

# Measuring the State of Muslim-West Relations



Assessing the “New Beginning”

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# The “New Beginning”



President Obama  
receives a standing  
ovation in Cairo,  
June 2009

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# Overview

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- Change in Muslim-West Relations Since 2008
- Nature of Tension
- Engagement Readiness
- Recommendations for Policymakers

# Key Findings

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- Greatest improvement in opinion of U.S. among Muslims found in **MENA**, but was not sustained
- Muslim-West tensions seen as mostly **avoidable**, especially by those who view them as **political vs. religious**
- **Muslim religious practice** and satisfaction with **own leaders** associated with greater **readiness for engagement**
- “Respect” includes perceptions of **fairness in policies**

# Representation



From March 2008 to May 2010  
Gallup conducted **115,157**  
interviews across  
**55 countries** or areas,  
representing the views of more  
than **1.5 billion people.**

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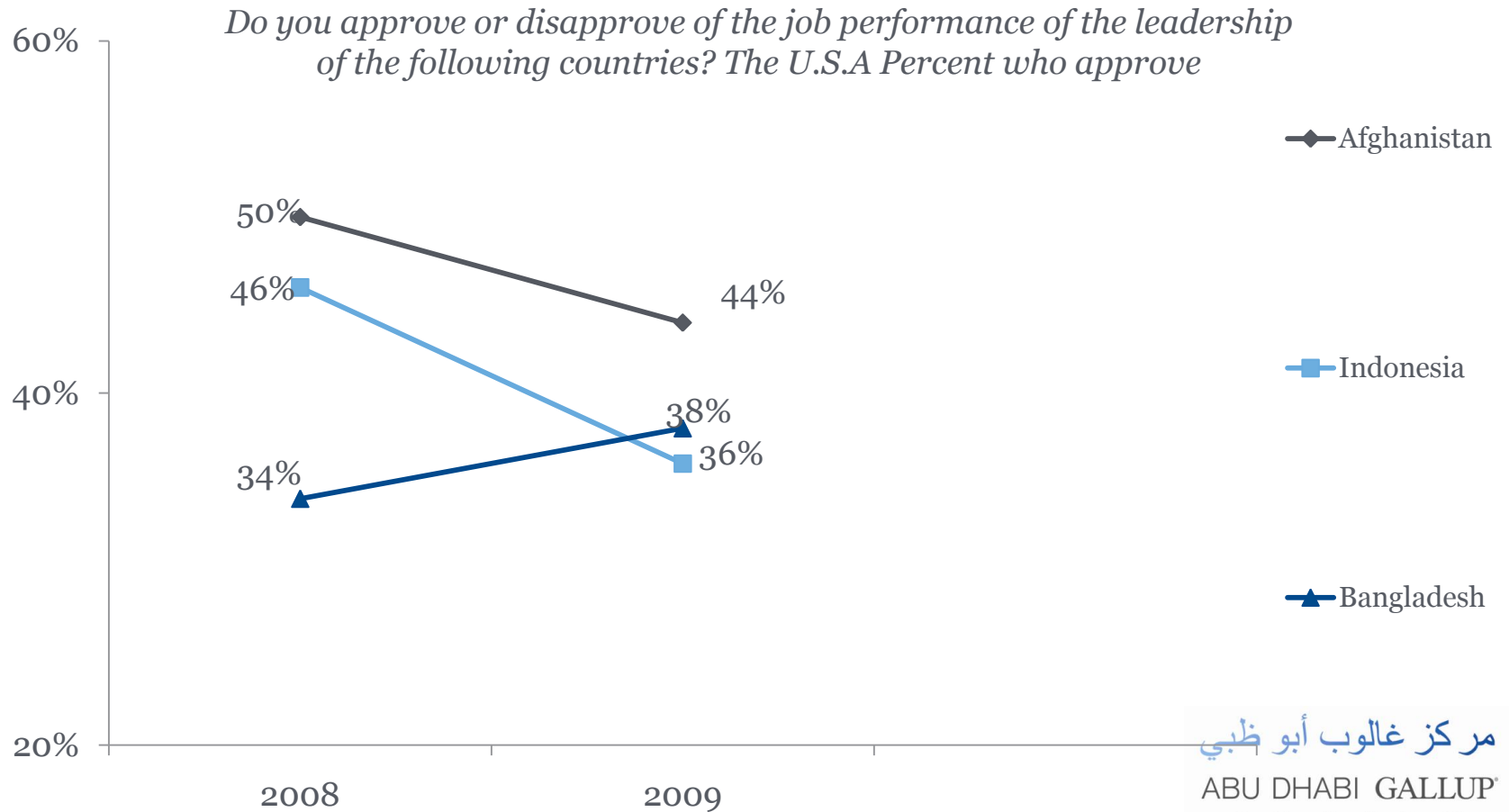
# Change Since President Obama Took Office

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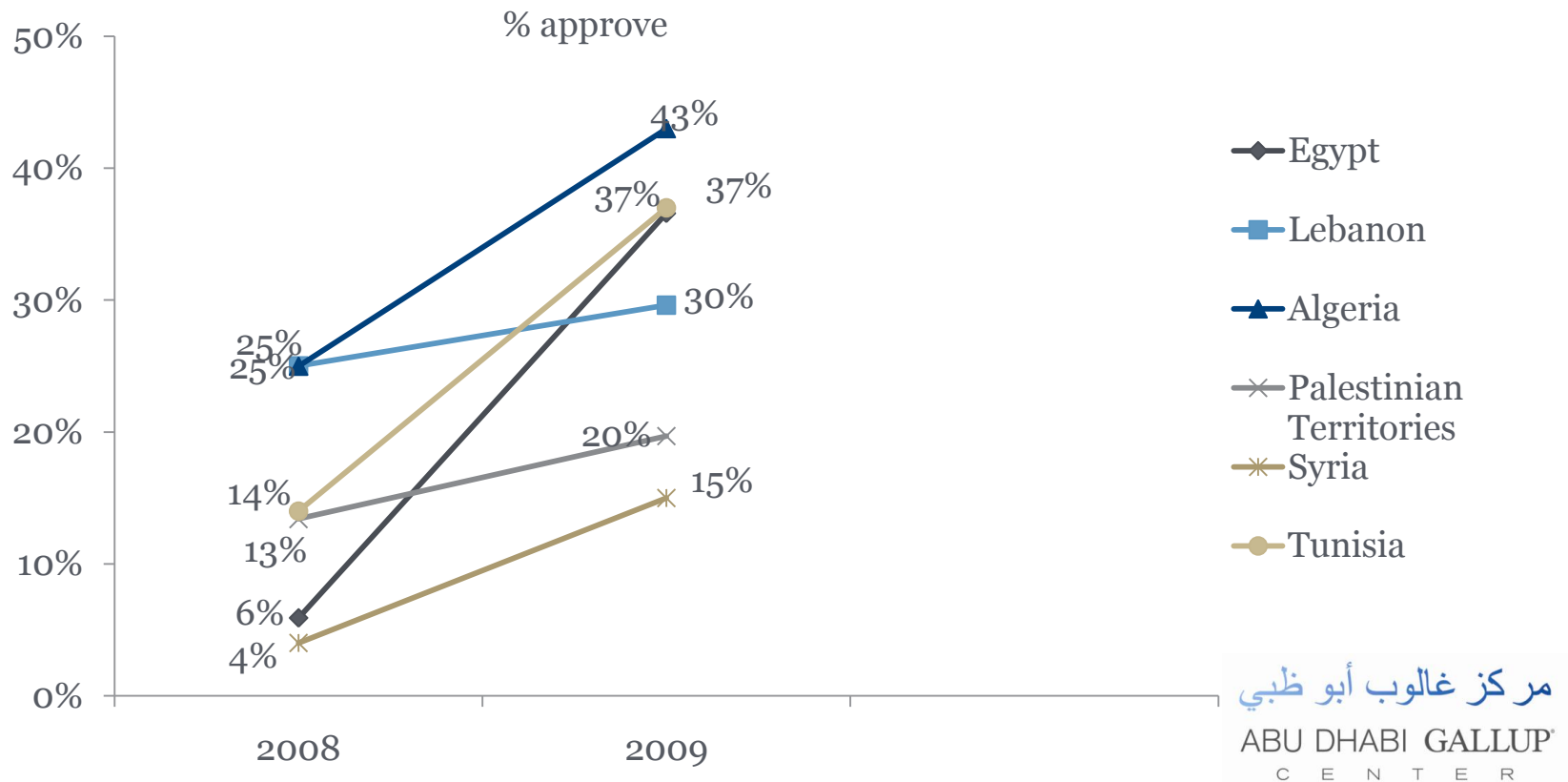
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# Asian Attitudes Toward U.S. Leadership Stable



# Approval of U.S. Leadership Down in MENA in 2010

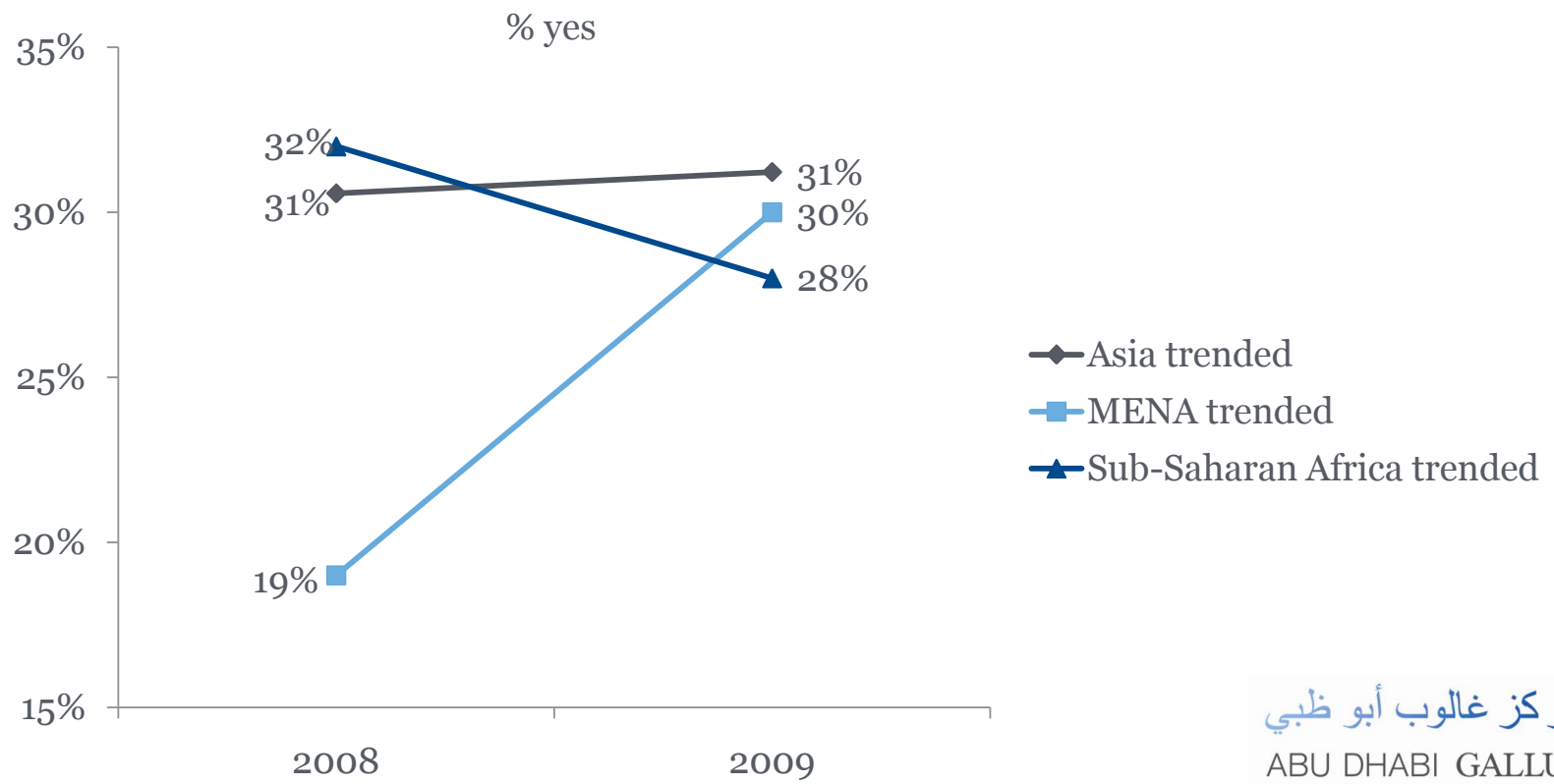
*Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the following countries? The U.S.A.*





# Greatest Improvement in Perceptions of Muslim-West Relations in MENA

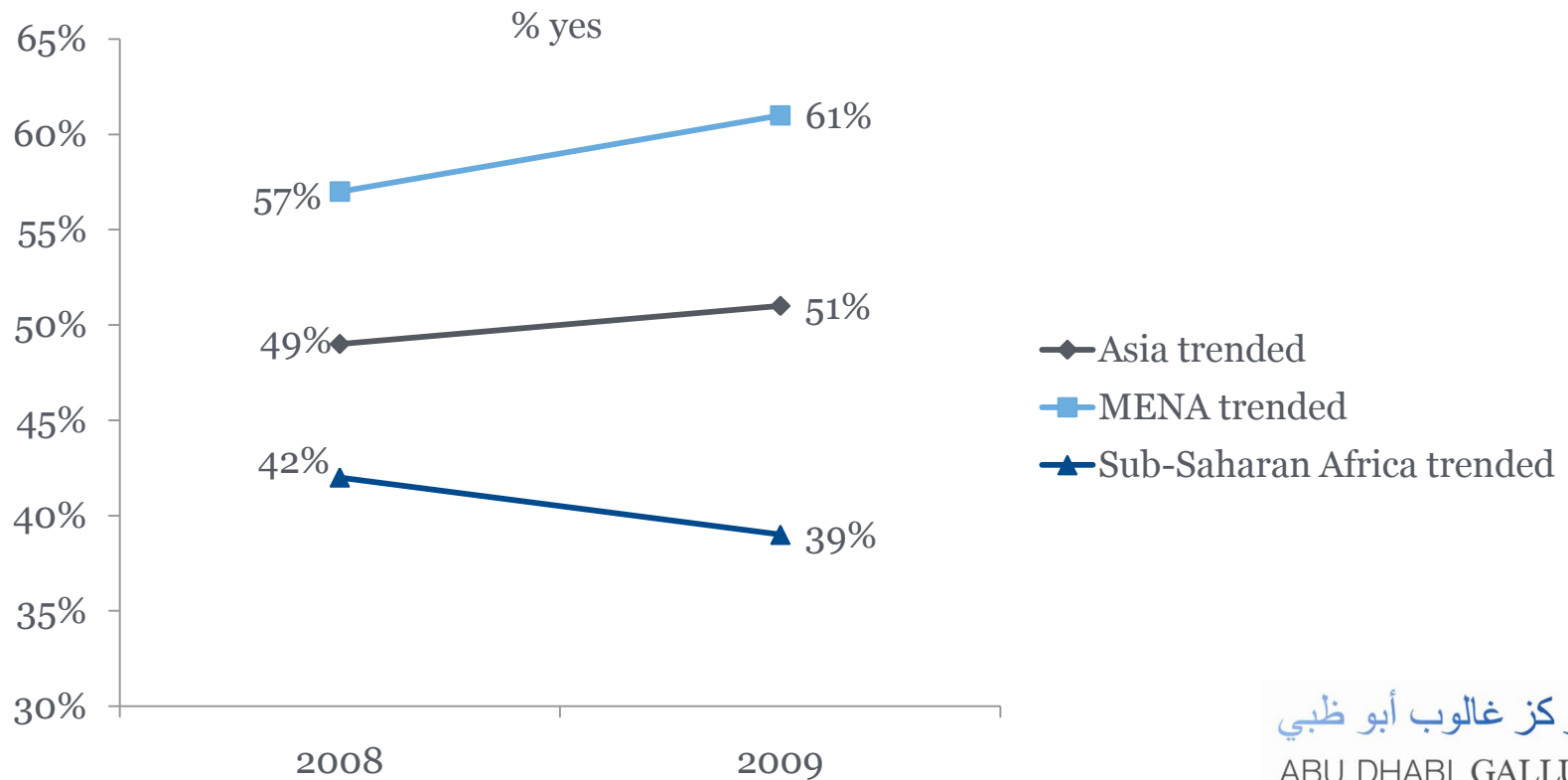
*Do you think the Muslim world and the Western world are **getting along** well with each other today?*



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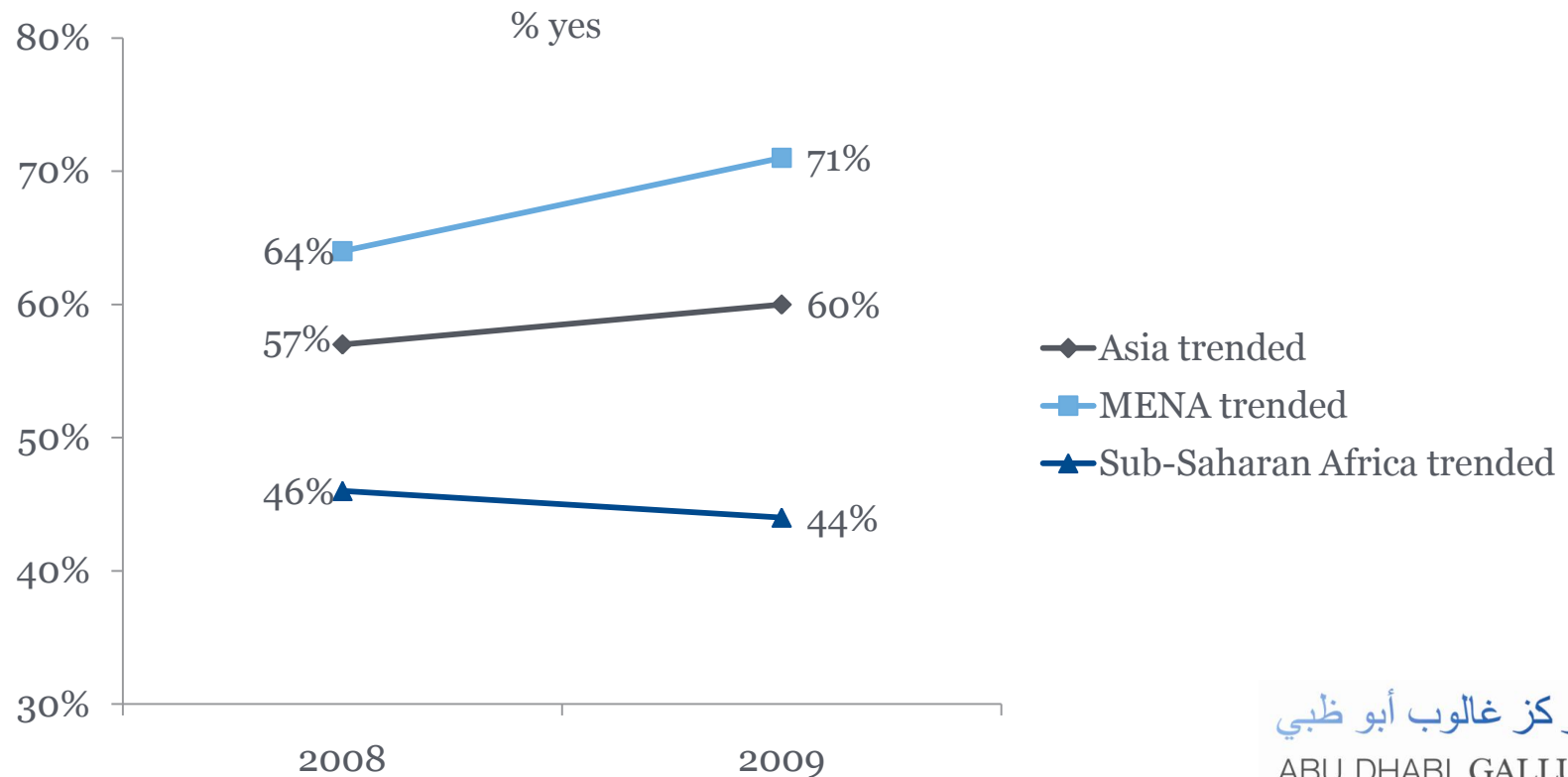
# MENA Most Likely to Believe Muslim World Is Committed

Do you think the **Muslim world** is **committed** to improving the interaction between the Muslim and Western worlds?



# Perception of Muslim Respect for West Consistent

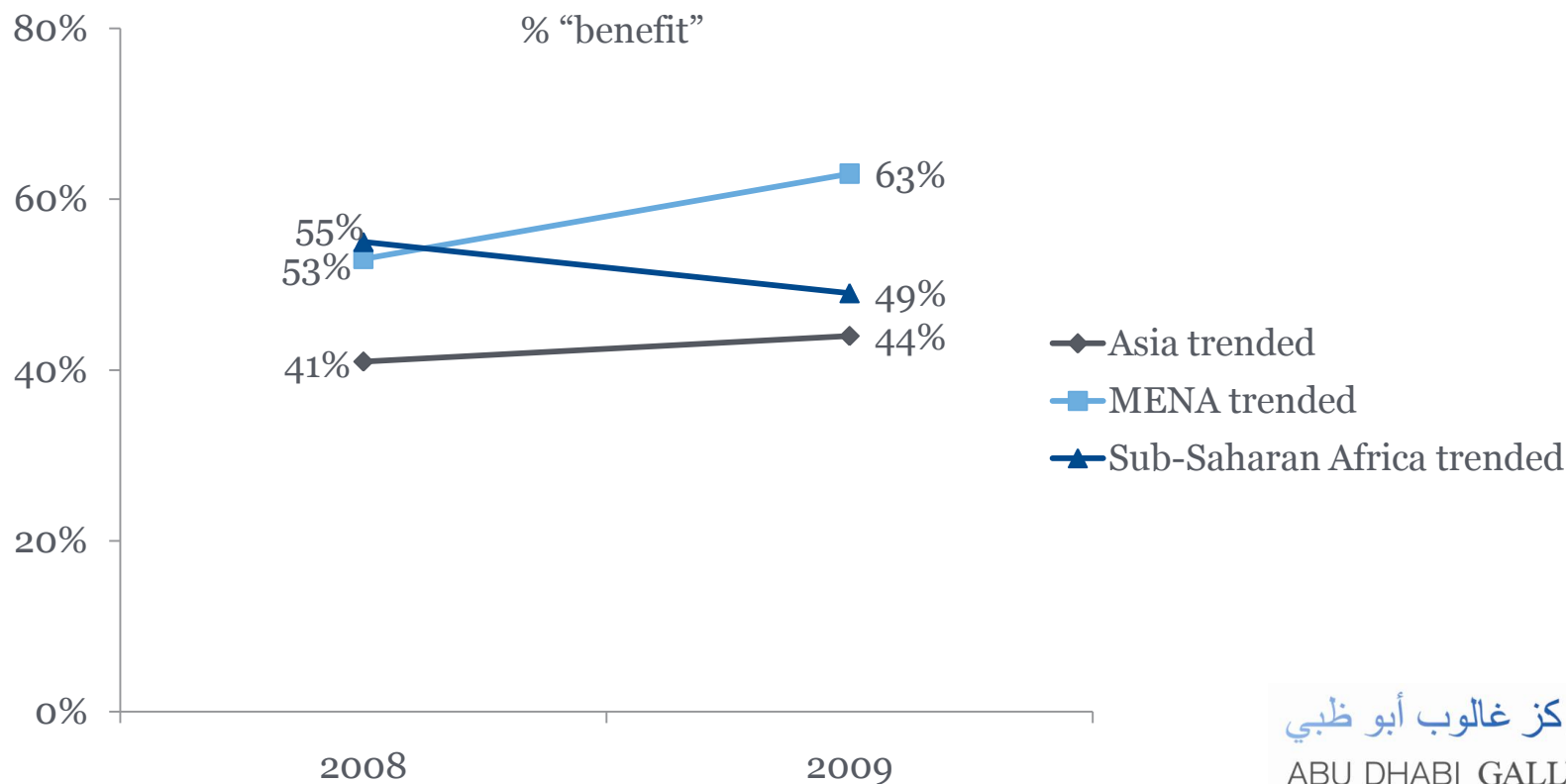
*Do you believe that the Muslim world respects the Western world?*



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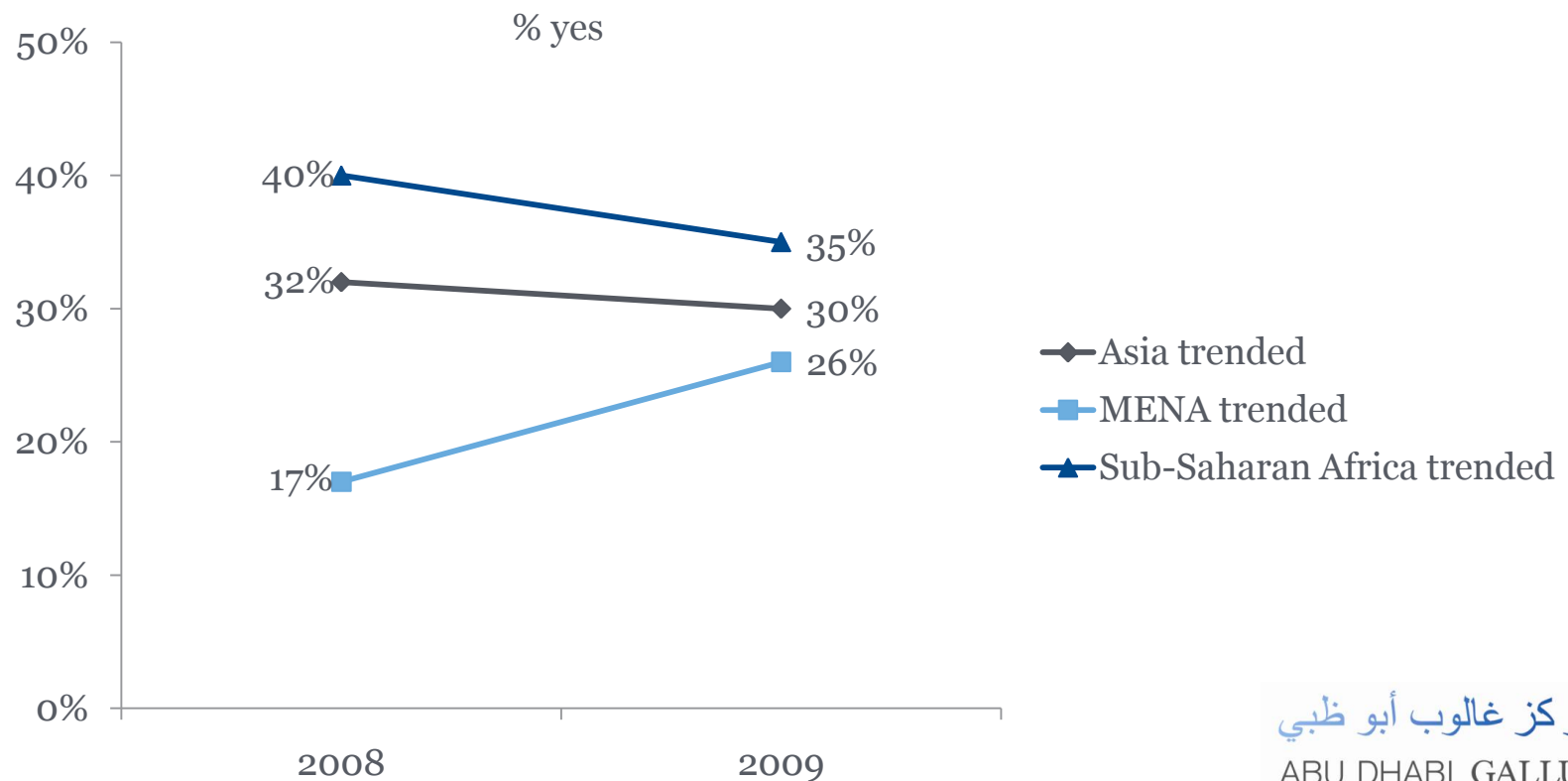
# More Believe Greater Interaction Is a Benefit

Which comes closer to your point of view? Greater **interaction** between Muslim and Western worlds is **a threat** or Greater interaction between Muslim and Western worlds is **a benefit**?



# Perception of Western Respect for Muslim World Low but Rising in MENA

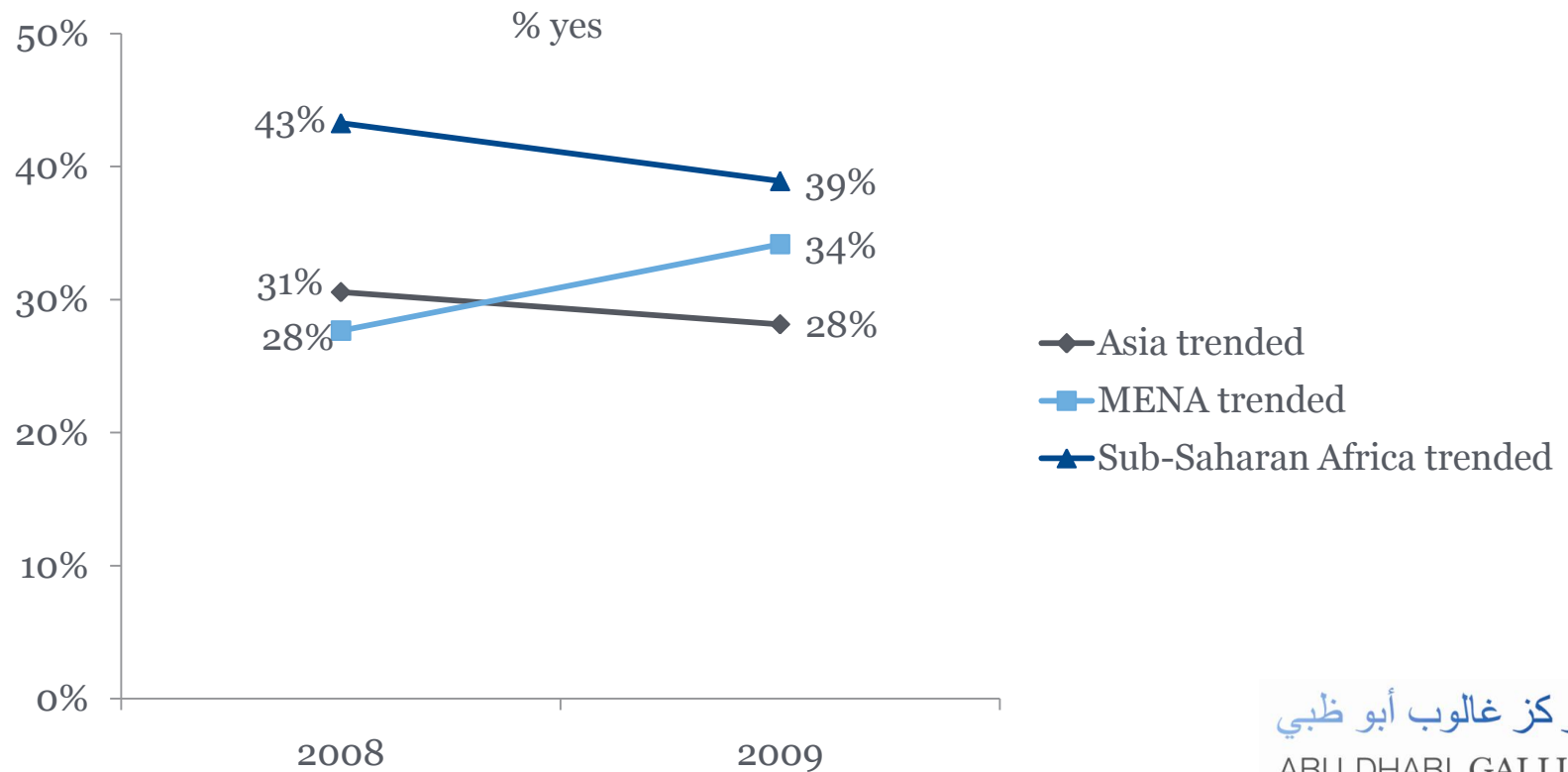
Do you believe that the **Western world respects** Muslim world?



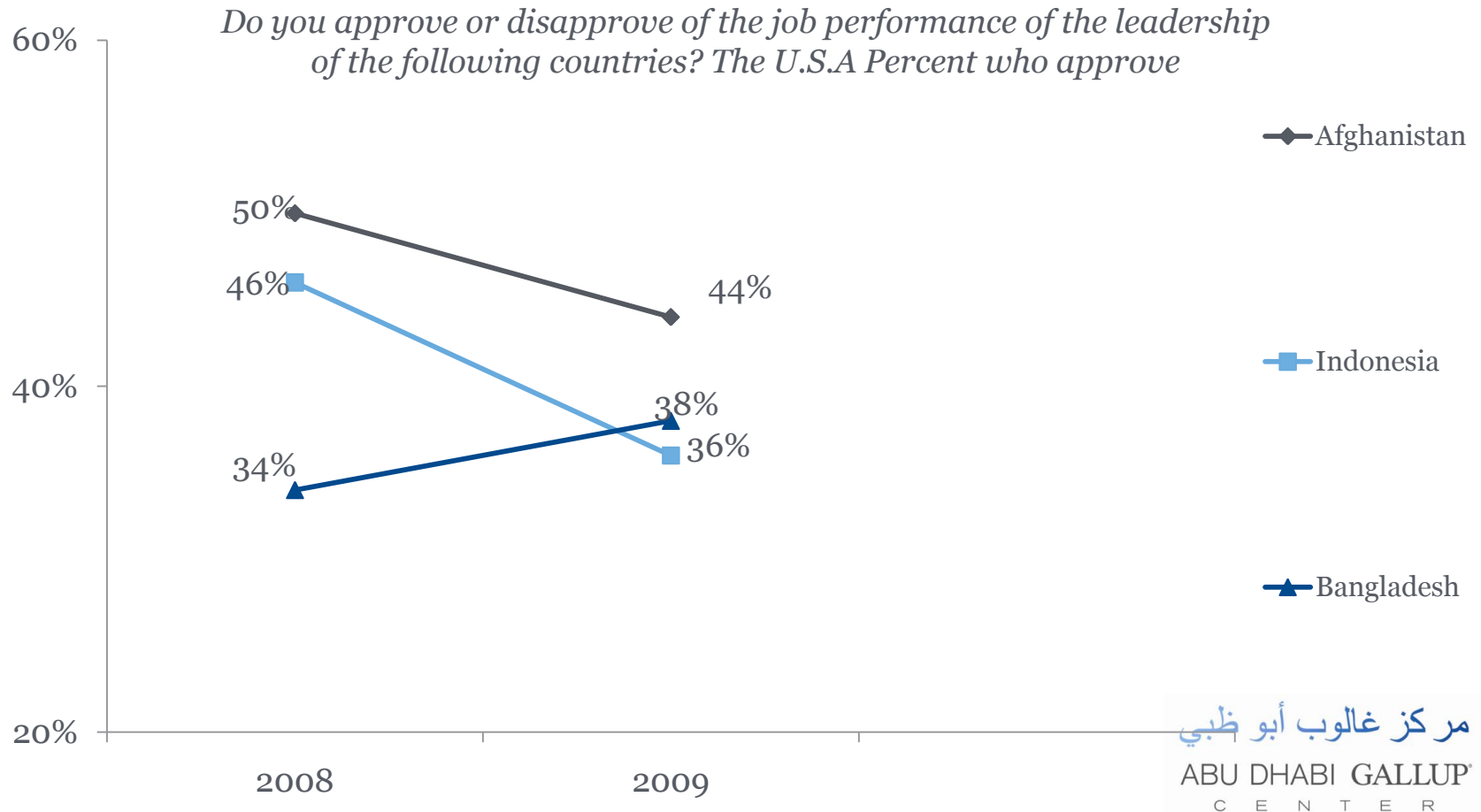
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# Africans Most Likely to Believe the West Is Committed to Better Relations

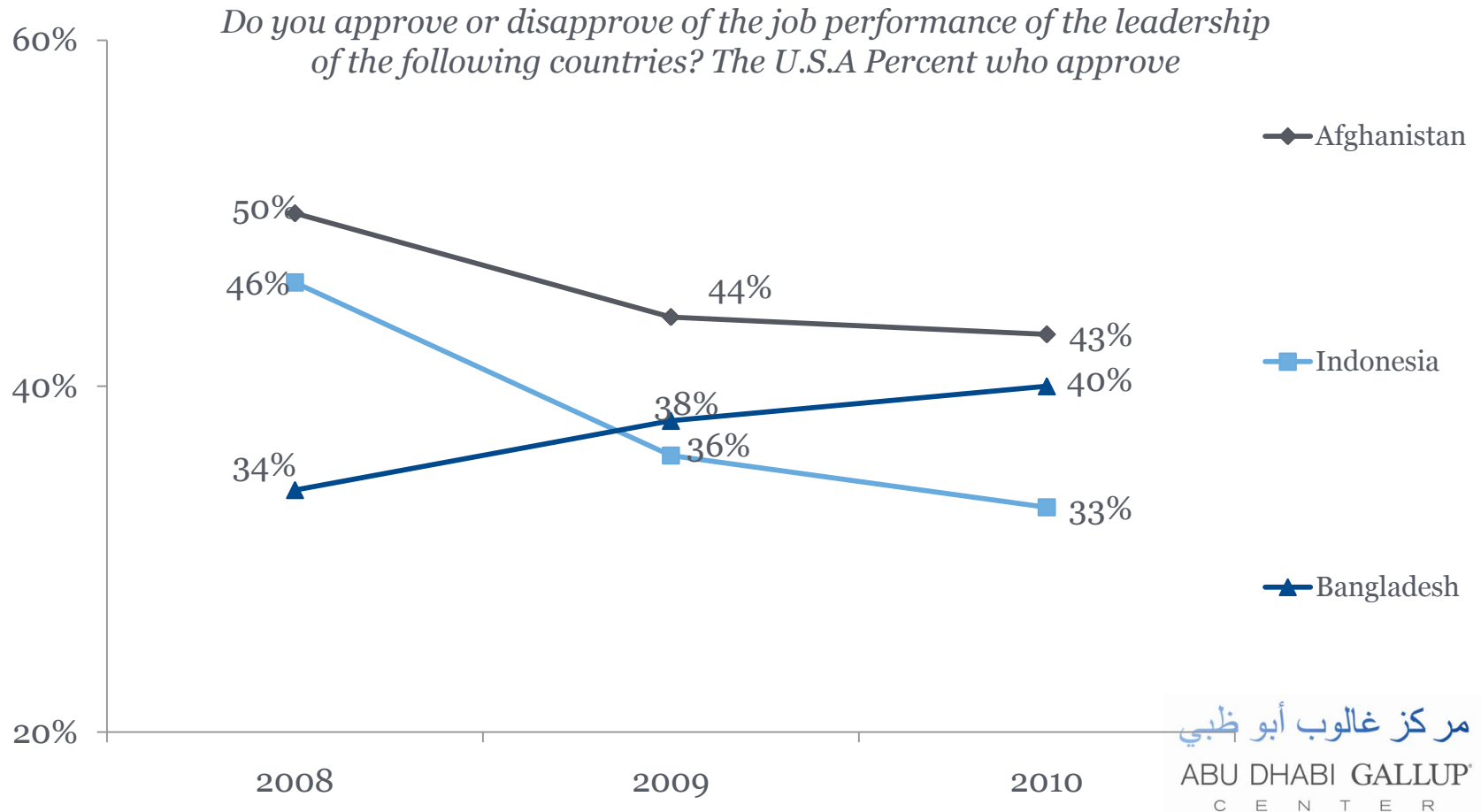
Do you think the **Western world is committed** to improving the interaction between the Muslim and Western worlds?



# Asian Attitudes toward U.S. Leadership Show Little Improvement



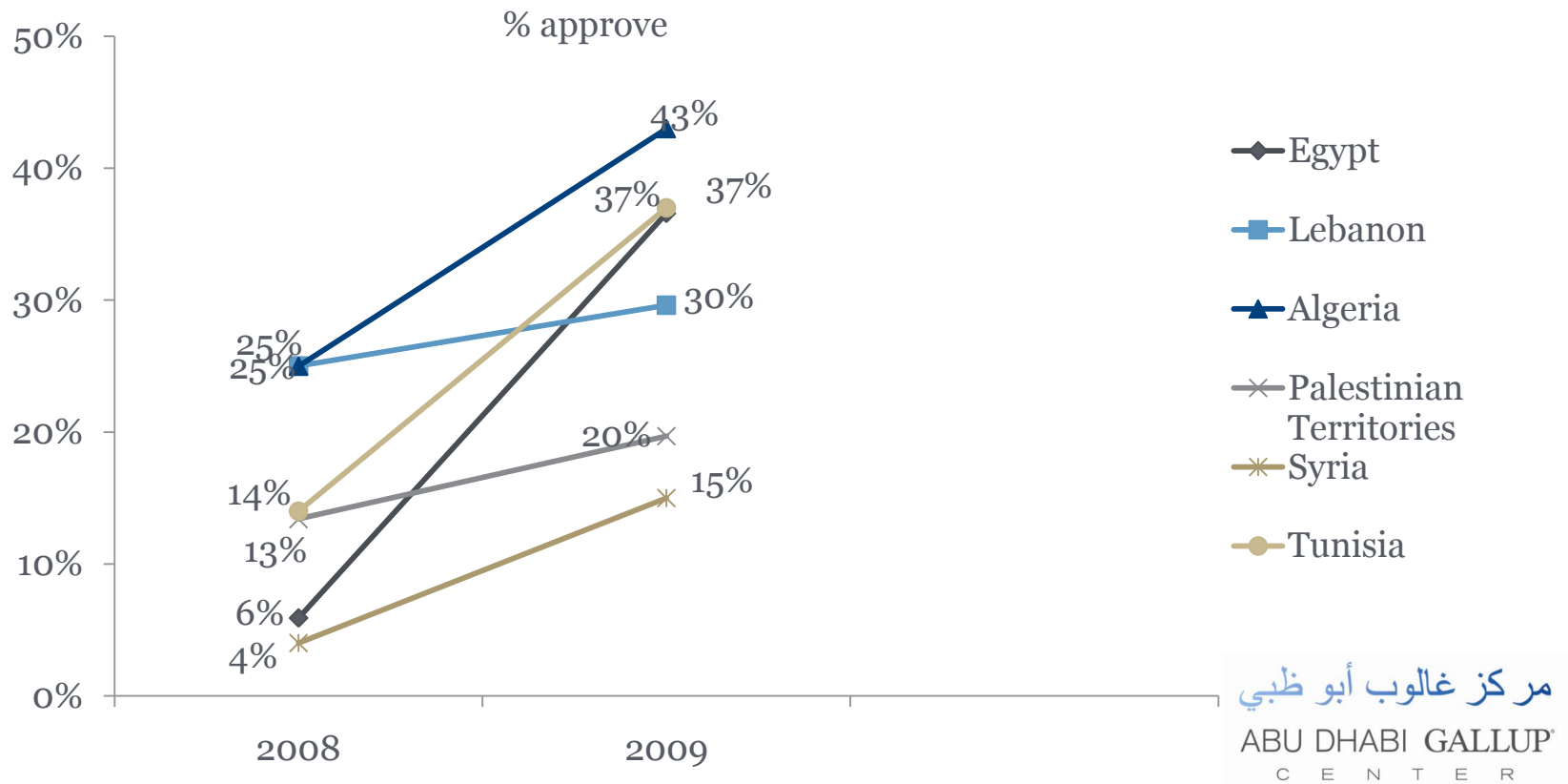
# Asian Attitudes toward U.S. Leadership Show Little Improvement





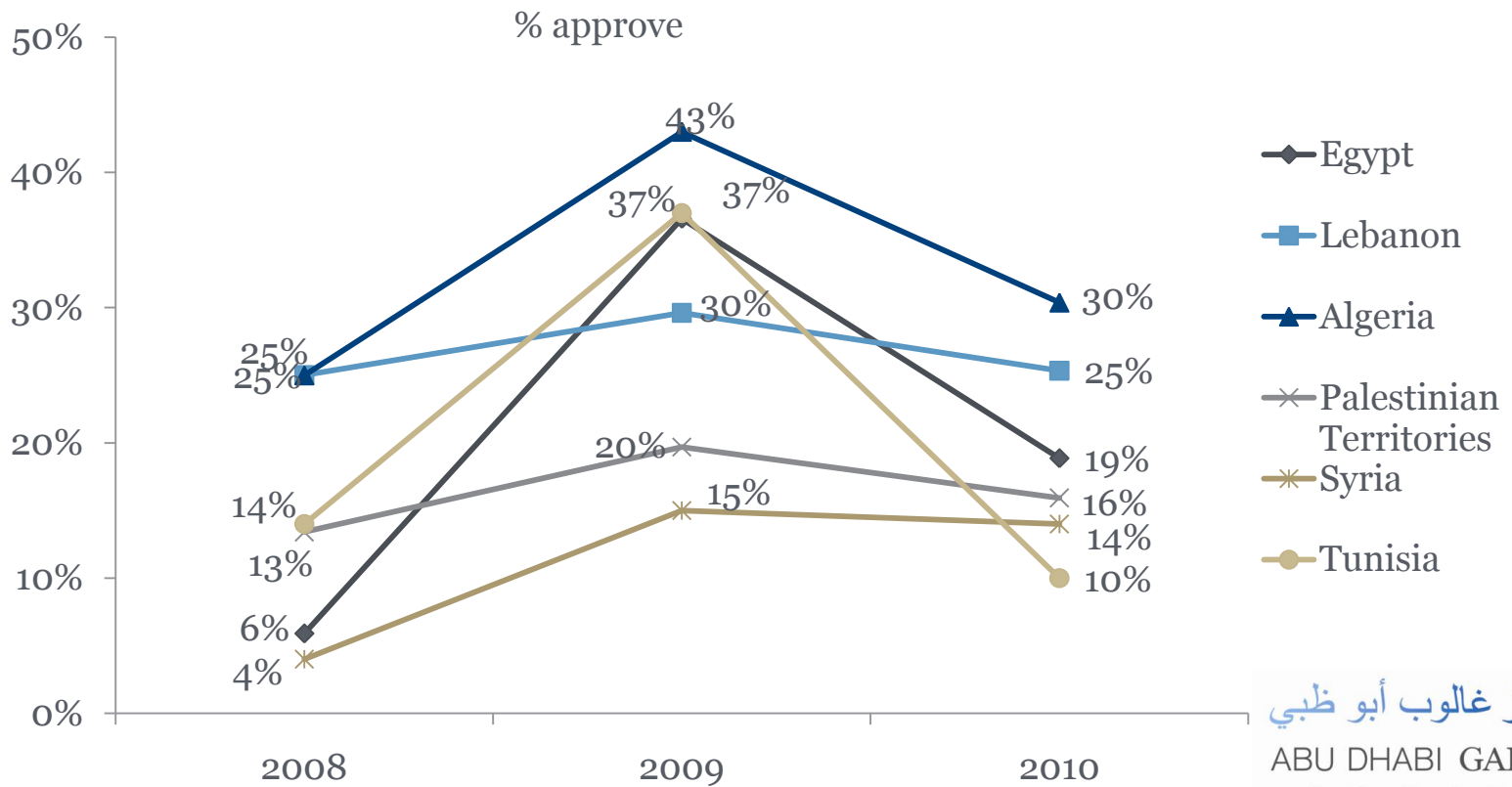
# Approval of U.S. Leadership Down in MENA in 2010

*Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the following countries? The U.S.A.*



# Approval of U.S. Leadership Down in MENA in 2010

*Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the following countries? The U.S.A.*





# Nature of Tensions

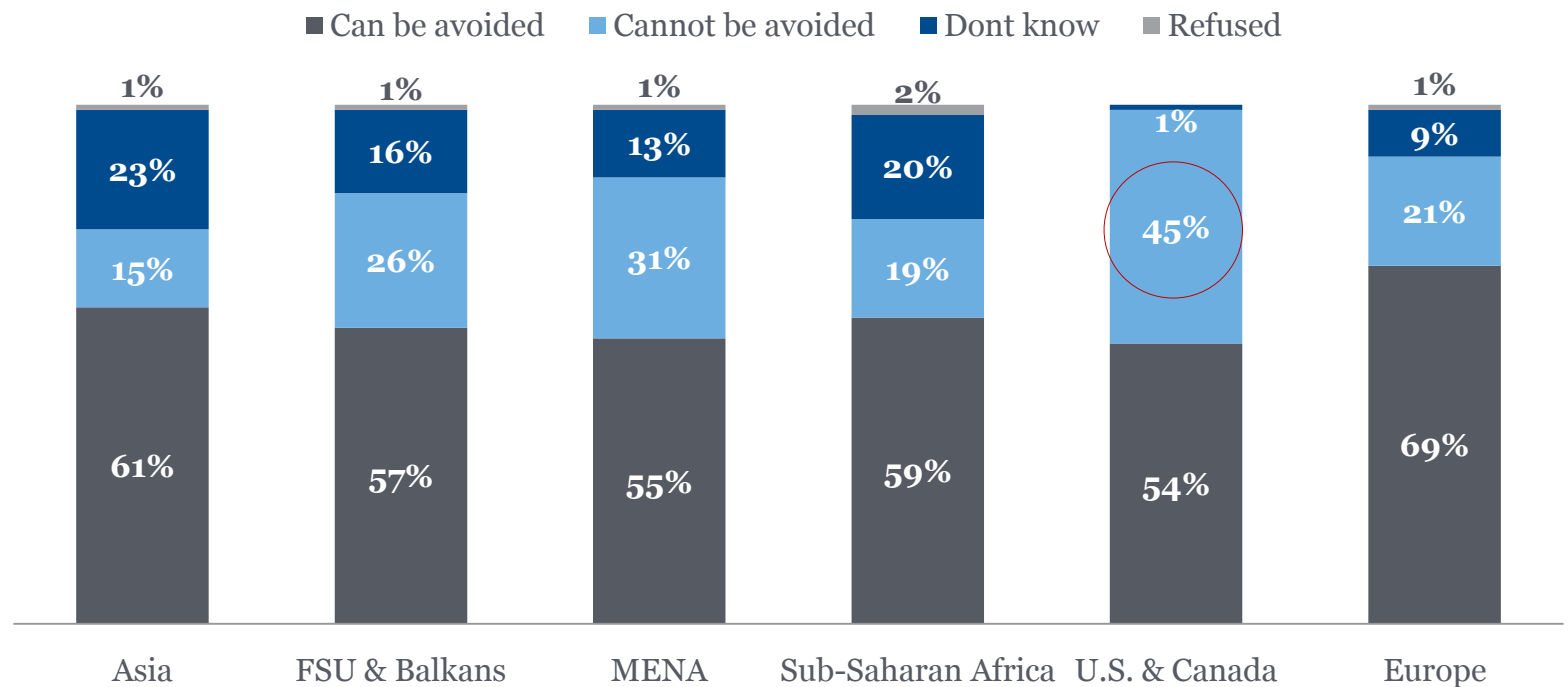
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# Majorities Believe Conflict Can Be Avoided

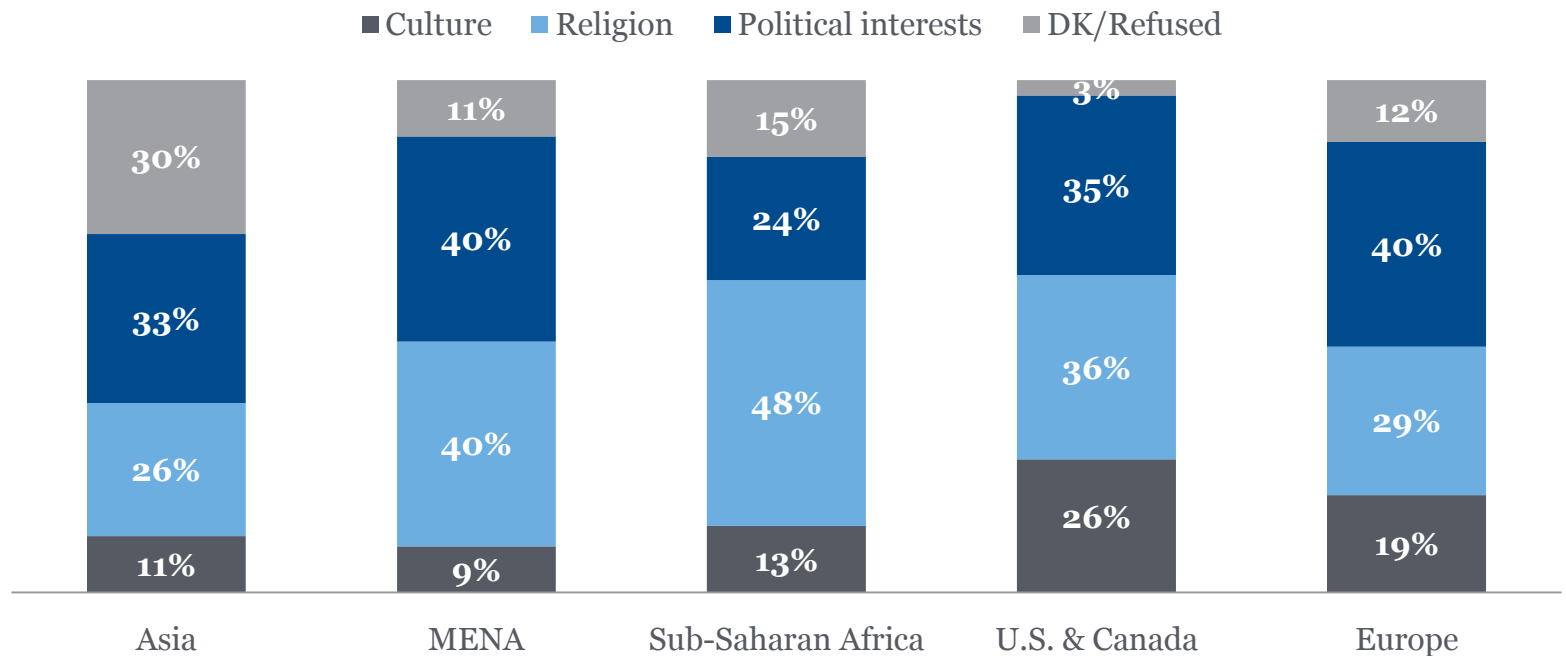
*Do you think violent conflict between the Muslim and Western worlds can be avoided, or not?*



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# Significant Differences Across Regions in Defining Root Cause of Muslim-West Tensions

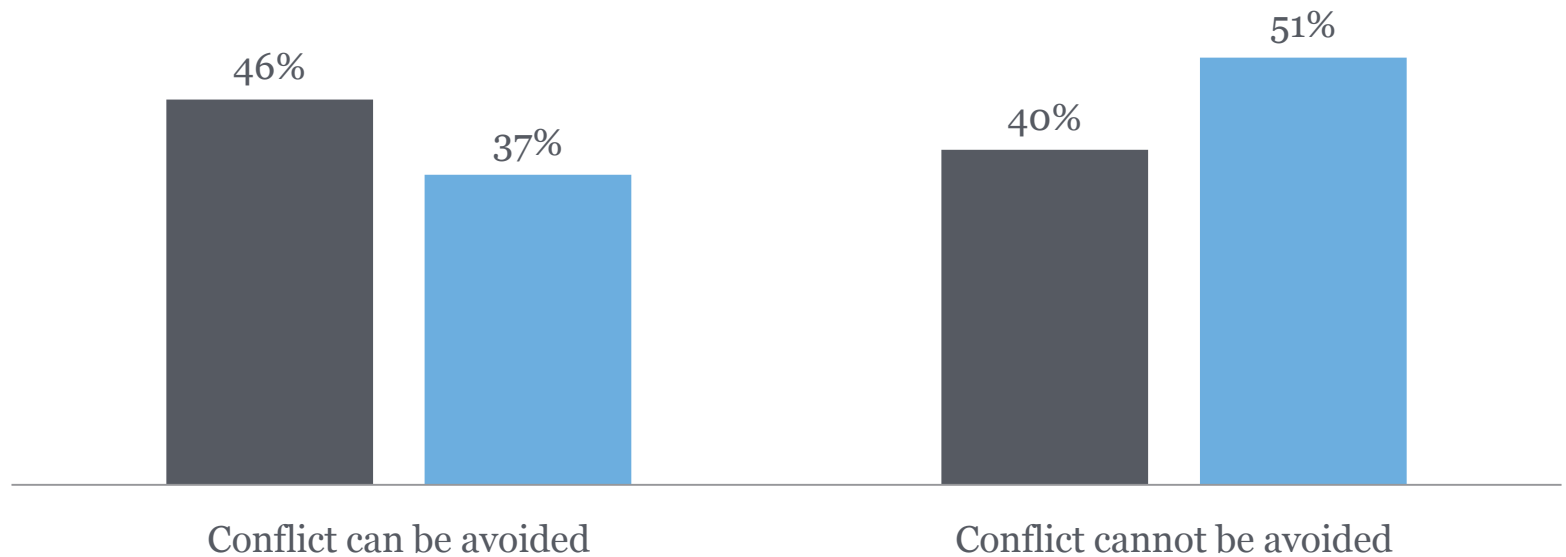
*Thinking about the tensions between the Muslim and Western worlds — do you think they arise more from differences of religion or differences of culture or from conflicts about political interests?*



# Conflict as Political vs. Religious Among MENA Public

Those who believe conflict is inevitable are more likely to say conflict is religious vs. political

■ Political ■ Religious



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# Engagement Readiness

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# Defining Engagement Readiness: “Ready”

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- **Personal Concern:** *Quality of interaction important to me*
- **Collective Commitment:** *My community is committed*
- **Collective Respect:** *My community respects other*
- **Engagement as Positive:** *Greater interaction is a benefit*
- **Solution Possible:** *Violent conflict can be avoided*



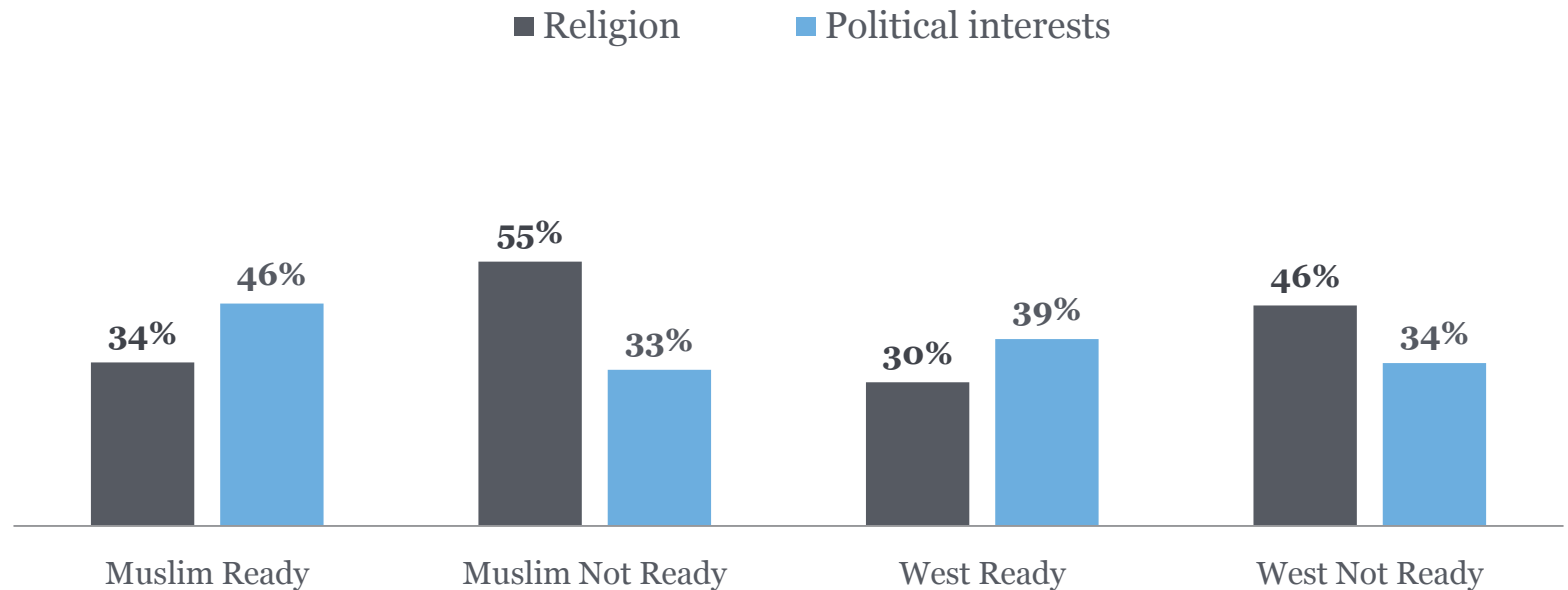
# Defining Engagement Readiness: “Not Ready”

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- **No Collective Commitment:** *My community is not committed*
- **No Collective Respect:** *My community does not respect other*
- **Engagement as Negative:** *Greater interaction is a threat*
- **No Solution:** *Violent conflict can not be avoided*

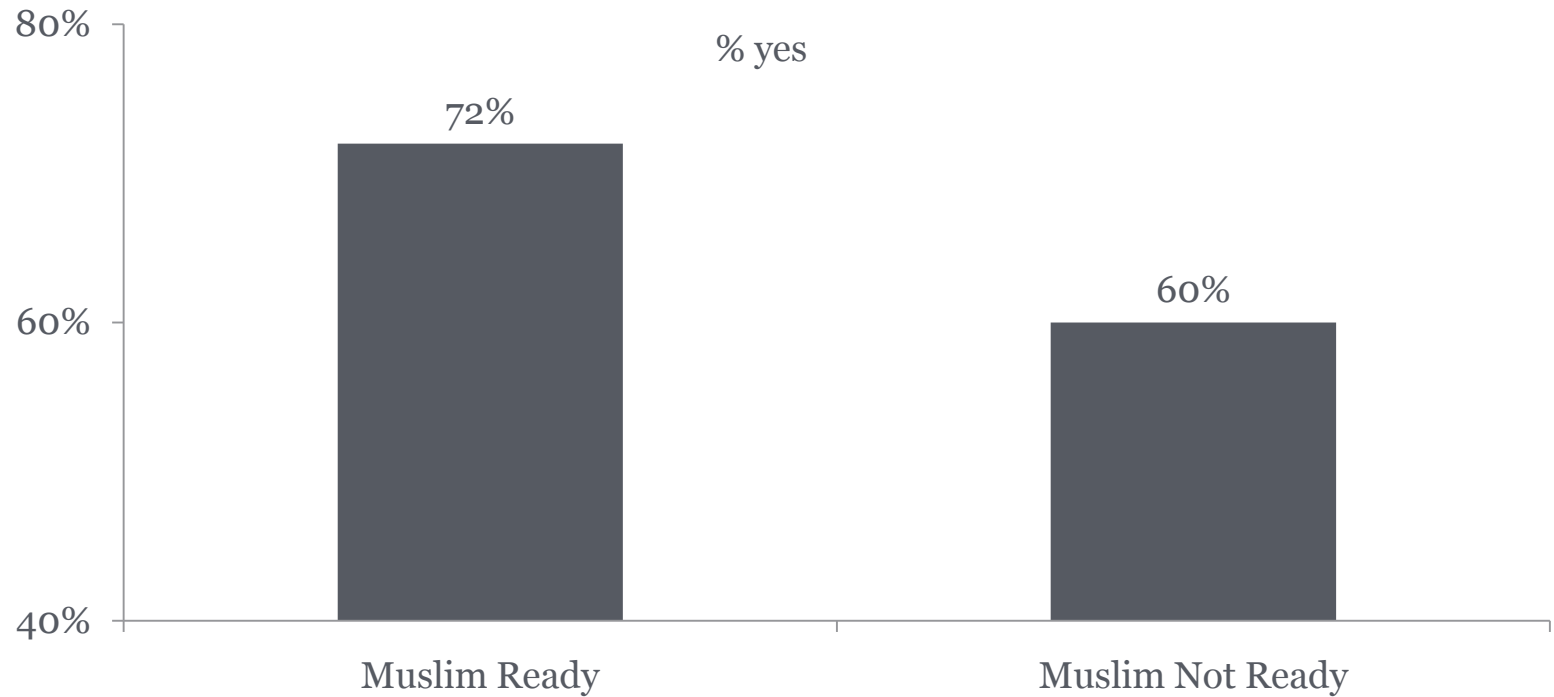
# Different Sources of Tension for Ready and Not Ready Groups

*Thinking about the tensions between the Muslim and Western worlds — do you think they arise more from differences of religion or differences of culture or from conflicts about political interests?*

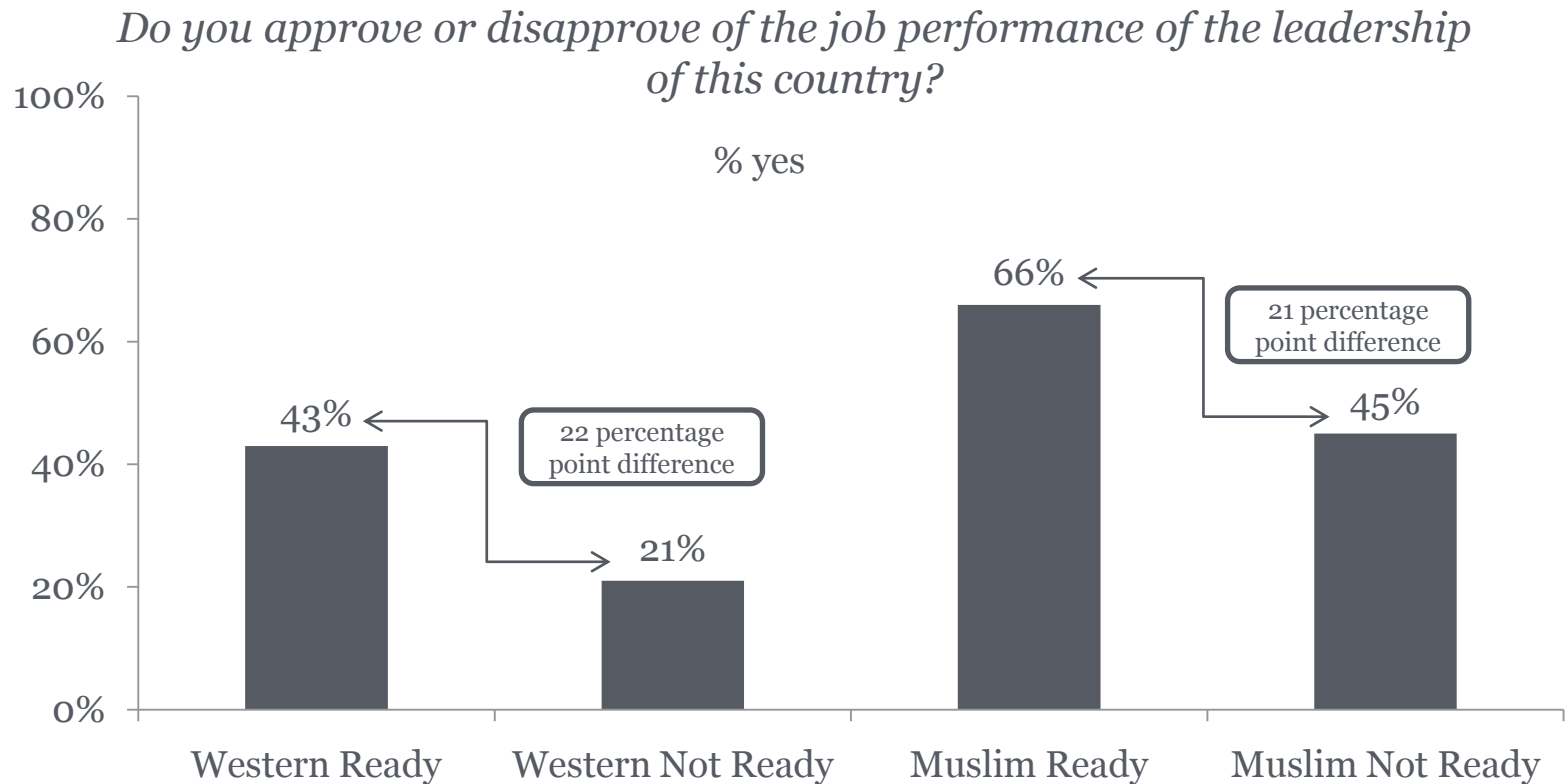


# Religious Service Attendance Among Ready and Not Ready Groups

*Have you attended a place of worship or religious service within the last seven days?*



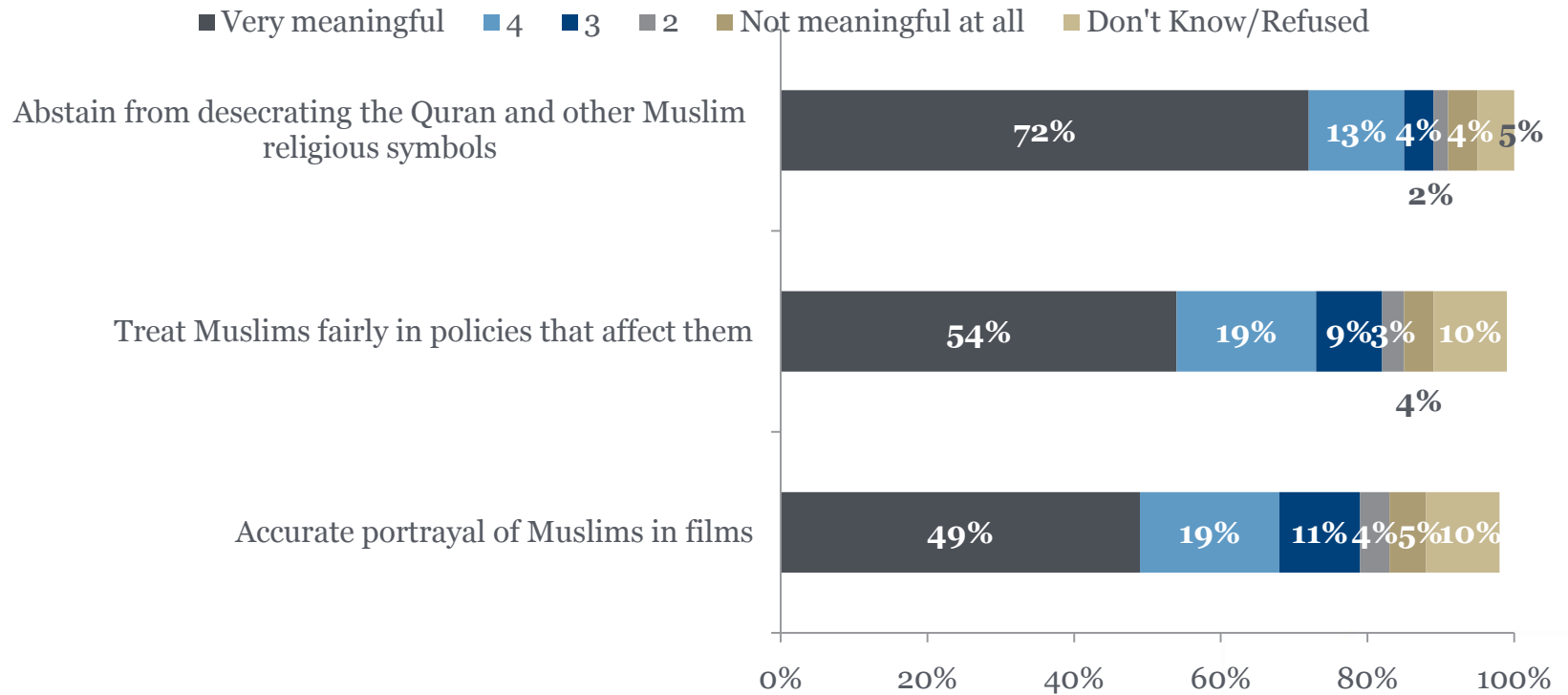
# Own Country Leadership Approval\*



\*Item not asked in: Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, UAE, and Uzbekistan

# Respect of Religious Symbols Is Critical, but not Enough

Many Muslims around the world have said to improve relations with the Muslim world, the West must show greater respect for Muslims and Islam. What of the following actions would be most meaningful to you? Please respond using a 5 point scale where a 1 means 'not meaningful at all' and a 5 means 'very meaningful'.



# Key Findings

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- Greatest improvement in opinion of U.S. among Muslims found in **MENA**, but was not sustained
- Muslim-West tensions seen as mostly **avoidable**, especially by those who view them as **political vs. religious**
- **Muslim religious practice** and satisfaction with **own leaders** associated with greater **readiness for engagement**
- “Respect” includes perceptions of **fairness in policies**

# Recommendations for Policymakers

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- Focus on the **MENA** region
- Emphasize **fairness** of decisions and actions
- Emphasize resolving **political issues** rather than religious differences



## Discussion

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