

Review Essay on : "Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies" by Claire Adida, David Laitin and Marie-Anne Valfort

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1) Overview

In many western societies, the issue of Muslim integration is at the forefront of the political debate. Radical Islamic terrorist attacks in several capitals, and pressures from immigration flows, most of which coming as political refugees of Muslim dominated countries have mobilized opinion against a Muslim threat to Europe. Dealing with the ethnic, religious and cultural heterogeneity associated to such trends is one of the most important challenges that European societies will face in the next future. In this context, the book by Claire Adida, David Laitin and Marie-Anne Valfort (ALV in the sequel) is a very timely and welcome contribution to a crucial contemporary issue, with important implications for political and policy discussions.

The central thesis of ALV is that because of their religion, Muslims experience significant discrimination when they attempt to integrate into a Christian heritage society. More precisely, the study turns around three main questions. First, do Muslim immigrants from Muslim-majority countries experience discrimination on the basis of their religion per se? Second, if so, why does the host population in the Christian-heritage country discriminate? Finally, what can be done to change this situation and which policy framework is likely to work?

To investigate these issues, ALV take a specific focus on Senegalese immigrants in France, using an array of methodologies (field experiments, collection of data surveys, and ethnographic work). Based on their field analyses comparing how Senegalese Christians and Muslims differ in their social interactions with French natives, ALV confirm the expected fact that Muslims are discriminated by so-called "rooted" French (FFFs: with French parents and grandparents), whether one looks at labor market situations, or various types of experimental games involving some degree of altruism, trust or reciprocity between players.

Related to the second question of why there is religious discrimination, ALV highlight two dimensions that explain the phenomenon in France. The first one is what they describe as "rational Islamophobia", that is a process of statistical discrimination, grounded on the existence of factors (religious norms, gender norms and mastery of French) that create socio-economic difficulties for Muslims' integration with the rest of a society. The second component is the so-called "non-rational Islamophobia", namely discrimination simply associated to taste-based prejudices: rooted French prefer to interact with co-religious people and not with Muslims.

ALV then conclude that FFFs and Muslims are locked in a discriminatory equilibrium, namely a situation in which both FFFs and Muslims in France are acting negatively towards one another in ways that are mutually reinforcing. Building on some international surveys (the European Social Survey and the Detroit Arab American Study, as well as a small-scale study restricted to migrants from Lebanon and Bosnia-Herzegovina), they argue that the existence of a discriminatory equilibrium also holds true in other European nations and the USA.

Given this, ALV propose to shift the equilibrium by attacking the problem at three different levels. First, at the individual level they suggest to use elements of "nudge theory" to challenge religious discrimination. In particular, they propose Muslims to name their children in ways which are not obviously Muslim in order to mitigate obvious discrimination. Second, they propose to target institutions like corporations, schools and Islamic communities to reduce both the rational and non-rational components of Islamophobia, promoting the strengthening of secular, republican and balanced gender norms on the working place, and the implementation of diversity training and socialization programs reducing taste-based prejudices. Third, at the state level, they lean in favor of assimilationist institutional systems rather than multiculturalist ones, emphasizing the development of policy tools such as citizenship contracts that promote the socioeconomic integration of migrants in the host society.

The book is well written and easy to read. The conclusions are not much surprising, but ALV are right at pointing out at the existence of a self-reinforcing discrimination equilibrium that prevents the integration of Muslims immigrants into Christian Heritage societies. This review will complement their discussion along several dimensions. In particular, ALV insist at length on the respective roles of "rational" and "irrational Islamophobia" in generating discrimination, but do not discuss much how these two components interact to create the discriminatory equilibrium. As well, the discussion on the notion of taste-based discrimination remains somewhat static, and does not really emphasize the intergenerational socio-cultural dynamics that may lead to the integration or segregation of Muslims in western societies. Finally, the policy part at the end of the book can be reconsidered in the context of these intergenerational cultural dynamics and their political economy implications for the design of integration policies in western welfare state societies.

My review is organized in the following way. Section 2 provides an analytical outline to situate the conceptual issues related to the issue of minority discrimination and their integration in a host society. I review in particular the sociological and more recent economic approaches to cultural integration. Section 3 considers the specific case of Muslims and the French context. Section 4 discusses the strengths and limitations of the research approach expanded by ALV. Finally, section 5 considers the policy proposals provided by ALV and concludes.

2) **Conceptual issues on discrimination and minorities' integration processes**

Conceptually, the issue of migrants' integration in a given country corresponds to two central questions. First, do migrants or minority groups, everything else equal, face the same conditions of access to goods, services and social interactions as natives of the host society? Second, do initial differences in terms of socio-economic characteristics between migrants (and their descendants) and natives tend to disappear overtime? While the first question essentially can be asked at any point of time, the second one typically requires a more dynamic perspective.

Why do we observe discrimination against migrants?

From a static point of view, the discrimination issue relates to the question of the existence of segregated outcomes between specific groups (migrants versus natives, minority versus majority) in diverse domains: access to markets (labor, housing, insurance, credit markets), and public services (law, public education, health services), implications in non-

market interactions (marriage, family issues, friendship), and allocation of decision rights in collective decisions (political representation and participation).

As recognized by ALV, the economic literature emphasizes two contrasting views on the sources of discrimination against individuals belonging to a specific group. The first one, expanded by Kenneth Arrow (1973), is the so-called "statistical" discrimination situation, based on the construction of negative stereotypes, namely negative beliefs about some group level characteristics. This is called "rational discrimination" as it results from the efficient use of some statistical measure of a group-level observable information (race, religion, ethnic marker) to infer some unobservable individual level characteristic (productivity, skills, honesty, trustworthiness, etc..) that objectively conditions the quality of the social interaction. Given that groups are never fully homogeneous, the use of a group level statistics generates therefore a bias that may lead to some discrimination at the individual level. Importantly, when individual level characteristics depend on costly investments to be undertaken before the interaction (such as education effort or training for instance), the logic of statistical discrimination may lead to self-fulfilling discriminatory social equilibria. A negative stereotype about a particular group can indeed be sustained by rational beliefs, as the discrimination associated to that stereotype leads members of the group to adopt actions that ex-post justify the very stereotype.

The second approach as formulated by Gary Becker (1957) is "taste-based", namely the existence of a taste or distaste to interact with individuals that share, or do not share the same group characteristics. In such a case, discrimination against specific groups comes from so-called "irrational" prejudices, as they are simply embedded into the preference structure of the individuals.

Two points are worth underlying at this stage. First, the distinction between "rational" and "non-rational" discriminations, as pinned down by ALV, is useful for analytical purposes but it is likely that the two dimensions interact and are therefore difficult to identify separately. Second, a full discussion of minority integration processes involves tackling the issue of the evolution of 'taste-based' discrimination, something that necessitates going beyond the traditional economic approach. We turn to these features below.

Rational versus irrational discrimination?

A bit of "taste-based" discrimination may indeed significantly interfere with rational belief formation processes and lead to important magnifying effects. An interesting example of this logic is provided in Basu (2005) who outlines a simple strategic coordination or assurance situation where cooperative behavior leads to desirable outcomes, but people do not like to be cooperative when one's opponent is being aggressive. More precisely, Basu (2005) considers a society in which there are two groups of individuals differentiated by some publicly visible characteristic (race, skin color, physical trait, wearing clothes or symbols, etc...). Each individual is also endowed with some invisible other characteristics that she knows about but others do not. The visible characteristic does not matter whatsoever for the interaction payoffs. The invisible characteristic reflects an innate taste to be aggressive to somebody of the other group. This invisible parameter therefore matters for how likely somebody's aggression has to be to provoke some aggressive defensive reaction. In a large society, this sensitivity parameter is likely to be individual specific and likely to be smoothly distributed, going from those who need a small likelihood of aggression to make them respond aggressively to those who need a much higher likelihood to provoke them to react.

Consider now a society where people do not have an innate “aggressive taste” towards members of the other group, though if the likelihood of the other person being aggressive is high, then a typical individual will respond with aggression. Given no “aggressive taste” in that society, a plausible equilibrium outcome is “harmonious” cooperation with no particular weight attached to the visible (payoff irrelevant) group characteristic. Suppose then alternatively that this society has now a few additional persons who are innately aggressive (i.e. radicals for which discrimination and aggression towards members of the other group is their dominant strategy). Then it can be shown that this small amount of “taste-based” discrimination can completely unravel social harmony, and rationally leads to complete aggression of one group towards the other group. The intuition for this is simple. People rationally use group conditional expectations when calculating the probability of aggression on the part of the members of the other group. Because of this, with a few radicals in one group, individuals of the other group, who are prone to being aggressive if there is a small chance of aggression by their opponent, will now become aggressive. But once these people choose to be aggressive, others of the first group, who needed less provocation to be aggressive, might want to reply as well. And once these people choose to be aggressive, those of the second group who needed even less provocation may in turn choose to be aggressive. This domino process may go on until a complete collapse of cooperative behavior between groups in the society. The simple mechanism of individuals rationally using statistical information and group characteristics to form expectations about the behavior of individuals, can therefore lead a *little* of taste-based discrimination to have magnifying effects on most individuals who do not have any innate “taste-based” discrimination. From the outside, this full aggression equilibrium seems very much as coming from “exaggerated” and irrational responses, as noted by ALV. It may however derive in fact from perfectly rational behavior of virtually all individuals in society.

Once one leaves the world of unlimited rationality and we get in a behavioral context with cognitive biases or limitations, the distinction between “taste-based” and “rational-based” discrimination can also be quite blurred. An example of this is provided by Fryer and Jackson (2008) who present a behavioral model where a decision maker stores past experiences in a limited number of categories, and is therefore forced to group heterogeneous experiences in the same category. The decision maker then forms prototypes for prediction based on some aggregate memory or statistic from each category. When encountering a new situation, the decision maker matches the current situation to the most analogous category, and makes predictions based on the prototype from that category. In such a context, optimal categorization (ie. that minimizes the sum across categories of within category variation) forces the decision maker to lump less frequent types of experiences into categories that end up being more heterogeneous. An interesting implication of this is that interactions with minority groups, which for most decision makers are necessarily less frequent due to their minority size, will generally be sorted more coarsely into categories than interactions with larger groups. This in turn can lead to discrimination against minority groups even when there is actually no taste for discrimination.

This preceding discussion suggests overall that it might be difficult to separate the “rational” from the “irrational” components for discrimination, as they are likely to reinforce each other. ALV somehow implicitly recognize this feature when, in chapter 8, they point out to the existence of a self-sustained discriminatory trap between Muslim and rooted French: taste-based prejudices from rooted French and ideology-based aggressive actions by radical Muslims, lead respectively to belief-based reactive logics of separation by Muslims, and belief-based defiance by rooted French natives. As we will discuss later this may have important policy implications.

The evolution of taste based discrimination and integration theories

For economists, the roots of "rational" discrimination, namely the use of group level information to construct belief formation at the individual level, is quite well understood. The origins of "taste-based" discrimination are however much less explicitly discussed. Following Becker and Stigler (1977)'s famous say: "*De Gustibus Non Es Disputandum*", ALV to some extent keep up with that economic tradition. While they highlight the existence of "taste-based" discrimination in their experimental games, ALV do not discuss precisely how such tastes might have come up, and how they can evolve. Still, some of the policy prescriptions at the end of the book on diversity training or educational programs in schools suggest that these preferences are malleable. One may therefore think that it is important to dig further into the genesis of "taste-based" discrimination, to understand ultimately how to affect it through public policy. Addressing properly this issue requires however an understanding of the formation and diffusion of tastes and preferences across individuals. As such, this relates therefore to the second central question about the nature of minorities and migrants' integration processes, namely the mechanisms leading to the convergence or divergence of cultural characteristics across social and cultural groups and cultural integration dynamics.

Given, some initial level of segregation of socio-economic and cultural outcomes between minorities and the mainstream society, the central issue about integration dynamics in a host society concerns the question of persistence (or not) of these segregated outcomes.

In the case of pure "rational" statistical discrimination, things again are relatively clear. The segregation of outcomes comes from the existence of some aggregate group information and the coordination of beliefs on non-directly observable individual characteristics (endogenous or not) of the individual. The persistence of segregated outcomes therefore rests upon frictions associated to the diffusion of information between the minority group and the rest of society. Such frictions are naturally related to the decentralized nature of individual level information, and consequently the costs associated to collect or make revealed these pieces of information. As noticed earlier, informational frictions may as well be inherently associated to cognitive limitations (Fryer and Jackson 2008). In both cases, policies or contexts that tend to reduce the degree of these informational/cognitive frictions are likely to alleviate the problem and lead therefore to less discrimination.

More interestingly, the persistence (or not) of a "taste-based" component of discrimination relates to changes in intrinsic preferences and the question of convergence of cultural characteristics of minorities towards the majority mainstream group. Here, social disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and social psychology started to tackle the issue far earlier than economics.

Specifically, three main perspectives confront themselves in the social sciences: *assimilation theory*, *multiculturalism*, and *structuralism*, while a recent perspective, called *segmented assimilation*, tends to provide a synthetic effort at integrating these different views.

Assimilation theory, which dominated much of sociological thinking during the XXth century, builds upon the central idea that diverse groups come to share a common culture through a natural process of gradual disappearance of the original cultural and behavioral patterns in favor of new ones. Such a process once set in motion, moves inevitably and irreversibly toward complete assimilation. Exemplified by Gordon (1964), this view argues in particular that immigrant or minority groups are expected to "melt" into the mainstream culture through an inter-generational process of cultural, social, and economic integration.

While corroborated by the experience of the various waves of European immigrants (Germans, Italians and East Europeans) that arrived in the U.S. between the 1920s and the 1950s,¹ this view however has been somewhat challenged by the integration patterns of more recent non-European immigrant groups (Mexicans, Central Americans, Southeast Asians)².

As an alternative approach, and illustrated by Glazer and Moynihan (1970) and Handlin (1973) in the context of the American society, *multiculturalism* considers multicultural societies as composed of an heterogeneous collection of cultural, ethnic and racial minority groups who actively shape their own identities rather than posing as passive subjects in front of the forces of assimilation. As a consequence, that perspective recognizes that some aspects of the cultural characteristics of immigrants may be preserved in a state of uneasy co-existence with the attitudes of the host country.

Rather than focusing on the processes of assimilation or integration per se, *structuralism* on the other hand emphasizes how unequal access to resources (wealth, jobs, housing, education, power, and privilege) acts as a structural constraint on the ability of immigrants and ethnic minorities to socially integrate (Blau and Duncan, 1967; Portes and Borocz, 1989). Structuralism underlines persistent disparities in socio-economic outcomes remaining for such groups and the inherent conflicts that exist in the social hierarchy between dominant and minority groups.

From the point of view of the immigrants' and minorities' integration process, the three aforementioned sociological perspectives provide different views of the same phenomenon. Assimilation theory seems to be the most optimistic as it sees succeeding generations gradually moving away from their original culture, and socially integrating in a natural and irreversible process. Multiculturalism is somewhat in between, highlighting the fact that the cultural characteristics of minorities are constantly reshaped along the integration process and therefore may never completely disappear. Structuralism takes the most pessimistic view, as it emphasizes the constraints of the social and economic structure of the host country on the ability of immigrants to integrate into its cultural attitudes and questions the possibility of cultural and socio-economic integration of minority people.

While each of the previous perspectives insists on a specific dimension of the integration process of a minority group, *segmented assimilation theory* provides a synthesis of these different approaches. Specifically, it highlights a more complete picture of the different patterns of integration in terms of convergent or divergent paths of cultural adaptation. The integration process may alternatively follow three possible patterns: a) upward mobility associated to assimilation and economic integration into the normative structures of the majority group; b) downward mobility, associated to assimilation and parallel integration into an underclass; c) economic integration but with lagged assimilation and/or deliberate preservation of the group community's values and identity (Portes and Zhou, 1994). The emphasis of this perspective is to highlight how socio-economic and demographic factors interact with contextual variables to produce specific cultural integration patterns of a given cultural minority group.

¹ See Alba (1985), Chiswick (1978), Lieberman and Waters (1988).

² See for instance Kao and Tienda (1995); Rumbaut and Ima (1988), Gans (1992), Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (1995), Landale and Oropesa (1995).

The Economic Approach to Cultural Integration

Given its basic adherence to the assumption of fixed preferences, the standard economic approach cannot tackle directly the issue of the evolution of "taste-based" segmentation and its dynamic implications in terms of groups' socio-economic integration. Recently, however economists have increasingly recognized that cultural attitudes of minority and immigrants' groups can be important sources of "taste-based" discrimination and that these patterns can be endogenous to social actions and evolving overtime. While other social scientists tend to focus on the effects of the social environment on cultural patterns across groups, the starting point of the economic approach to cultural integration is the analysis of individual behavior, extended to account for endogenous preferences and identity formation. Economists, therefore, emphasize the importance of individual incentives and opportunity costs associated to different integration patterns.

An initial example of such an approach is Lazear (1999a)'s analysis of adoption of a common language. In this framework, individuals from two different cultural groups (a minority and a majority) are matched to interact economically and socially. Cultural integration facilitates trade³ across individuals. The incentives for an individual belonging to the minority cultural group to assimilate and adopt the culture of the majority are then directly related to the expected gains from trade that such a strategy provides. Another example is Akerlof and Kranton (2000) who, building on insights from social psychology and sociology, emphasize cultural identity as an important source of gains or losses associated to social interactions between different groups. Other approaches such as Berry (1997), and Chiswick (2006)⁴ move beyond viewing cultural integration as a simple binary choice (ie. choose to identify to the dominant culture or to the minority culture), and suggest more complex forms of identity formation.⁵

Interestingly, this line of research underlines conditions leading to the emergence of so-called "oppositional cultures",⁶ that is when minorities adopt cultural categorizations and prescriptions defined in opposition to the categorizations and prescriptions of the dominant majority. While initially developed for the context of social integration of poor black communities in the US, this approach may actually partly be relevant to understand the rise of Islamic radicalism in western societies.

Given the dynamic and intergenerational character of cultural integration processes, it has been worthwhile incorporating explicitly these features into the analyses. A first approach due to Konya (2005) extended the static framework of Lazear (1999a) to a fully dynamic optimization context with minority members being concerned with their own utility as well as some forward looking component of the utility of their children.

³ defined broadly to include non market interactions as well.

⁴ Following a Beckerian approach, Chiswick (2006) associates cultural identity choices to investment decisions into group-specific human capital versus general shared human capital, both entering with different degrees into the production of household goods, whose preferences for are specific to the group or not.

⁵ For instance, Berry (1997) actually considers four distinct acculturation strategies regarding how individuals relate to an original culture of the minority group and the dominant culture of the majority. The first strategy, *integration*, implies a strong sense of identification to both the original and the majority culture. The second, *assimilation*, requires a strong relationship with the majority culture but a weak relationship with the original culture. The third, *separation*, is associated to a weak connection with the majority culture but a strong connection with the original culture. Finally, the fourth strategy, *marginalization* involves a weak link with both the majority and the original culture.

⁶ See for instance Austen-Smith and Fryer (2005), Battu, Mwalle and Zenou (2007), Battu and Zenou (2010).

Building on evolutionary models of cultural transmission and population dynamics (Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman, 1973, and Boyd and Richerson, 1985)), a line of research explicitly recognizes the importance of parental socialization in the process of intergenerational cultural transmission (Bisin and Verdier 2000, 2001, 2010). Starting from the observation that parents typically have "paternalistic" motivations to transmit, at least partly, their own values, beliefs and norms to their children, this approach has relevant implications regarding the determinants of cultural integration of migrants in a society. Importantly, it highlights how cultural differentiation at the societal level depends crucially on the nature of the interactions between various agents of cultural socialization (family, peers, teachers, community leaders, etc...).⁷ As well, given that the adoption of a dominant cultural trait might provide a beneficial effect per se, the benefits of socialization depend on the nature of the socio-economic interactions between minority members and the society at large. As a consequence it depends on the structure of the population (ie. is frequency dependent). In this case, altruistic parents even if paternalistic, may favor (or discourage less intensely) the cultural assimilation of their children. This trade-off between ethnic/religious preferences and the disadvantage of minority traits in terms of economic opportunities may then be central to the integration pattern of minority groups in the host country.⁸

To summarize, the economic approach to cultural integration emphasizes three important features with respect to the evolution of minorities' cultural characteristics and their convergence or not towards mainstream society.

a) *Structural socio-economic opportunities.* Related to the so-called structuralist approach in sociology, the economic perspective highlights how the costs of cultural assimilation depend on different structural factors, such as the size of the groups, the socio-economic gains from trade and interactions between groups, the role of frictions in social interactions and matching, some of which have been indeed investigated empirically in the literature.⁹

b) *The different components and motivations of cultural transmission.* The cultural transmission economic approach emphasizes the importance of the interactions between different agents of socialization (family, peers, schools, etc...) for the convergence or not of cultural characteristics across groups. In particular it highlights how the nature of such interactions may significantly affect the intensity with which minority members engage in cultural transmission with respect to their children and therefore the likelihood of resistance or convergence to the dominant culture.¹⁰ The empirical implications of these features have been also tested in several specific contexts.¹¹

c) *Expectations, externalities, and the normative analysis of integration.* Assimilation and integration processes are partly determined by individual decisions formed under certain

⁷ Specifically a crucial factor determining the composition of the stationary distribution of the population consist in whether the socio-economic environment (oblique socialization) acts as a *substitute* or as a *complement* to direct vertical family socialization (Bisin and Verdier 2001).

⁸ See for instance, Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier and Zenou (2009), Bisin and Verdier (2017).

⁹ See for instance, Algan et al. (2012) for a set of empirical studies in the European context.

¹⁰ Specifically, when socialization mechanisms are characterized by *complementarities* in imitation processes, minority parents tend to reduce their direct transmission efforts when they expect children to be less exposed to cultural role models of their own group. On the contrary, when family and society are interacting as *cultural substitutes* in socialization, minority members try to compensate through to their own socialization effort for the fact that their group's cultural influence is reduced (Bisin and Verdier 2001).

¹¹ See for instance Bisin et al. (2016), Patacchini and Zenou (2011) Giavazzi et al. (2014).

sets of beliefs about the aggregate process of the cultural dynamics. How such beliefs are formed and coordinated may crucially affect the path of cultural integration.¹² As well, given that they essentially relate to decisions involving non-market transactions, socialization and cultural integration dynamics are characterized by various types of externalities not internalized by individuals taking these decisions. Specifically transmitting successfully one's cultural traits to one's children has not only implications for family members, but also for other group members of the current and future generations. These effects may not be internalized by parents or other role models. The lack of appropriate markets and "prices" to resolve the issues of coordination of expectations and internalization of group externalities suggest therefore that one may derive some normative analysis indicating for instance whether resources in the integration process are efficiently allocated, and whether cultural evolution might proceed too slowly or too fast according to some efficiency criteria.

Concerning the "rational" basis of discrimination, as the problem mostly stems from some degree of information frictions, the standard normative economic approach with fixed preferences can usually be applied. Things are however less straightforward when dealing with the "taste-based" component of discrimination and the dynamics of cultural integration. With individual preference characteristics changing overtime, it becomes more difficult to define a normative criterion based on individual preferences. Which preferences are legitimate to use to evaluate the consequences of cultural convergence or divergence of minority groups: those before or after socialization? Providing relevant efficiency statements independent from any path of preference profiles may be impossible. As a consequence, most of the time, normative statements related to the question of the evolution of taste-based discrimination can only be drawn conditional on a fixed social welfare or an ethical criterion that is external to the process of changes of the preferences generating such situation. Obviously, making explicit the criterion one uses is crucial to assess the importance of the normative implications one gets from the analysis.

3) Analyzing the integration of Muslims in western societies

Do Muslim migrants (and their descendants) have some specificity in terms of integration compared to other migrant groups? Academic studies based on survey data do not provide a definitive answer to that question. Some studies and pools suggest that there is no specific Muslim effect (Pew Global Attitudes Project 2006, Laurence and Vaisse 2006, Manning and Roy 2010). Other studies recognize a process of economic integration but with a lower or ambiguous pace of integration on cultural dimensions compared to other migrants (Bisin et al. (2008), Constant et al. (2006), Inglehart and Norris (2009), Meliapaard and Alba 2015). A very recent study Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor (2017) investigated the language competence, education, working life and interreligious contacts of Muslims in France, the UK, Austria, Germany and Switzerland, and indicates that by the second generation, the majority of Muslim immigrants have made significant at integrating economically and socially the mainstream society of their host countries.

Obviously, the answer on Muslim integration depends on a variety of features: the dimension of integration one considers (economic, social or cultural), the race or ethnicity of the migrant group, the country of origin and the society of destination. While there seems to be a consensus that Muslims and their second generation are discriminated in their access to

¹² Konya (2005) provides an interesting illustration of the importance of expectations for the paths of cultural integration of minority groups.

the labor market, location, or access to credit and earnings, they do not seem to integrate economically differently than other groups (Algan et al. 2010). At the same time though, one notes some degree of intergenerational persistence of cultural differentiation in terms of religiosity, gender and intermarriage norms, or fertility (van de Pol and van Tubergen (2014), Palhié (2017), Soehl (2017)). Recent studies even suggest that there is a revival of religiosity and conservative attitudes among a sizable fraction of individuals of second generation as compared to their parents (Algan, Landais and Senik (2012), Maliepaard, Gijsberts and Lubbers (2012), Meliapaard and Alba (2015), Tournier (2013), El Karoui (2016)).

As ALV recognize, one of the major empirical difficulties of these studies is that it is hard to differentiate the religion effect from other factors such as the country of origin, as both are often strongly correlated in the available data. To avoid such identification problem, the strength of ALV's methodological strategy is to creatively focus on a restricted group of Senegalese immigrants, constituted of Muslims and Christian of similar socioeconomic backgrounds that migrated to France at similar times for the same motives, and with populations made of roughly comparable proportions of Christians and Muslims. The comparison between Senegalese Muslim and Senegalese Christians should then ideally reflect solely a matter of religion, and not ethnicity, education any other social variable.

Of course, any fieldwork entails limitations both in terms of internal and external consistency. ALV are fully aware of this, and their chapter 4 provides an honest discussion of the potential biases in the selection process and the implementation of their experiments. Specific features may temper though the internal consistency arguments of these experiments.

First, the analysis focuses on two specific groups of Senegalese People: the Joolas and the Serers. Importantly, both groups contain a non-negligible proportions of Christians, though there is incidentally more than twice as much Christians Joolas among the Joolas (20,17%) than Christians Serers among the Serers (9,32%). ALV provide an interesting discussion in chapter 3 ensuring the reader that the Joolas and the Serer share the same attributes on all dimensions that may be relevant for the experiment. Beyond emanating from the same country, Joolas and Serers share common ethnic and historical backgrounds, faced the same socio-economic environment in Senegal, and moved to France at the same time, with the same economic motivation. According to some anthropologists, one feature though seems to be different across the two groups: The Serer people had traditionally a society organized through a stratified cast system (Richard 2010, Klein 1968), while the Joolas communities are egalitarian and organized horizontally without any hierarchical cast system (Diédhiou 2005). As suggested by the recent work of Lowes et al. (2017) in the context of the Kuba kingdom in the DRC, this initial institutional difference may well imply different types of cooperative and trust behaviors in experimental games. One may thus wonder how this initial difference may interact with the religion characteristic and eventually create some bias in the experiment.¹³

Second, the field experiments are implemented in the XIX arrondissement in Paris, one of the most ethnically, culturally, and racially integrated neighborhoods in France. According to ALV, the area was selected to underestimate anti-Islamic bias because rooted French in such neighborhoods are more open to the presence of Muslim people than the average French. While this feature cannot be directly tested, ALV indicate that their sample pool tends to express more political left wing opinions than the

¹³In the appendix p. 209, ALV raise the issue of a Joola/Serer effect as a tribe effect. They mention that they tried as much as they could to run separated sessions for Joolas and Serers, and control for this in the regressions with session fixed effects.

average French, an indicator known to be correlated with openness to diversity. But it may be worth mentioning also that the more left wing position of the sample may simply reflect the fact that the XIX arrondissement is populated by individuals poorer than the median in France¹⁴ and not necessarily the fact that they are more open to diversity.

An issue that one would also raise relates to the selection protocol of rooted French. These individuals are picked up at the entrance of the Metro station and asked to participate into an experiment. One may wonder from an economic perspective if those who accept to participate are systematically individuals with low opportunity cost of time, associated to lower education, an unemployment situation, or a part-time/household job position. If that was true, one may ask how such features lead to specific biases with respect to the interactions with Muslim people. As well, ALV do not differentiate between Christian rooted French and Jewish rooted French (though we are told that some Jewish participants are considered as rooted French in their sample)¹⁵. Because Jewish attitudes towards Muslims are certainly influenced by factors other than Christian attitudes towards Muslims, one may as well ponder how to interpret the experiment results with respect to a Christian French discrimination effect against Muslims. Finally, one may also wonder if, by the very fact of their higher exposure to Muslims migrants in their neighborhood, rooted French individuals selected in the XIX arrondissement are more subject than the average French to the so-called "Hortefeux effect"¹⁶ that interestingly ALV themselves identify in one of their experiments. Again if true, this could lead to an anti-Islamic bias tempering the conclusions.

From an external validity point of view, a few other points might also be worth mentioning. First, as ALV recognize in the appendix, France is a very specific context with distinctive historical factors: the politics associated to the relationship between religion and state (the so-called "laïcité" (*secularity*) issue), and the strong colonial legacy with respect to North Africans populations. Because of this, focusing on Christians and Muslims from Senegal allows isolating the existence of a pure religion effect. At the same time though, it prevents the authors to say much on the strength of the religion effect for the symbolically and quantitatively more relevant North African Muslim populations of France.

France is also special in terms of its sensitivity to the issue of ethnic and religious data collection, and the measurement of the impact of religious and ethnic characteristics on social and economic integration. The debate on the legitimacy of collecting ethnic and religious data has been raging among French social scientists for more than two decades. On the one side, distinguished French sociologists like Dominique Schnapper, have been arguing against such systematic undertaking in the name of French republican ideals (Schnapper 1991). On the other side, a well-established demographer like Michèle Tribalat at INED¹⁷ insisted on the necessity to

¹⁴ In 2016, the monthly disposable income per equivalence unit in the XIX arrondissement is on average 1 489 € while it is 2 256 € for Paris and 1 675 € for France (<http://www.salairemoyen.com/sources.php>)

¹⁵ The fact that they are included as FFF is presumably because of statistical power reasons associated to the small sample size of their field experiments.

¹⁶ ALV call the "Hortefeux effect" the fact that, like Brice Hortefeux a former French Minister of Interior, French people tend to express more anti-Islamic reactions, the larger the number of Muslims with whom they have to interact.

¹⁷ INED is the Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques

construct statistical surveys allowing explicit measures of the integration process of migrants and their descendants in France, according to their religious and ethnic characteristics (Tribalat 2013). Although, data collection on these sensitive dimensions has been recently improving, these features impose some limitations on the study of the integration process of Muslim in the French society. For instance, ALV cannot get precise estimates of the size of the two Christian and Muslim Senegalese (first and second generations) communities, nor where they are located. This implies in particular that in their analysis of a differential integration path between Christians Senegalese and Muslim Senegalese (in chapter 2), ALV cannot account for the existence of group specific externalities associated say, to group specific social capital that could have been accumulated differentially between Christians and Muslims. We know from Borjas (1992) that such dynamic dimension may be important to explain differential patterns of social integration of immigrants.

More generally, while conceptually clear, the identification of a Muslim effect in the integration process does not preclude the fact that this effect interacts with other ethnic, race or country of origin dimensions. Indeed the issue of Muslim integration into western societies covers a variety of situations across Moroccan, Tunisian, Algerian, Turkish communities. From a policy point of view, assessing the heterogeneity effect of the religion dimension across Muslim minorities in their integration process might be as important as proving the existence of a pure religion dimension.

4) The mechanisms behind the discriminatory equilibrium

A central point of ALV's book is to pin down the existence of a discriminatory equilibrium between rooted French and Muslims. On the basis of the games discussed in Chapter 5 and the correspondence test they implemented with French employers, they suggest the following mechanism. Muslim immigrants display behaviors that induce French to discriminate "rationally" and "non-rationally" against them. Then Muslims, perceiving such hostility in France, tend to separate more from their host society than other migrants do. This feeds back into reinforcing the discriminatory motivations of rooted French. The argument is then extended beyond France by looking at international survey data.

From the perspective of the dynamics of integration of a minority group inside a host society, our discussion on integration theories suggest two important elements that might contribute to the persistence of a discriminatory equilibrium and that are worth emphasizing more: structural factors and intergenerational transmission of values and preferences.

Clearly, socioeconomic structural factors may feed into the process of statistical discrimination and therefore generate so-called "rational Islamophobia". As pointed out by ALV, the existence of specific Muslim cultural characteristics associated to gender norms and religiosity contribute to the well-known fact that people of Maghreb origin in France are more often unemployed and experience a more discontinuous career, than not only of French natives but also other immigrants of South European origin (Meurs et al. (1999), Tribalat (2004), Silberman and Fournier (2007)).

Occupation choices, group-specific social networks and values

Structural differences in occupational choices and group specific social capital may also be important alternative dimensions affecting the nature of the integration process of

Muslims. These dimensions moreover may interact with the intergenerational transmission of specific values, reinforcing the existence of a discriminatory penalty in the labor market equilibrium to second generation individuals in France as observed by Algan, Landais and Senik (2012).

This aspect is highlighted by Senik and Verdier (2011) who exploit a survey *Histoire de vie-construction des identités* of the French population conducted in 2003. This survey over-sampled immigrants of the first and second generations and contains both objective and subjective information about individuals' trajectories since their birth.¹⁸ Among a number of general broad-ranging questions, respondents were asked about their attitude towards work. At first sight, immigrants from North Africa attach less importance to their job than do other segments of the population. By contrast, people coming from Southern Europe are closer, in their declared attitudes, to the native French and declare more frequently that working is at least as important as other aspects of life. Of course, subjective work attitudes of individuals of North African origin are related to their objective working conditions: they are more often unemployed, less often on a permanent contract, and generally experience less stable labor market situations. The survey "Histoire de Vie" contains as well information on the professional component of the social network of the respondents. It shows that first and second generations of immigrants from North Africa are much less well connected than of other groups. Interestingly enough, concerning the transmission of work attitudes and the importance of role models, the survey reveals that compared to the average, twice as many respondents of North African origin declare that they have not seen their father work (because he was absent, retired or unemployed) when they were aged 15 years old.¹⁹

In a nutshell, the picture that is suggested by the literature and seems to be supported by the survey "Histoire de vie" is the following: In the 1970's, immigrants from Maghreb, employed in large industrial firms, mostly in unqualified occupations, were particularly exposed to the shock of recession and industrial restructuring; moreover they lacked the network of social relations that could have allowed them to escape unemployment and inactivity. The subsequent generations have generally not benefited from a network of "ethnic" firms that could naturally integrate them. This contrasts with the situation of immigrants from Southern Europe (mostly Portuguese and Spanish), who were protected from long term unemployment thanks to a network of entrepreneurs concentrated in a few sectors such as house-building and public construction, or qualified manual occupations in the sectors of electricity, electronics, and car repairing.²⁰

These stylized facts are consistent with a model of inter-generational transmission of work attitudes, where ethnic social capital plays both a direct role in the access to job and an indirect role in the transmission of work values. Moreover, these dynamics can be self-reinforcing as it becomes common knowledge and is integrated in the expectations of employers. Indeed, matching the survey "Histoire de vie" with the 1999 French census, which

¹⁸ *Histoire de vie -construction des identités*", conducted in 2003 by the French national statistical office (INSEE) in collaboration with other institutional partners. The sample of the survey includes 8,403 adults living in France (metropolitan), with a deliberate over-representation of immigrants of the first and second generation. About half of the sampled population was professionally active in 2003 (4,387 persons).

¹⁹ De facto, controlling for the usual observable characteristics (age, matrimonial status, number of children, education, region), having an absent or unemployed father (hence no working model) significantly increased the probability of being inactive for men aged 18 to 60 years (Senik and Verdier 2009).

²⁰ A study by Dos Santos (2005) reveals indeed that about 60% of Portuguese workers declare that they have found their job using personal relations or thanks to persons of the same origin; this difference persists even in a regression with the usual controls

contains the number employers of each geographical origin for each of the 22 French regions, Senik and Verdier (2011) investigated more precisely the role of the entrepreneurial network on the transmission of work values in France. Exploiting the regional variability of the density of ethnic entrepreneurs across the French regions, they found that, once the entrepreneurship capital specific to each group of immigrants is taken into account, the specificity of immigrants from North Africa in terms of work values becomes statistically insignificant or may actually be reversed. For instance, concerning the subjective statement that “work is important as compared to other aspects of life”, it appears that immigrants, including the minority from North Africa, attach actually more importance to work than French natives, once the effect of “ethnic” entrepreneurial capital is controlled for. With the caveat that identifying relations of causality is certainly too much demanding, given the data available, these results still suggest that work values, entrepreneurship networks and labor market integration are closely intertwined. They also highlight that, under similar global economic conditions, different equilibria can occur across various minority groups. Structural factors induce the development of "non-rational" value-based dimensions that feed into "rational" segmentation processes.

The role of the Family in cultural transmission

Another key locus explaining the persistence of cultural segmentation of a minority group (except in their ethnographic discussions), is the role of the Family with two distinct dimensions: (1) the transmission of the cultural trait from parents to children; and (2) the formation process of the family and in particular the degree of group intermarriage across the different generations as this sets the stage for the transmission of the trait in the following generation (Bisin and Verdier 2000). If most of the problem of discrimination of Muslims rests on the existence of a perceived difference of religious practices and norms between Muslim and the mainstream society, it is natural to ask how such cultural differences tend to evolve over time and across generations, and whether Muslims tend to differ from other immigrant groups.

With respect to the dimension of family socialization processes, sociological studies tend to indicate that religious socialization in Muslim immigrant families in western countries is very effective at transmitting religion to the next generation (Jacob and Kalter 2013; Maliepaard and Lubbers 2013; van de Pol and van Tubergen 2014). For France, a recent study using the TeO survey²¹ (Soehl 2017) compares intergenerational stability in religiosity across Muslim and Christian families and families of different migration statuses. It confirms the fact that in Muslim families, there is very little intergenerational decline in religiosity across generations, while the trend is substantially negative for Christian families. Moreover religion rather than migrant status is the decisive variable explaining the transmission of religiosity from parent to children. What explains such differences in intergenerational stability between Christian and Muslim families? First, the steeper decline in the religiosity of Christians as compared to that of Muslims may be related to differences in experiences of secularization in the origin countries of the migrants. Muslims immigrants come from majority Muslim countries where socialization to religion is more vibrant (especially in the public sphere) than in other European countries from where most Christian immigrants arrive. Also, Islam can be a key identity marker for a minority group in a country like France, where the compatibility of Islam and secularization is a highly politicized issue (Simon and Tiberj (2013)). Such feature

²¹ The TeO (*Trajectoires et Origines*) survey is a data collection project conducted in 2008/2009 that surveyed 20,000 respondents aged 18–60 years old, of which more than 8,000 are immigrants and another 8,000 are children of immigrants (not from the same households).

may create incentives for intergenerational transmission of religion, both as cultural practice or a set of cultural references. In any case, this pattern is consistent with the economic cultural transmission literature that emphasizes the higher marginal propensity of minority groups to transmit their trait to their children (the so-called cultural substitutability property highlighted by Bisin and Verdier (2001)). Muslim migrants along the religious trait perceive themselves more as a minority than their Christian counterparts, and therefore may have higher incentives to socialize their children to their religious practices than the other groups.

With respect to the evolution of family unions, several studies (Algan, Landais, Senik 2009, Safi 2010), document the fact that the intermarriage rate of Muslims in western societies significantly increases from the first generation of immigrants to the second generation, but that compared to other migrant groups, Muslims tend to intermarry less rapidly than other minority groups. Again for the case of France, Soehl (2016)'s analysis goes in the same direction: while the levels of religious homogamy are uniformly higher for those raised in Muslim families than those raised in Christian families, in both cases there is a clear drop in the share with a partner of the same religion. The share of Christian immigrants with a Christian partner drops from 72 percent to just above 50 percent in the second generation. For Muslim families, 81 percent of the immigrant sample is in homogamous religious unions, while this share falls to 69 percent in the second generation. Interestingly, logistic regressions predicting the probability of religious homogamy and controlling for a full set of individual characteristics beyond migration and religion status, indicate that when it comes to partner choice, there is no statistically significant difference between Muslim and Christian respondents. On the other hand, those born in France are much less likely to form religiously homogenous unions than those who were born abroad and immigrated as adults.

Given that religiously non-homogamous families tend to transmit less efficiently their religiosity to subsequent generations (Grotenhuis and Scheepers 2001; Voas 2003), these results suggest interesting opposing forces in the process of integration of Muslim along the religiosity dimension in western societies. On the one hand, there seems to be some religiosity continuity from parents to children in Muslim. On the other hand, second generation immigrants are more likely to form non-homogamous couples, which in turn may induce declines in religiosity by the third generation. In the long run, much in terms of integration may therefore depend on structural demographic processes. Increasing intermarriage rates and the associated decline of religiosity of mixed couples may lead to the cultural convergence of grandchildren of first generation Muslim immigrants towards local natives' religious practices. At the same time though, and especially in the context of the Middle East and African refugees crisis that Europe is facing, continued immigration (including marriage migration) is likely to replenish the stock of religious newcomers, resulting into a higher likelihood of religious homogamous marriages, and subsequently a larger religiosity into the next generation of Muslims' descendants. Assessing the net effect of the role of the family channel for the dynamics of Muslim cultural integration, would demand therefore a comprehensive framework taking into account migration patterns, assortative mating and fertility decisions, and intergenerational transmission with respect to religion.

Islamophobia and Multiplier effects

Islamophobia in France is founded on a sense of cultural threat of Muslim religiosity against the French republican ideal of secularism. At the macro level, this is certainly exemplified by the rethoric of Mrs Lepen's extreme right nationalist party, promoting a stereotyped and negative vision of Islam in the society. The "Hortefeux effect" that ALV identify in the experiments seems as well to capture this phenomenon at the micro level. ALV

note the existence of cultural differences between Muslims and Christians in terms of religiosity and gender norms may feed the existence of such fears. They also conclude that these fears are "exaggerated" and actually reflect a distorted non rational perception of the rooted French, based on some polarization of cultural differences. A first argument by ALV to support this conclusion rests on the fact that in the 2009 survey that they conducted on 511 Serer and Joola Senegalese respondents, Muslim and Christian do not seem to differ significantly in terms of their attitudes towards laïcité (as an obstacle to religious liberty). Given the size and the selection biases associated to the specific survey, one might not however be fully convinced by the argument. Moreover, one may also argue whether the specificity of the Senegalese Serer and Joolas (who historically tended to resist Islamic and Christian conversions) necessarily generalizes to other Muslims in France.

The reader may feel more convinced by the information contained in the survey of Muslim immigrants conducted by Brouard and Tiberj (2005) that relates that, over 80 % of the Muslim respondents see "laïcité" as either "very or rather positive" and that Muslims and Christians from immigrant backgrounds do not seem to differentiate significantly in terms of frequency of worship. At the same time though, a recent survey by IFOP and Institute Montaigne ²² also reveals that about 28 % of the individuals declaring themselves as Muslims or having one Muslim parent, express very conservative religious attitudes (in favor of the niqab, polygamy, against secularism and consider religious law to be more important than the laws of the French State) (El Karoui (2016)). A balanced interpretation of the situation suggests that a majority of Muslims is on a steady path towards secularization. At the same time though, there is a sizable minority of Muslims ready to oppose the French law if the latter is incompatible with their religious prescriptions. Interestingly, the existence of such group may rationalize a complex interpretation of the dynamics of Islamophobia, in which rational and irrational elements are intertwined. In particular, even the perception of a small amount of "justified" threat may rationally induce a disastrous social equilibrium that appears as "exaggerated" from the outside. To retake the example of Basu (2005), whereby group identity markers interact with the possibility of non-cooperation in social interactions between groups, it may be sufficient to have just a few individuals of one group with an intrinsic (non-directly observable) taste for noncooperation to unravel an equilibrium inducing all individuals (even those with no such taste) to be trapped into a group discriminating and aggressive equilibrium. In such a case, this outcome can be viewed as simply the result of irrational fears by members of one group or the other. The situation may actually reflect magnifying and multiplier effects on rationally constructed equilibrium beliefs, triggered by just a minimum amount of taste discrimination.

5) What to be done to improve the integration of Muslims in Christian Heritage Societies?

In the last part of the book, ALV tackle the difficult question of what to do to unlock the discriminatory equilibrium in which Muslim migrants and western countries natives find themselves. The authors contemplate a set of policy prescriptions at three levels of intervention: the individual level, the communities and organizations level; and the macro level (ie. the state). Overall, most of the ALV prescriptions make sense, despite having sometimes some limitations from an implementation perspective.

²² The French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP) is a private poll survey institution in France

For instance, at the individual level, one of ALV's suggestions based on nudge theory is to challenge religious discrimination by highlighting to Muslim families the integration benefits of giving non-Muslim first names to their children. While this may have beneficial effects in terms of labor market integration, one should not discount too easily the cultural costs to Muslim families. As documented by sociological studies, there is a significant degree of religious continuity in terms of intergenerational transmission inside Muslim families. The symbolic value for families of transmitting an Islamic name, (a well identified marker of Muslim identity) may therefore be a resilient feature, difficult to change from a cultural point of view. As well, when a nudging policy strategy is scaled up and therefore becomes common knowledge in the society, one may expect its efficiency to be mitigated. Discriminating rooted French get eager to find alternative ways to screen Muslim people. This is consistent with the surprising finding by Behaghel et al. (2015) that anonymized resumes procedures tend to effectively reduce the hiring of minority people at the interview stage. The policy may also feed Nationalist movements political narratives like "they change their names just to try to avoid to be recognized and to feed on us", reminiscent of the well-known anti-Semitic propaganda of 30ths in Germany or France. On the other side, Muslim families may realize that one is inducing them to abandon an essential cultural identity marker in the name of some uncertain benefits of reduced discrimination.

The second level of interventions at the institutional and community level appears as more promising. From an economic perspective, ALV are right at questioning the efficiency of quotas and compulsory "anonymous resumés" in reducing the anti-Muslim discrimination in the labor market. Given that the efficiency condition of equal productivity between Muslims and rooted French is unlikely to be satisfied (because of structural inequality of access to education and training), these policies "full of good intentions" go against strong economic incentives and are likely to backfire. As an alternative, ALV propose the promotion of diversity training programs, and actions targeting the reduction of the rational component of anti-Muslim discrimination inside corporations. This is justified by several academic studies reflecting the benefits in terms of creativity and problem solving of group diversity in team works (Lazear 1999b). One should note however that the productivity benefits associated to diversity in team-work are often shown for specific populations (college students (Hansen, Owan, and Pan (2006)), or undergraduate students in international business (Hoogedorn and van Praag 2012)). Such benefits are also more likely to be realized for non-standardized task occupations, involving typically skilled rather than unskilled populations of individuals. Again, because of the lack of access to skill acquisition by a large fraction of young individuals of Muslim origin, it is not clear how this type of argument may have a significant impact in terms of inducing firms to unlock the discriminatory equilibrium that many unskilled Muslims face. Given that inequality of access to skills is a fundamental structural root to the existence of the "rational" dimension of the discriminatory equilibrium, tackling directly this distortion by improving the inclusiveness of the school system to descendants of Muslim migrants (notably as suggested by ALV with programs involving more efficiently parents) seems probably the most promising policy line to follow from a dynamic intergenerational point of view.

ALV also propose at the community level cooperation with the French Council of the Muslim Religion (CFCM) and that state funding be used to promote training centers of imams and Muslim leaders in France. The development of an Islam compatible with republican secular values obviously connects to the systemic level and the issue of the policy framework that the state should adopt with respect to the integration process of immigrants in a host society. Should the state be multiculturalist or assimilationist? ALV touch at this difficult debate relying on five waves of the European Social Survey (ESS). Acknowledging the usual

caveats of selection bias and endogeneity issues associated to cross-country survey data analyses, they somewhat provocatively suggest that, compared to multiculturalism, the assimilationist policy framework is more successful at reducing the divergence in cultural norms between Muslim and Christian immigrants, and consequently is more likely to reduce the relative discrimination these immigrants face in their host country. Consistent with such findings, ALV propose to introduce citizenship contracts in which immigrants in order to stay in the host country have to commit to learn the national language and to take training courses to understand the national values of the host society. In return, such training sessions would be provided to them at no cost.

This proposal echoes a recent heated debate in France, after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, on how far should French institutions accommodate the specificities of Islam in the public space. On the one hand, Pierre Manent (2016), a distinguished French philosopher, argued about the limits of secularism in occidental societies to integrate Muslim communities, and expressed doubts about the fact that Islam can modernize in ways that Westerners can find more congenial. As a consequence, he reluctantly proposed the idea of a social contract between the Muslim community and its host country, in which on the one hand, the western society should find room for Muslim faith and cultural practices in the public space.²³ In return, the Muslim minority should accept the fact that they it *is* a minority within a larger community that is not Muslim and is not ruled according to Islamic rules.²⁴ That position was strongly criticized by some visible French intellectuals such as Pascal Bruckner (2017), opposing that making a special accommodating case for the Islam religion goes against the very concept of French “laïcité”. Gilles Kepel (2016), a distinguished specialist of Islam in France, also noted that the proposal of a specific social contract for Muslim communities would face important commitment and implementation problems, given the decentralized nature of the Islamic religion and the diversity of Muslim communities faced on the ground in western societies.²⁵

The heated debate on the type of policy framework to implement for Muslims communities' integration in a western society like France illustrates several features²⁶. First, what seems to matter for the construction of beliefs on the capacity of Muslims to integrate in ways compatible with western societal values, is not so much the perceptions and motivations as expressed by the modal Muslim, but more so those vindicated by a fraction of the community, radicals (mostly young, unskilled and socially marginalized) who are clearly hostile to western liberal values. As already mentioned, such phenomenon is consistent with an economic model of identity formation and conflicts in which rational beliefs inferred on a small fraction of individuals can unravel into "exaggerated" types of discriminatory equilibria for the whole group. If true, this suggests that unlocking the discriminatory equilibrium will require more than the integration of the majority of Muslim immigrants. It will require

²³Specifically Manent proposed that the hijab and other religious symbols should be permitted in public and official places, public swimming pools should set hours for single-sex swimming and local governments should subsidize the creation of Muslim prayer spaces where they are in short supply. He acknowledged only two exceptions to the rule of accommodation: no tolerance for polygamy or for face-veiling.

²⁴In other words, Muslims should accept the principle of the freedom of speech of liberal societies, and to be openly criticized as any other religion. Manent also emphasizes that crucial to achieving this balanced social contract is a rediscovery by non-Muslim French of their own identity and nationhood.

²⁵ El Karoui (2016) also recognize the fragmentation of Muslim institutions in France, nourished and spread by various national movements, as well as by transnational organisations and foreign States.

²⁶This debate is obviously not limited to France. For instance, in a provocative book, Caldwell (2009) provides a passionate defense of “rational Islamophobia”, strongly criticizing the liberal immigration policies undertaken by European governments, regarding Muslim migration in Europe during the second half of the XX century. See Laitin (2010) for a contradictory review of Caldwell’s positions.

unlocking in a strong manner the reinforcing beliefs that extreme non cooperative behaviors are possible between rooted French and Muslim individuals. To convince the modal natives and the modal Muslims that an "unraveling" equilibrium is unlikely to happen, a credible commitment both by the state and the Muslim communities should signal that extreme positions incompatible with societal cooperation are not feasible. On the Muslim community side, this implies clear statements from legitimate French leaders of Muslim faith (supported by the silent majority of well integrated Muslims) conveying the idea that being both French and Muslim does not pose any issue. On the state side, integrative policies should reach out the typically young and marginalized individuals who are attracted to religious fundamentalism. While the centralized nature of state authority may help build up such institutional commitment on the state side. The decentralized nature of religious authority makes this more challenging for the (Sunni) Muslim communities.

Second, the policy debate about the integration of Muslims communities has to be put into an evolving current external context characterized by two important dimensions: a) the radicalization process of Islam in some Muslim majority countries shapes the identity markers of Muslim individuals in western societies, b) the current pressures of flows of Muslim immigrants coming as economic and political refugees from Middle East and African countries. These dimensions contribute importantly to the political economy constraints that any integration policy of Muslims into a Christian Heritage society will face. The first dimension currently tends to increase the perceived cultural distance between host country natives and Muslims immigrants along some important societal dimensions. It provides a reference point to some second generation, young, socially marginalized Muslim individuals who see appropriation of Islam as a mode of ideological rebellion against the rest of French society. As a consequence, it raises the political stakes related to the integration process of these Muslim communities in these host societies.

The second dimension connects to the issue of an immigration policy that is politically incentive compatible with the integration of the current Muslim communities in their host countries. A first element relates to the fiscal cost and the redistributive consequences of accepting (large) numbers of Muslim refugees for the local populations, including second-generation immigrants. Recently, Ruist (2015) provided some estimate of the fiscal cost of refugee migrants in Sweden. He carefully compared the revenues generated by refugee migrants in 2007, before the recent migrant crisis, and the fiscal costs of providing them with various services. In 2007, refugee migrants represented 5.1 percent of Sweden's population, accounted for 5.6 percent of total public spending, and contributed 3.4 percent of total public revenue. Overall, Ruist found that Sweden's non refugee population redistributed 1 percent of gross domestic product to its refugee population in 2007, four-fifths of which reflects lower revenue levels from refugees, and one-fifth of which reflects higher per capita costs for providing for refugees. For 2015, the estimate of the cost of Sweden's refugee population increased to 1.35 percent of GDP. While the net fiscal cost of accepting refugees seems relatively modest according to this study, it is by no means insignificant. The issue of its alternative use and redistributive impact leads naturally to the question of whether one should do more to integrate the large second-generation Muslim populations before deciding to bring in large new refugee populations.

Another issue relates to the demographic effects of these refugees flows and how they interact dynamically with the question of integration of second-generation immigrants from previous cohorts. Specifically, a continuous entry of Muslim refugees in a host country, by its size effect, may slowdown the process of marital and social intermixing, and consequently the process of intergenerational convergence of cultural attitudes and preferences towards natives.

From a political economy perspective, such feature may be expected to induce the emergence over generations of an electorate with political preferences further away from those of the current modal native. This in turn may reinforce the sense of a cultural threat from Islam and the logic of a discriminatory equilibrium between Muslims and the host societies.

Together, these elements suggest that a policy discussion on what to do to unlock the discriminatory equilibrium between natives and Muslims should also take into account the dynamic political economy constraints associated to how current native voters perceive the society median's bliss point to evolve with the integration process of second and third generations of immigrants, and how to coordinate the integration framework with an immigration policy that adjusts to the external evolutions in Muslim dominated origin countries.

Conclusions

The book by ALV provides a very useful contribution to the ongoing debate of integration of Muslim migrants into western societies. Using a variety of empirical methodologies (field experiments, original local surveys, and international individual level data), each of them with its own strengths and limitations, ALV overall convincingly point out at the existence of a discriminatory equilibrium in which Muslims and natives from France and other Christian Heritage countries are locked in.

The book also provides food for thoughts on how to unlock that situation. With the objective of promoting equal access and participation in a context of group cultural tolerance, ALV's policy recommendations are sensible. An important issue though remains on how to design these policy frames in such a way as to make Muslim integration credibly incentive compatible with the political economy constraints of the various social groups (natives and migrants) interacting in these societies. Indeed, one may expect members of each group to build up expectations and beliefs (instrumentalized or not) on how their political and cultural preferences may be dynamically affected by the intergenerational integration process of Muslims in the society. Intergenerationally, some may perceive themselves as winners, others as losers of these evolutions. In the current context of risks of Islamic radicalization, and Right-wing populist movements questioning whether Muslim religiosity is compatible with western liberal values, creating credible policy commitment ensuring the expression of cultural diversity in a pluralistic and open way, remains therefore a challenge for Christian-Heritage societies and their Muslim communities.

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