not working because they were disabled (6, 3%), retired (9, 4%), laid off (5, 2%) or for other reasons (54, 25%).

Marital Status

Most participants were married (130, 61%). Four (2%) were widowed; 10 (5%) were divorced; 3 (1%) were separated; 15 (7%) were living with a partner. Fifty-two participants (24%) were never married.

Muslim religious tradition

Most participants (115, 54%) identified themselves as Sunni; 35 (16%) identified as Shi'a; 50 (23%) said they were "Muslim, non-specific", and 11 (5%) said they were "another tradition".

Opinion Results

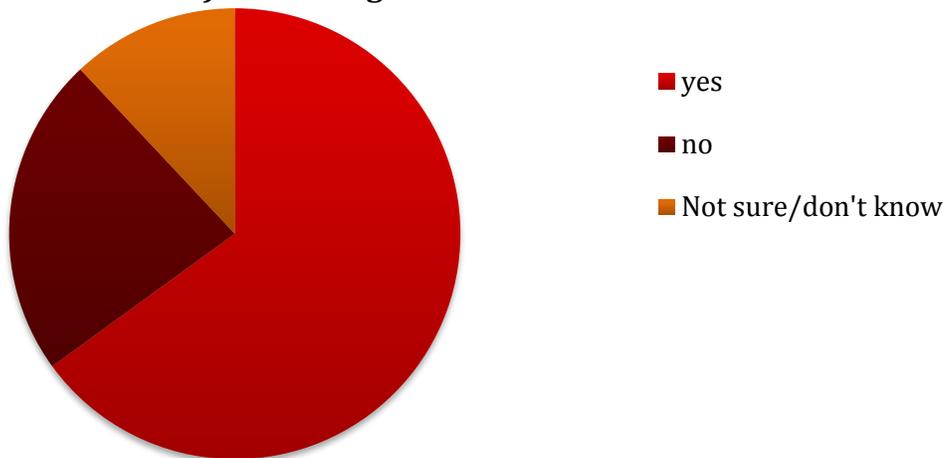
Opinions of ISIS and fighting in Syria

The survey included four questions related to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or to the conflict in Syria. Strong majorities of U.S. Muslims have a negative opinion of ISIS and disapprove of U.S. Muslims going to join ISIS, but opinions of travelling to Syria to fight Assad are more varied. The questions and distribution of answers for each question follow.

Do you blame ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known as Islamic State or IS) for making life more difficult for U.S. Muslims?

1. Yes (139, 65%)
2. No (49, 23%)
3. Not sure/don't know (26, 12%)

Do you blame ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known as Islamic State or IS) for making life more difficult for U.S. Muslims?

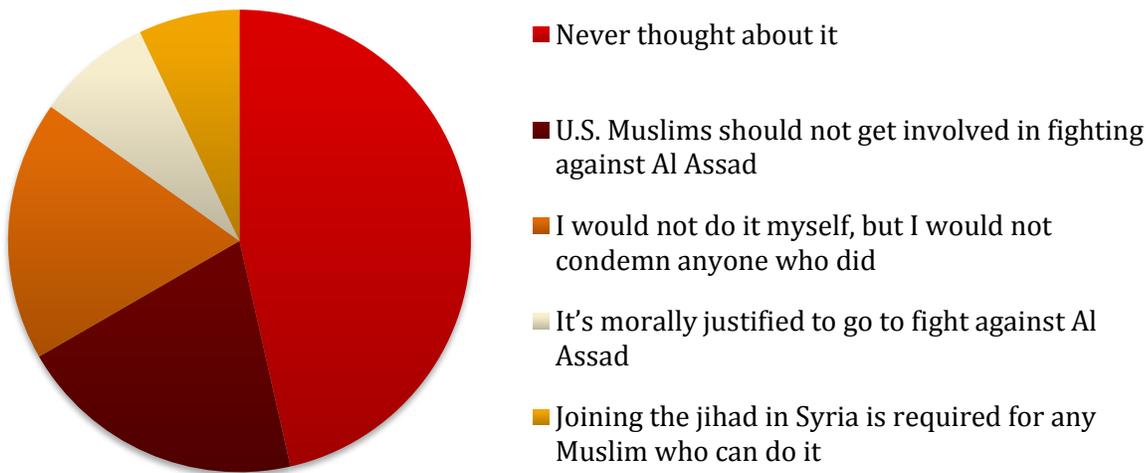


Interestingly, a majority of U.S. Muslims blame ISIS for some of the discrimination and mistrust they experience.

How do you feel about Muslims going to Syria to fight against Bashar Al Assad?

1. Never thought about it (98, 46%)
2. U.S. Muslims should not get involved in fighting against Al Assad (42, 20%)
3. I would not do it myself, but I would not condemn anyone who did (38, 18%)
4. It's morally justified to go to fight against Al Assad (18, 8%)
5. Joining the jihad in Syria is required for any Muslim who can do it (15, 7%)

How do you feel about Muslims going to Syria to fight against Bashar al-Assad?



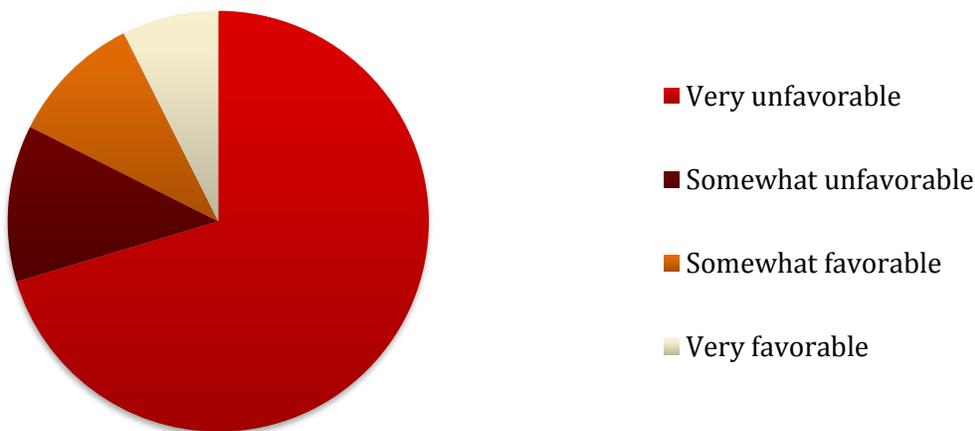
More than half of U.S. Muslims do not support those who travel to Syria to fight against Al Assad. The two most radical answers to this question (“it is morally justified” and “it is required for any Muslim who can do it”) were chosen by a total of 33 participants, with 18 (8%) saying that it is “morally justified to go to

fight in Syria”, and 15 (7%) saying that “joining the jihad in Syria is required of any Muslim who can do it.”

Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)?

1. Very unfavorable (163, 76%)
2. Somewhat unfavorable (27, 13%)
3. Somewhat favorable (11, 5%)
4. Very favorable (8, 4%)

Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)?

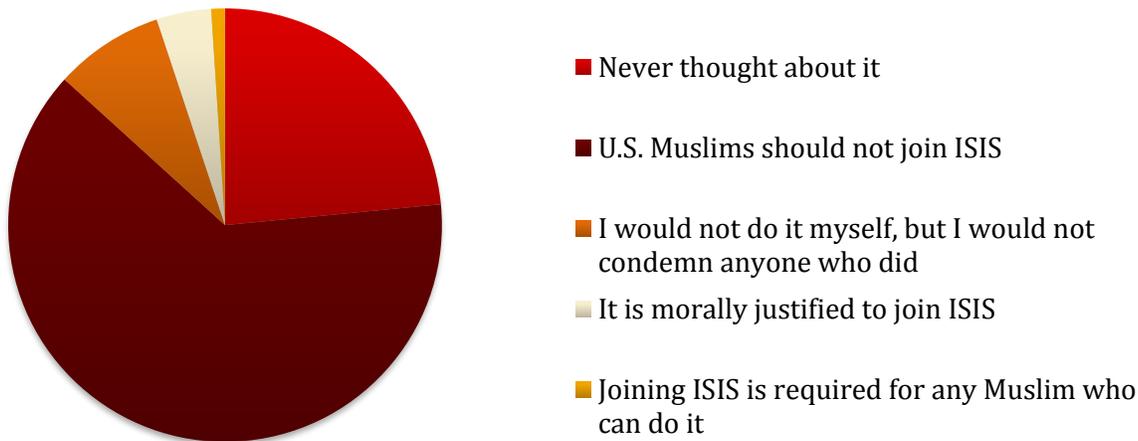


Three quarters (76%) were “very unfavorable” toward ISIS; about 10 percent had a somewhat or a very favorable opinion of ISIS.

How do you feel about U.S. Muslims going to Syria to join ISIS?

1. Never thought about it (50, 23%)
2. U.S. Muslims should not join ISIS (133, 62%)
3. I would not do it myself, but I would not condemn anyone who did (16, 8%)
4. It is morally justified to join ISIS (9, 4%)
5. Joining ISIS is required for any Muslim who can do it (3, 1%)

How do you feel about U.S. Muslims going to Syria to join ISIS?



The great majority of participants (85%) believe that American Muslims should not join ISIS; only a small minority (about 5%) support this radical behavior.

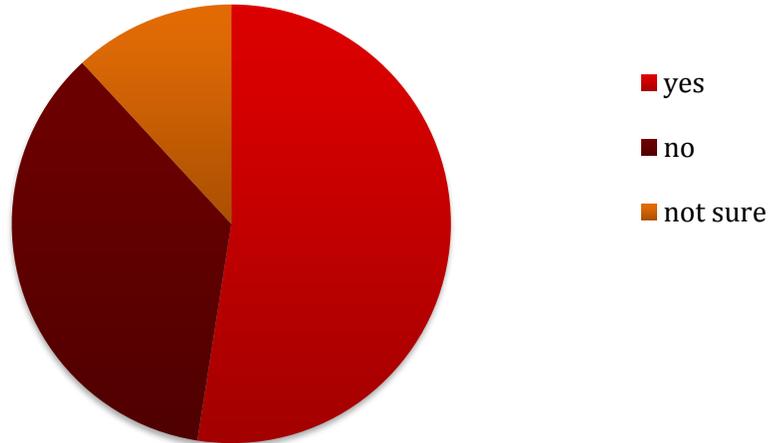
Opinions about Islam Polity and U.S. Policies

The survey included two questions about the idea of a “United States of Islam” and six questions focused on U.S. foreign policy. A majority of U.S. Muslims have heard of and support the idea of a United States of Islam. Opinions regarding U.S. foreign policy were more mixed. Questions from this section of the survey, with a breakdown of responses, are below.

Some people say that Muslims living in predominantly Muslim countries should join together in a kind of “United States of Islam” stretching from Morocco to Indonesia. Have you ever heard of this idea?

1. Yes (113, 53%)
2. No (76, 36%)
3. Not sure (25, 12%)

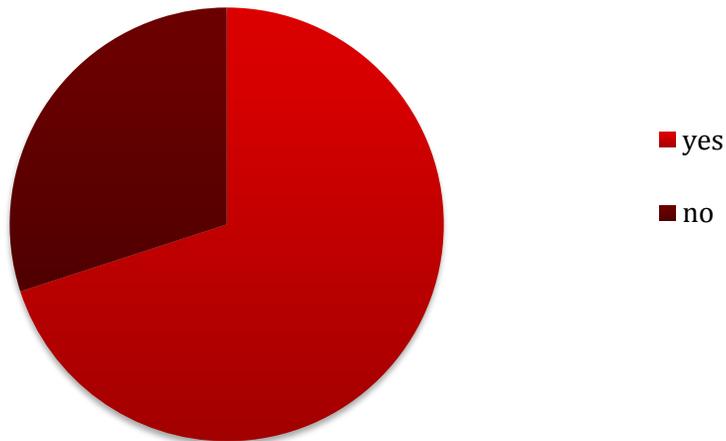
Some people say that Muslims living in predominantly Muslim countries should join together in a kind of “United States of Islam” stretching from Morocco to Indonesia. Have you ever heard of this idea?



Whether or not you have heard of this idea before now, do you personally agree with this idea?

1. Yes (149, 70%)
2. No (64, 30%)

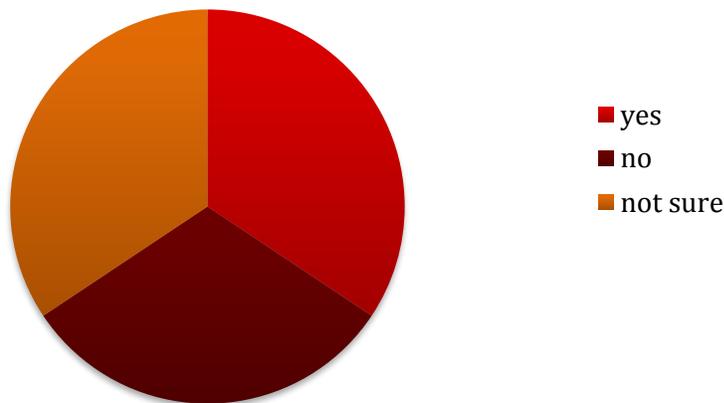
Whether or not you have heard of this idea before now, do you personally agree with this idea?



Do you think that President Obama should increase U.S. military attacks in Syria against ISIS?

1. Yes (73, 34%)
2. No (67, 31%)
3. Not sure/don't know (73, 34%)

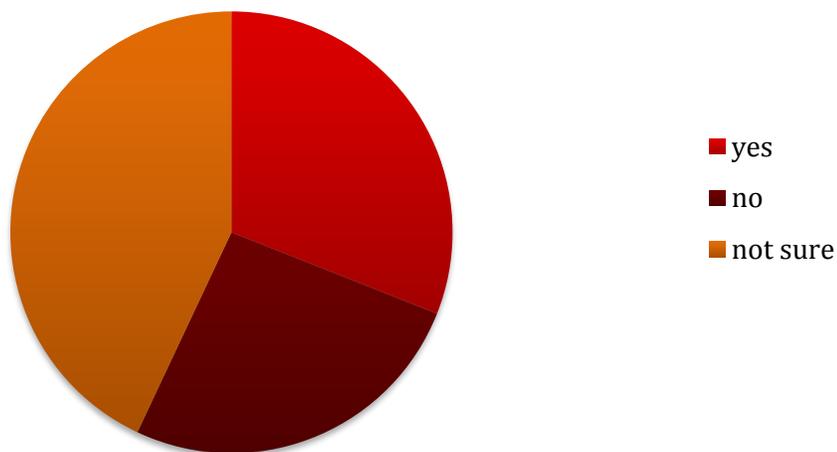
Do you think that President Obama should increase U.S. military attacks in Syria against ISIS?



Do you think that President Obama should increase U.S. military attacks against President Bashar Al Assad's Syrian government forces?

1. Yes (67, 31%)
2. No (55, 26%)
3. Not sure (91, 43%)

Do you think that President Obama should increase U.S. military attacks against President Bashar Al Assad's Syrian government forces?

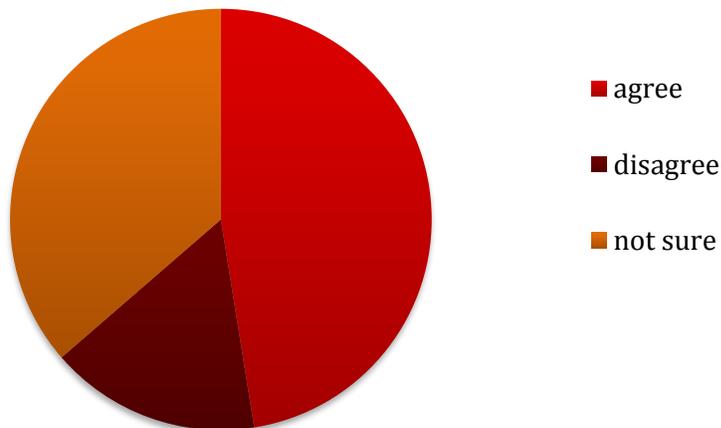


U.S. Muslims appear to be about equally divided about U.S. foreign policies in Syria, with about a third supporting more intervention against ISIS and Al Assad, and about a third opposing intervention.

Some people say that U.S. foreign policies are dictated by Jewish interests. How do you feel about this?

1. Agree (100, 47%)
2. Disagree (34, 16%)
3. Not sure (77, 36%)

**Some people say that U.S. foreign policies are dictated by Jewish interests.
 How do you feel about this?**

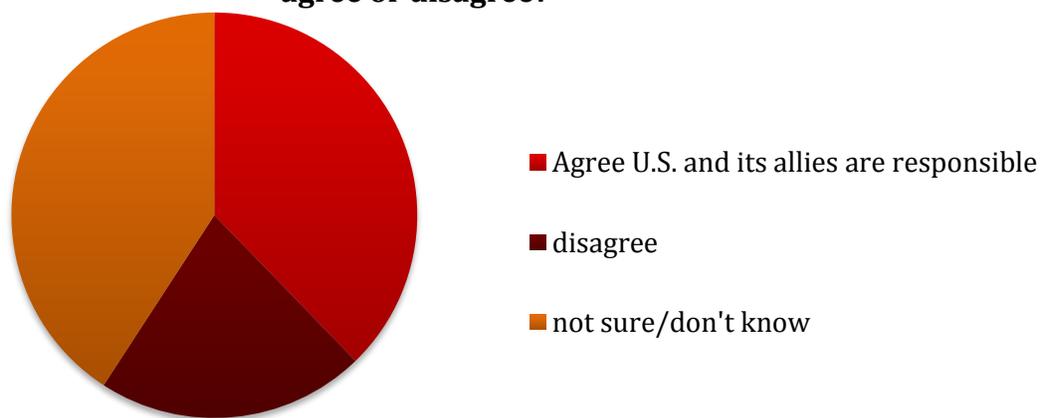


About half of participants agreed that U.S. foreign policies are controlled by Jewish interests.

Some believe that the U.S. and its Western allies are responsible for the Syrian refugee crisis, in which millions of Syrians have fled their country. Do you agree or disagree?

1. Agree U.S. and its allies are responsible (80, 37%)
2. Disagree (45, 21%)
3. Not sure/don't know (85, 40%)

**Some believe that the U.S. and its Western allies are responsible for the Syrian
 refugee crisis, in which millions of Syrians have fled their country. Do you
 agree or disagree?**

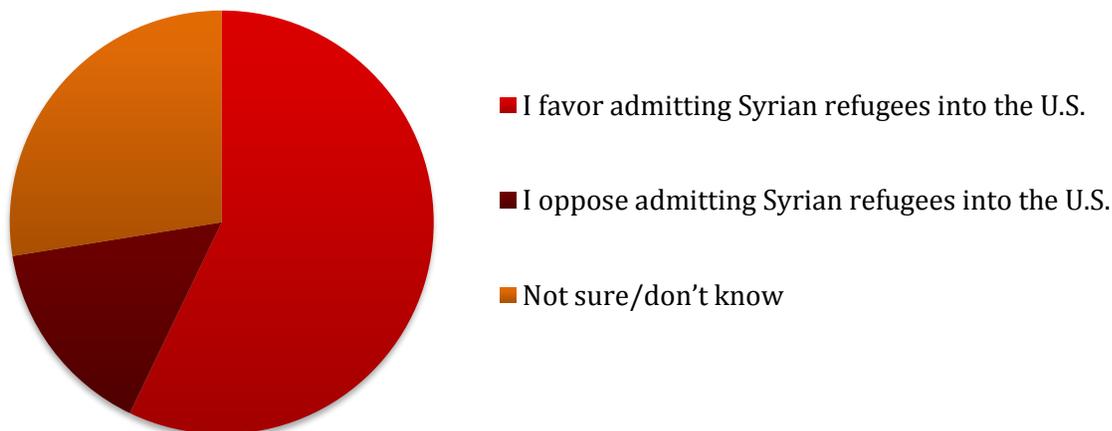


About a third of participants believe the United States and its allies are responsible for the Syrian refugee crisis.

Some believe that the U.S. should admit thousands of Syrian refugees, others oppose admitting Syrian refugees because some may be terrorists. What do you think?

1. I favor admitting Syrian refugees into the U.S. (120, 56%)
2. I oppose admitting Syrian refugees into the U.S. (33, 15%)
3. Not sure/don't know (58, 27%)

Some believe that the U.S. should admit thousands of Syrian refugees, others oppose admitting Syrian refugees because some may be terrorists. What do you think?



Over half of participants expressed support for the idea of admitting Syrian refugees into the United States. About 15 percent opposed this idea.

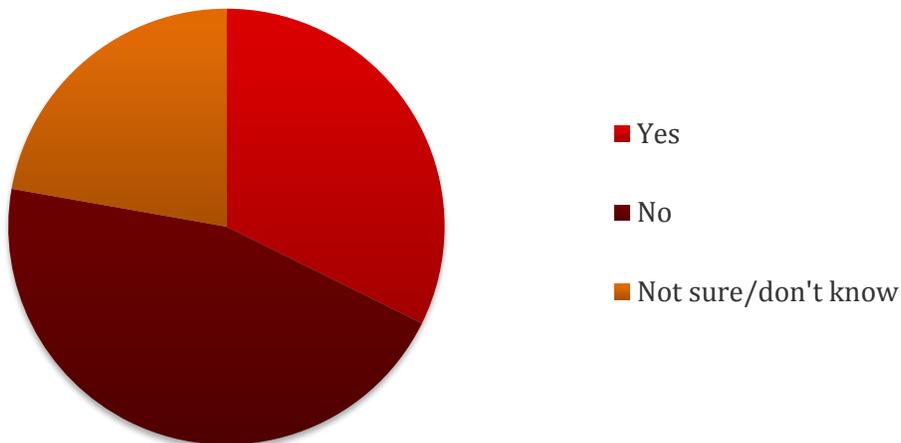
Opinions about the War on Terrorism and Suicide Bombing

The survey also included several questions regarding the war on terrorism (including a question regarding a parent informing on his son) and asked about support for suicide terrorism. An overwhelming majority of U.S. Muslims strongly oppose suicide bombing. Overall, U.S. Muslims continue to demonstrate low levels of radical opinion: only a minority view the war on terrorism as a war against Islam, few support suicide bombing, and few disagree that a father should inform authorities about his son's radicalization. The questions and distribution of answers for each question follow.

Do you feel the war on terrorism is a war against Islam?

1. Yes (68, 32%)
2. No (97, 45%)
3. Not sure/don't know (48, 22%)

Do you feel the war on terrorism is a war against Islam?

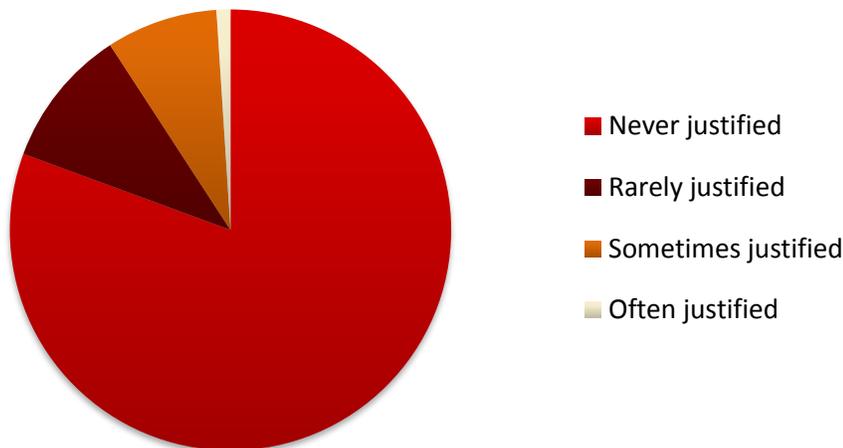


About a third of U.S. Muslims agree with the radical opinion that the war on terrorism is a war against Islam.

Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. Do YOU PERSONALLY feel that this kind of violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?

1. Never justified (169, 79%)
2. Rarely justified (22, 10%)
3. Sometimes justified (18, 8%)
4. Often justified (3, 1%)

Do YOU PERSONALLY feel that this kind of violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?

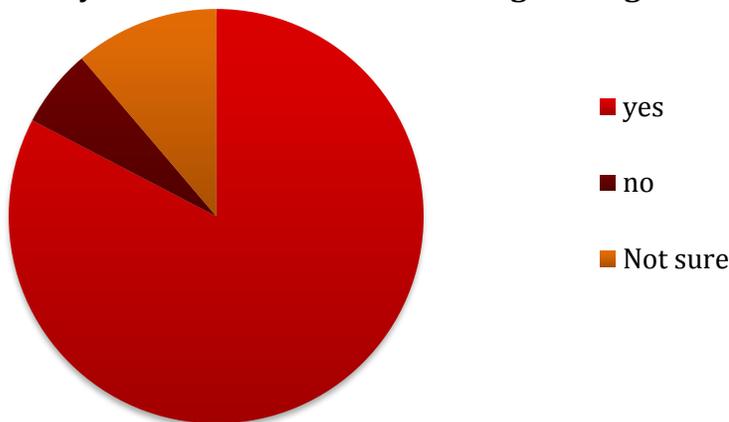


About four fifths of U.S. Muslims oppose suicide bombing as a tactic. Only a small minority (about one in 10) of U.S. Muslims say the tactic is sometimes or often justified.

On September 19, 2016, a U.S. Muslim, Ahman Khan Rahami, was arrested after a shootout with police in Linden, NJ. He is accused of planning bombings in New York City and in New Jersey. His own father Mohammad Rahami called the FBI in 2014, two years before the alleged attacks, and told the authorities his son might be a “terrorist” and to “keep an eye on him.” Do you think the father did the right thing?

1. Yes (173, 81%)
2. No (13, 6%)
3. Not sure (24, 11%)

Do you think the father did the right thing?



A strong majority of U.S. Muslims support the father who turned in his son to the authorities because of the son’s suspected radicalization. About four-fifths of our sample said the father did the right thing; only six percent said the father was wrong to do it.

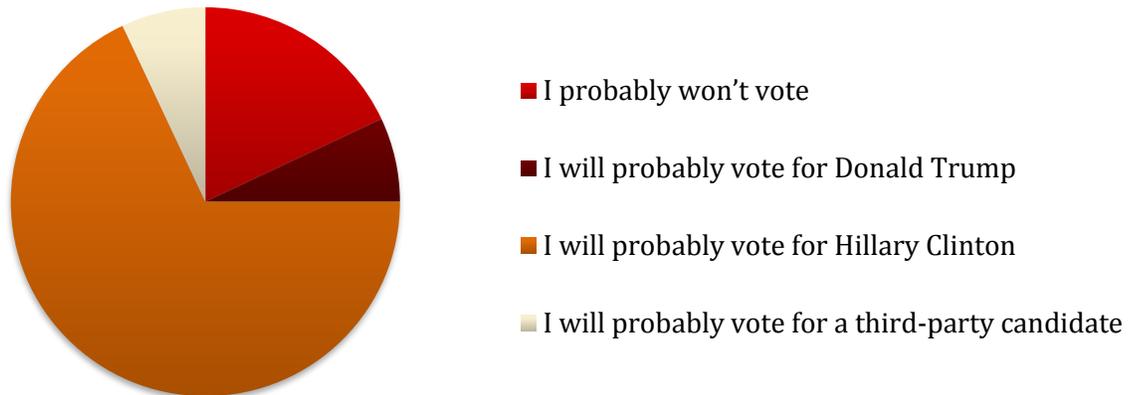
Opinions about 2016 U.S. presidential election

The survey also added a question unique to Wave 6 that asked about the U.S. presidential election (which occurred immediately following the survey period). About 80 percent of participants planned to vote, and 80 percent of these planned to vote for Clinton. Only 7 percent of participants planned to vote for Trump. The proportion of intended Clinton voters to intended Trump voters in this sample was about 10 to one.

There is going to be a U.S. presidential election on November 8, 2016. Which of the following is the most likely for you?

1. I probably won’t vote (38, 18%)
2. I will probably vote for Donald Trump (15, 7%)
3. I will probably vote for Hillary Clinton (146, 68%)
4. I will probably vote for a third-party candidate (15, 7%)

Which of the following is the most likely for you?



Analysis

Alienation

A recent study indicated that youth who feel alienated and rejected by their peers are especially likely to lash out against them by acting aggressively.¹ Coupled with the recent increase in lone wolf terrorism incidents² there is a possibility that perceived alienation may relate to political radicalization. Therefore our Wave 6 poll included the five highest-loading items from the Maddi et al Alienation scale.³ These five questions used a four-point Likert scale with 1=*Strongly Agree*, 2= *Agree*, 3=*Disagree*, 4=*Strongly Disagree*: “Hardly anyone knows how I feel inside;” “I often feel left out of things that others are doing;” “I often feel alone when I’m with other people,” “Most people don’t seem to accept me when I’m just being myself;” “I feel that my family is not as close to me as I would like.” Scoring of the five items was reversed for analysis, so that higher scores indicate more alienation.

A reliability analysis indicated that the five items had high internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha =.90). Therefore, a scale was computed by averaging across the five items for each participant. The resulting Alienation Scale had a mean of 2.81, SD=.83.

Correlations were then computed between the five-item Alienation scale and items related to radicalization. Below are questions that correlated significantly with the Alienation Scale.

¹ Reijntjes, A., Thomaes, S., Bushman, B. J., Boelen, P. A., de Castro, B. O., & Telch, M. J. (2010). The outcast-lash-out effect in youth: Alienation increases aggression following peer rejection. *Psychological Science, 21*(10), 1394-1398.

² Spaaij, R. (2010). The enigma of lone wolf terrorism: An assessment. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 33*(9), 854-870.

³ Maddi, S. R., Kobasa, S. C., & Hoover, M. (1979). An alienation test. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 19*(4), 73-76.

Table 1. Correlations (N) of the five-item Alienation scale with radicalization questions

Heard of “United States of Islam”	$r(216) = -.20 \ p<.01$
Agree with the idea of a “United States of Islam”	$r(215) = -.19 \ p=.01$
Suicide bombing is justified	$r(214) = .22 \ p<.01$
Positive opinion of ISIS	$r(211) = .17 \ p=.02$

Table 1 shows significant relationships between the five-item Alienation scale and four poll questions related to radicalization. Two questions correlated negatively with Alienation: knowledge of the idea of a “United States of Islam” and support for this idea were associated with less alienation. Therefore, U.S. Muslims who are aware of and supportive of the idea of a “United States of Islam” feel less socially alienated than those who are unfamiliar with this idea or do not support it. Two other questions showed statistically significant correlations with the Alienation scale: opinion of ISIS and opinion of suicide bombing. Their positive correlations with the Alienation scale indicate that participants who have a positive opinion of ISIS feel more socially alienated, as do those who think suicide bombing is justified. U.S. Muslims who feel socially alienated demonstrated greater radicalization of opinion and less interest in a “United States of Islam.”

Opinions Relating to Election Preferences

Wave 6 of the poll took place within a month of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Participants were asked which candidate they were likely to vote for: Hillary Clinton (N=146), Donald Trump (N=15), a third-party candidate (N=15), not voting (N=40). We compared participants’ responses on questions about radical opinions based on which candidate they supported in the upcoming election. Three questions (war on terrorism is war on Islam; United States and allies are responsible for the Syrian refugee crisis; and support for admitting refugees into the United States) showed significant differences among the supporters of different candidates.

Agreeing that the “war on terrorism is a war on Islam” was significantly different among supporters of different candidates ($F(3, 212) = 5.55, \ p<.01$). Tukey Post-Hoc analysis indicated that supporters of a third-party candidate (N=15) showed greater belief that the war of terrorism is a war on Islam ($M=1.4, \ SD=.63$) than either Clinton supporters (N=146, $M=2.21, \ SD=.87; \ p<.01$) or Trump supporters (N=15, $M=2.53, \ SD=.83; \ p<.01$).

The view that the United States and its allies are to blame for the Syrian refugee crisis was likewise significantly different among supporters of different candidates, $F(3, 209) = 3.00, \ p=.03$. Tukey Post-Hoc analysis showed that supporters of a third-party candidate showed greater agreement with the idea that the United States and allies are responsible for the refugee crisis ($M=1.40, \ SD=.74$) than did Trump supporters ($M=2.20, \ SD=.86; \ p=.02$).

Finally, there was a significant difference among groups of supporters on whether Syrian refugees should be admitted into the U.S. $F(3, 210) = 3.97, \ p<.01$. Tukey Post-Hoc analysis showed that Trump supporters were significantly more opposed to the idea of admitting refugees into the United States ($M=2.20,$

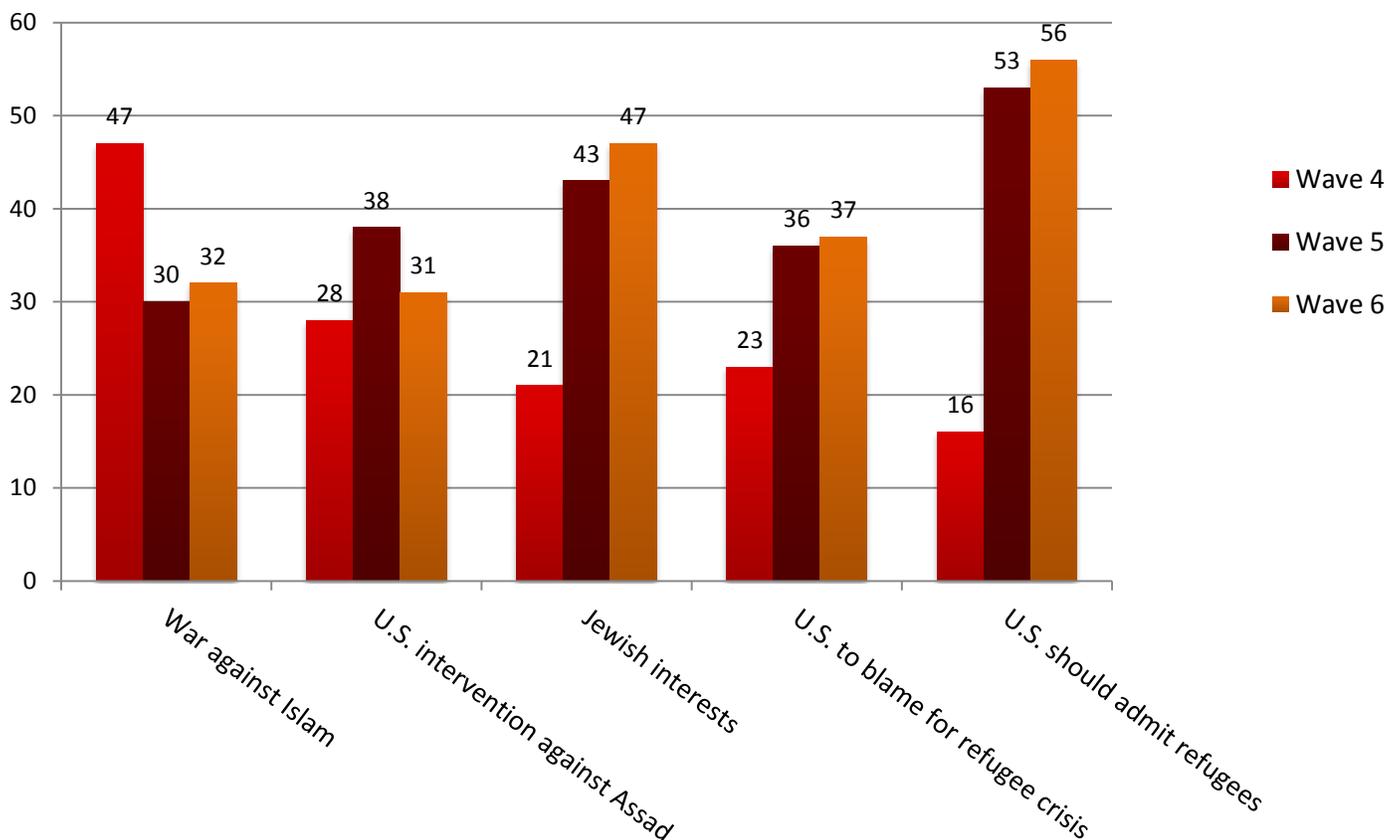
$SD=.86$) than were Clinton supporters ($M=1.52, SD=.72; p<.01$) or those who said they would not vote ($M=1.57, SD=.64; p=.03$).

Thus Trump supporters were more opposed to the idea of admitting Syrian refugees in to the United States, less likely to blame the United States for the Syrian refugee crisis, and less likely to agree that the war on terrorism is a war on Islam than U.S. Muslims who did not support Trump.

Comparison of Wave 6 to Waves 4 and 5

We also explored how answers to some questions have changed over time. Figure 1 shows percent agreement with the most extreme answer for the five questions that showed 10 or more percentage points change from Wave 4 to Wave 5. Changes from Wave 5 to Wave 6 are small: seven percentage points change or less. Thus, there were substantial opinion changes between Waves 4 and 5 but not between Waves 5 and 6; we return to this pattern in the Discussion below.

Figure 1. Percent agreeing with most extreme answer to each question in Wave 4, Wave 5, and Wave 6



On other questions about radical opinions, responses remained stable through Waves 4, 5 and 6. For instance, on the question about whether suicide bombing is justified in defense of Islam, about four-fifths agreed with the least radical answer, and fewer than five percent endorsed the most radical answer

“Often Justified.” Table 2 below compares percent answering “Do you think suicide bombing is justified..?” across Wave 4, Wave 5 and Wave 6.

Table 2. Percent answering question “Do you think suicide bombing is justified in defense of Islam?”

	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Never justified	84	82	79
Rarely justified	6	9	10
Sometimes justified	7	4	8
Often justified	3	4	1

Questions showing substantial opinion change between Waves 4 and 5 show no further change between Waves 5 and 6. Opinion of suicide bombing is overwhelmingly negative and does not change over Waves 4, 5, and 6.

Discussion

As has been the case with previous waves of the poll, Wave 6 results show that U.S. Muslims report low levels of radical opinion: A third see the war on terrorism as a war on Islam; only one in 10 see suicide bombing as sometimes or often justified. Similarly, strong majorities of U.S. Muslims report negative opinions of ISIS and do not support the idea of U.S. Muslims travelling to Syria to join ISIS. Opinions of going to Syria to fight against Bashar Al Assad are more mixed.

Also consistent with previous waves of our Internet poll, we found little relationship between demographic characteristics and radical opinion. As with previous waves, we found men slightly more likely than women to support ISIS ($r(209)=.14, p=.05$). and younger participants slightly more likely to express support for ISIS ($r(212)=-.18, p<.01$). Older participants were slightly more likely to feel that the war on terrorism was a war on Islam ($r(213)=.14, p=.04$). Thus demographics are only weak predictors of opinion.

From Wave 4 to Wave 5, we found a number of important changes in opinions of U.S. Muslims: more support for U.S. military intervention in Syria against Assad’s government forces; more blame of the United States and its allies for the Syrian refugee crisis; more belief that U.S. foreign policy is controlled by Jewish interests; and more support for the United States’ admitting Syrian refugees despite the possibility that some may be terrorists. On this last question, participants’ agreement went up threefold from about 16 percent agreeing in Wave 4 to about 53 percent agreeing in Wave 5 that the United States should admit Syrian refugees.

Our interpretation of the Wave 4 to Wave 5 differences has to do with the unexpected success of Donald Trump’s presidential campaign. At the time of Wave 4 in January-February 2016, most political observers did not predict that Trump would become the Republican Party’s front-runner candidate and a likely nominee. By the time of Wave 5 data collection in June 2016, Trump’s strength was widely accepted. The Trump campaign’s main issues included his vocal position on immigration including a ban on admitting

any Muslims into the United States. He specifically opposed admitting Syrian refugees into the United States because some of them may be terrorists.⁴ Trump also expressed his willingness to declare war against ISIS and to use nuclear weapons against ISIS; he also called for using enhanced interrogation techniques against terror suspects and has expressed support for surveillance of mosques and possibly closing mosques in the United States.⁵

Wave 6 responses were consistent with Wave 5 results, indicating that the changes in opinion observed from Wave 4 to Wave 5 persisted over the interval of time between the data collection of Wave 5 and Wave 6. If the change in U.S. Muslim opinion indeed related to Trump's political ascent, the stability of Trump-related opinions between June and November 2016 is not surprising. Consistent with this "Trump effect" is the Wave 6 finding that the few (N=15) who planned to vote for Trump were, compared with other participants, more opposed to admitting Syrian refugees, less likely to blame the United States for the Syrian refugee crisis, and less likely to see the war on terrorism as a war on Islam.

It will be interesting to see how these opinions might change in our next Internet poll (Wave 7), which will take place in Spring 2017 when Trump will have been President for some months.

The Wave 6 poll included new questions not used in previous waves of the poll. In order to test a hypothesis that political violence may be related to feelings of social isolation, a five-item Alienation scale was added. Our results show some support for the hypothesis. The five-item alienation scale correlated with two radicalization questions: support for ISIS and endorsement of suicide bombing. Individuals high on perceived alienation were more likely to have a positive view of ISIS and to believe that suicide bombing is justified in defense of Islam.

We believe that the Alienation scale is the first psychological measure to show a relation with radical opinion among Western Muslims. This relation warrants further testing in new samples, including our planned Wave 7 in Spring 2017. If reliable, the predictive value of the Alienation scale for radical opinion may be useful for both its diagnostic value and for the potentially useful direction it suggests for deradicalization practitioners.

Finally, the Wave 6 poll included a question about a recent (2016) arrest of a young man who allegedly planned terrorist attacks in New York City and New Jersey, who had been brought to the FBI's attention by his own father two years prior to his arrest (in 2014). We asked participants their opinion on the father's actions—was he wrong or right to inform the authorities of his own son's suspected terrorist activity? An overwhelming majority of our participants said the father was right to do what he did. This response is consistent with our sample's disapproval of ISIS and terrorist tactics in general. It suggests that most U.S. Muslims are likely to cooperate in reporting potential extremists to U.S. security officials.

In general, CSTAB 2.12 (Trends in U.S. Muslim Opinion) was conceived as a two-pronged project, investigating not only the U.S. Muslim opinions over time, but also the utility of quick turnaround Internet

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/oct/13/donald-trump-foreign-policy-doctrine-nation-building>

⁵ https://ballotpedia.org/Donald_Trump_presidential_campaign,_2016/Foreign_affairs

polls for this kind of poll research. Over the course of six successive waves of Internet polling across the span of four years, both objectives have been achieved. Important and timely data about U.S. Muslim opinions have been collected in the immediate aftermath of significant political events such as terrorist attacks in Paris, France and in San Bernadino, CA. Opinions about political events such as the rise of ISIS, Syrian refugees, and the 2016 U.S. election have been assessed as these events unfolded. Trends of decreased radicalization over time in the general U.S. Muslim population alongside a continuing radical minority have been reported.

In addition, speaking to the utility of Internet polls, a recent study from the London School of Economics found that Internet polls were more accurate in predicting Britain's vote to exit the European Union ("Brexit") than were traditional telephone polls.⁶ Using Internet polling to study U.S. Muslim opinions may be more informative and reliable than using the more expensive and slower-turnaround telephone polling. For security practitioners who are the target audience for our work, faster, cheaper and more reliable tracking of U.S. Muslim opinions provide a win-win-win alternative.

⁶ <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2016/07/12/leave-always-lead/>

Appendix A: Sample selection, composition, and sample weights.

The sample was recruited and data were collected by KnowledgePanel^{® b} that is currently operated by the international corporation GfK. Below is the description of sample selection procedures and data collecting procedures as performed by KnowledgePanel[®].

Panel Recruitment Methodology

When GfK began recruiting in 1999 as Knowledge Networks, the company established the first online research panel (now called KnowledgePanel[®]) based on probability sampling covering both the online and offline populations in the United States. Panel members are recruited through national random samples, originally by telephone and now almost entirely by postal mail. Households are provided with access to the Internet and a netbook computer, if needed.

Unlike Internet convenience panels, also known as “opt-in” panels, that include only individuals with Internet access who volunteer themselves for research, KnowledgePanel recruitment has used dual sample frames to construct the existing panel. As a result, panel members come from listed and unlisted telephone numbers, telephone and non-telephone households, and cell phone only households, as well as households with and without Internet access, which creates a representative sample. Only persons sampled through these probability-based techniques are eligible to participate on KnowledgePanel. Unless invited to do so as part of these national samples, no one on their own can volunteer to be on the panel.

The target population consists of the following: non-institutionalized adults age 18 and over residing in the United States who identify as Muslim. To sample the population, GfK sampled households from its KnowledgePanel, a probability based web panel designed to be representative of the United States.

The data collection field period was as follows: 28 October 2016-7 November 2016

Poll Sampling from Knowledge Panel

Once panel members are recruited and profiled, they become eligible for selection for client polls. In most cases, the specific poll sample represents a simple random sample from the panel, for example, a general population poll. Customized stratified random sampling based on profile data can also be conducted as required by the study design.

The general sampling rule is to assign no more than one poll per week to individual members. Allowing for rare exceptions during some weeks, this limits a member’s total assignments per month to four or six polls. In certain cases, a poll sample calls for prescreening, that is, members are drawn from a subsample of the panel (such as females, Republicans, grocery shoppers, etc.). In such cases, care is taken to ensure that all subsequent poll samples drawn that week are selected in such a way as to result in a sample that remains representative of the panel distributions. For this poll, a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults (18 and older) who identify as Muslims was selected.

Poll Administration

Once assigned to a poll, members receive a notification email letting them know there is a new poll available for them to take. This email notification contains a link that sends them to the poll questionnaire. No login name or password is required. The field period depends on the client's needs and can range anywhere from a few hours to several weeks. After three days, automatic email reminders are sent to all non-responding panel members in the sample. If email reminders do not generate a sufficient response, an automated telephone reminder call can be initiated. The usual protocol is to wait at least three to four days after the email reminder before calling. To assist panel members with their poll taking, each individual has a personalized "home page" that lists all the polls that were assigned to that member and have yet to be completed.

The typical poll commitment for panel members is one poll per week or four per month with duration of 10 to 15 minutes per poll. In the case of longer polls, an additional incentive is typically provided.

Appendix B. Poll questionnaire

2016 Poll of American Muslims – Wave IV
2016 Poll of American Muslims – Wave 6
Fall 2016
WBS # 310.209.01183

Contracted Length of Interview: 15 minutes
Start Fieldwork: 10/28/2016
End Fieldwork: 11/7/2016

I. SAMPLE VARIABLES

- KP standard demographics

II. QUOTA CHECK BASED ON SAMPLE VARIABLES

None.

III. INTRODUCTION

Base: Ask all

R1. [S; Prompt Once]

What is your religion?

1. Catholic
2. Evangelical or Protestant Christian (Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Pentecostal, Church of Christ, etc.)
3. Jehovah's Witness
4. Mormon
5. Jewish
6. Islam/Muslim
7. Greek or Russian Orthodox
8. Hindu
9. Buddhist
10. Unitarian (Universalist)
11. Other Christian religion, please specify: [small text box]
12. Other non-Christian religion, please specify: [small text box]
13. No religion

Scripter: Terminate if R1 does not equal 6 'Islam/Muslim'

V. MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

SCRIPTER: Use default instruction text for each question type unless otherwise specified.

SCRIPTER: Do not prompt on all questions.

SCRIPTER: Use default instruction text for each question type unless otherwise specified.

Base: Ask all

Intro. [D]

You may have previously participated in a poll of U.S. Muslims earlier this year. While some of the questions found in this poll may be similar or identical to the previous poll, this is a new poll and we wish to obtain your current views and opinions on the questions asked.

Newspapers have had a lot to say about what U.S. Muslims think—usually on the basis of a few interviews. Professor Clark McCauley (Bryn Mawr College) hopes to bring better understanding of U.S. Muslims with this poll, designed to get a snapshot of how Muslims experience life in America. There are two kinds of questions: questions about your own opinions and experiences, and questions about your best guess about the opinions and experiences of other Muslims. There are no right or wrong answers. As always in an opinion poll, you may skip any item and you may quit the poll at any point.

Thank you in advance for completing this poll. Your input is very much appreciated.

IV. MAIN POLL

Base: Ask all

D1. [S]

Do you think of yourself as African-American?

1. Yes
2. No

Base: Ask all

1a. [S]

The next five questions ask about how you feel in relating to others.

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement below.

I often feel alone when I'm with other people.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Base: Ask all

1b. [S]

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement below.

Hardly anyone I know is interested in how I feel inside.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Base: Ask all**1c. [S]**

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement below.

I feel that my family is not as close to me as I would like.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Base: Ask all**1d. [S]**

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement below.

I often feel left out of things that others are doing.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Base: Ask all**1e. [S]**

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement below.

Most people don't seem to accept me when I'm just being myself.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Base: Ask all**Q2_New. [S]**

There is going to be a U.S. presidential election on November 8, 2016. Which of the following is the most likely for you?

1. I probably won't vote
2. I will probably vote for Donald Trump
3. I will probably vote for Hillary Clinton
4. I will probably vote for a third-party candidate

Base: Ask all**Q3A. [S]**

Do you blame ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known as Islamic State or IS) for making life more difficult for U.S. Muslims?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure/don't know

*SCRIPTER: Display Q4 and Q5 on the same screen.***Base: Ask all****Q4. [S]**

Some people say that Muslims living in predominantly Muslim countries would be better off if all these countries joined together in a kind of "United States of Islam" stretching from Morocco to Indonesia. Have you ever heard of this idea?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Base: Ask all**Q5. [S]**

Whether or not you have heard of this idea before now, do you personally agree with this idea?

1. Yes
2. No

Base: Ask all**Q6. [S]**

Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. Do YOU PERSONALLY feel that this kind of violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?

1. Never justified
2. Rarely justified
3. Sometimes justified
4. Often justified

Base: Ask all**Q8. [S]**

Do you feel the war on terrorism is a war against Islam?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure/don't know

Base: Ask all

Q10. [S]

Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, also known as Islamic State or IS)?

1. Very unfavorable
2. Somewhat unfavorable
3. Somewhat favorable
4. Very favorable

Base: Ask all**Q12. [S]**

Do you think that President Obama should increase U.S. military attacks in Syria against ISIS?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure/don't know

Base: Ask all**Q13. [S]**

Do you think that President Obama should increase U.S. military attacks against President Bashar Al Assad's Syrian government forces?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Base: Ask all**Q14. [S]**

How do you feel about U.S. Muslims going to Syria to fight against Bashar Al Assad?

1. Never thought about it
2. U.S. Muslims should not get involved in fighting against Al Assad
3. I would not do it myself, but I would not condemn anyone who did
4. It is morally justified to go to fight against Al Assad
5. Joining the fight against Assad is required for any Muslim who can do it

Base: Ask all**Q15. [S]**

How do you feel about U.S. Muslims going to Syria to join ISIS?

1. Never thought about it
2. U.S. Muslims should not join ISIS
3. I would not do it myself, but I would not condemn anyone who did
4. It is morally justified to join ISIS
5. Joining ISIS is required for any Muslim who can do it

Base: Ask all**Q16. [S]**

Some people say that U.S. foreign policies are dictated by Jewish interests. How do you feel about this?

1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Not sure

Base: Ask all**Q19. [S]**

Some believe that the U.S. and its Western allies are responsible for the Syrian refugee crisis, in which millions of Syrians have fled their country. Do you agree or disagree?

1. Agree, the U.S. and its allies are responsible
2. Disagree
3. Not sure/don't know

Base: Ask all**Q20. [S]**

Some believe that the U.S. should admit thousands of Syrian refugees, others oppose admitting Syrian refugees because some may be terrorists. What do you think?

1. I favor admitting Syrian refugees into the U.S.
2. I oppose admitting Syrian refugees into the U.S.
3. Not sure/don't know

Base: Ask all**Q20a. [S]**

On September 19, 2016, a U.S. Muslim, Ahman Khan Rahami, was arrested after a shootout with police in Linden, NJ. He is accused of planning bombings in New York City and in New Jersey. His own father Mohammad Rahami called the FBI in 2014, two years before the alleged attacks, and told the authorities his son might be a "terrorist" and to "keep an eye on him." Do you think the father did the right thing?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Base: Ask all**Q21. [S]**

Are you Shi'a, Sunni or another tradition?

1. Shi'a
2. Sunni
3. Another tradition
4. Muslim, non-specific

SCRIPTER: Insert KP closing question.

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE