



Arab Public Opinion and US Presidential Elections 2016

November 1, 2016

Arab Center Washington DC (ACW) conducted a public opinion survey in the Arab world in cooperation with the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS) based in Doha, Qatar. The poll surveyed a randomly selected sample of 3,600 respondents in nine Arab countries, namely Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip), Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia, with 400 respondents from each country. Polling was carried out during the period of October 21-31, 2016 by One-2-One, a British-registered public surveying company based in Tunisia. Interviews were conducted by telephone.

The sample was selected using the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) method, which ensures that each individual within a country has an equal likelihood of being included in the sample. As a result of this sampling method, the country-level samples used in this survey are representative of the respective populations in terms of gender and educational attainment. The resultant margin of error for each country-level sample is $\pm 5\%$.

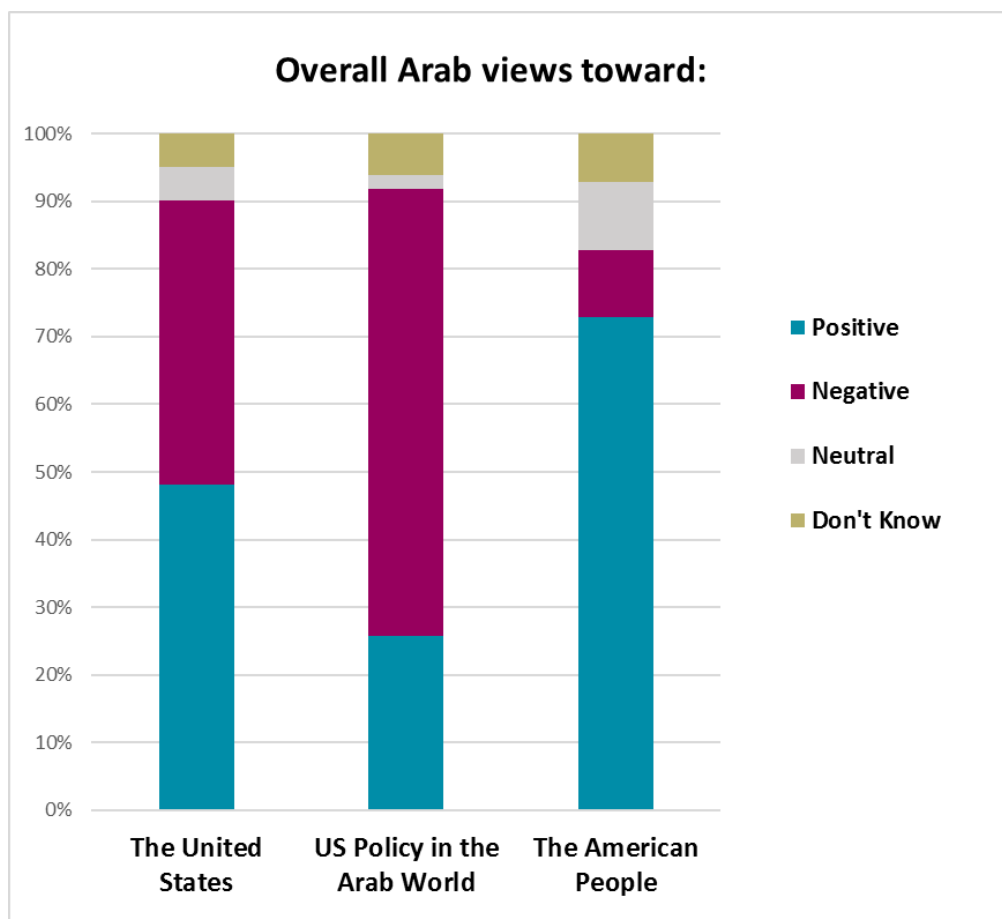
All respondents were 18 years of age or older at the time of the survey. The sample consisted of 51% males and 49% females, with almost half (47%) under the age of 35. A quarter of the sample (23%) are between ages 35 and 44, whereas 16% are between 45 and 54 and 14% above 55.

Below is a summary of the findings of this survey.

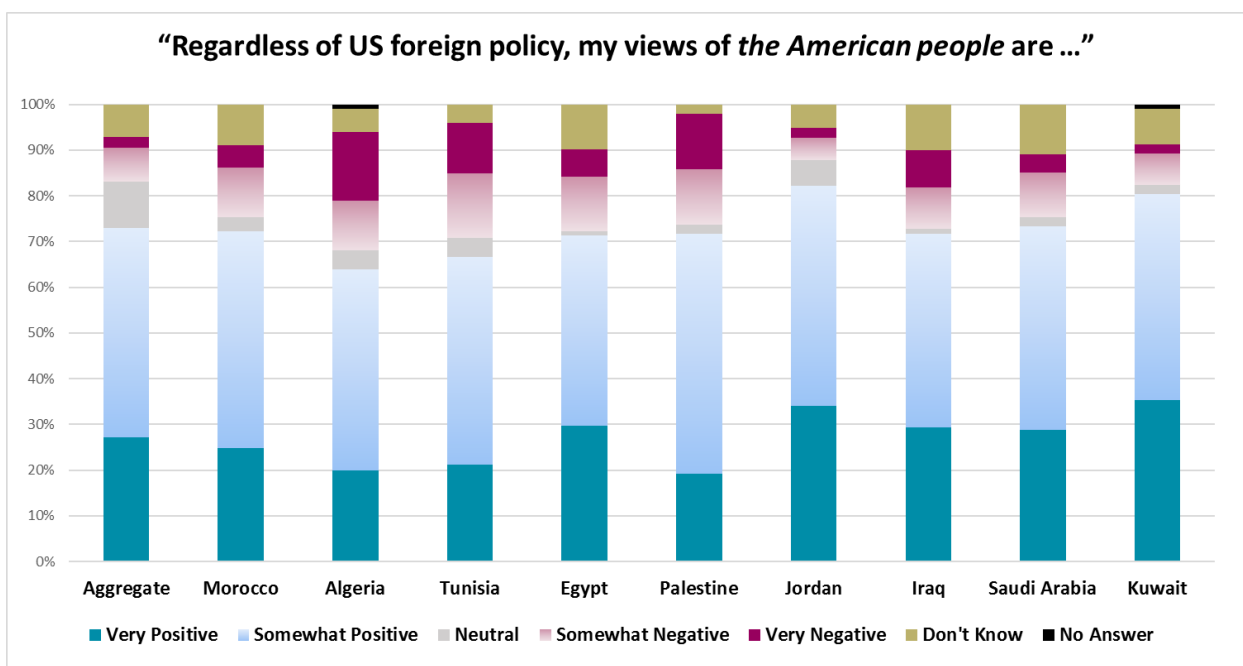
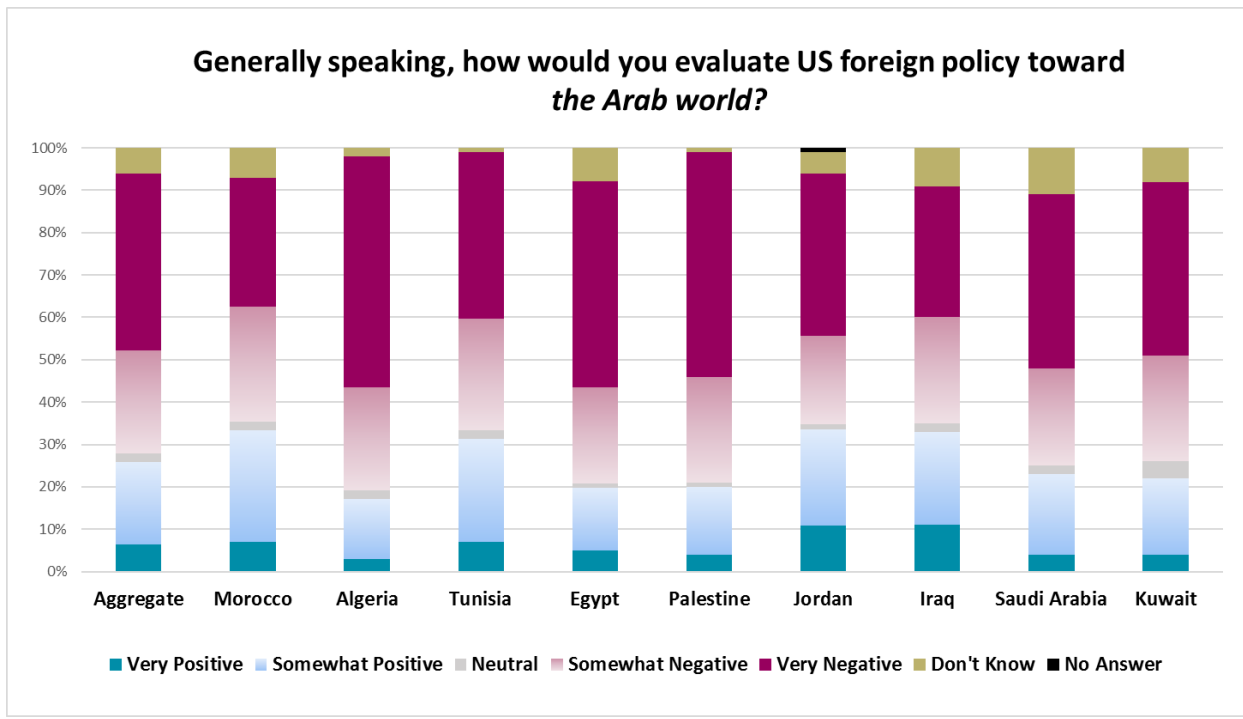
Attitudes toward the United States

When asked about their general views of the United States, almost half of the Arab public expressed positive views. However, consistent with similar public opinion polls, there is a strong Arab distrust in US foreign policy. Overall, 66% of Arabs have a negative or somewhat negative attitude toward US policy in the Arab world, in contrast with 73% who expressed positive overall views of the American people.

The survey shows that anti-American sentiment in the Arab world targets US foreign policies in the region, and not the US as a country or its population.

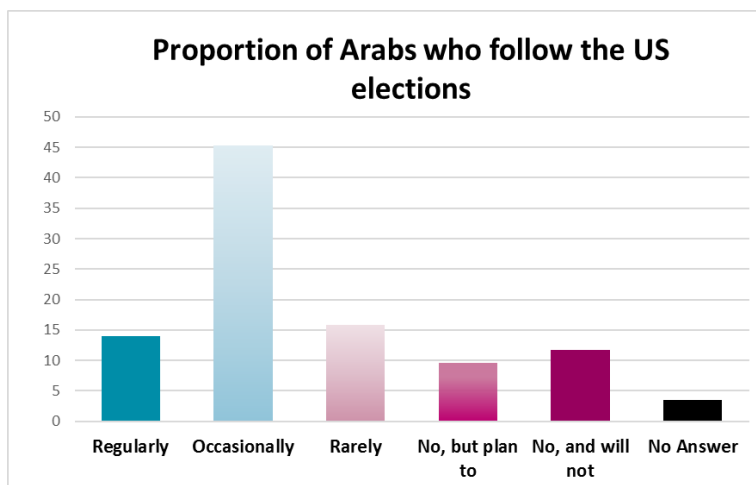


Of the Arab countries surveyed, respondents in Iraq (33%), Morocco (33%), and Tunisia (31%) expressed the most overall positive views of US foreign policy toward the Arab world. Meanwhile, respondents in Algeria and Palestine (78% of each country's sample) expressed the most negative views. Regarding attitudes toward the American people, Kuwaitis and Jordanians hold the most positive views, at 82% within each population.

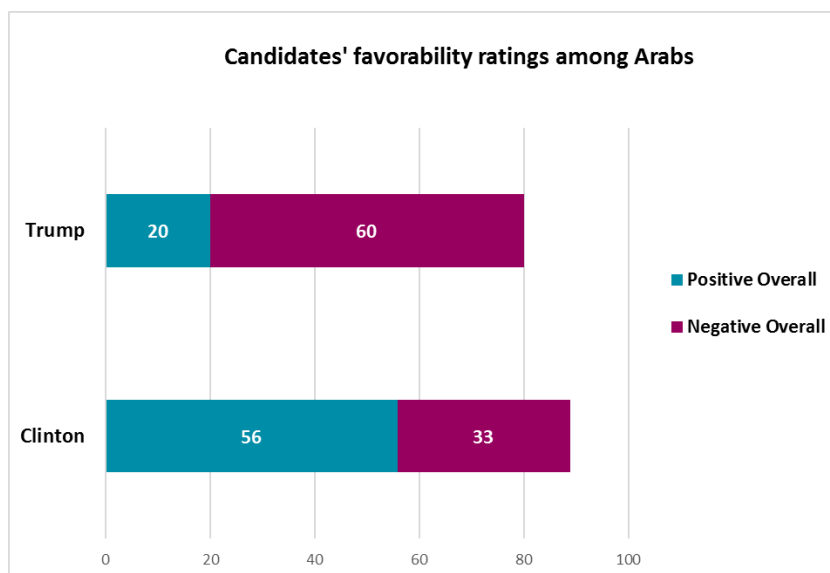


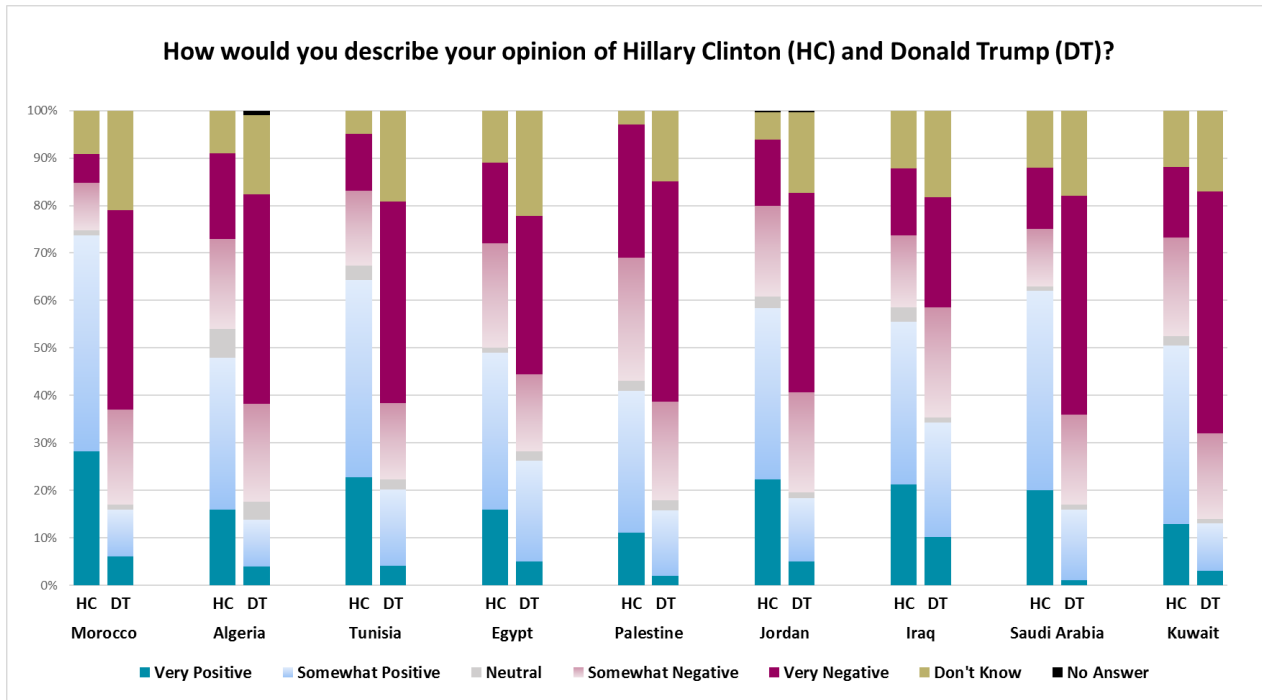
US Presidential Candidates

A significant proportion of Arabs follow news of the US elections. About 60% follow the US presidential race on a regular or occasional basis, the majority of whom keep up with the developments using satellite or cable television (59%) and the Internet (30%).

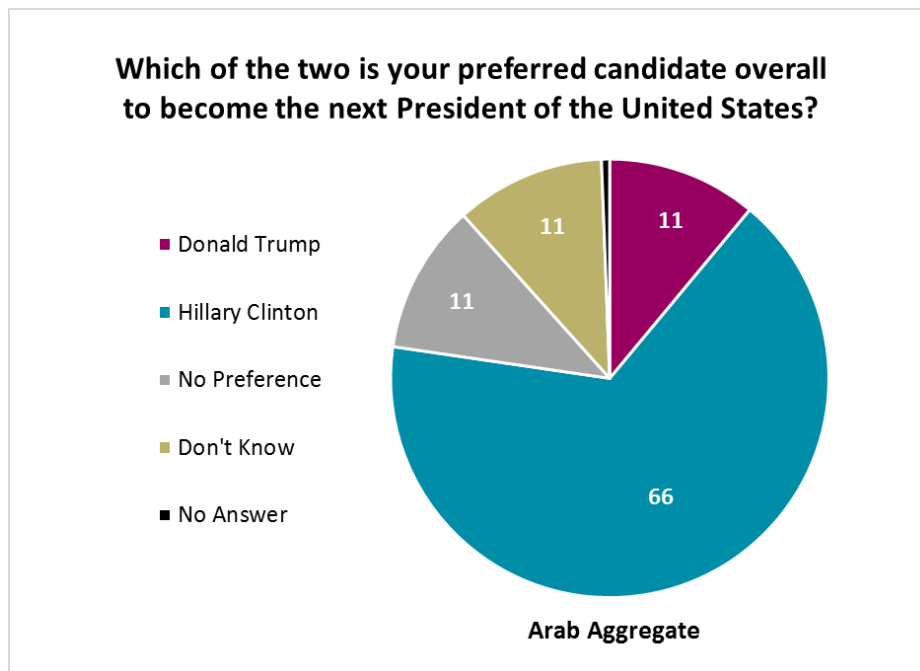


Regarding the candidates, 56% hold positive views of Hillary Clinton overall, with the most positive attitudes among Tunisians (65%) and the most negative views of Clinton held by Palestinians (54%). Donald Trump, on the other hand, garners 60% negative views among the Arab public, with Kuwaitis expressing the most negative views at 69% and Iraqis holding the most overall positive views of Donald Trump at 34%.

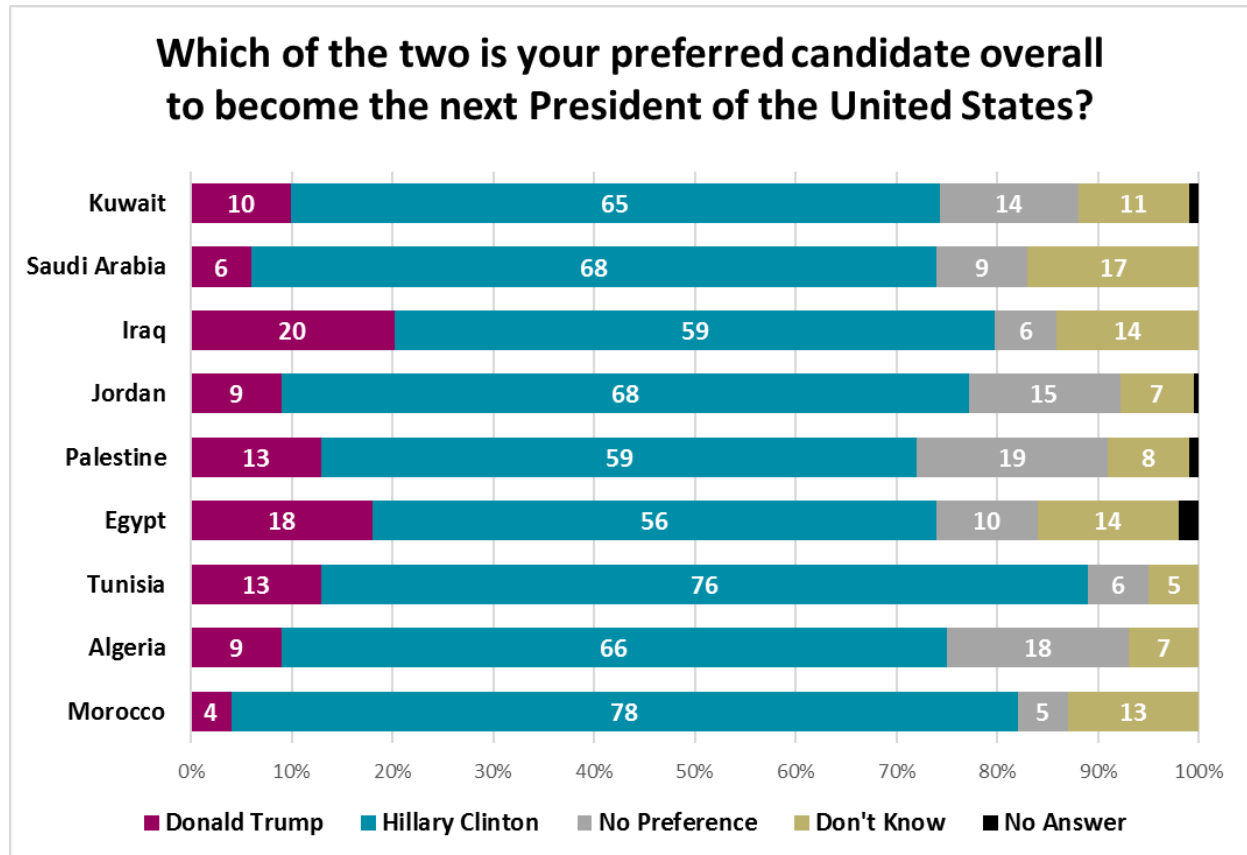




Overall, the Arab public prefers Clinton to become the next US president (66%), while 11% prefer Trump, 11% show no preference, and another 11% said they do not know.

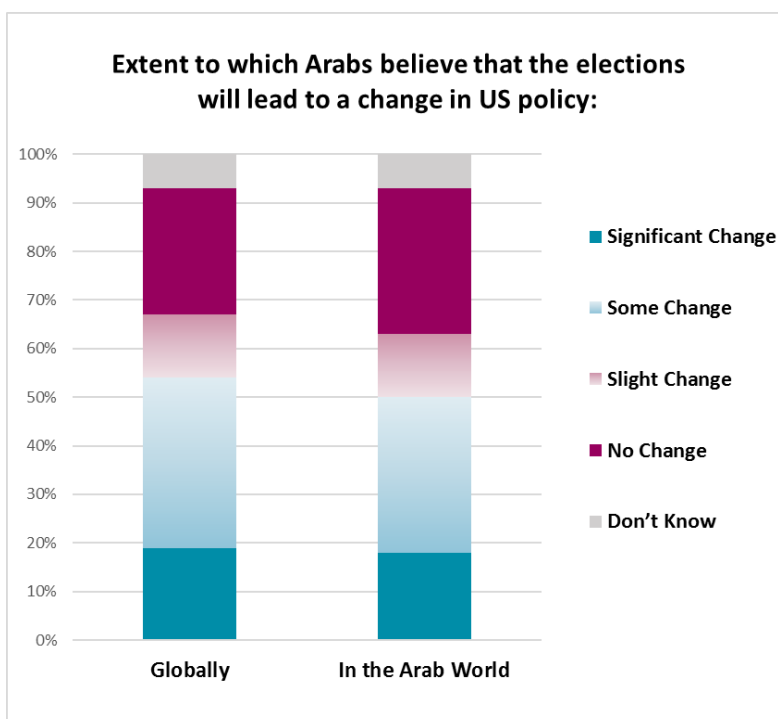


Respondents in Morocco (78%) and Tunisia (76%) strongly preferred Hillary Clinton, in comparison with 56% of Egyptians and 59% of Iraqis and Palestinians.

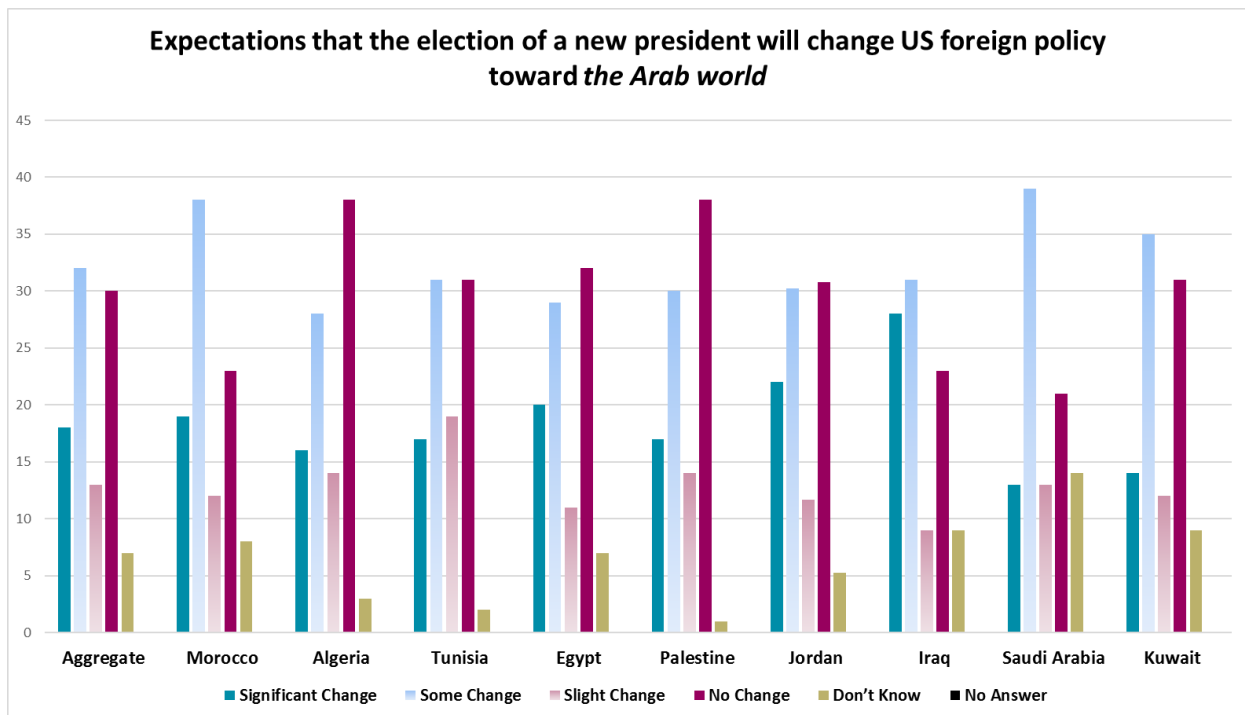


Perceived Impact of Elections on US Foreign Policy

When asked about the impact of elections on US foreign policy, 26% of Arabs do not believe the US presidential elections will change US policy globally. When asked about the impact of the elections on US policy specifically toward the Arab world, the number increases to 30% of Arabs not expecting any change. Overall, the Arab public is split between believing there will be *no change* and believing there will be *some change* to US foreign policy globally (35%) and US foreign policy in the Arab world (32%).

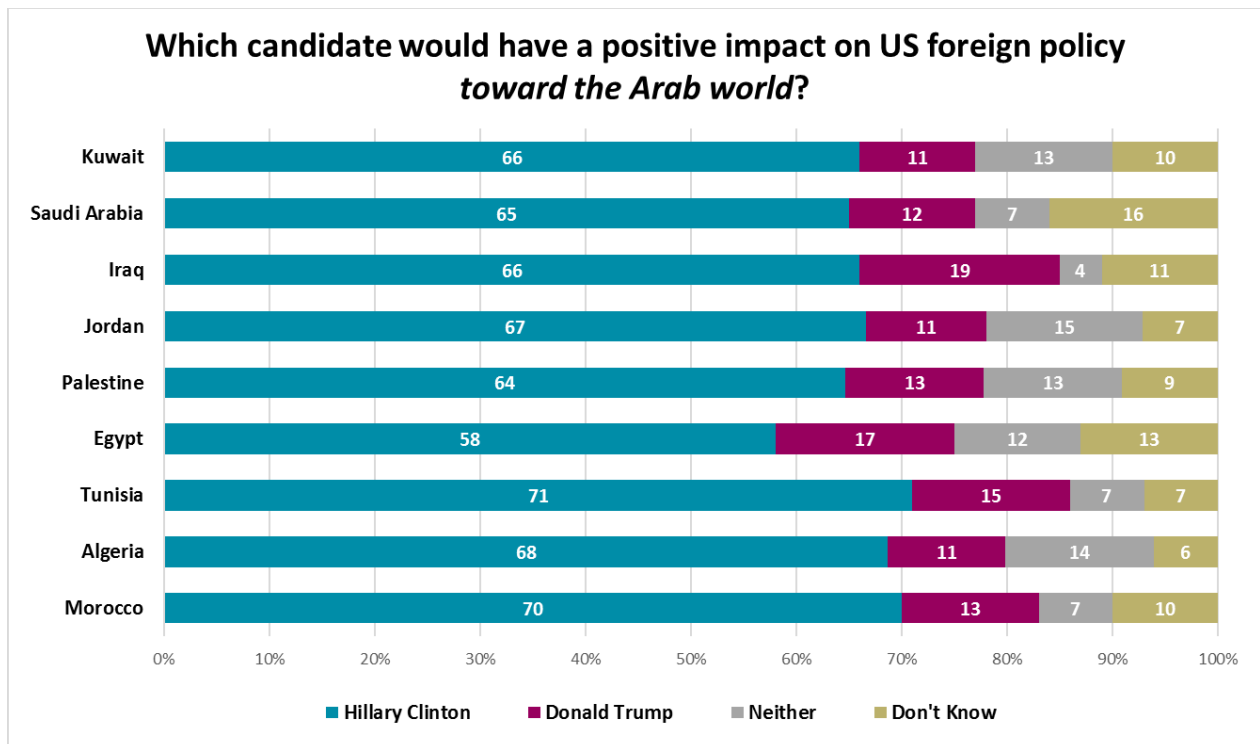
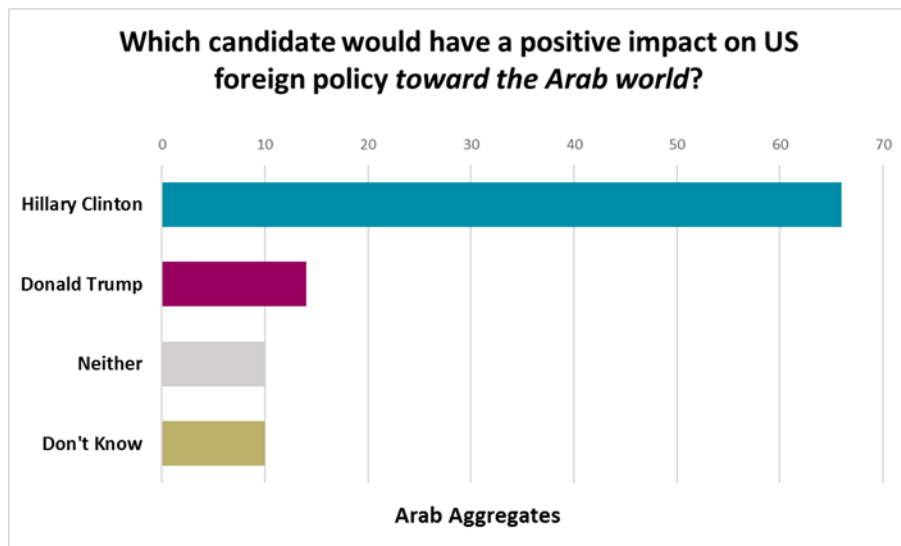


Palestinians and Algerians have the least faith in the influence of the presidential elections on US policy, with 39% of Palestinians and 32% of Algerians believing there will be *no change* to US policy globally. Similarly, 38% of both Palestinians and Algerians surveyed believe the elections have no impact on US foreign policy toward the Arab world in particular. On the other hand, respondents in Iraq believe that the presidential elections will lead to a *significant change* to US foreign policy globally (26%) and to US foreign policy in the Arab world (28%).

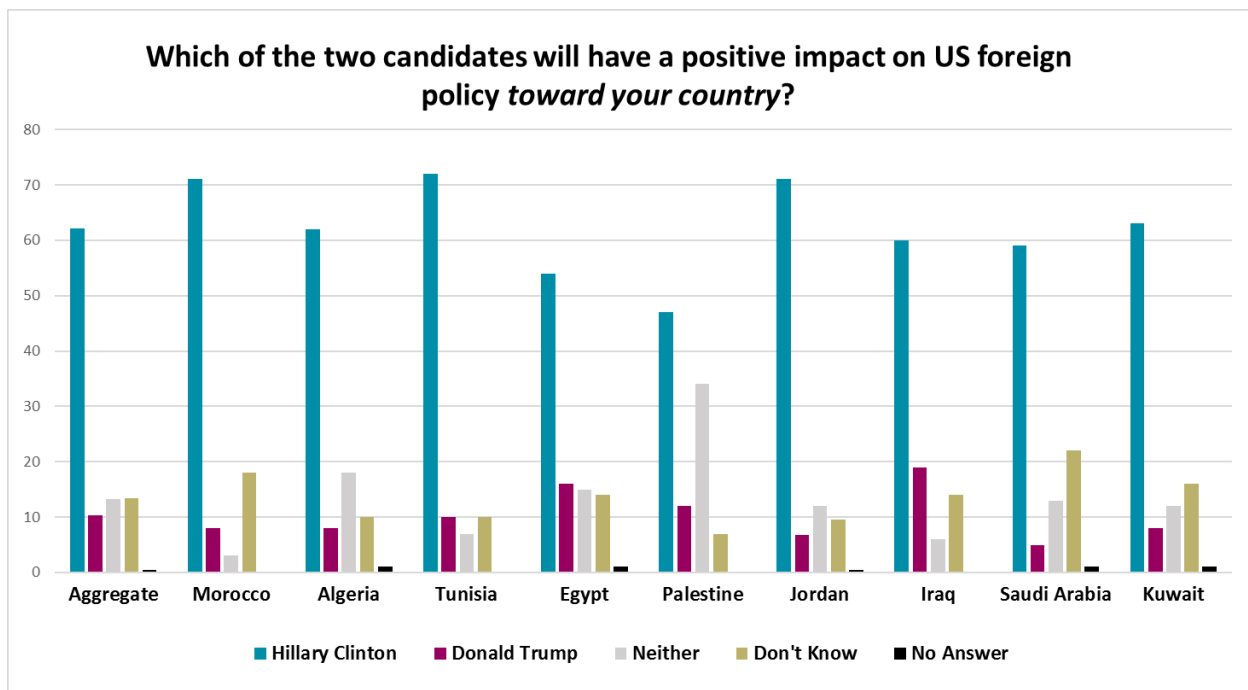


In comparing Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, 70% of Arabs believe that Clinton will have the most positive impact on US foreign policy globally, compared to 13% who believe Trump will have the most positive impact on US foreign policy.

Regarding US policy in the Arab world, although Clinton is still believed to have the most positive impact her numbers decline to 66% (from 70%) when respondents are asked which candidate will have the most positive impact on US policy toward the Arab world. In comparison, a mere 14% believe that Trump will have the most positive impact on US policy in the region.



When asked about the candidate that will have the most positive influence on US policy toward their country in particular, Tunisians expressed the most faith in Hillary Clinton at 72%, while Palestinians expressed the least faith in Clinton with 47% of Palestinians believing a Clinton presidency will have a positive impact on US policy toward Palestine. In addition, 34% of Palestinians believe that neither Trump nor Clinton will have a positive impact on US policy toward their country. In contrast, Iraqi respondents expressed the most faith in Donald Trump, with 19% believing a Trump presidency will have a positive impact on US policy toward Iraq.

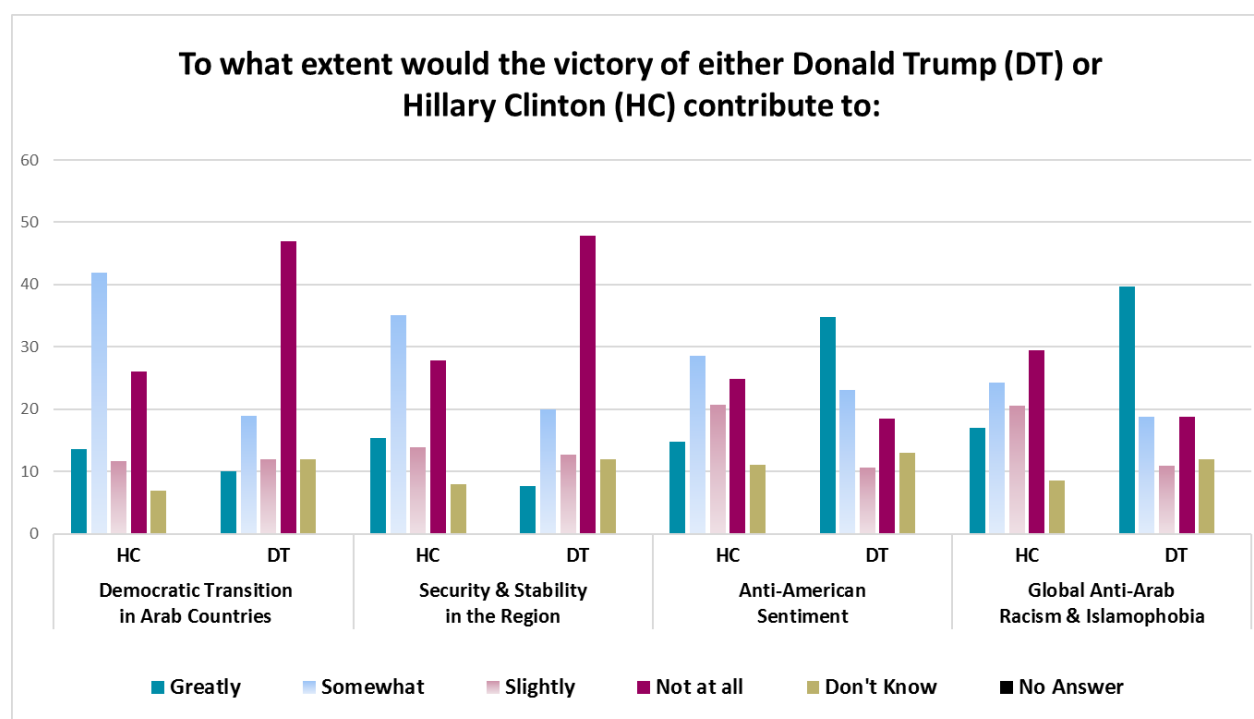


Expectations after the Elections

Following a Clinton presidency or a Trump victory, respondents were asked about their expectations from the next president regarding support for democratic transition in Arab countries, anti-American sentiment, security and stability in the region, and anti-Arab racism and islamophobia. Almost half of the Arab public (43%) believes that a Clinton victory would *somewhat* increase support for democratic transition in Arab countries and an additional 14% believe her presidency would *greatly* contribute. In contrast, 26% believe it would *not at all* and 12% believe that a Clinton presidency would only *slightly* increase support for democratic transition in Arab countries.

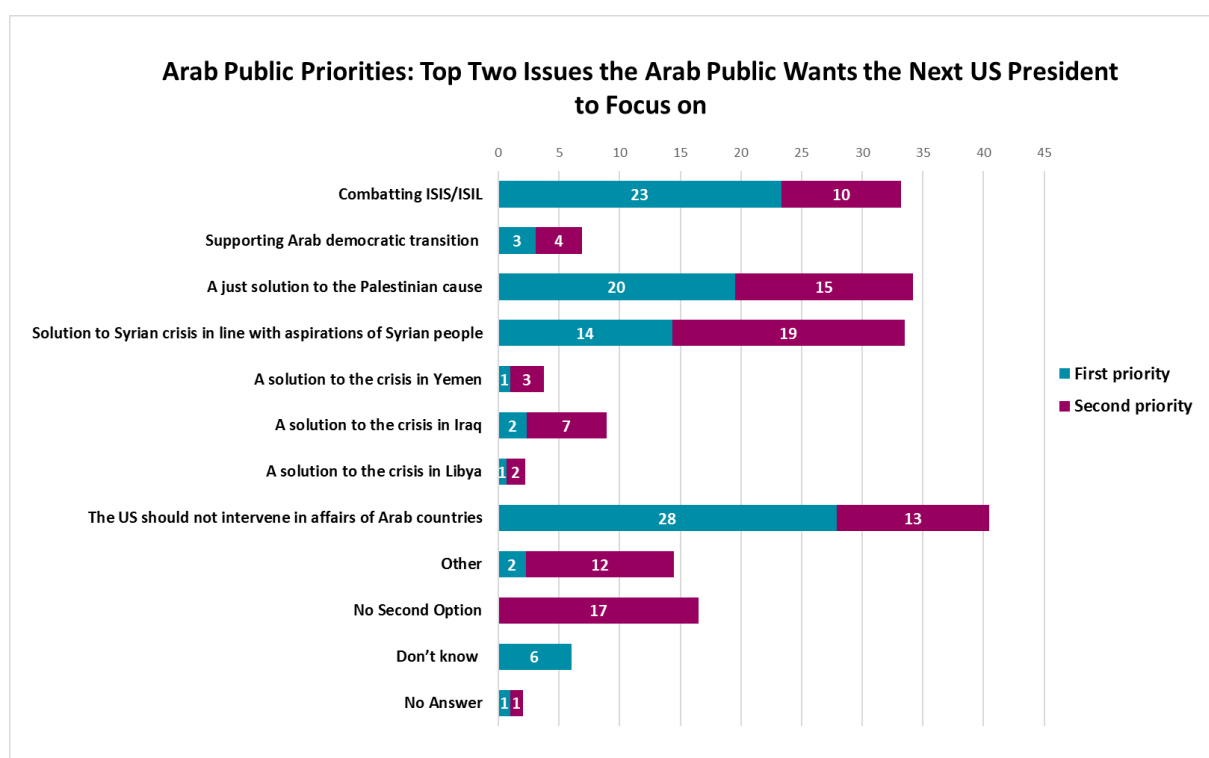
On the other hand, 48% of Arabs believe a Trump presidency would *not at all* contribute to democratic transition, while a large proportion of respondents believe that a Trump victory would *greatly* contribute to increased anti-American sentiment (35%) and to increased anti-Arab racism and islamophobia globally (40%).

A small proportion of Arabs believe that Clinton would contribute *greatly* (15%) or *somewhat* (35%) to increased stability and security in the region, whereas 48% believe that a Trump presidency would *not at all* contribute to stability and security in the Arab world. Iraqi respondents hold the highest positive expectations from a Clinton victory overall, and the least negative expectations from a Trump presidency.



Arab Perspectives on US Middle East Policy

Regarding the top issues that the next US president should focus on, the largest proportion (28%) of respondents believe the US should not intervene in the affairs of Arab countries, while 23% indicated combatting ISIS/ISIL as the top priority that the next US president should focus on. Iraqis (45%) and Tunisians (39%) express combatting ISIS/ISIL as their top priority, while respondents in Palestine (46%), Jordan (30%) and Algeria (23%) believe the Palestinian cause should be a top priority for the next US president. When asked to provide a second priority, Tunisians were the most likely (56%) to believe there was none.



When asked about their opinion regarding the entities most influential in forming US foreign policy, Arab respondents rated the US Congress as the most influential, followed by the US president, and the pro-Israel lobby in third place.

** Correction: An earlier version of this report incorrectly indicated that 24% of Tunisians believe supporting democratic transition should be a top priority for the next president; 4% of Tunisians do.*