

BOOK REVIEWS

Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies, by CLAIRE L. ADIDA, DAVID D. LAITIN, and MARIE-ANNE VALFORT. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016, 288 pp.; \$45.00 (cloth).

With its crystal clear argumentation and creative use of experimental games to unearth bias, Adida, Laitin, and Valfort's *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies* is an important contribution to ongoing conversations about Muslims in the West. Adida, Laitin, and Valfort add to this scholarship by seeking to isolate the effect of being Muslim on one's experience of social discrimination, the result being a resource scholars can utilize to show that Muslims in France face discrimination specifically for their religious affiliation.

To investigate religious discrimination, the authors compare Muslim immigrants to non-Muslim immigrants while controlling for a host of other factors that might also result in discrimination, such as race, immigration history, and country of origin. They also examine elements that might give non-Muslim immigrants an advantage over Muslims upon their arrival in France, such as language skills and the legacy of colonial-era favoritism. They accomplish this by comparing the experiences of Christian and Muslim immigrants to France from Senegal. Throughout the book, the authors take potential criticisms of their research design into account, frequently noting that if their conclusions about the nature of discrimination against Muslims in France are incorrect, it is in the direction of being too conservative about the extent of this bias.

Adida, Laitin, and Valfort want to determine why Muslims have "failed" to

integrate into France. They argue that many non-Muslim French who have lived in France for at least three generations tend to discriminate against Muslims for two reasons: out of irrational "taste discrimination" (drawing on economist Gary Becker) and out of a rational concern that certain Muslim behaviors threaten French businesses and values. Examples of "rational discrimination" in which employers might engage include, according to the authors, a concern that fasting employees are less productive or that employees who abstain from company parties with alcohol will damage the "esprit de corps." Facing such discrimination, Muslims in France defensively turn inward. The authors note that, compared to their non-Muslim counterparts, Muslim immigrants and their descendants "exhibit greater attachment to the homeland of their ancestors, lower identification with French society, and lower adoption of the host country's secular norms" (121). The result, we are told, is a "discriminatory equilibrium" wherein Muslims will continue to disengage from the rest of France as they experience discrimination, and this disengagement will foster increased discrimination from non-Muslims who feel justified in seeing Muslims as unwilling to enter into French society.

The book concludes with a series of policy suggestions to end this cycle. There are a number of broader contextual factors that go largely unaddressed in the book, resulting in some policy suggestions that seem overly optimistic (increase a firm's positive reputation by giving out "diversity complaint" labels) or that place the burden of ending discrimination on the discriminated (Muslims should give their children less Muslim-sounding names).

Does the burden of integration rest entirely on the new population, or does the host population have obligations as well?

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Are Muslims failing to integrate, or does our concept of “integration” provide inadequate responses to the challenges of managing substantial religious diversity in Western democracies? Where does structural racism fit into the authors’ account, and what does it mean to say that Muslims engage in behaviors that undermine the French value of secularism? The concept of secularism, which has profoundly shaped the debate about Muslims in France today, is primarily located in the appendix. The authors do not meditate on the paradox that French Muslims may actually be internalizing their French identity by exercising their Constitutional right to engage in behaviors (like wearing a headscarf in public) that some non-Muslims will, controversially, identify as a threat to secularism. Engagement with the literature on secularism studies or critical race theory would have generated more opportunities to investigate the meaning of integration and to consider the uneven positionality of Muslims and non-Muslims in the enactment of this discriminatory equilibrium.

While France provides an interesting starting point for raising questions about how to respond to populations that are more pious than the majority of the nation, there remain some limits to the generalizability of the French case. France’s unique relationship with secularism and the history of its war with Algeria have a profound influence on how Muslims are perceived, more, perhaps, than the “Christian heritage” that supposedly binds France together with the rest of Western Europe. That said, this book provides a refreshingly frank discussion about the challenges of making causal claims in the social sciences. It is an approachable and informative lesson in the art of careful research design with a significant message about anti-Muslim sentiment that will inspire many fruitful conversations.

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Pastors and Public Life: The Changing Face of American Protestant Clergy, by CORWIN E. SMIDT. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, 264 pp.; \$24.95 (paper).

Few observers of American Protestantism have displayed the insight and breadth of Corwin E. Smidt. Smidt’s most recent work, *Pastors and Public Life*, is the latest addition to an impressive corpus of scholarly work about the public face of American Protestantism, with a particular and ongoing emphasis on the political roles played by Protestant clergy.

The scope and direction of this impressive volume are deceptively simple. Using surveys conducted in 1989, 2001, and 2009, Smidt compares the demographic, religious, and political characteristics of clergy in seven denominations. Three of these are generally considered evangelical Protestant: the Assemblies of God, the Christian Reformed Church, and the Southern Baptist Convention. The other four denominations covered are usually classified as mainline Protestant: the Disciples of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church of America, and the United Methodist Church. Smidt tracks a number of variables over the two decades in question, including demographic variables, theological orientations, “social theology,” attitudes toward issues of public policy, and political activity.

Despite Smidt’s impressive writing skills, this is a demanding book. Although the data analyses are appropriately straightforward, Smidt’s methodological details, such as question wording and sampling, require the reader’s close attention. Moreover, the very breadth of topics Smidt covers in this compact volume makes facile summary of the findings rather difficult.

Not surprisingly, Smidt uncovers both impressive continuity and substantial change in the demographic and attitudinal characteristics of Protestant clergy. Smidt shows that the clergy members have become older over time, which represents both the aging of clergy during the earlier time periods as well as the tendency for some clergy members to enter the ministry later in life.