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## **Six Arab Nation Survey Report**

Submitted to:  
The World Economic Forum's  
Arab Business Council

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## I. Methodology

Zogby International conducted face to face interviews in six Arab states during the month of October, 2005. Breakdown of number of respondents and margin of error for each nation is as follows:

**Egypt:** 800 respondents, margin of error +/-3.5 percentage points

**Jordan:** 500 respondents, margin of error +/-4.5 percentage points

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:** 800 respondents, margin of error +/-3.5 percentage points

**Lebanon:** 500 respondents, margin of error +/-4.5 percentage points

**Morocco:** 800 respondents, margin of error +/-3.5 percentage points

**United Arab Emirates:** 217 respondents, margin of error +/-6.8 percentage points

Zogby International conducted surveys on the following dates: Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, 15-21 October 2005; Morocco, 15-22 October 2005; Jordan, 15-23 October 2005; UAE and Egypt, 18-24 October 2005.

## II. Executive Summary

The poll by Zogby International asked citizens in six Arab countries across the Middle East for their views on education, business and the importance of Shari'a law.

In the countries where the poll took place, (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), a majority of citizens said Shari'a law should be applied to businesses, although they agreed that further interpretation is needed to allow businesses in the Muslim world to integrate into the global economy.

Citizens in different Muslim nations also differed substantially on whether they would trust a popularly elected Islamic government to abide by the rules of a democracy. Asked whether they would trust an elected Islamic government to follow these rules, 72% of Saudis and 70% of those in the UAE said yes, while just 36% of those in Lebanon agreed. Christians in Lebanon were most skeptical – just one in five said they believe an Islamic government would abide by the laws of a democracy.

The survey also found a striking split between various Arab states on the quality of the education systems in their home countries, with Egyptians the least confident their nation's education system is preparing young people for success, and with Saudis and Emiratis the most confident.

Egyptians are particularly skeptical that their education system is working. Just 15% said they believe the current system there prepares young people for successful careers in today's global economy. Saudis and residents of the UAE were most optimistic, but still not thrilled with their education systems; 56% of both Saudis and UAE residents believe their systems are working properly.

A majority of respondents in most nations, except Lebanon and Jordan, called for applying Islamic Shari'a law to business operations. In Lebanon, the majority overwhelmingly rejected this view while, in Jordan, it was the position of a plurality.

Majorities or pluralities in every nation also expressed the opinion that Shari'a law requires further interpretation to allow businesses in the Muslim world to integrate into the global economy. This was a majority view in most states, while a 40% plurality of Egyptians and a 43% plurality of Jordanians also favoured further interpretation of Shari'a.

The survey also found evidence that Lebanon, with its large Christian population, is a significant outlier on all questions—but that the Muslim population of Lebanon was closely aligned in viewpoint with fellow Muslims in Jordan and Morocco on numerous questions.

### III. Narrative Analysis

*Do you believe that religion has too much, too little, or the right amount of influence over what children are taught in schools to prepare them for the future?*

	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon			Morocco	Saudi Arabia	UAE		
			Overall	Muslim	Christian			Overall	Emirati	Arab Non-Emirati
Too much	21	27	27	27	26	30	27	54	53	55
Too little	55	33	50	46	56	38	24	31	34	28
About the right amount	17	29	15	17	12	26	45	13	13	14
Not sure	8	11	9	11	6	6	3	2	1	3

Citizens of Arab states have very different outlooks on the influence of religion on education in their states. In two states—Egypt and Lebanon—majorities believe religion holds too little sway on education and preparing youth for the future (although in Lebanon, this is only a majority viewpoint among the Christian portion of the population). This stands in marked contrast to the United Arab Emirates, where a 54% majority believes religion is too powerful an influence.

Religion’s role in education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, is viewed by a significant plurality of respondents—45%—which is much higher than the next most content grouping, in Jordan (29%).

*Do you believe that the current education system prepares young people for successful careers in today's economy?*

	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon			Morocco	Saudi Arabia	UAE		
			Overall	Muslim	Christian			Overall	Emirati	Arab Non-Emirati
Yes	15	33	39	37	42	26	56	56	59	54
No	80	47	54	57	47	61	35	41	37	44
Not sure	5	20	7	6	10	13	10	3	5	2

Few questions produced as disparate a result as this one. Respondents are split significantly by nation as to the quality of their country's education system—four-out-of-five (80%) Egyptians polled say the national education system is not adequately preparing youths for success in today's global economy, while three-fifths (61%) of Moroccan respondents say the same.

Lebanese and Jordanian respondents are closer to each other, with roughly half of both groups describing their states' education system as adequate (47% of Jordanians and 54% of Lebanese). Meanwhile, Saudis and citizens of the UAE have a more positive outlook on their nations' school systems, with majorities of both groups saying their education systems adequately prepares youths in their states.

*Should business operations be governed by Shari'a Law?*

	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon			Morocco	Saudi Arabia	UAE		
			Overall	Muslim	Christian			Overall	Emirati	Arab Non-Emirati
Yes	50	39	19	27	3	58	82	69	74	64
No	30	32	67	60	79	29	14	22	22	22
Not sure	20	29	15	13	18	13	4	9	4	14

Of those countries polled, four clearly demonstrate a desire to see Islamic Shari'a Law applied to business operations, while Lebanon rejects that view and Jordan sends a mixed message.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, more than four-fifths (82%) of respondents favor the application of the Muslim law to businesses. This view is almost as intense in the United Arab Emirates, where seven-in-ten (69%) hold this outlook.

Moroccans and Egyptians are less intensely favorable to the application of Shari'a, with 58% of the former and half (50%) of the latter supporting application.

Shari'a's application is viewed in less favorable terms in Jordan—where a 39% plurality favors imposing the law, but three-tenths (29%) of respondents are not sure—while in Lebanon, majorities of both the Muslim and Christian populations soundly reject applying Shari'a.

*Does Shari'a Law require further interpretation to allow businesses in the Muslim world to integrate into the global economy?*

	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon			Morocco	Saudi Arabia	UAE		
			Overall	Muslim	Christian			Overall	Emirati	Arab Non-Emirati
Yes	40	43	53	63	35	60	54	78	82	74
No	32	23	17	17	18	25	34	14	9	17
Not sure	29	34	30	20	47	15	12	9	9	9

Despite the strong support for applying Shari'a to business operations found in the previous question, there is considerable support for further interpretation of Shari'a to allow businesses in the Muslim world to integrate into the global economy.

This is a majority view in four of the countries polled and the view of a plurality in two states. Emirati and non-Emirati Arabs in the UAE are extremely lopsided in their views on this question; overall, 78% in the UAE hold the view that Shari'a requires further interpretation. This is the view of three-fifths of Moroccans as well.

In Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, small majorities hold this view—but much smaller percentages reject it. In the case of Lebanon, 53% favor further interpreting Shari'a—although this is largely a view of the Muslim community, where 63% hold this view—a percentage similar to Morocco's overall numbers. Lebanese Christians, meanwhile, are agnostic on the question, with a 47% majority suggesting they are not sure on the matter.

In Egypt and Jordan, meanwhile, two-fifths favor further interpretation, while fewer oppose it.

*Would you be likely to trust a popularly elected Islamic government to abide by the rules of a democracy?*

	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon			Morocco	Saudi Arabia	UAE		
			Overall	Muslim	Christian			Overall	Emirati	Arab Non-Emirati
Yes	44	39	36	44	20	46	72	70	75	65
No	34	33	48	39	65	36	14	19	14	23
Not sure	22	28	16	17	15	19	15	12	11	13

Pluralities or majorities in all predominantly-Muslim states believe a popularly-elected Islamic government would abide the rules of democracy, while Lebanon, with its significant number of Christians, is skeptical on this count.

Saudis and residents of the UAE hold the most optimistic outlook, with seven-in-ten respondents in both states (72% in the Kingdom; 70% in the UAE) willing to trust a popularly elected Islamic government.

This viewpoint gets a more lukewarm reception in Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan, where pluralities ranging from 39% to 46% believe a popularly elected Islamic government could be trusted to play by democratic rules. Only in Lebanon is this a minority viewpoint, although the majority Muslim population mirrors Egyptian and Moroccan views on the matter. However, strong doubts from the Christian community produce a losing percentage overall.