

# A Discussion of Claire L. Adida, David D. Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort's *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies*

**Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies.** By Claire L. Adida, David D. Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016. 288p. \$46.50 cloth.

The title of the book needs no explanation: *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies*. It marks an issue of widespread and obvious current relevance, especially in Europe and in the United States in the age of Donald Trump. It registers a claim that is surely controversial and that also perhaps blends empirical and normative judgments. The book is thus a perfect candidate for a *Perspectives* symposium because it opens itself to so many different perspectives.

## Abdulkader Sinno

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This is a methodologically exceptional and urgently topical tome. The authors masterfully integrate multiple methods to isolate and quantify the economic penalty for being Muslim in France, and to identify some drivers of discrimination and poor integration. As one would expect from such relevant research, Claire Adida, David Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort suggest policies to facilitate Muslim integration (Chapter 10). It is, however, tricky to formulate good policy recommendations, which often deal with messy and complicated realities, on the basis of rigorous research that clinically isolates a few suspected causal mechanisms. The authors do it as well as currently possible and consequently illustrate how even the most brilliant minds in our discipline cannot transcend the limitations of formulating policies based on rigorous research findings.

There may be a topical scholar's dilemma (TSD): The more rigorous and clinical the research design, the more reliable the findings, but also the less useful these findings are in formulating policy recommendations. Mastery of quantitative research is measured by the ability to identify, isolate, and quantify the effect of a particular causal mechanism—a costly endeavor. The more complex the causal mechanism, and the more the scholar wants to increase confidence in his or her findings, the more costly is the implementation of the research design. The high cost of rigorous inquiry limits the range of what can be tested,

and consequently the scope of findings on which policy recommendations could be based. Rigorous scholars therefore find themselves forced to rely on others' research and on their intuition in order to produce policy recommendations, instead of building on their narrow findings. Let us look at three policy recommendations that the authors make to illustrate the point.

In their first policy proposal, Adida, Laitin, and Valfort recommend broadcasting one of their findings—that a part of anti-Muslim discrimination is nonrational (pp. 150–51). They base their recommendation on research by others that shows that referees in basketball games tend to correct discriminatory behavior when informed that it is nonrational and that it violates institutional norms. Their recommendation relies on reasoning by analogy instead of their own findings—they assume that agents make similar calculations in different institutional and cultural contexts. Their analogy also ignores the fact that only the French government has the authority and ability to broadcast and reinforce a powerful pro-equality narrative in the context that interests them. Past French governments, however, seemed more interested in marginalizing Muslims than helping them integrate. The authors are therefore making a policy recommendation based on wishing away another intractable problem afflicting French society—the government's lack of interest in addressing the marginalization of Muslims.

The same issue applies to the recommendation that Muslim integration can be improved by increasing Muslim representation in the French parliament (pp. 175–76). While also sensible, this recommendation relies on dissolving the similarly formidable political obstacles that have

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*Abdulkader Sinno is Associate Professor of Political Science and Middle Eastern Studies at Indiana University.*

kept Muslims from being represented in the French parliament. The book does not speak to how this could be done, nor does it refer to works that can speak to how it could be done. When minority advancement in one area (employment) requires breakthroughs in two others (representation and government support), the three are likely to be interlocked, with advancement in any area being held back by discrimination in the other two. The two ways to break the logjam may be a broad civil rights movement that aims to redress discrimination in all areas of life, or incremental improvements in each area that may ultimately unravel the entire discriminatory edifice. The scope of this research only allows the authors to explore measures addressing discrimination in the area of employment, but not in connected areas of governmental agenda setting or political representation.

In their second recommendation, Adida, Laitin, and Valfort advise Muslims to change their names to reduce discrimination against them in the labor market and in other spheres (pp. 151–53). They base this advice on findings from another study that shows through correspondence experiments that, all else being equal, French employers discriminate heavily in calling back applicants with Maghrebin names, but temper their discrimination in the case of Maghrebins with Christian first names. The authors claim that this finding suggests that Muslims applicants with a Christian first name nudge employers to be less discriminatory by signaling commitment to integration. This policy recommendation illustrates the TSD in two ways.

First, and just like in the earlier example, Adida, Laitin, and Valfort do not utilize their own research to make this recommendation—they rely on another study. Their rigorous and costly correspondence experiment is only designed to quantify the substantial amount of discrimination against Muslim job applicants in contrast with Christian applicants who share their ethnicity and white French natives, but could not possibly shed light on whether Muslims' adoption of Christian first names effectively signals integration or reduces bias. They could have made this same recommendation on the basis of the other scholar's focused research without conducting a single experiment.

Second, neither the authors' nor the other scholar's correspondence experiments shed light on post-call-back discrimination. A Muslim may benefit from a Christian name at the correspondence stage of a job application because of a corporate officer's inattention, but his or her ethnicity may be only too obvious at the interview stage. It is perfectly fine to limit research to the correspondence stage of the hiring process, but such research does not suffice to show that individuals with Muslim last names would reduce future discrimination against their newborns by calling them Georges or Marie.

A third recommendation made by the authors is for the state to use correspondence tests, such as the one

they use, to regularly audit the recruiting practices of corporations (p. 157). Unfortunately, the tools used by social scientists are geared toward the identification of trends across large samples, not the enforcement of policy or the auditing of specific firms. Random selection for a correspondence test allows the characteristics of firms in each treatment group to be comparable, which is perfect for social science purposes, but also means that no human resources (HR) officer needs to see two matched applications. Government enforcers, however, will need to produce firm-specific evidence and contend with firm-specific hiring justifications. They would need to submit matched pairs of pretend applicants to the same corporation in large enough numbers to prove that the firm is discriminating against minority applicants. The number of matched applications submitted may have to become prohibitive if the firm has a mix of biased and unbiased recruiters or if, for example, its officers discriminate against Muslim men but not Muslim women (four treatments). Tests may therefore only help audit compliance by very large enterprises with enough positions to fill. Also, a correspondence test works best with unaware firm officers who do not react strategically. An HR officer anticipating potential state auditing could behave fairly at the call-back stage but discriminate during the interview stage, or could completely ignore applications that appear to form matched pairs.

These problems are not unique to this **outstanding book**—they afflict the work of all scholars trying to inform policy based on rigorous research. I am not arguing that rigorous scholars should not formulate policy recommendations or that researchers should not be rigorous, but there may be a need for a disciplinary conversation about how to convincingly transition from research findings to policy formulation.

To be clear, the recommendations by Adida, Laitin, and Valfort are instructive, sensible, and compelling, and they are likely to be effective if implemented. **These recommendations are informed by the intuition of brilliant thinkers and their research, even if they are not directly based on their findings.** And finally, the cachet of intellect may very well be what is needed to help societies such as France's to break out of damaging thought loops on Islam, integration, and discrimination. **For that, and for much more, *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies* deserves to be read and discussed in graduate seminars for many years to come.**

**Amaney Jamal**

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This is an exceptional book that addresses a timely debate about an extremely important topic: Muslim integration in Western societies. The authors make two core contributions. The first is to the social scientific and empirical study of Muslim integration in Europe, and the second is to policy debates addressing the “discriminatory equilibrium” that exists between the French and their Muslim population.

The first part of the book is enormously successful. To control for confounders and eliminate concerns about endogeneity, Claire Adida, David Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort quite ingeniously identify a group of immigrants (Senegalese) who vary by religion (Muslim and Christian) but share many similar features. The authors then conduct their own surveys, interviews, experiments, lab games, and focus groups to ascertain whether there is a uniquely Muslim discriminatory trend in France. They confirm through their meticulous approach that, indeed, such discrimination exists.

What is most impressive about this first part is its careful and cutting-edge empirical work: amassing original data, implementing well-designed experiments, and paying attention to difficult identification challenges when examining the effects of homeland influences on immigrant integration. The authors should also be commended for stepping up to better understand the difficult subject of discrimination, a topic that has garnered much attention yet is still poorly understood. Adida, Laitin, and Valfort effectively raise the bar on research on immigration to Europe. And they should be very proud of the product they have produced.

The book’s second contribution is also noteworthy. Upon convincingly providing evidence that discrimination does exist toward Muslims in France, the authors turn to addressing policy recommendations. And while not everyone will agree with the policy diagnosis or its prescriptions, the authors should be credited for engaging in vital normative debates that have far-reaching consequences on Western societies. This is not an easy subject to tackle. It is complicated, complex, and quite challenging on many fronts.

The authors are troubled by the current “discriminatory equilibrium” that exists in France. Yet in their efforts to offer helpful policy prescriptions, one cannot help but wonder whether their analysis about the underlying problems withstands closer scrutiny. Let me start with the title of the book, *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies*. This title is quite fatalistic,

suggesting that Muslim integration is invariably doomed. However, there are examples of integration, even as measured by the authors themselves, and the empirical evidence from other Christian-heritage societies, like the United States, that does not add up. Second, France (champion of *laïcité* policies) is used as a case representative of Christian-heritage societies, which some might find problematic.

From the outset of the sections that deal with these normative issues, there appears to be a tension, and the authors oscillate back and forth about it throughout the book. To insert themselves in a normative policy debate, they attempt to gain a better understanding of the sources underlying French discrimination. This is an important analytical goal, especially if the policy prescriptions are to gain traction. Yet in undertaking this very challenging task, the language the authors use to explain French discrimination is, unfortunately, rather legitimating of it. The authors use terminology like “rational” versus “non-rational” discrimination, and “statistical-based” versus “nonstatistical-based” discrimination. Although common in the economics literature on discrimination, the assignment of social science terminology of “rationality” and “statistics” to better explain discrimination is a bit unsettling for any reader concerned with these normative debates. Further, the book presents very little robust empirical work to disentangle whether “statistical” discrimination is indeed a “rational” response to Muslims. Do French Muslims truly possess a bundle of undesirable qualities that makes hiring them unattractive? Or are these attributed “undesirable qualities” instead an artifact of prejudicial portrayals that poorly represent Muslims to begin with?

Chapters 6 and 7 spend ample time determining whether discrimination against Muslims in the labor market might be statistically or rationally determined—that is, if discrimination is rational because the presence of Muslims leads to economic inefficiencies. There are three primary economic reasons that might prove costly to French employers. First, Muslims possess inegalitarian gender norms that carry over into the labor market and workplace. Second, Muslim religious practices, like fasting and praying, might produce inefficiencies. And the third factor is the language barrier between immigrants and the French. Additionally, in Chapter 7 we also learn that “even if French recruiters considered Muslim candidates as strictly identical to Christian candidates in terms of productive characteristics, they would still discriminate against Muslims, out of pure distaste” (p. 105; emphasis added). Thus, the authors conclude that in France, a discriminatory equilibrium exists that must be “nudged.”

Although the authors spent almost six chapters proving the point that Muslims are indeed discriminated against because they are Muslim, and that this discrimination does not appear to be justified by Muslim practice or norms,

*Amaney Jamal is Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics at Princeton University.*

Chapter 8 starts diagnosing the problem of discrimination by assigning blame to both sides: “We find that both Muslims and rooted French jointly bear the responsibility for Muslims’ integration failure in France” (p. 108). What is the Muslim contribution to this failure? The authors go on to say that “Muslims display characteristics that leave room for statistical discrimination [while the] rooted French exhibit unprovoked taste-based discrimination against Muslims” (p. 105). It would have been fascinating to explore which social and political processes lead certain characteristics—like religiosity or views about gender—to become salient in the first place, especially since they were much less politicized in the first few decades of Muslim settlement in France. This fact in turn suggests that what appears to be rational statistical discrimination at the individual level is at least partly founded on collective political processes that construct a distorted presentation of minority groups.

Framing the diagnosis along these lines, then, sets the stage for policy prescriptions that may not capture the essence of the problem. First of all, the authors speak of integration failure because the French are discriminatory and racist against Muslims. This is not a failure of integration as such. This is a failure of French society to deal with the integration of its minority communities. To be fair to the authors, however, they spend considerable time discussing ways to reverse French discriminatory and racist practices and norms.

Second, if indeed these “stereotypical” criteria outlined in the book are legitimately the sources of statistical discrimination—language, religious practice, and gender norms—then we should not be in an age and time where Islamophobia is at an all-time high across most Western societies. Yes, Muslims in Muslim-majority countries tend to have more egalitarian gender attitudes than other groups worldwide, as do European Muslims when compared to European non-Muslims, but if that concern was a major factor, the authors should not find so much French discrimination against Muslim *women*! Moreover, the survey results in the book that examine the attitudes of first-generation Muslims against second-generation Muslims in Europe and the United States (pp. 137 and 144) illustrate that gender norms are rapidly improving across generations. In fact, the Pew Survey of Muslims Americans in 2011 shows that second-generation Muslim Americans are more likely to mirror mainstream Americans on attitudes on gender

equality than are Muslims from majority Muslim countries.<sup>1</sup> So, if anything, these results show remarkable success and assimilation, not integration failures.<sup>2</sup>

On other social issues we see a similar story. I provide an example from the Pew National Surveys that have now surveyed Muslim Americans for more than a decade (2007, 2011, 2017). Concerning Muslim American attitudes towards the acceptability of homosexuality, only 27% of the US Muslim public believed that homosexuality was acceptable in 2007. By 2011, that number had reached 39% and by 2017 it had almost doubled from 2007 to 52% (The US public sits at 63% in 2017). It shows a remarkable change in attitudes toward the acceptability of homosexuality among the Muslim American community in only a decade. Similarly, the second and third generations are just as fluent in English as are the mainstream publics.

The second and third generation of Muslims in France remain quite devout in their practice, however. In this regard, Muslim prayers and Muslim fasting can pose inefficiencies in the labor market. But even the authors point out that prayer is not so time-consuming. After all, numerous French non-Muslim workers take breaks to smoke and drink coffee (and the fact that devout Muslims do not drink or take drugs should, if anything, be a plus from an efficiency perspective). Further, the Ramadan fast might result in inefficiencies due to fatigue. But even the most vocal firm manager in the book complains about a 10%–15% reduction in productivity (for the month of Ramadan) in a firm with a large concentration of Muslims (though, arguably, Muslims provide cheaper labor and, hence, better profit margins).

In offering recommendations, the authors take a bold and commendable position maintaining that this discriminatory equilibrium must be challenged in France at the individual level, the meso level, and the state level. And while the policy recommendations disproportionately focus on how the French might address their own Islamophobia, the authors also have advice to Muslims. There are two ways to read this advice. On the one hand, because the discrimination is so irrational, how might Muslims protect themselves? On the other hand, given that Muslims are disliked for some of these “statistical” reasons like religious practice, it is best that Muslims do not provoke the French.

**Table 1**  
**Pew survey results of muslim american attitudes**

	2007	2011	2017
<b>Homosexuality should be accepted in society</b>	27%	39%	52% (U.S. public is at 63%)

Source: “US Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream.” <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2017/07/09105631/U.S.-MUSLIMS-FULL-REPORT-with-population-update-v2.pdf>.

This difference is not about semantics but has actual implications for how we think about this debate. The first approach suggests that Muslims are outright victims of a discourse that is stacked against them for no other reason than that they belong to a group whose religious background has been politicized in the last several decades. The latter suggests that Muslims warrant some of this discrimination because of what they think, believe, and practice. Therefore, Muslims have to consistently prove that they are not “those” types of Muslims. They must subject their leaders to adequate “training” and “socialization” so that they are more like the French. But in suggesting these solutions, are we reinforcing exaggerated and hysterical stereotypes that underlie the problem to begin with? In other words, should the burden be on Muslims to constantly prove that they are not a) terrorists, b) fundamentalists, c) women haters, and/or d) religious fanatics?

Thus, the authors’ suggestion that if Muslims did not have Muslim identifying names, this cycle of discrimination could perhaps be broken is questionable at best. Does the solution lie with Muslims to deny who they are in order to be accepted? And what does this mean for the way we think about discrimination and racialization in Western societies? The authors show that those French who interacted with Muslims (through speed-chatting games) maintained (albeit milder) prejudice against Muslims. Thus, a Muslim can change her name from Ayesha to Emily or his name from Mohammad to Mike. However, is concealment of identity markers a practical solution when the French will continue to dislike Muslims because of the way they “encounter” Muslims and Islam? The prism of suspicion and difference, and not interaction and acceptance, shapes this debate. In my opinion, trying to make Muslim identity invisible privileges and reinforces, rather than challenges, the discriminatory equilibrium.

### *Notes*

- 1 Pew 2011: In response to the question: “Do men or women make better political leaders or is there no difference?” 68% of the U.S. Muslims said in 2011 that there is no difference, while the general U.S. public was at 72%. The relevant comparison, though, is with Muslim attitudes in Muslim-majority countries, where in 2007, majorities in the majority of Muslim countries indicated that men were better political leaders.
- 2 The Muslim community in France differs from the Muslim American community on a variety of socioeconomic criteria. The Muslim American community tends to be better educated and wealthier. However, what this distinction shows is that socioeconomic status matters for “integration.”

## Anne Norton

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This is a much smaller book than it first appears, and a far more troubling one. As the title of their book avers, Claire Adida, David Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort promise to explain “why Muslim integration fails in Christian-heritage societies.” They do much less. The book is not a study of Christian heritage-societies. It is, as the authors write in the appendix, “a case study of Muslim integration into France” (pp. 186–87). France is an “assimilatory regime” unlike “most other Christian-heritage societies” (p. 176). One in fact could not readily generalize from a case that is “if not unique in Europe, at least quite distinctive” (p. 191).

Yet even the French case is neglected here. The authors note, albeit belatedly and in an appendix, that France is the “only imperial power that fought not only imperial wars of conquest but also an anticolonial war among a population that was overwhelmingly Muslim.” (p. 191). They recognize that the “issue of Muslims and their status in France is deeply linked to France’s fractious relationship with Algeria.” Yet Adida, Laitin, and Valfort chose not to study that relationship. They focused instead on two small groups of Senegalese who immigrated to France in the 1970s, the Serer and Joola. They did so in order to “isolate Muslim factors” (pp. 17–18). In short, they constructed an experiment that excised a history of settler colonialism and current politics, ignored racial difference, and elided the presence and influence of Maghrebi Jews in France. The dominant Muslim Maghrebi population “cannot represent themselves,” as Marx famously wrote; “they must be represented.” The Serer and the Joola are made to stand for all French Muslim and Christian immigrants, though they arrive at a different time from a country with a very different history, a very different experience of colonialism in the past and enmity in the present. This is what passes for methodological rigor among its champions.

Accompanying this commitment to metonymy and symbolic substitution is a more profound, and rather surprising, error. The authors see the question of change induced by immigration as limited to the perceptions, treatment, and conduct of immigrants without effect on the receiving population. Immigrants enter. They meet hostility or acceptance (a welcome does not seem to be a possibility). They are accepted or rejected. They assimilate or they refuse integration. They laïcize or they radicalize. They do all this in an undifferentiated field called “France” in which the inhabitants, the “hosts,” all belong.

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*Anne Norton is Stacey and Henry Jackson President’s Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania.*

This is not France. There is no place like that in all the world. There are differences and divisions in France. There are hierarchies of class and sex and race. The interaction (if you prefer, intersection) of these is not acknowledged in Adida, Laitin, and Valfort’s research design. Nor are Muslims the only objects of discrimination. Anti-Semitism continues to trouble the highest reaches and lowest corners of French politics. The descendants of Asians and Africans and the compatriots of the notorious “Polish plumber” are all targets of discrimination. Perhaps the fiercest discrimination is directed at the Roma. The authors erase the great diversity of France. Methodological sleights of hand permit them to create a mythic monolithic France in its place. Against the Muslim immigrant they pose “the rooted French” who act as “host” (pp. 4, 5, 6, 7 and *passim*). For more than a century, from 1830 to 1957, Algeria was a department of France. Maghrebi Muslims and their descendants have been a presence in the French mainland, increasing in strength. The authors write that “as of 1999 some 5–6 million residents in France had Maghrebi roots” (p. 192). Indeed, many will meet the criteria for the “rooted French”: born in France, with French parents and French grandparents.

It is not, however, the method of the book that is most troubling. In the dedication, Adida, Laitin, and Valfort affirm their hope “that all barriers to achievement due to discrimination” will be lifted. Yet unfortunately, they use an intellectual frame and offer policy prescriptions that would perpetuate, even intensify, discrimination against Muslims in France.

The structuring comparison of Muslim immigrants (or French citizens of Muslim ancestry) with those belonging to a “Christian-heritage society” is the work of the *Le Pens* and other anti-Semites. It is tragic that people who sought to identify and amend Muslim discrimination should have slid so easily into the structures and rhetoric of the French Right. It is ironic that scholars who craft their experiments so carefully should have so completely neglected the literature on immigration and difference that has laid visible the discriminatory structures operating in the rhetoric of “host” and “guest.”

Although Adida, Laitin, and Valfort document discrimination, inequalities between Muslims and Christians are still “the failure of Muslims” (p. 14). Christian Joppke was not slow to recognize this message, writing in his endorsement that “Muslims are to be partially blamed for hostility against them.” Why? The authors write that Muslims “behave in ways that feed rational Islamophobia” (p. 79). They fast, they pray five times a day, they do not drink or eat pork. These practices “can erect obstacles to the productivity and cohesion of the work force” (p. 83). There is, therefore “rational Islamophobia” (Chapter 6, pp. 79–92). One might instead see discipline in the fasting and safety in the proscription of alcohol, and note that of

the five prayers required of pious Muslims, only one falls in working hours, and that tends to coincide with a lunch break. Similarly, while they deplore gender discrimination among Muslims, the authors seemingly accept the myth that France is a paradise of gender equality. The truth however, is irrelevant, because “the stories circulate like viruses” (p. 89).

Adida, Laitin, and Valfort praise a proposal put forward by the National Association of Human Resource Directors. Recognizing that the French calendar is profoundly Christian, the association proposed that “firms maintain only three of the six Christian holidays in place.” Christmas, Easter Monday, and All Saints Day would remain, for their “societal importance has become cultural rather than merely religious.” Pentecost and the Feasts of the Ascension and Assumption “would be replaced by generic holidays” that employees could take when they chose. The authors see this as a solution. They should see it as a problem. The proposed solution maintains the privileging of the Christian religious calendar. Christian holidays are for all. Jewish and Muslim holidays continue to be the secret province of the few, still outside the national calendar. This policy recommendation signals the authors’ (I believe unwitting) commitment to maintaining a privileged status for Christianity in the most pervasive aspects of French public life. Yet if, as the authors suggest, religious holidays can “become cultural” (p. 164), then give French workers and schoolchildren Pesach and the Eid. Let people recognize that religious and cultural diversity brings them pleasures they did not know before: new holidays, with new forms of celebration.

This authors’ commitment to a Christian rather than a Republican heritage comes with an endorsement of state power in the service of Catholicism. Adida, Laitin, and Valfort recommend “state funding of religious and theological training centers” charged with teaching a “tolerant and moderate interpretation of Islam” (p. 165). These should “inculcate future imams and religious leaders with a nuanced understanding of French *laïcité*” (p. 165). Muslims, in other words, should model their faith after the centralized forms of Catholicism, with a content determined by the ostensibly *laïc* priests of the “Christian heritage.”

Perhaps it is French Catholics and Christian-heritage secularists who should be inculcated with a nuanced understanding of *laïcité*. They seem unable to recognize

that the pervasive presence of Christianity in architecture, in the calendar, in naming practices, and in views of dress makes a mockery of the claim that France has a neutral public sphere.

The most poignant and disheartening of the authors’ policy recommendations is one recommended to Muslims. The man named Muhammad, the woman named Khadijah, get fewer jobs and less access to apartments than a David or a Claire or a Marie Anne. “What is to be done?” Adida, Laitin, and Valfort ask. Muslims should change their names: “*Retaining Exclusively Muslim Names is Nonrational for Muslims*” (p. 151; italics in the original). The rational Muslim should seek a “name belonging here” (p. 151).

What names do belong in France? Manuel works well enough for a former prime minister, Hidalgo for a mayor of Paris. Manuel Valls and Anne Hidalgo are both immigrants themselves. Hidalgo, according to a 2015 *Financial Times* interview, retains her dual nationality. It appears that retaining ties to one’s country of origin is not necessarily the bar to integration that the authors suggest. Warren Barguil’s name does not quiet the cheers at the Tour de France. Despite Azouz Begag and Zinedine Zidane, Muslim names are, it appears, not yet names “that belong here.” It could be otherwise. In the midst of wars and reactionary politics, the list of the most popular baby names in the United States includes Layla, Aaliyah, and (in the shadow of Donald Trump’s wall) Santiago and Mateo.

Perhaps this book is a cause not for dismay but for courage. Adida, Laitin, and Valfort have not shown that Muslim integration fails in Christian-heritage societies. They have shown the persistence of discriminatory structures that the French—and, sadly, the authors—often fail to recognize. Yet the narrow scope of their research leaves open the possibility that these structures are being confronted, subverted, and eroded at sites too complex for the methods they employ. Perhaps if one were to leave the lab for the street, the workplace, the hospital, and the civil service, France might show itself to be a more capacious place. If integration fails because France’s regime of assimilation is being challenged, perhaps that failure is not something we should mourn. The French Republic once took pride in its universal character. Republicans should call France back to that pride.