

# British views on Arabs

## An opinion poll on attitudes in the UK towards Arab people



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# Rationale

Despite the enormous significance of Arab-British relations, on a domestic and international level, British attitudes towards Arab people have been largely ignored. While attitudes towards other minority groups have frequently been subject to research, there has not been a high profile study on attitudes towards Arabs since a Gallup poll in 1967. Caabu is the leading organization in the UK working on Arab-British relations and is perfectly placed to oversee a new survey.

## **Why a national survey essential**

There has been a substantial British Arab community in the UK since at least the late 19th century. It is estimated that Britain is currently home to over 500,000 Arabs and many British Arabs have taken leading roles in social and cultural life, while every year UK educational institutions welcome thousands of students from the Arab world pursuing their studies at all levels.

The UK also enjoys strong economic ties with the Arab world, with direct investment from the region providing a major revitalising force to the UK economy, while Britain's most successful businesses have benefited from long and fruitful relations with clients and markets across the Middle East and North Africa.

Yet, despite the overwhelming importance of these connections, the concerns of the Arab community remain under-represented. There has never been a British Arab Member of Parliament, in either the House of Commons or the House of Lords. The UK census only recognised 'Arab' as an ethnic category for the first time this year. And biased reporting in the mainstream media continues to be a serious issue.

Since 2001, and with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, there has been a growing awareness of both the alienating and polarising effects that foreign policy decisions and international events can have on British society. Though this has produced some admirable work, particularly regarding the lack of engagements with and discrimination against the UK Muslim community, there has not been a substantial policy or civil society effort regarding British Arab relations. The interests of Arabs in the UK and the challenges they face are too often elided with those of the wider Muslim community. Now, with the Arab Spring providing a vital opportunity to transform the popular image of the Arab world for a whole generation, the need for a national survey is more crucial than ever.

## **About Caabu**

*Since its establishment in 1967, Caabu has taken on a strong political, educational and media role.*

*A cross-party organisation, with Chairs from the main political parties, Caabu works to advance Arab-British relations through its support for international law, human rights and democracy.*

# How the Project Will Work

## Objectives

- To produce an original piece of opinion research in line with the field's best practice
- To utilise our unique data on this vital issue to produce a written report for distribution to relevant opinion formers in the UK
- To achieve media coverage of the poll and its results in at least two UK national English language newspapers and at least two Arabic language newspapers
- To solicit comments on our findings by leading politicians and opinion formers, including at least one relevant UK Minister and one member of the Shadow Cabinet
- To identify critical concerns and construct a programme of work for Caabu to address the critical concerns revealed by this research so that we might focus our efforts for maximum effect in future
- To lobby governmental, educational, media and relevant charitable institutions to address any negative findings in the report
- To contribute to the literature and research on community cohesion, British-Arab relations and the Arab community in the UK
- To organise a major conference on the state of Arab-British relations to highlight the findings of the survey and provide a platform for discussion of the written report.

## Methods

We sent out a brief to several research companies with established reputations in conducting opinion polls. Based on their responses, previous projects and relationship management we decided on Ipsos Mori. They have a strong track record in research with children and young people and are highly skilled in the use of suitable qualitative techniques in designing effective quantitative questionnaires. They have also conducted a similar opinion poll researching British attitudes towards Muslims and have an experienced and dedicated faith, race and cohesion team to conduct the research.

## Quantitative research

This will consist of ten simple pre-coded questions included within one of Ipsos Mori's regular national opinion polls:

- With a sample of 1,000 adults aged 15+ using Ipsos Mori's weekly face-to-face omnibus survey
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- With 470 children aged 8-14 via Ipsos Mori's monthly survey of 1000 children (aged 5-19), selecting the age groups we want to include.

# Key outcomes

## Qualitative research

It is essential to put children and young people at their ease in order to conduct effective qualitative research. Ipsos Mori have found that conducting friendship groups of around 4-6 young people in the same year group works really well when conducting research in schools, as respondents are already familiar and comfortable with one another.

We will select a wide range of schools in order to ensure we include children and young people from a range of geographies and backgrounds. Given the indicative budget of £17,000 for the qualitative component of the research Ipsos Mori recommend conducting twelve friendship groups across five-six secondary schools, conducting 1-3 friendship groups with students in different year groups in each school.

A full discussion guide will be developed in conjunction with Ipsos Mori to guide the groups while also providing a flexible space to explore any fresh avenues of interest raised by respondents.

## The Conference

Caabu will organise a one-day conference for 150 people at a central London location as a launch event for the survey and the written report. We will invite a range of participants including civil servants, foreign office officials, journalists and academics. The conference will provide a crucial platform to discuss the issues raised by the survey and recommendations on how to improve Arab-British relations.

## Key outcomes

- A vital piece of research to promote better relations between Britain and the Arab world
- Identification of the concerns and situation of the British Arab community in the UK
- The production of an informative report that will contribute towards community cohesion by highlighting any negative findings and making recommendations
- A major conference discussing the state of Arab-British relations

# Costs

| Project  | Item         | Unit         | Cost per Unit | Quantity | Total          |
|--|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| National survey  | Survey       | 10 Questions | 18,000        | 1        | 18,000*        |
| National survey  | Focus groups | 4            | 17,000        | 1        | 17,000         |
| National survey  | VAT          |              |               |          | 6,125          |
| Subtotal   |              |              |               |          | 41,125         |
| Writing and consultation on questions and content of focus groups                            |              |              |               |          | 520**          |
| Attending focus groups   | day          |              | 192           | 4        | 768            |
| Subtotal   |              |              |               |          | 1,288          |
| Writing report   |              |              |               |          | 260***         |
| Printing report  | quote        |              | 560           | 1        | 560            |
| Set-up   | quote        |              | 300           | 1        | 300            |
| Fold switch and trim   | quote        |              | 100           | 1        | 100            |
| Subtotal plus VAT  | quote        |              | 1128          | 1        | 1,220          |
| Conference   | Venue hire   |              | 77            | 150      | 11,550         |
| Conference administration including speaker arrangements, follow-up and report on conference | days         |              | 240           | 9        | 2,160****      |
| Subtotal   |              |              |               |          | 13,710         |
| <b>Total</b>   |              |              |               |          | <b>£57,343</b> |

\*This cost includes a booster of the lowest age range and a summary report

\*\* 8 hours of Director's time and 8 hours of Head of Education's time

\*\*\* 4 hours of Director's time and 4 hours of Head of Education's time

\*\*\*\* includes staff time for 4 members of staff

Staff costs include: national insurance, management and administration costs, capital depreciation costs and general organisational running costs. It is calculated on an hourly basis per staff member