

Study shows French Muslims hit by religious bias

March 25, 2010

French Muslims face considerable discrimination based purely on their religion instead of their country of origin, according to a study released Thursday by French and American researchers.

The study, "Are French Muslims Discriminated Against in Their Own Country?" found that Muslims sending out resumes in hopes of a job interview had 2.5 times less chance than Christians of a positive response to their applications. It also showed that monthly salaries of Muslims was on average €400 less than Christians.

"The discrimination Muslim candidates endure in the French labor market therefore seems to have concrete repercussions on their standard of living," the study says.

The study bills itself as the first to isolate Islam as the source of discrimination in the labor market.

The work was conducted by two [Stanford University](#) professors, [David Laitin](#) and [Claire Adida](#), and a colleague at the [Sorbonne University](#), [Marie-Anne Valfort](#). It was carried out in conjunction with the [French-American Foundation](#) and a grant from the [U.S. National Science Foundation](#).

To determine whether Muslim French citizens of immigrant origin suffered specifically religious discrimination, the researchers fabricated nearly identical resumes for two single, 24-year-old women from [Senegal](#).

Immigrants hailing from [sub-Saharan Africa](#) are "less spontaneously associated with Islam" in the collective mind, the study explains.

Batches of resumes for the two women, [Marie Diouf](#) and [Khadija Diouf](#), plus a third woman with a typically French name, [Aurelie Menard](#), were sent out in response to published job offers in hopes of getting an initial interview.

Marie's resume showed a period of work as an assistant accountant at [Secours Catholique](#) and volunteer work with French Scouts of [France](#). Khadija's showed the same accounting work with [Secours Islamique](#). and volunteer work with [Muslim Scouts of France](#).

Marie received 21 percent of positive responses, Khadija received 8 percent.

Another study looked at 511 households of Senegalese origin and found that Muslims made €400 a month less, on average.

France, with [Western Europe's](#) largest Muslim population, has been wrestling with how to better integrate citizens of immigrant origin, particularly its estimated 5 million strong Muslim population, mainly from former colonies in [North Africa](#).

There is, in particular, widespread concern that some Muslims are compromising secularism, a value inscribed in the France's constitution and meant to assure that all citizens are equal.

Laitin said the study suggests that "the goals of secularism (have) not been fulfilled ...," Laitin said. "At present, their own ideals have not been fully met."