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Muslims National Identification in France

What Makes Muslims Feel French?

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In this article, we analyze the extent to which Muslims self-identify as French. A common interpretation of Muslim political attitudes assumes that Islam fundamentally conflicts with mainstream European society and that when Muslims are more attached to their religion they will be less likely to identify as French. We examine this assumption by exploring whether Muslim national identification is more strongly related to religiosity or other factors such as socio-economic status, social networks, and immigrant integration. Our results offer some support for each explanation, but we find that religiosity is not the dominant force shaping Muslims’ attitudes. Instead, factors associated with immigrant integration have the most profound relationship with Muslim identification. These conclusions are supported by the fact that religiosity and immigrant integration variables have similar effects on the national identification of Christian immigrants. Our findings suggest that focusing on religiosity is not the best way to analyze Muslims’ attitudes or identities, and that tensions surrounding Muslims’ self-identification with France are likely to decrease in future generations, as immigrant integration proceeds through the increased prevalence of birth in France, having French citizenship, and French language fluency.

European politicians, publics, and scholars frequently depict Muslims as one of the least integrated minority groups in contemporary Europe, due largely to their religiosity. This is because Muslims’ high levels of religiosity are seen as out of sync with a continent that is increasingly secular and because Islam is seen as incompatible with European norms (Caldwell 2009; Foner and Alba 2008; Leiken 2011; Statham et al. 2005; Zolberg and Long 1999). Muslims’ religiosity has been associated with segregated lifestyles, susceptibility to violent terrorism, and rejection of European values and identity (Koopmans 2013; Koopmans et al. 2005; Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007; Wike and Grim 2010). In addition, although many minority groups become part of mainstream society over
time, some argue that second-generation European-born Muslims are the most likely to adhere to radical Islam and are the biggest threat to stability in Europe (Leiken 2011; Khosrokhavar 2005, 149–224; Joppke 2009a). Governments across Europe have responded by promoting a more moderate “Europeanized” version of Islam through the inclusion of Islam in official national institutions for managing religious practice (Laurence 2012). It remains to be seen how effective these government strategies will be, but for now the integration of Muslims is a major concern across Europe.

In this article, we question prevailing assumptions about the danger of Muslim religiosity by analyzing the factors that account for whether Muslims in France are more or less likely to identify as French. In addition to religiosity, we explore the possibility that Muslim attitudes could be explained by their socio-economic status, social networks, or immigrant integration status. Our results offer some support for each explanation, but we argue that Muslim identification is best understood through the lens of immigrant integration (i.e., whether Muslims are born in France, have French citizenship, and speak French fluently). In addition, although religiosity is negatively correlated with feeling French among Muslims, we find the same dynamic among Christians, which challenges the notion that Muslims are uniquely difficult to integrate.

France is a useful country for our analysis because tensions surrounding Muslim integration have been particularly acute there (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010, 2013). France has approximately five million Muslim residents, more than any other European country (Kepel 1991; Laurence and Vaisse 2006; Ternisien 2002). It has been the site for some of the most highly politicized debates in Europe about Muslim practices, such as whether it is appropriate to wear headscarves and veils in schools and on the streets (Joppke 2009b; Kuru 2008). In addition, the French tradition of secularism conflicts with some Muslims’ desires to make claims about the social or political value of their religious practices (Koopmans et al. 2005; Bowen 2007; Scott 2010). Yet despite these well-publicized political conflicts, there has not been much detailed analysis of attitudes and identity attachments among the masses of French Muslims.

Our claims about the importance of immigrant integration and the relative unimportance of religiosity for understanding national identity among French Muslims have numerous implications. First, our argument speaks directly to debates about the integration of Muslims in France. Contrary to the widespread belief that Muslims in France are alienated from mainstream society due to their religiosity, our findings suggest that the majority of French Muslims feel strongly attached to French identity and that their national identification is only moderately related to religiosity. Our results also contribute to discussions about the integration of Muslims in Europe more broadly. We challenge the assumption that Muslims will be uniquely difficult to integrate by suggesting that they will become inevitably closer to mainstream European societies across generations and as they acquire their host-country citizenship and become fluent in their host-country languages. Finally, we contribute to theoretical literature on group boundaries by building on
the notion that there are multiple categories that could be used to understand any one “group” (Brubaker 2002; Sen and Wasow 2013; Wimmer 2013).

The next section reviews literature on Muslim religiosity and identification. The third section explores other factors that may affect Muslim identification and generates alternative hypotheses. The subsequent section discusses the data set and measures. We then turn to our analysis of the relative importance of various predictors of Muslim identification. The following section explores whether Muslims and non-Muslims have similar national identification dynamics, and the last section concludes.

Religiosity and National Identification among Muslims

France (like many European countries) has a tradition dating back to the 19th century of successfully integrating immigrant-origin minorities. Most immigrants initially faced integration difficulties, as their national origins, ethnic culture, or religious practices were seen as foreign and unwelcome in French society. Yet over time each wave of immigrants eventually became part of mainstream French society (Noiriel 1988).

Despite this history of successfully incorporating immigrants, some scholars and many citizens consider contemporary Muslim minorities uniquely problematic because their religion supposedly involves beliefs and practices that are incompatible with contemporary European societies (Statham et al. 2005; Wike and Grim 2010). Most notably, Muslim religious beliefs about the place of women in society, child-rearing, homosexuality, clothing, and the prayer and religious observance requirements that interrupt daily life are frequently portrayed as out of touch with contemporary European norms (Hansen 2007, 2011; Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007). Some argue that adhering to Islam connects Muslims to a broader international religious community and inhibits attachments to specific European national communities (Levitt 2007; Roy 2006).

Muslim religiosity also tends to generate hostility from Europeans who do not understand or agree with the foreign religious practices (Alba 2005; Zolberg and Long 1999, 6). There is some debate about whether this hostility is directed toward a dislike of specific Muslim customs or is merely a fear of the unknown that may subside with time (Helbling 2012). Regardless, openly practicing Islam increases the likelihood of stigmatization in contemporary Europe, which makes it difficult for highly religious Muslims to operate in mainstream society (Cesari 2004, 4–5; Foner and Alba 2008, 373). Some claim that this dynamic has been especially vicious in France, where the public commitment to secularism stigmatizes even modest displays of religion (Geisser 2003; Laurence and Vaisse 2006).

The supposed incompatibility between Muslim religious practices and European society is also embedded in national institutions that offer minimal official recognition of Islam (Alba 2005; Fetzer and Soper 2005; Foner and Alba 2008; Jenkins 2009). Most European countries have institutional structures to facilitate interactions with the more established religious groups
like Catholics, Protestants, or Jews, but do not grant equal recognition or privileges to Muslims. This has been especially challenging in France, where the strong adherence to secularism makes it even more difficult to establish institutional support for Muslims to practice their religion (Laurence and Vaise 2006).

Important for our argument, a number of scholars see the challenges of Muslim religiosity as particularly acute for the second generation. Robert Leiken (2011, 71) asserts that “Muslim extremism in Europe is typically found not among migrants but among their children.” He argues that this is true not only for isolated individuals, but also for those who are well integrated into their societies. Khosrokhavar (2005, 149–224) comes to a similar conclusion in his work on Muslim terrorists in the West, many of whom were born and raised there, speak a European language fluently, and have achieved some success in the realms of education and employment. Examining the cultural domain, Joppke (2009a, 454) draws on survey results to state that British Muslim attitudes about apostasy, polygamy, and homosexuality are “particularly extreme among the young, which suggests that the rift between Muslims and the majority society is growing,” a finding echoed by Bisin et al. (2008, 446), who note that Muslims retain an intense religious identity and assimilate “at a much slower rate” than non-Muslims in Britain.

In summary, existing literature focuses on religiosity as the key to understanding Muslims in Europe, and generates the following hypothesis:

H1: Muslims with higher levels of religiosity should be less likely to identify as French.

**Alternative Ways of Conceptualizing National Identification among Muslims**

In this article, we explore several alternative ways of conceptualizing national identification among Muslims in France. In doing so, we join a growing literature that questions whether religion is really the best lens for understanding the integration of Muslims in Europe (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010; Brouard and Tiberj 2011; Brubaker 2013; Maxwell 2010a; Meer 2012). The logic is that membership in a group is often highly correlated with membership in other types of groups. As a result, it can be difficult to isolate the relevant type of identity for explaining a given outcome (Sen and Wasow 2013; Wimmer 2013). For example, Muslims in Europe share a common religion but they also tend to be socio-economically disadvantaged and have segregated social networks. In addition, the overwhelming majority of Muslims are either first-generation immigrants or descendants of recent immigrants. Any one of these factors may be more important than religiosity for understanding Muslim identification in France.

Socio-economic status is one way of understanding Muslim attitudes. The majority of Muslims who arrived after World War II came as low-skilled guest workers or migrants in search of low-skilled jobs (Nielisen 2004). Admittedly, some Muslims arrived in Europe with higher socio-economic status and there has
been some social mobility over time and across generations. However, Muslims continue to be among the most socio-economically disadvantaged residents of Europe in general and of France in particular (Laurence and Vaisse 2006; Leiken 2011). As a result, socio-economic status may be more relevant than religiosity for generalizing about Muslims in Europe.

Socio-economic issues may be especially important for Muslim identification in France because existing literature has found that when minorities enjoy educational and professional success they will be more empowered to engage with mainstream society and should have stronger identification with the national community (Bueker 2005; Chong and Kim 2006; Leighley and Vedlitz 1999; Wilson 1980). Yet there is some countervailing evidence, as other research finds that socio-economic measures are negatively correlated with pride in the nation (Bollen and Medrano 1998; Elkins and Sides 2007). This literature generates the following two contradictory hypotheses:

H2: Muslims with better socio-economic outcomes should be more likely to identify as French.

H3: Muslims with better socio-economic outcomes should be less likely to identify as French.

Another perspective on Muslim identification would focus on social networks. Irrespective of religiosity and socio-economic status, Muslims in France (and across Europe) tend to live in segregated neighborhoods, where they socialize and interact primarily with other minorities (Franz 2007; Kepel 1991; Phillips 2006). This may be especially important in France, where many Muslims were French colonial subjects and therefore may be predisposed to live apart from the dominant mainstream society (Geisser 2012). Moreover, existing research suggests that social networks may be important for identification because when minorities are more physically and socially removed from mainstream society they are less likely to participate in and feel connected to that society (Alba 2005; Bail 2008; Brouard and Tiberj 2011; Geisser 2003; Lamont 2000). This generates the following hypothesis:

H4: Muslims with more segregated social networks should be less likely to identify as French.

A final possibility is that Muslim attitudes should be viewed through the lens of immigrant integration. While immigrant integration is a broad concept, we focus on indicators that are relevant only for immigrants: country of birth, citizenship, and language fluency. For the most part, Muslims in Western Europe are either immigrants or recent descendants of immigrants who arrived in the decades following World War II (Jenkins 2009; Laurence 2012; Laurence and Vaisse 2006; Nielsen 2004). This is potentially important because of the literature on the ways in which immigration may be related to national identification. For starters, immigrants are less likely than natives to identify strongly with the host country. Despite the fact that many first-generation immigrants develop strong attachments to their adopted homes and in some respects can be more fervent patriots than the
native-born (de la Garza, Falcon, and Garcia 1996; Maxwell 2010b), their identity is always split between the home and the host country (Norris and Inglehart 2012). The children of immigrants do not face that divide and are more likely to identify with the surroundings in which they were raised (Fuchs 1990; Lucassen 2005). In addition, when immigrants acquire host-country citizenship, it is generally seen as a commitment that strengthens their connection to the host society (Just and Anderson 2012; Street 2014). Finally, learning the host-country language is a crucial step in becoming a functioning part of the host society (Alba and Nee 2003; Tam Cho 1999), and therefore may be related to the extent to which immigrants view themselves as part of the host society. This literature on immigration generates our final three hypotheses (H5, H6, and H7). It is worth emphasizing that these hypotheses are derived from literature on immigrant integration in general, but some of the Muslim-specific literature from Europe predicts exactly the opposite, as second-generation Muslims who are host-country citizens and fluent in the language are often viewed as the most radicalized and alienated, in large part because of their higher levels of religiosity (Leiken 2011; Joppke 2009a).

H5: Muslims who were born in France should be more likely than Muslims born abroad to identify as French.

H6: Muslims who are French citizens should be more likely to identify as French.

H7: Muslims who speak fluent French should be more likely to identify as French.

Data and Measures

France has several legal limitations and cultural taboos against collecting data on racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. Most French government data identify the national origins of migrants but will not distinguish between individuals born in France with migrant or native-origin parents. In addition, official French government surveys are not permitted to ask about religious practices or racial or ethnic identification. As a result, there have been fewer large-scale quantitative studies of migrant and religious minority integration in France than in other European and North American countries.

We use the Trajectories and Origins (TeO) data set, which was compiled through face-to-face interviews with 21,761 individuals between September 2008 and February 2009. Organized by the National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) and the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), it focused on residents in metropolitan France and surveyed migrants (from foreign countries and from overseas departments) and their children, as well as natives with no migration background. To obtain this sample, TeO researchers received special permission to access confidential government files (most notably census data and birth certificates) in order to locate potential
second-generation migrant-origin respondents. The raw TeO sample was designed to have a large subject pool of minorities with non-European origins, so it is not representative of the population living in metropolitan France. Therefore, in our analyses, we weight the data on the basis of generational status (i.e., born in France or born abroad) and country of origin.

Our sample of Muslims is constructed from a question that asks respondents about their religion, to which 5,706 people answered “Muslim.” This question makes no assumption about practices or beliefs and casts a wide net for people who self-identify as Muslim. Yet, given the strong taboo in France on collecting ethnic, racial, and religious data, it is likely that some Muslim respondents refused to identify themselves as Muslim as a protest against the invasive question. This could be a problem for our analysis if the Muslims who did not identify themselves as Muslim are not a random subsample but instead differ in systematic ways from those who do identify themselves as Muslim. It is impossible to know the extent of this bias, but given their willingness to identify as Muslim in a potentially controversial circumstance, most likely our sample of Muslims is more attached to their religious identity than the true population of Muslims in France. This suggests that our findings should not be automatically generalized to the entire Muslim population in France. However, in some respects, this potential bias adds to the robustness of our main findings. We argue for the limited importance of religiosity in understanding Muslim national identification, and if the true population of French Muslims is even less attached to their religion than the Muslims in our sample, we would expect even stronger results in favor of our argument among a more representative sample.

The TeO data set is a particularly rich resource because it provides unprecedented data on minorities in France, including hundreds of questions on social, political, and cultural practices. As with any study that explores sensitive issues, it is possible that TeO researchers were unable to reach the most alienated and segregated Muslims, who were uninterested in speaking with surveyors. Yet, to facilitate a wide range of subjects, TeO researchers employed translators for respondents who were not fluent in French. The overall completion rate for the survey was 61 percent, but it was 70 percent for respondents who had not moved from the address initially identified by TeO researchers in the census data.

Our dependent variable consists of individuals’ opinions about the proposition “I feel French.” Respondents were asked to categorize their opinions in one of four ways: “completely agree,” “somewhat agree,” “somewhat disagree,” and “completely disagree.” Of the 21,761 survey respondents, over 99 percent selected one of these categories. Only 56 (0.2 percent) answered “I don’t know,” and 331 (0.5 percent) answered “I do not wish to respond.” We focus on this measure because it directly addresses the issue of whether or not Muslims have accepted French identity. However, we conducted similar analyses on related measures of attitudinal integration (“Others see me as French” and “I feel at home in France”) that resulted in similar outcomes to the ones presented below.

The TeO data include seven items that tap different aspects of religiosity: how important religion is to one’s life, the importance of religion in one’s education,
how frequently respondents practice their religion, whether or not respondents wear ostentatious religious symbols, whether or not respondents follow religious dietary restrictions, whether or not religion is an important aspect of their identity, and whether or not respondents belong to a religious association. This broad range of indicators is especially useful, as literature on the sociology of religion argues that the form and the content of religiosity vary across individuals, religions, and societies (Glock and Stark 1965; Greeley 2004; Lenski 1961; Roy 2006; Stark and Finke 2000).

For socio-economic status, we use measures of educational attainment and household income. For social networks, we use self-reported measures of having friendship networks primarily of the same ethnicity or religion, and of residential segregation based on immigrant origins. For immigrant integration, we use self-reported information about place of birth, citizenship status, and language fluency. More details on all measures can be found in the appendix.

Is Religion Really the Best Way of Understanding Muslim National Identification?

Our main task in this section is to explore whether religiosity is really the best predictor of Muslim identification. We start with an overview of responses to

Figure 1. Responses to the statement “I feel French”

Source: 2008–2009 TeO.
Note: Bars indicate the weighted percentage of Muslims, immigrant-origin non-Muslims, and native-origin non-Muslims who chose each response category.
the question “I feel French” among Muslims, non-Muslims with immigrant origins, and non-Muslims with native origins. The results in figure 1 suggest that Muslims are less likely than both subsets of non-Muslims to have positive responses. Among Muslims, 75 percent answered “I feel French” in the two positive categories, compared to 84 percent of non-Muslims with immigrant origins and 98 percent of non-Muslims with native origins. These results support the conventional wisdom that Muslims may be a minority group that is uniquely difficult to integrate, as they are less likely than other immigrant-origin individuals to identify as French. In addition, results in figure 1 support the commonly held assumption that immigrant-origin individuals in general are less likely than native-origin individuals to identify with France. Nonetheless, it is worth highlighting that a solid majority of Muslims responded positively, which suggests that there is no widespread crisis of anti-French sentiment.

To compare predictors of Muslim identification, we estimate a series of logistic regression models. Given the ordinal nature of the French-identification measure, ordinal logistic regression was our first modeling option. However, the Brant test revealed numerous violations of the parallel regression assumption. To use logistic regression, we recode the dependent variable so that it has two values, 0 for negative identification (“Completely disagree” and “Somewhat disagree” with “I feel French”) and 1 for positive identification (“Completely agree” and “Somewhat agree”).

As we have multiple indicators for each of our independent variables, we use factor analysis to construct latent variables for religiosity, socio-economic status, social-network segregation, and immigrant integration. This approach has two main advantages. First, it summarizes the effect of each independent variable in one measure, which facilitates comparison across variables with different numbers of indicators. In addition, the latent-variable approach allows each indicator of a particular concept to have different weights. Table 1 presents results for a series of logistic regression models using the latent variables to predict French identification among Muslims.

Model I in table 1 includes a covariate for religiosity and suggests that higher levels of religiosity are generally associated with being less likely to have positive French identification, which is consistent with H1. Model II suggests that better socio-economic status is associated with being more likely to have positive French identification, which provides support for H2 as opposed to H3. Model III suggests that Muslims with more segregated social networks are less likely to have positive French identification, which is consistent with H4. Finally, model IV indicates that being more integrated on immigration-related measures is associated with being more likely to have positive French identification. In short, models I through IV provide support for various ways of interpreting Muslim national identification in France.

Model V in table 1 includes covariates for each of the explanations for Muslim national identification. These results are similar to those in models I through IV, although socio-economic status is no longer statistically significant at the 5 percent level. This suggests that socio-economic status may be the weakest explanation for Muslim national identification in France. Yet determining the relative
importance of our variables is difficult because it is hard to interpret the substantive significance of the logistic regression coefficients in table 1. Therefore, we use results from the full model V to calculate the predicted probability of positive identification for the top and bottom quartiles of each latent variable. Figure 2 presents these results.

The results in figure 2 indicate that the greatest variation in French identification is associated with differences in immigrant integration. In fact, the change in positive French identification associated with immigrant integration is almost three times as large (0.34) as the change associated with religiosity (–0.12). Moreover, religiosity (along with socio-economic status) is associated with the smallest change in identification of the four independent variables. Thus far, our results suggest that religiosity is neither the only nor the most useful way of understanding national identification among French Muslims. Instead, immigrant integration appears to have the strongest relationship with national identification, and socio-economic status and social-network segregation should also be considered relevant dynamics.

To check the robustness of our findings, we tested alternate measures of socio-economic status (occupational status and employment status) and social networks (whether respondents were married to native-French-origin partners). Given the concerns about discrimination against Muslims (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010; Geisser 2003), we added measures of perceived discrimination to explore whether that would be another way of understanding variation in

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<td>Socio-economic status</td>
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Note: Weighted data; all variables have been coded from 0 to 1. Each cell gives the estimated coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001
French national identification. These specifications did not substantively change our results, as immigrant integration remained a better predictor of French national identification among Muslims. For a more direct test of concerns about the second generation being the most religiously radical and alienated, we created interaction terms for religiosity and immigrant integration (i.e., being born in France, having French citizenship, and being fluent in French), but the interaction terms were not statistically significant predictors of identification at the 5 percent level.

We also examined whether subsets of Muslims have different identification dynamics. Research suggests that the practice of Islam is often highly gendered, so Muslim men and women may have different integration experiences in Europe (Predelli 2004). In addition, Muslim immigrants in Europe come from a wide range of countries and their national backgrounds may shape integration dynamics (Roy 2006). Appendix figure 2 presents results indicating that male Muslims are slightly more likely than female Muslims to have positive French identification and Maghrebian Muslims are more likely to have positive identification than Sub-Saharan African Muslims, who are more likely than Turkish Muslims to have positive French identification. However, when we conduct logistic regression analysis predicting French identification among each subset of Muslims (full details for these analyses can be found in appendix tables 10, 11, and 12), all subsets share the dynamic of immigrant integration being more

Figure 2. Change in the predicted probabilities of a positive response to "I feel French"

Note: Figure 2 plots the difference in the predicted probability of a positive ‘I feel French’ response as independent variables change from the bottom to the top quartiles of the latent variable of interest, with other variables set to their mean values. Results are calculated from model V in table 1. For social networks, “High” is segregated and “Low” is assimilated. Black bars plot 95 percent confidence intervals.
useful than religiosity, social-network segregation, or socio-economic status for understanding national identification.18

In short, our results challenge several aspects of conventional wisdom. First, our findings do not support the view that Muslims in France suffer from widespread alienation. Second, our analysis suggests that religiosity is not the most important way of understanding Muslims’ national identification. Instead, our results indicate that immigrant integration is the best way of analyzing Muslim national identity. These are especially noteworthy findings, as they contradict the belief by some observers that second-generation Muslims with language fluency and host-country citizenship are more dangerous and disillusioned than the first generation (Joppke 2009a; Khosrokhavar 2005; Leiken 2011).

Do Our Findings Apply to Groups Other Than Muslims?

We test the generalizability of our finding that religiosity matters less than immigrant integration variables by exploring its applicability to other groups. We selected Christians as a comparison group because they are the largest religion in the TeO sample and are the only one for which reliable analysis is possible (8,405 respondents identify as Christian).19 More important, Christians share the religion of the majority in France, making their situation different from that of Muslims in a way that is very likely to affect their national identification. If religiosity is associated with less positive French national identity among Christians, as with Muslims, and if immigrant-integration variables accounted for more of the variation in national identification among Christians, that constitutes strong evidence that our findings apply not just to Muslims but are of broader significance.

We begin our analysis of Christians by estimating a series of logistic regression models in which covariates for religiosity, socio-economic status, social networks, and immigrant integration predict French identification. We use those models to calculate the difference in the predicted probability of positive French identification among Christians with high as opposed to low levels of religiosity, socio-economic status, segregation, and immigrant integration. Due to the heterogeneity of Christians in France, we estimate separate models for all Christians, Christians with immigrant origins, Christians with Western origins, and Christians with non-Western origins.20 We make these distinctions because native-origin French Christians may have different national-identification dynamics than French Christians with immigrant origins. In addition, research finds that non-Western-origin immigrants tend to face more stigmatization and have different integration experiences than Western-origin immigrants in Europe (Bail 2008; Lucassen 2005).21 Figure 3 presents results, and for comparison purposes we include a plot of differences in the probability of positive identification among Muslims.22

Figure 3 indicates that among both Muslims and Christians, variation in immigrant integration is associated with larger changes in the probability of positive French identification than variation in religiosity, socio-economic status, or social networks. This suggests that our argument about immigrant integration being more important than religion for understanding national identification may be a general
phenomenon that extends beyond Muslims to include Christians. That said, there are differences between Muslims and Christians. Figure 3 indicates that the relationship between social-network segregation and French national identification is stronger among Muslims. This is largely because segregation on all three network indicators is associated with less positive identification among Muslims, but among

Note: Figure 3 plots the difference in the predicted probability of a positive “I feel French” response as independent variables change from “Low” to “High.” “Low” and “High” are composite calculations of each item set to its lowest or highest values (0 and 1 for dummy variables or lowest and highest quartiles for all others), with other items set to their mean values. Black bars plot 95 percent confidence intervals. “Christians” are either first- or second-generation immigrant-origin respondents who self-identify as Christian. These plots are calculated from models presented in appendix table 13.
Christians the relationships are mixed. For Christians, having religiously segregated friendship networks is associated with more positive identification, which one would expect, as Christianity is the dominant religion in France. Yet when Christians have ethnically segregated friendship networks and live in neighborhoods with more immigrant residents, they are less likely to have positive French identification. These contradictory relationships weaken the overall relationship between the composite segregation category and French identification.

A striking result in figure 3 is that higher levels of religiosity are associated with lower levels of positive French identification not only among Muslims but also among Christians. In addition, this relationship is stronger among the subsample of Western- as opposed to non-Western-origin immigrant Christians. Christianity is the dominant religion in France, so one might have expected greater Christian religiosity to be associated with more positive French identification. Yet there is a long tradition of secular French politics, and in many respects the modern French republican national identity has been crafted in opposition to the power of the Catholic Church (Weber 1976). Therefore, in light of the negative relationship between religiosity and French national identification among Christians, another way of interpreting the same relationship among Muslims is not that Islam is uniquely incompatible with French society but that religiosity in general is at odds with positive French identification.

To the extent that this is true, it is further support for our claim that specificities of the Muslim religion are not the best way of understanding French national-identification dynamics among Muslims.

Finally, it is worth noting that immigrant integration has even stronger relationships with French identification among Christians than among Muslims. This is largely because although Christians and Muslims with low levels of immigrant integration have the same predicted probabilities of positive French identification (roughly 0.40 to 0.45), Christians with French citizenship who were born in France and who are fluent in French have higher levels of positive French identification than Muslims with the same outcomes (roughly 0.98 for Christians compared to 0.88 for Muslims).

In this section, we have focused on the similarities between Muslims and non-Muslims in the relative importance of different independent variables for predicting national identification. Yet there are differences in the overall level of positive French identification between Muslims and various subsets of non-Muslims. Among Muslims, 75 percent responded in the two positive identification categories, compared to 96 percent of Christians, 84 percent of non-Muslims with immigrant origins, and 98 percent of non-Muslims with native origins. A key extension of our argument is to examine whether these differences in the level of positive French identification are better explained by differences in immigrant integration, as opposed to differences in religiosity, socio-economic status, or social networks.

We address this by estimating logistic regression models that include a dummy variable for the non-Muslim versus Muslim comparison. Full regression results are in appendix tables 14 through 19, and plots of the group dummy variable coefficients are in figure 4. Our interest is in how the coefficient for that group dummy variable changes from the bivariate case with the addition of particular covariates.
A model with greater reductions in the group dummy coefficient suggests that more group variation has been accounted for by the covariates in that model.

In each graph, the far left bar is the non-Muslim/Muslim coefficient with no additional covariates. Each bar to the right plots the non-Muslim/Muslim coefficient from models with different sets of covariates. The top two graphs in figure 4 plot

**Figure 4. Logistic regression coefficients for group differences in French national identification across different model specifications**

**Note:** Weighted data French national identification is coded 0—negative, 1—positive, and all covariates are coded from 0 to 1. Each graph plots the coefficient for the respective group comparison across several model specifications. In each graph, “Base” is a model where the only covariate is the dummy variable for the group comparison. “Religiosity” includes the seven religiosity indicators. “SES” includes the three socio-economic covariates. “Netwks.” includes the three social network covariates. “Imm. Int.” includes the three immigrant integration indicators. Black bars plot 95 percent confidence intervals. These plots are calculated from models presented in appendix tables 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19.
coefficients for general non-Muslim/Muslim differences in French identification. As one might expect, given Muslims’ status as an immigrant-origin group, the group difference coefficients are smaller across all specifications for the comparison between Muslims and non-Muslims with immigrant as opposed to native origins. However, within each comparison, adding immigrant-integration covariates is associated with the greatest reduction in the group difference coefficient. The graph on the left indicates that adding covariates for religiosity, socio-economic status, and social-network segregation is also associated with slight reductions in the group difference coefficient between non-Muslims and Muslims. This suggests that differences between immigrant-origin non-Muslims and Muslims in overall levels of positive French identification are partially the result of all four explanations. Yet in the graph on the right, there is almost no change in the group difference coefficients when adding covariates for religiosity, socio-economic status, or social-network segregation. This suggests that immigrant integration is the most powerful of these four explanations in accounting for French-identification differences between Muslims and native-origin non-Muslims.

The next four graphs in figure 4 plot coefficients for Christian/Muslim differences in French identification. The first graph compares Muslims and all Christians and indicates a substantial reduction in the group difference coefficient with the addition of covariates for immigrant integration but only modest reductions for religiosity, socio-economic status, or social networks. This suggests that the difference in positive French identification between Muslims and Christians as a whole is primarily a function of immigrant-integration differences.

The next three graphs plot coefficients for French-identification differences between Muslims and subsets of Christians with immigrant origins. The group difference coefficients are fairly small across these graphs, which suggests that Muslims have only modest French-identification differences with immigrant-origin Christians (whether of non-Western or of Western origin). In addition, although models with covariates for religiosity or socio-economic status are associated with reductions in the group difference coefficient, immigrant-integration covariates are consistently associated with the largest reduction in the group difference coefficient. In short, results in the bottom four graphs of figure 4 reinforce our claim that immigrant integration is more important than religiosity, socio-economic status, or social networks in accounting for French-identification differences between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Our findings in this section suggest that religiosity is negatively correlated with French identification among Christians as well as among Muslims. In addition, immigrant integration has a stronger relationship than religiosity with French national identification for Christians as well as for Muslims. Finally, results in figure 4 suggest that differences in immigrant integration are more relevant than differences in religiosity, socio-economic status, or social networks for understanding French-identification differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. Overall, results in this section provide more evidence for our claim that religiosity is not a uniquely Muslim barrier to French identification. Moreover, the findings challenge existing literature that frames Muslims as a uniquely difficult group to integrate.
Conclusion

To the extent that Muslims are less integrated than others in France, is it primarily because of their attachment to religion, but are Muslims distinct from other religious groups in this respect? Our research addresses these pressing questions by focusing on the extent to which individuals “feel French” and thus identify with the nation. By analyzing a recent survey with thousands of respondents, we arrive at several central findings. Although Muslims are less likely than non-Muslims to report feeling French, religiosity is not the central factor influencing these responses. Instead, immigrant integration—notably birth in France, French citizenship, and French-language fluency—accounts for substantially more of the variation in national identification. Moreover, Muslims are not unique in either of these respects. Increased religiosity also corresponds to lower national identification among Christians, for whom immigrant-integration variables also have the largest impact on identification with the nation. Our findings thus support the view that analyzing Muslims as a problematic group with little attachment to the country is highly misleading. Instead, it is more accurate to view Muslims as one group among others for whom religiosity marginally decreases national identification, but for whom the passage of time and generational change will foster integration into the nation in this important respect.

While our findings are robust, we acknowledge that our data are cross-sectional and our analysis is correlational. This raises several potential issues that require further exploration in future research. For instance, while Muslims who are better integrated are more likely to feel French, it is also likely that causation runs both ways, such that Muslims who feel more French become better integrated. This is less relevant for the “born in France” indicator, as that is beyond individual choice. Yet Muslims who feel more French may be more likely to acquire citizenship and become fluent in the language. Religiosity may also have a causal effect on immigrant-integration outcomes, or immigrant integration may have a causal effect on religiosity among Muslims. If either of these possibilities is true, there could be important indirect effects on identification that our models cannot capture.27 There is also the potential that identification dynamics are unstable and may evolve or shift due to situational factors that cannot be captured through a survey taken at one moment in time (Kuo and Margalit 2012). The nature of the TeO survey does not allow us to sort out these causal thickets, although future research could use panel data or experimental designs to address those concerns. Despite these limitations, we view our contribution as providing a plausible and substantively meaningful overview of the relationship between Muslim identification and other factors.

While we are cognizant of the potential limitations of our analysis, we believe that our research has broader implications for Muslim integration in France, and perhaps for Muslim integration across Europe. In particular, while religious Muslims may be less likely to fully identify as French, they are unlikely to be a subgroup of individuals that cannot be integrated into the nation. Our findings suggest that Muslims are likely to achieve successful integration in France within the coming decades. Among Muslims in the survey who were born in
metropolitan France (a demographic subgroup that is likely to grow as Muslim communities expand into the third and fourth generation), 98 percent have French citizenship and 100 percent are fluent in French (see appendix table 1). This suggests that strong integration is already a key aspect of the Muslim community and will be even more likely in the future. That said, we do not claim that place of birth, citizenship, and language will resolve all integration issues for Muslims. There are still slight differences in positive French identification between Muslims and non-Muslims, even when controlling for immigrant-integration outcomes. Nonetheless, policymakers would do well to build on the reservoir of successful integration that we highlight when confronting the periodic integration difficulties that may arise.

One might argue that citizenship and language fluency are uniquely strong markers of belonging in France, given the dominant national discourse about assimilation into a mainstream civic culture. Yet we hypothesize that immigrant-integration variables are likely to be extremely influential for understanding Muslim identification across Europe. While it is doubtful that religion will become a “bridge” to integration as it has in the United States (Foner and Alba 2008), it seems improbable that it will be an insurmountable barrier to Muslims identifying with the nation. Exploring this proposition elsewhere in Europe offers an avenue for further research. If our findings hold beyond French borders, they will provide a clearer understanding of the factors that are most influential in accounting for national identification as a key element of migrant and minority integration, even among a group deemed to pose one of the greatest challenges to European societies today.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material is available at Social Forces online, http://sf.oxfordjournals.org/.

Notes

1. There are exceptions to this dynamic (e.g., the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), where Muslims benefit from official religious recognition. Moreover, some scholars (e.g., Laurence 2012) claim there is a growing trend toward increased official recognition of Islam in Europe. Nonetheless, in most countries that recognition is nascent and minor compared to the institutions for Christianity and Judaism.

2. One could also compare immigrant and native religiosity, socio-economic status, and social networks as a way to understand immigrant integration. However, those variables could also be used to study natives’ integration into the broader society by comparing individual natives to the group average. Thus, our use of immigrant integration focuses on country of birth, citizenship, and language fluency, which are relevant only for immigrants.

3. For an overview, see the May 2009 issue of Esprit.

4. The authors would like to thank the Archives de Données Issues de la Statistique Publique at the Centre Maurice Halbwachs for access to the data.

5. TeO includes 3,020 respondents born in metropolitan France with two parents born in metropolitan France, a group we call native-French origin in our analysis. TeO
also includes 761 French citizens born abroad, people repatriated from the colonial empire, and former residents of overseas territories who were excluded from our analysis.

6. Among Muslims who were not fluent in French, the relationship between religiosity and French identification was the same irrespective of whether questions were translated.

7. For more on TeO survey procedures, see http://teo.site.ined.fr/ and Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques (INSEE) 2010.

8. Ideally, we would have used items on the religious, ethnic, and immigration profile of both friendship networks and neighborhood of residence. Unfortunately, these were not all included in the TeO survey.

9. “Immigrant origin” is defined as either being born abroad or having at least one parent born abroad. “Native origin” is defined as being born in France and with both parents born in France.

10. As with any observational survey data, social-desirability bias may inflate positive French identification among Muslims. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know the extent to which this exists in the TeO data.

11. Multinomial logistic regression and generalized ordinal logistic regression were two other options that do not involve losing information across the four response categories and for which all analyses presented in this article were also conducted. Results from those models were substantively similar to those for logistic regression, which we present in the interest of parsimony and ease of interpretation. Probit regression also yielded similar results to the logistic regression results.

12. Rotated factor loadings and scoring coefficients for each latent variable can be found in appendix table 8. We limited the sample to Muslims when constructing latent variables because of concerns that the relationship between individual indicators and the underlying concepts operate differently for Muslims as opposed to non-Muslims. Moreover, using a religiosity latent variable constructed only among Muslims is a stricter test of the conventional wisdom that religiosity operates in unique ways among Muslims to reduce their identification with France. We also conducted all analyses using a religiosity latent variable constructed among the entire sample, and results are substantively similar to those presented in this article. Social network segregation is another concept that may operate differently among Muslims and non-Muslims. Among Muslims, all three indicators have the same sign in the latent variable construction. However, among the whole population (which includes native-born French people), the percentage of immigrants in the neighborhood has a negative sign, while the percentage of co-ethnic and same-religion friends have positive signs. Latent variables for socio-economic status and immigrant integration are similar among Muslims and among the whole sample.

13. The alternative would be to estimate the cumulative effects of each indicator, which requires the (most likely erroneous) assumption that each indicator contributes equally to the overall concept.

14. We also estimated logistic regression models with covariates for each of the separate indicators for the four independent variables. These results can be found in appendix table 9 and are consistent with those from the latent variable analysis in table 1. In addition, it is worth noting that our three key independent variables (country of birth, citizenship, and language) are each statistically significant (at $p < .001$) in bivariate regressions predicting French identification among Muslims.

15. We obtain similar results when calculating predicted probabilities using a model with each of the separate indicators for the four independent variables. These results
can be found in appendix figure 1. Our results are also consistent when we conduct sensitivity analyses and calculate predicted probabilities for latent variables with smaller subsamples (i.e., top and bottom fifteenth or tenth percentiles). For those more extreme subsamples, the magnitude of the change in positive identification increases but immigrant integration is still associated with the largest change.

16. This may be especially true in France, where there have been intense debates over the right for Muslim women to wear religious clothing in public spaces (Parvez 2011).

17. Muslims from these three regions cover the three main sources of Muslim migration to France and are 92 percent of the Muslim respondents in the TeO sample. The TeO sample includes 3,208 Maghrebian Muslims, 1,002 Sub-Saharan African Muslims, 1,030 Turkish Muslims, and 466 Muslims with other origins. We code respondents as having one of these origins if they were born in the respective country or if they were born in France with at least one parent born in the respective country. There are seven Muslim respondents born in France with one Maghrebian parent and one Sub-Saharan African parent and three Muslim respondents born in France with one Maghrebian parent and one Turkish parent. These 10 respondents were dropped from the country-specific analyses. More detailed national-origin analysis was not possible for Sub-Saharan Africans because of the small sample from each country. Country-specific analysis for Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians yielded results similar to those for the composite “Maghrebian” category.

18. There are two exceptions to this trend. One is among men, where religiosity has a stronger relationship than immigrant integration with national identification when using the individual items analysis. This is primarily because Muslim men with high religiosity on each indicator have particularly low levels of positive French identification. Yet it is worth noting that Muslim men with high levels of religiosity on each indicator are only 0.6 percent of the total Muslim male sample. The other exception is Turkish Muslims, for whom socio-economic status, social networks, and immigrant integration have similar relationships with French national identification in the individual items analysis. It is beyond the scope of this article to explore the particularities of Turkish Muslims in detail, but several studies have focused on the status of Turkish immigrants in France, noting that their more recent arrival may cause different integration outcomes (Simon 2003; Yagmur and Akinci 2003).

19. TeO includes Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist respondents, but the samples are too small for reliable analysis.

20. Respondents with Western migrant origins were either born abroad in Europe, North America, Australia, or New Zealand or were born in metropolitan France with both parents born abroad in abroad in Europe, North America, Australia, or New Zealand. Respondents with non-Western migrant origins were either born abroad in Africa, Asia, Central America, South America, or the Caribbean or were born in metropolitan France with both parents born abroad in Africa, Asia, Central America, South America, or the Caribbean. French citizens born abroad, people repatriated from the colonial empire, and former residents of overseas territories were excluded.

21. We do not disaggregate the analysis of Muslims, because they are less heterogeneous than Christians on these measures and the sample size is too small for reliable statistical analysis of each Muslim subgroup. For example, in the unweighted TeO sample there are 6,518 Christians of immigrant origin and 1,887 Christians of native-French origin, compared to 5,618 Muslims of immigrant origin and 88 Muslims of native-French origin. Among those with immigrant origins, there are 4,180 Christians of Western origin and 2,338 Christians of non-Western origin, compared to 235 Muslims of Western origin and 5,383 Muslims of non-Western origin.
22. In figure 3, we present results for only the individual items analysis because the heterogeneity of Christians makes it difficult to construct meaningful latent variables. This is especially relevant for the social network indicators, as “immigrant neighborhood” has different meanings in terms of segregation for native-origin and immigrant-origin Christians and “ethnic friendship networks” has different meanings in terms of segregation for Western-origin and non-Western-origin Christians. Therefore, to maximize comparability, the results for Muslims are calculated from models with all the specific indicators for each independent variable, and are reproduced from the figure in appendix table 1. Full regression results for Christians are in appendix table 14.

23. Another possibility is that the negative relationship between religiosity and French identification among Christians is the result of Orthodox Christians from Eastern Europe and Protestant Christians from Africa, Asia, and the Americas who do not feel welcomed by the French Catholic Church. Yet when Christians are disaggregated into Catholics and non-Catholics, greater religiosity is associated with less positive French identification among Catholics but has no relationship with French identification among non-Catholic Christians, regardless of whether the non-Catholic Christians are born in France or born abroad.

24. Given the combination of Muslims and non-Muslims in the same models, we estimate models with each indicator of the independent variables. The latent variable approach is less suitable here, because the heterogeneity of the Muslim and non-Muslim populations makes it difficult to construct meaningful latent variables.

25. Adjusted Wald tests indicate that for both comparisons the non-Muslim/Muslim coefficient in the models with immigrant integration covariates is not equal to the coefficient in the base model with a probability of 99 percent or greater.

26. Among immigrant-origin Christians, 83 percent have positive French identification (82 percent among non-Western-origin Christians and 83 percent among Western-origin Christians), compared to 75 percent of Muslims.

27. This is not likely to be an issue for language fluency or citizenship. Among Muslims, French language fluency is associated with less religiosity, while language fluency and less religiosity are each associated with more positive French identification. Similarly, having French citizenship is associated with less religiosity, while French citizenship and less religiosity are each associated with more positive French identification. The indirect effects that are most likely to be an issue involve place of birth and religiosity. Among Muslims, being born in France is positively correlated with French identification and with religiosity. Yet religiosity is negatively correlated with French identification. This suggests that being born in France could have direct effects that lead to more positive French identification but indirect effects that lead to less positive French identification, which is the point of concern for the literature highlighting second-generation Muslims as particularly problematic. However, our results suggest that this potential indirect effect is not strong enough to outweigh the broader dynamic we highlight of being born in France being associated with more positive French identification. Future research should explore this more closely.

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