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Integration Failures in France: A Search for Mechanisms*

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Abstract

Are there religious barriers to integration in France? We examine integration success of first- and second- generation immigrants in France using a new multidimensional index of integration. We show that immigrants converge to the means of French citizens with no migratory background on four dimensions of integration, ranging from economic to navigational integration. However, while second-generation Christian immigrants are indistinguishable from rooted French, significant differences remain between second-generation Muslim immigrants and French natives. We find evidence consistent with two possible explanations of this pattern. First, among first-generation immigrants, Christians marry native French at higher rates making them more eligible for citizenship. Second, Muslims growing up in France are more likely to be stopped by the police than immigrants of Christian descent, generating mistrust for the police among young Muslims. These mechanisms require further investigation in order to understand better the widening integration gap between Christians and Muslims into French society.

Keywords: integration, discrimination, distrust, Muslims, France

Successful integration of immigrants has become one of the principal challenges facing Europe, North America, and Australia, where the foreign-born population averages 10 to 20 percent of the total population.¹ After decades of sustained immigration, major differences persist today between natives and immigrants in the chances that they have to live a successful life (OECD, 2015). These differences have been attributed to legal status (Amuedo-dorantes and Bansak, 2011; Rivera-Batiz, 1999), language barriers (Bleakley and Chin, 2004, 2010; Dustmann et al., 2003), and the human capital that immigrants bring with them (Borjas, 1984; Hainmueller et al., 2016; Lueders et al., 2017).²

Nonetheless, prospects generally look better for second-generation immigrants and tend to improve gradually over time. In the U.S. for example, immigrants choose less foreign-sounding names for their children as they spend more time in the U.S., effectively closing half of the naming gap with natives, thereby reflecting rapid cultural assimilation (Abramitzky et al., 2020). The appearance of a new out-group can also affect the integration of previous outsiders (Fouka et al., 2020). Recent survey results in France are similarly encouraging; Geisser (2010) in his editorial in *Migrations Société* even refers to second-generation immigrants as “abnormally normal citizens.”

However, there have been conflicting results on the differential religious barriers to integration success in Christian-heritage societies. To illustrate, Bisin et al. (2008) and Manning and Roy (2010) reach opposite conclusions studying Muslim integration in the U.K. In France, on the one hand, there is evidence that Muslims are discriminated against in the labor market (Adida et al., 2016) and that the 2004 headscarf ban impacted negatively on the socioeconomic integration of Muslim girls (Abdelgadir and Fouka, 2020). On the other hand, Maxwell and Bleich (2014) show that religiosity is not the relevant predictor in

¹Source: OECD (<https://data.oecd.org/migration/foreign-born-population.htm>). We omit Arab states of the Persian Gulf where on average foreign-born represents more than 40 percent of population.

²For a review of this literature, see Dancygier and Laitin (2014)

explaining variation in Muslims’ identification with France.

These results need to be reconciled, but the overall challenge of integrating this religiously different population won’t go away. Even assuming a halt to future immigration, it has been estimated that by 2050, 7.4 percent of the EU (plus Norway and Switzerland) will be Muslim, with a figure approaching 13 percent in France.³ Therefore, identifying barriers to Muslim integration and potential mechanisms that sustain those barriers is of prime importance. In this paper, we examine integration trajectories of immigrants of Christian and Muslim descent in France using an extraordinary dataset, *Trajectoires et Origines* (Beauchemin et al., 2008), hereafter *Trajectoires*, which for the first time in France gathers a wealth of data on first- and second- generation immigrants.

Along with Harder et al. (2018), we define integration “as the degree to which immigrants have the knowledge and capacity to build a successful, fulfilling life in the host society.” By remaining agnostic about mechanisms that best promote integration, this definition allows scholars to estimate the effects of policies (such as citizenship) and available individual choices (e.g. in the marriage market or school opportunities) for leading a successful, fulfilling life. Furthermore, this definition is agnostic on the returns to assimilation – i.e. the adoption of the cultural practices of the host society replacing those of the home society – for integration success. Religious membership or religiosity reflect assimilation, but are not relevant for the measurement of integration.

Our results confirm that immigrant integration in France has been a story of success. However, the data reveal an integration gap between Christian and Muslim immigrants that is exacerbated over generations. Over time and across generations, immigrants to France express values on the multidimensional integration scale similar to those of the native population. But Christian immigrants and their descendants do so faster than Muslims. As in all observational studies, our empirical strategy is subject to omitted variable bias. However, sensitivity analysis reveals that a hidden bias caused by omitted variables would

³<https://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/29/europes-growing-muslim-population/>

have to be considerable to explain the differences in psychological integration that we observe between Christians and Muslims among second-generation immigrants ([Altonji et al., 2005](#)).

Why do Muslims integrate more slowly than Christians into French society? It is often claimed, mostly by Center-right/Far-right politicians that Muslim immigrants don't naturalize because they don't identify with their host societies, and they are to be blamed for integration failure. But the data reveal success among first generation Muslims, suggesting some exogenous factor that turns second generation Muslims to see themselves as outsiders. The relative failure to identify among second-generation Muslims requires an explanation.

We find existing explanations insufficient to explain the pattern we reveal. First, scholars have rigorously documented the discrimination that Muslims face on the labor market. Our analysis confirms that economics is indeed an important dimension to understand trajectories of immigrants of Christian and Muslim descent. However, we also show that there is more to it than just a story of discrimination on the labor market. Indeed, we show that even among the most economically successful immigrants, the psychological integration gap between Muslim and Christian increases between the first and the second generation.

Second, we find little support for the alternative explanation proposed by [Tournier \(2013\)](#) that young Muslims are less likely to integrate into French society because they are more attracted to a cosmopolitan Islamic identity than a French national identity. Our analysis shows that among second generation immigrants, both Christians and Muslims display a higher interest for international politics than does the native population.

The data suggest two alternative explanations for the increasing integration gap between Christians and Muslims. First, we find that Christian first generation, largely due to the marriage market, naturalize more and at a younger age than Muslims. This not only means that Christian first-generation immigrants are more likely to feel French, because they are more likely to become French, but this can also have a downstream impact for second-generation immigrants, who are more likely to be born to at least one parent of French nationality. Moreover, since France does not have the *droit du sol*, second generation immigrants born

to parents who naturalized are more likely to be French citizens at birth.

Second, the data reveal that Muslim second generation immigrants are more likely to experience repeated identity checks by the police, often ones they feel are unjustified. This, we hypothesize, triggers mistrust among second-generation Muslim immigrants of French institutions, and this especially for the police system, contributing to the widening integration gap between Christians and Muslims.

We are therefore going beyond the modeling of a discriminatory equilibrium as proposed in [Adida et al. \(2016\)](#). They portray a sequence in which an initial exhibition of distaste by the rooted French leads to a reaction by Muslims that they will never be fully accepted, leading the French to think they never wanted to integrate. This model cannot explain first generation successes. Moreover, the data in the *Trajectoires* survey reveal new mechanisms, viz., an opportunity (for Christians through the marriage market) and a constraint (for Muslims in targeted police action) that reinforces the proposed equilibrium.

This paper is organized as follows. We start by providing political background to France's policies in regard to immigrant integration. We then describe the data and the integration scale that we use. We then show that France has been successful in incorporating its significant migrant population while heterogeneity analysis reveals a substantial Muslim disadvantage in the route from first- to second-generation, most notably on the psychological, social and economic dimensions of integration. The following section explores reasons for this Muslim disadvantage. The last section offers some concluding observations.

France's integration project

Whether due to geography, where (almost) all roads lead to Paris, or the dynamism of the population in Île-de-France (that attracted migrants from all other regions), or the economic policies of Louis XIV's comptroller general of Finance (Jean-Baptiste Colbert), France emerged in modern times as a centralized state incorporating – even standardizing –

a diverse set of regions (Braudel, 1986; Gourevitch, 1979; Mousnier, 1974). The revolution in 1789 broke down barriers of caste and class, promulgating that all citizens were brothers. The revolutionary Declaration of Rights of Man and the Citizen declared in Article 10 for freedom of religious belief. Napoleonic rule erased provincial claims to difference creating a political structure of uniform governance within France's famed hexagon. Napoleon also took family law out of the hands of religious authorities. To be sure, there were backtracks post-Napoleon returning schools and family law to Church authority, but they could not be sustained.

The denial of cultural differences across citizens returned at full speed in the Third Republic. Through control over the educational system, conscription, and railroads, the Third Republic turned "peasants into Frenchmen" (Weber, 1976). The electoral victories of the Radical Republicans in the early 20th century allowed them to take the next big step, *viz.* to formally separate the church from the state. The Republicans ruled in favor of secularism (*laïcité*). Its laws from 1905 guaranteed state neutrality in regard to religion and transferred all public education from the church to the state.

State centralization and a common national culture helped make the doctrine of *laïcité* a core uniting principal in France, transcending the deep ideological divides pitting the political left against the right. This was vividly illustrated when a schoolgirl was sent home for wearing a headscarf, in apparent violation of the 2004 ban on religious apparel in public places. While it is difficult for outside observers to understand who could be threatened by a piece of clothing with no explicit religious signal, Bowen (2007) makes clear that the actions of the school authorities and the commission approving the ban were broadly popular throughout France.

France's *laïc* tradition provides an expectation that Muslims who accept their public role as citizens should face no discrimination by the religiously-neutral state. In this sense, if systematic discrimination is uncovered in France, this can be considered a lower bound for Europe in general. Maxwell and Bleich (2014) estimate the effect of religiosity among Muslim

immigrants on a scale of “feeling French”. Their goal was to “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 as they acquire their host-country citizenship and become fluent in their host-country languages” (p. 156). In line with their expectations, after creating an integration index (based on citizenship, country of birth, and language facility in French), they show that most of the effect of religious difference washes away once this index is used as a control. “Our findings,” they report, “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” (p. 171).⁴

Tournier (2013), also relying on *Trajectoires*, presents a direct challenge to Maxwell and Bleich (2014). To be sure, the explored relationship is different. Tournier (2013) estimates the sociodemographic and political factors that lead to higher degrees of religiosity and lower levels of feeling French among Muslim immigrants as compared to Christians. As we report below, our analysis of the *Trajectoires* data are more in line with his findings. Our principal contribution is in a fuller exploration of the mechanisms that lead second-generation Muslim immigrants to integrate more slowly than their Christian counterparts.

⁴This ignores France’s troubled imperial history especially in Algeria, where a war for independence led to grievous violence between French forces and the rebels, and ultimately in massive immigration of Algerian Muslims into France, along with the displaced French settler population (the *pieds noirs*) who were resolutely anti-Muslim. Waves of Algerian immigrants continued, with associated social tensions. Their finding is all the more surprising given this history.

Measuring immigrant integration

The *Trajectoires* dataset, jointly collected by the National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED) and the National Institute of Economics and Statistical Studies (INSEE) is extraordinary.⁵ The “principal objective” of this study is, through a representative sample of all those living in France, gaining sufficient power to understand small minority populations, in order best “to describe the diversity of the population” living in France between the ages of 18 and 60 (?).

The *Trajectoires* dataset represents a new era on the collection of ethnic data in France where republican ideology resolutely categorized all citizens as “French”. In it, two important innovations were implemented. First, the survey overcame France’s official insistence that the second-generation living in France were French citizens, and consequently no different conceptually from those with long roots within the hexagon. In *Trajectoires* those second-generation immigrants are a recognized sub-group. Second, overcoming decades of official refusal to collect ethnic data, with a few partial exceptions, the state permitted the collection of data on the religion of all respondents.⁶

⁵INED and INSEE are state agencies created after World War II. INED works under the auspices of the Ministries of Research and of Social Affairs; INSEE is under the direction of the Ministry of the Economy and Finance. Both are protected by statutory guarantee against political influence. See ?, p. 126 on their legal status, and his testimony (p. 129) that despite bitter political battles over policy and data collection, INED and INSEE remain scientifically independent.

⁶The “Mobilité Géographique et Insertion Sociale” (MGIS) study in 1992 permitted ethnic questions, but this was restricted to certain groups. Because the religion question in *Trajectoires* is considered “sensitive”, we needed to get special permission to merge the religious identification question with the full dataset, and promised we would not release that variable to outsiders. Thus we cannot provide to readers a full replication dataset, but we can direct them on how they can gain access.

Researchers connected with the INED have published numerous papers relying on the *Trajectoires* data (many of which are available in ?), vastly increasing our knowledge of the diversity of the French population, facts that were hidden for years due to restrictions on the collection of ethnic data. Among these, only one exploited the information provided on respondent’s religion and the religion of respondent’s parents (Simon and Tiberj, 2016). In the broader social science literature, we know of only four published papers that applied for the special permission to merge the data on religious affiliations, with two of those addressing the question of Muslim success in French society.⁷

While most social surveys relying on random procedures have very few immigrant respondents, in *Trajectoires* the immigrant population is oversampled – 8,456 first-generation respondents and 8,161 in the second-generation — allowing for comparative analyses of sub-populations. But this isn’t merely a survey of immigrants. Beyond the oversampling of immigrants, the data allow us to compare immigrant sub-populations with the means for the rooted French (with over three thousand respondents), those with no migratory background that *Trajectoires* calls the “majority population.” Also important about the *Trajectoires* survey, there is a wealth of questions (allowing for 1,560 variables) on housing, on sources of income, on nationality of parents, on language, on migratory trajectories, on family relations, on self-image, on education, on professional life, on religion, on marriage, on citizenship, on health, on perceived discrimination and on social relations. This broad repertoire of questions allows us to go beyond unidimensional measures of integration, as there are questions that allow for assessment of social, economic, psychological, political and navigational integration of sub-sets of the immigrant population.⁸

Most studies of integration success evaluate only a single outcome variable as their mea-

⁷Soehl (2016) and Lagrange (2017) rely on *Trajectoires* data as well, and merge the religion variable, but their focus is on explaining levels of religiosity. We therefore summarize in this literature review only Maxwell and Bleich (2014) and Tournier (2013) whose focus is on the relative success of Muslims in integrating into French society.

⁸There were no problems in response rates, as state law compelled participation to those

sure of integration (Bisin et al., 2008; Manning and Roy, 2010; Maxwell and Bleich, 2014). In economics, studies focus principally on wage and employment differentials between immigrants and natives (Borjas, 1984; Ozden et al., 2018). However, it is well-known in sociological investigations that the related concept of assimilation is a multi-dimensional process. These models postulate the notion of “segmented assimilation” (Portes, 2013; Waters et al., 2010) that envision the possibility of intergenerational shift in some domains toward the host country culture and in others a return to the cultural repertoires of their parents’ home country. In line with these findings, Harder et al. (2018), in line with their definition of integration, propose a six-dimension model of integration – psychological, economic, navigational, linguistic, social, and political – that is sensitive to the variety of paths on the route toward success in the host country.

We can extract from *Trajectoires* questions that in part measure each of four out of six dimensions, serving as the outcome variables for our analysis. For each dimension, we recode all variables such that a higher value indicates a higher level of integration. See Appendix A for details on the creation of our variables from the data in the *Trajectoires* survey and Table B.1 for summary statistics. First, psychological integration “captures respondents’ feeling of connection with the host country, their wish to continue living there, and their sense of belonging in the host country.” For this in *Trajectoires* we extracted three questions: “I feel French”; “I feel at home in France”; and “People see me as a Frenchman”. Second, economic integration “captures income, employment, satisfaction with employment status, and the ability to meet different levels of unexpected expenses.” For this in *Trajectoires* we extracted three questions: “Monthly income”; “Is currently working”; “Opinion about standard of living”.

Third, navigational integration “captures the ability to manage some basic needs in the host country, such as seeing a doctor, addressing legal problems, and searching for jobs.” For this in *Trajectoires* we extracted three questions: “Needed help in the last year with

who were randomly assigned to participate in this massive survey.

administrative procedures”; “Possesses a drivers’ license”; “Possesses a bank account or permanent postal address”. Fourth, social integration “captures social ties and interactions with natives in the host country, as well as bridging social capital as evidenced by participation in organizations with natives.” For this in *Trajectoires* we extracted one question: “Does not have contacts with family or friends outside of France.”

The survey does not allow us to capture levels of linguistic and political integration. *Trajectoires* only measured linguistic skills of first-generation immigrants. Linguistic integration “captures respondents’ assessment of their ability to read, speak, write, and understand the dominant language of their host country or region.” Regarding political integration, or “the understanding of the important political issues facing the host country and the degree to which respondents engage in discussion and political action,” *Trajectoires* only measures interest in politics but not understanding of political issues.

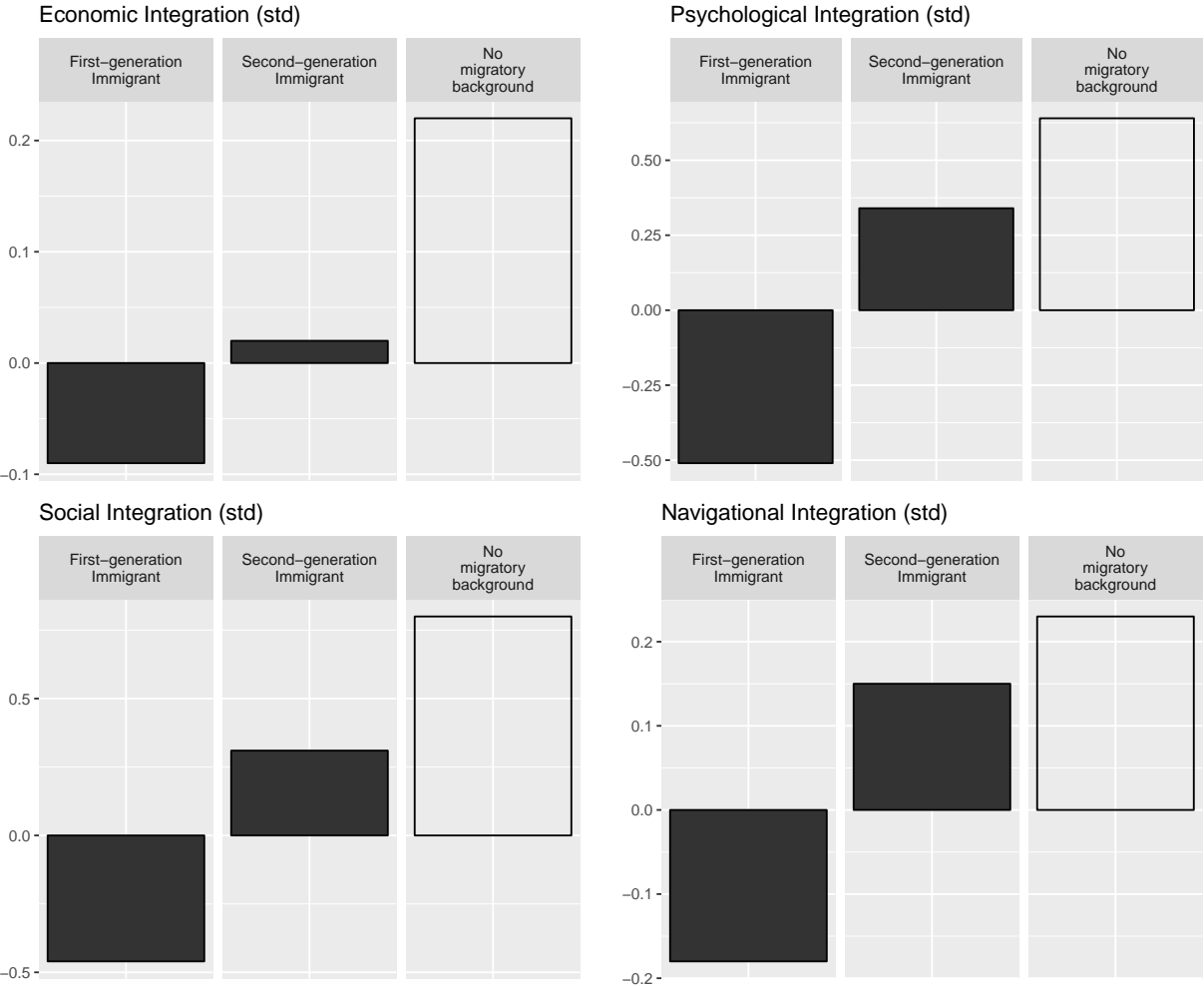
An integration success story

Confirming cogent survey work portraying immigrants as “French as everyone else” ([Brouard and Tiberj, 2005](#)), the *Trajectoires* data supports the Republican mantra that the recognition of “citizen” as the primary public identity would work to integrate immigrants across generations. When *Trajectoires* data were released, this view was reinforced. In an editorial in *Migrations Société* reviewing *Trajectoires*, [Geisser \(2010\)](#) noted, with the partial exception of relations with police, the data reveal a migrant population that is not a threat to French culture. *Trajectoires*’ portrayal of the descriptive percentages, the editorial underlines, shows that immigrants are French like the native population. As [Maxwell and Bleich \(2014\)](#) further demonstrate with their analysis of the *Trajectoires* data, citizenship, birth within France’s hexagon, and facility in the French language are strong predictors of “feeling French.”

Indeed, on all our dimensions of integration, as we move from first- to second-generation immigrants, and as powerfully illustrated in [Figure 1](#), convergence toward the values of the

native population is impressive. Figure 1 visually displays the average level of integration of first- and second-generation immigrants, as well as the integration level of respondents with no migratory background for the economic, psychological, social and navigational dimensions. Simple differences in means reveal a similar pattern for all dimensions: while first-generation immigrants look very different from respondents with no migratory background, second-generation immigrants look much more similar to natives than does the first-generation. For all dimensions, we see an impressive intergenerational convergence to the rooted French mean.

Figure 1: Intergenerational integration (Differences in means)



Note: This figure displays the weighted average level of integration by sub-group for economic (top left), psychological (top right), social (bottom left) and navigational integration (bottom right).

To estimate the difference between each of these groups, while controlling for differences in observable characteristics, we turn to multivariate regression. In Table 1, we report OLS estimates of the differences between each of these three subgroups controlling for country of origin, age, gender, family situation, region of residence and education. Looking at the combined integration index (column 1), we find that the difference between immigrants and rooted French goes from close to 1 standard deviation difference (-.96) in the first-generation, to less than a third of a standard deviation difference in the second generation (-.30). The difference between the two generation (-.66) is significant at the .01 significance level. Looking at sub-indices, the pattern is strikingly similar, except for the economic dimension.⁹ The gap between immigrants and rooted French is closing by at least half within a single generation.

In sum, on all four dimensions, evidence of integration convergence is powerful. The data provide clear evidence that, on average, France has been an impressive success in integrating its immigrant populations.

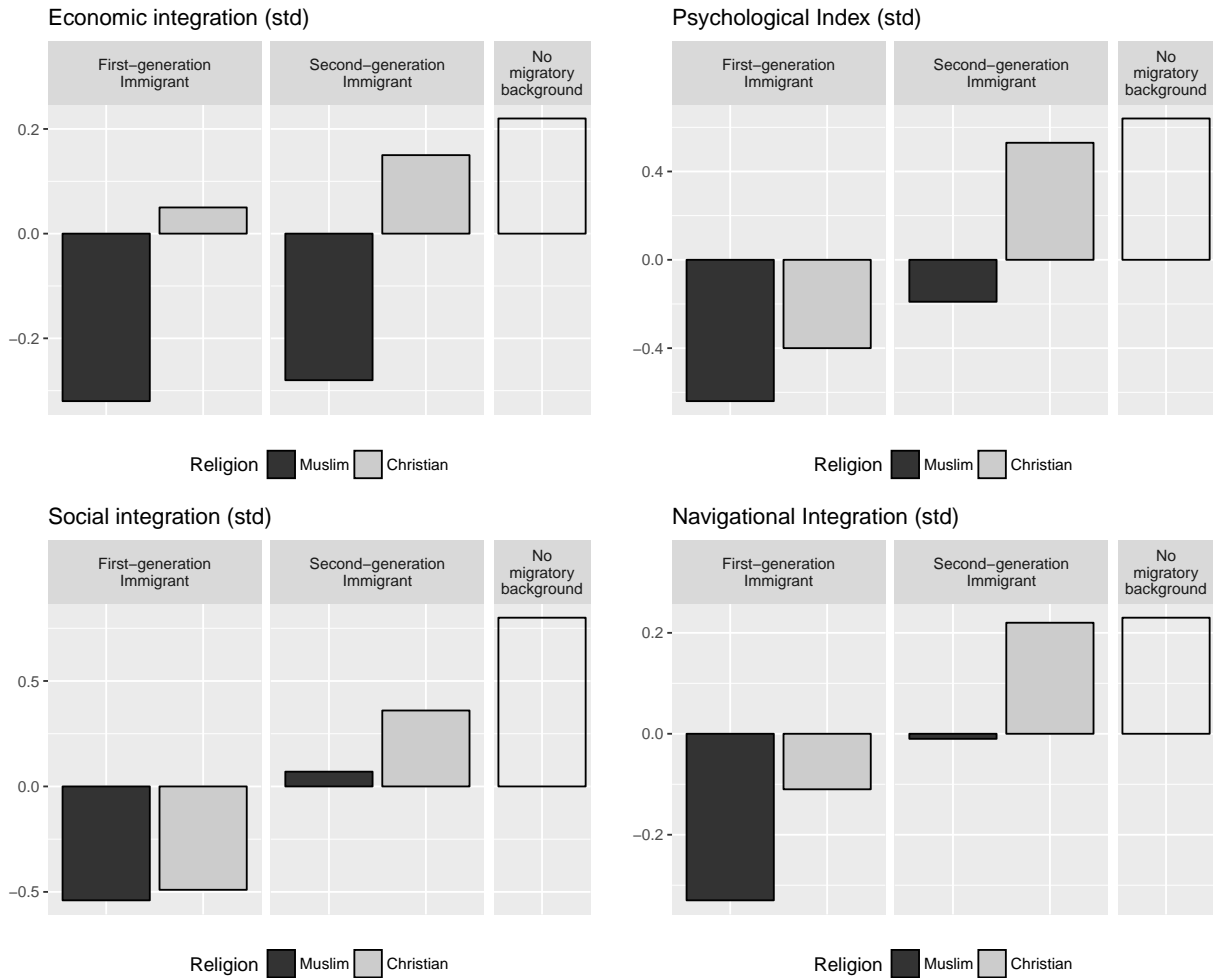
A growing integration gap

If integration of immigrants in general is succeeding in France, the situation for Muslim immigrants is more troubling. We now examine the intergenerational integration for Muslims and Christians separately. Since second-generation conversion from Islam to either atheism or Catholicism could lead to biased results if these converts succeed in France, we compare first-generation immigrants that identify as Christian (Muslim) to second-generation immigrants who identified their mothers as Christian (Muslim).

As Figure 2 reveals, and more fully computed on Table 2 on the combined integration index (first column), convergence with rooted French for Christians is significant by the second-generation falling only .23 standard deviation behind. However, the rate is slower for

⁹This may help explain why studies of labor market discrimination are less sanguine about the integration project in France than are broader sociological investigations.

Figure 2: Intergenerational integration by religion (Differences in means)



Note: This figure displays the weighted average level of integration by sub-group for economic (top left), psychological (top right), social (bottom left) and navigational integration (bottom right).

Table 1: Intergenerational integration (Multivariate regressions)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Integration index (std)	Economic Integration index (std)	Psychological Integration index (std)	Social Integration index (std)	Navigational Integration index (std)
First-generation	-0.959*** (0.04)	-0.141** (0.04)	-0.771*** (0.03)	-1.050*** (0.04)	-0.103** (0.04)
Second-generation	-0.296*** (0.03)	-0.133*** (0.04)	-0.110*** (0.02)	-0.408*** (0.03)	0.042 (0.03)
Observations	17815	19100	17908	19196	19196
R^2	0.307	0.150	0.303	0.245	0.121
≠ btw second- and first- generation immigrants	-0.66	-0.01	-0.66	-0.64	-0.15
p-value	0.000	0.786	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: This table shows the coefficients and 95 percent confidence intervals of two indicator variables for first-generation and second-generation immigrants included in five different OLS regressions. The omitted category is the rooted French category. Not shown but included in the regression are country of origin, age, gender, family situation, region of residence and education. We also control for the decile of the following neighborhood (IRIS level) characteristics (per capita tax revenue, percent social housing, percent unemployment for 15 years and more) aggregated at the decile. The difference between first- and second-generation immigration is shown at the bottom of the table, along with the p -value.

Muslims (over three-quarters of a standard deviation behind).¹⁰

These results are based on multivariate analysis controlling for observable differences between Christians and Muslims including age, gender, family situation, education, country of origin and region of residence. In spite of our efforts to control for a rich set of covariates, we need to test whether the differences between Christians and Muslims we observe in the second-generation are the result of unobserved factors. To quantify the size of this potential hidden bias, we use the sensitivity analysis developed by [Altonji et al. \(2005\)](#) and find that while differences between Christians and Muslims among first-generation immigrants are sensitive to omitted variable bias, selection on an unobservable would have to be substantially

¹⁰We can rule out that the observed patterns result from Muslims with higher integration potential being more likely to move out of France, as overall 99 percent of children born in France are still living in France and this rate is not significantly different for Muslims and Christians.

Table 2: Intergenerational integration by religion (Multivariate regressions)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Integration index (std)	Economic integration index (std)	Psychological integration index (std)	Social integration index (std)	Navigational integration index (std)
First-generation Christian	-0.730*** (0.06)	-0.100 (0.07)	-0.814*** (0.04)	-1.100*** (0.06)	-0.075 (0.06)
First-generation Muslim	-1.004*** (0.06)	-0.335*** (0.07)	-1.036*** (0.05)	-1.254*** (0.06)	-0.166** (0.06)
Second-generation Christian	-0.234*** (0.04)	-0.078 (0.05)	-0.037 (0.03)	-0.378*** (0.04)	0.075 (0.04)
Second-generation Muslim	-0.741*** (0.06)	-0.341*** (0.08)	-0.652*** (0.05)	-0.699*** (0.07)	0.008 (0.07)
Observations	14049	15021	14113	15088	15088
R^2	0.302	0.152	0.294	0.233	0.119
\neq btw Muslims and Christians:					
Among first-generation immigrants (D1)	-0.27	-0.23	-0.22	-0.15	-0.09
p-value	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.027	0.179
Among second-generation immigrants (D2)	-0.51	-0.26	-0.61	-0.32	-0.07
p-value	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.302
D2-D1	-0.23	-0.03	-0.39	-0.17	0.02
p-value	0.000	0.708	0.000	0.013	0.726

Note: This table shows the coefficients and 95 percent confidence intervals of four indicator variables for first-generation and second-generation immigrants, whether Christian or Muslim, included in five different OLS regressions. The omitted category is rooted French. Not shown but included in the regression are country of origin, age, gender, family situation, region of residence and education. The differences between Muslims and Christians among the first- (D1) and second-generation immigrants (D2), as well as the difference between D2 and D1 are shown at the bottom of the table, along with their p -values.

stronger than selection on the observables in order to explain away differences in integration prospects among Christians and Muslim immigrants in the second-generation (Appendix C).

In the context of a remarkable record in integrating immigrants, the relative failure of second-generation Muslims merits scrutiny. This is what we provide in the next section.

A search for mechanisms

Discrimination on the labor market

Discrimination against Muslims in the labor market is now well-documented (See [Adida et al. \(2016\)](#) for an overview of studies). We consider first the hypothesis that the pattern we uncover results from discrimination in the labor market. It could be the case that dis-

crimination against Muslims on the labor market prevent them from accessing jobs halting their integration, and increasing the gap between Christians and Muslim by the second generation. It is true that we see in Figure 1 that the economic dimension is the slowest moving of all four. This is confirmed in Table 1 where we see that there is no difference between first- and second- generation on the economic dimension.

But this explanation is not enough to explain the pattern we reveal. Consider the psychological integration in Table 3. We ask, does the pattern go away when focusing only on the respondents who are scoring the highest on the economic dimension? That is, we look at those who are currently working (column 1), those whose monthly income is above the 75th percentile (column 2), and those who are above the 75th percentile on the economic integration index (column 3). What this table reveals is that even among those who are integrated economically, the pattern remains the same: the difference between Christians and Muslims is increasing in the second generation.

Global Reislamization

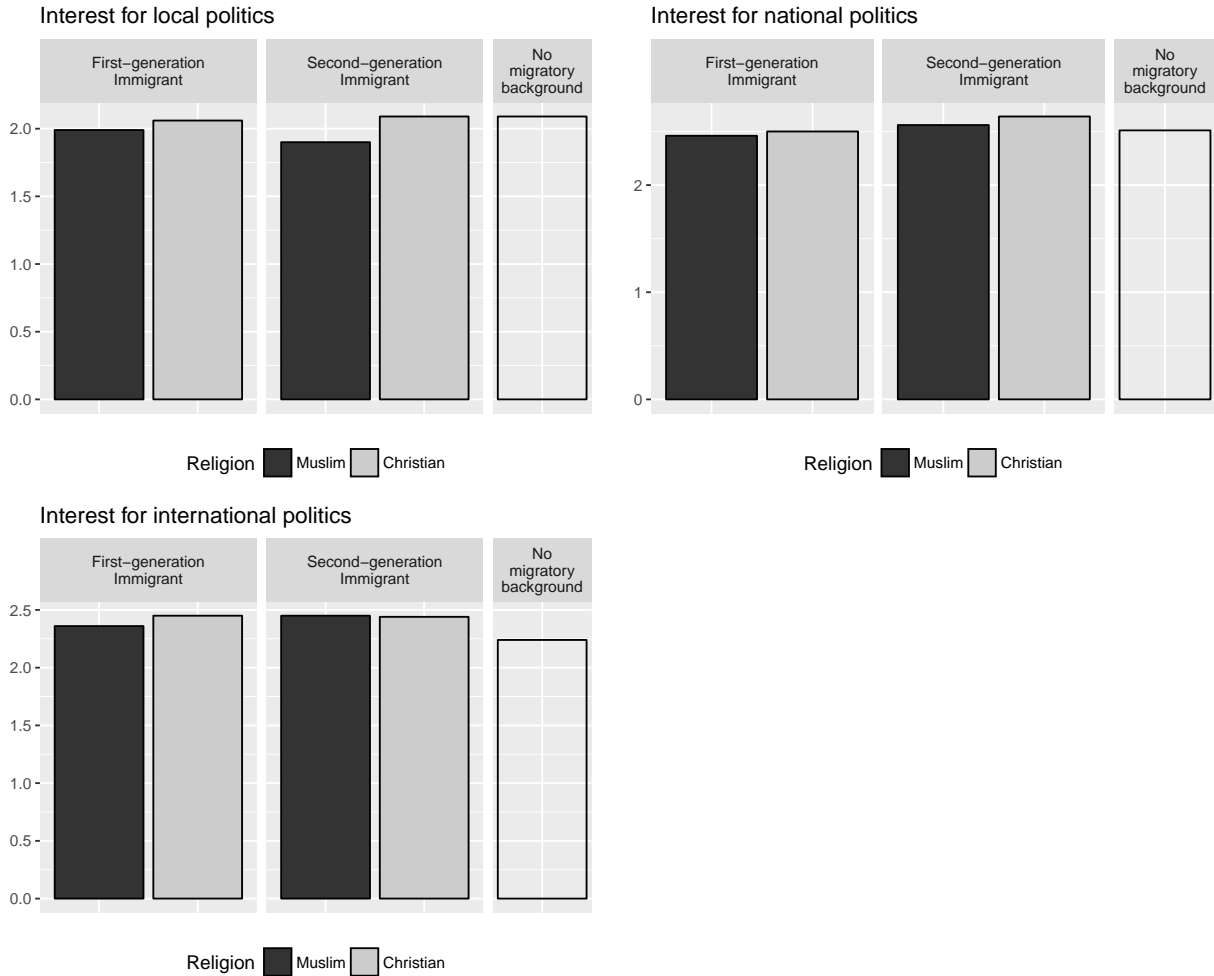
[Tournier \(2013\)](#) reports very similar results as ours in regard to the lag in integration of second-generation Muslim immigrants as compared to Christians. But the cause, he argues, goes beyond discrimination and social difficulties to integrate; rather it is the result of an affirmation of an identity that is not compatible with modernity. He shows, relying on the categorization of [Donegani \(1993\)](#), an increasing degree of religious integralism across generations among the Muslims, integralism defined as the belief that religion is essential to one's self-definition. Among the Muslim (Catholic) respondents, 27 percent (14 percent) of the first-generation immigrants are integralists, while 34 percent (7 percent) of the second-generation are integralists. In regression analyses explaining the integralist association with Islam, he reports only weak links to sociodemographic values and feelings of discrimination. Rather, relying on [Kepel \(1991\)](#), he points to the cultural and ideological transformation among French Muslims in the wake of the Iranian revolution in 1979, providing an alternative

Table 3: Psychological integration among the most economically integrated

	Psychological integration index (std)		
	If is currently working	If monthly income > 75th perc.	If economic integration > 75th perc.
First-generation Christian	-0.827*** (0.05)	-0.889*** (0.06)	-0.905*** (0.07)
First-generation Muslim	-0.981*** (0.05)	-0.991*** (0.07)	-1.013*** (0.09)
Second-generation desc Christian	-0.029 (0.03)	-0.022 (0.04)	-0.002 (0.05)
Second-generation desc Muslim	-0.626*** (0.06)	-0.683*** (0.07)	-0.645*** (0.10)
Observations	9745	6220	3706
R^2	0.287	0.279	0.270
\neq btw Muslims and Christians:			
Among first-generation immigrants (D1)	-0.15	-0.10	-0.11
p-value	0.008	0.171	0.287
Among second-generation immigrants (D2)	-0.60	-0.66	-0.64
p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000
D2-D1	-0.44	-0.56	-0.54
p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: This table shows the coefficients and 95 percent confidence intervals of four indicator variables for first-generation and second-generation immigrants, whether Christian or Muslim. The omitted category is rooted French. Each column reports the result from the same regression in 3 different sub-samples: among those who are currently working (column 1), those whose monthly income is above the 75th percentile (column 2), and those whose score on the economic integration index is above the 75th percentile (column 3). Not shown but included in the regression are country of origin, age, gender, family situation, region of residence and education. The differences between Muslims and Christians among the first- (D1) and second-generation immigration (D2), as well as the difference between D2 and D1 are shown at the bottom of the table, along with the p -values.

Figure 3: Interest in Politics



Note: This figure displays the weighted average level of interest in politics by sub-group for local (top left), national (top right), and international politics (bottom left).

vision of radical Islam, with the immediate effect of a discernible rise in religiosity among young Muslims. In support of this conjecture, controlling for age, education and social origin, he shows that declaring oneself Muslim is a strong predictor, among those in the second-generation, of interest in international politics, and especially with politics in their parents' home country. [Tournier \(2013\)](#) therefore argues that factors such as leftist voting, hostility toward the police, and weak identification with the French nation, cannot be reduced to a special social situation, nor to experiences of racism and discrimination. These variables are effective in differentiating Muslim immigrants in general compared to Christians, but do not provide much leverage to explain what he dubs as “integralism”, the highest degree of religious attachment. For those in this latter sub-sample, he insists on a political explanation: viz. it is the attraction of “the global dynamic of reislamization” ([Tournier, 2013](#), p. 94) to young French Muslims that drives their reluctance to fully integrate into France at similar rates as their Christian counterparts.

While we agree with much of [Tournier \(2013\)](#)'s analyses, here we note that his most original explanation based on Muslims reporting much higher interest in international affairs than natives, is not fully convincing. In fact, second-generation Christians and second-generation Muslims both reveal an interest in international politics a fifth of a standard deviation more than the native French respondents (Figure 3). This is more a reflection of native French disinterest in foreign affairs than evidence of a super-interest in international politics by Muslims, such as to explain their relative failure to integrate into their host country.

Differential access to naturalization

Our first alternative mechanism is that the increasing gap between Christians and Muslims comes from a differential access to naturalization. Indeed, if Christians and Muslims naturalize at a different rate, this could explain that the gap between them increases in the second generation. Indeed, we see that among first-generation immigrants Muslims are 9 percent-

age points less likely to have adopted French citizenship. The difference is substantial since, among first generation immigrants, 41 percent are naturalized French. In other words, Muslims are 20 percent less likely to naturalize French. One reason could be that Muslims are less likely than Christians to marry a French native. Indeed, 8 percent of second generation Muslims have a parent who was born in France; meanwhile 25 percent of second generation Christians have a parent born in France. Because marriage to a French citizen is (almost) automatically enabling naturalization – indeed 30 percent of naturalizations in France are linked to marriage (Rallu, 2011) – Christian immigrants, through the marriage market, have a clearer path to citizenship. And this is an advantage to their second generation children.

Table 4: Religious difference in access to naturalization among first-generation immigrants

	(1) Is French	(2) Age at naturalization	(3) Partner is French
Muslim	-0.089*** (0.03)	4.169*** (0.60)	-0.180*** (0.02)
Observations	5848	2400	4334
R^2	0.233	0.570	0.364

Note: In this table, the sample is restricted to first-generation immigrants. Not shown but included in the regression are country of origin, age, gender, family situation, region of residence, education and age at arrival.

Differential treatment by the Police

Our second mechanism linking the intergenerational failure of Muslim immigrants into France to integrate at the same rate as their Christian counterparts, focuses on French institutions – especially the police. We explore repeated identity checks and police brutality as one possible factor explaining the drop we observe in trust in the police among Muslim second-generation immigrants. As recognized by even those most optimistic about the success of the integration

project in France, mistrust by immigrants of the police stands out as worrisome.¹¹ As with our summaries of four dimensions of integration, we observe a decided first- to second-generation evolution of distrust among Muslims (but not for Christians) in the police (Table 5). Among the first-generation immigrants, both Christians and Muslims are more trustful in the police than the French. However, in the second-generation, Christian immigrants are as trustful as the French, but Muslim second-generation immigrants are 30 percentage points less likely to trust the police. This result holds controlling for neighborhood characteristics such as per capita tax revenue, social housing, and unemployment. To put this differently, while we don't observe differences between Christians and Muslims in the first-generation in the extent to which they trust the police, Muslims are much less trusting of the police by the second generation.

What happened to these second-generation immigrants that led to such low levels of trust in police? As Geisser (2010) writes despite his rose-colored glasses in viewing all other variables, "The only institution that is an exception is the police." But on this point too, the conclusions of the authors of the investigation report are nuanced. "The relative mistrust of the police institution is not due to any 'anti-police culture' in the suburbs or to a willingness to settle with the cops," they insist, "but is rooted in the dramatic experience of repeated identity checks." In then noting that this distrust is higher for the police than for justice, he reasons that "This difference cannot be explained by the aversion towards repressive institutions, otherwise one would not see statistically significant differences between justice and police. It becomes clear when it is related to the frequency of contacts with the police [...]. Identity checks carried out by the police are a source of contention with young people

¹¹The upside of police surveillance may be the reduction of criminal behavior in areas in which high ethnic/religious diversity would predict prevalence of crime. Algan et al. (2016) report that in public housing units, diversity correlates with poor provision of public goods (such as elevators and heating units that are non-operational), yet no difference in reported incidences of crime.

from working-class backgrounds, particularly those of immigrant origin, and regularly makes headlines.”

Distrust, [Tournier \(2013\)](#) shows, correlates with youth, living in a ZUS (Sensitive Urban Zone), and reporting of police checks on their identity. And indeed, the data show that first- and second-generation Muslims are more likely to have been stopped for an identity check and among those who were stopped, they are more likely to feel that the control was not justified (Table 5). As reported by [Chelini and Kwan \(2008\)](#) “The French police force, notorious for its secrecy and code of silence by which its officers abide, has in recent years come under severe criticism over accusations of police brutality and racism.” This began to change under the Socialist government of Lionel Jospin, where community policing (*police de proximité*) was introduced. However, when the center right took power under Jacques Chirac, and under the Interior Ministry of Nicolas Sarkozy, that experiment was largely abandoned. As Sarkozy memorably declared in 2003, “The police do not exist for the purpose of organizing sporting tournaments, but on arresting delinquents. You are not social workers.” (Quoted in [Chelini and Kwan \(2008\)](#)).

These remarks burnished Sarkozy’s image as an enemy of the *banlieue* youth,¹² more interested in maximizing arrests and deportations than building local trust. This has had ominous consequences. In October 2005, in response to the death of two teenagers who were hiding from the police (and got (accidentally) killed in the electrical substation in which they were hiding), and for which Sarkozy defended the police, riots began to spread through several *banlieues*. Sarkozy’s instincts may have won him support for his future presidential bid, but inflamed passions in the *banlieues*, especially among the Muslim youth. To be sure, a report from the International Crisis Group claimed no connection between those riots and Islamic organizations. Moreover, Sarkozy’s depiction of the rioters as “scum” had no

¹²While *banlieue* is typically translated as “suburb”, its etymology suggests places of punishment going back to feudal times. In France, suburbs that lack social and geographic connections to wealthy cities are referred to as *banlieue*.

Table 5: Differential treatment by the police

	(1) Trust in the Police	(2) Was stopped and frisked	(3) Thinks stopped unfairly
First-generation Christian	0.118* (0.05)	-0.013 (0.03)	0.030 (0.06)
First-generation Muslim	0.159** (0.05)	-0.031 (0.03)	0.073 (0.05)
Second-generation Christian	-0.038 (0.03)	0.007 (0.01)	0.047 (0.03)
Second-generation Muslim	-0.309*** (0.04)	0.050* (0.02)	0.217*** (0.03)
Observations	14391	14757	4080
R^2	0.042	0.081	0.105
\neq btw Christians and Muslims:			
Among first-generation immigrants	0.04	-0.02	0.04
p-value	0.526	0.609	0.551
Among Second-generation immigrants	-0.27	0.04	0.17
p-value	0.000	0.089	0.000
Difference between the two	-0.31	0.06	0.13
p-value	0.000	0.143	0.096

Note: This table shows the coefficients and 95 percent confidence intervals of four indicator variables for first-generation and second-generation immigrants, whether Christian or Muslim, included in three different OLS regressions. The omitted category is rooted French. Not shown but included in the regression are country of origin, age, gender, family situation, region of residence and education. The differences between Muslims and Christians among the first- (D1) and second-generation immigrants (D2), as well as the difference between D2 and D1 are shown at the bottom of the table, along with the p -values.

religious connotation. However, among their tactics of control, the police fired a tear gas canister into a mosque in Clichy after being denied entry, when two boys they had been pursuing ran into the mosque. Hundreds inside the mosque at the time were injured. It is therefore of no surprise that in a subsequent article in *Le Monde* reporting that on French popular views of the riots, they were publicly seen as a Muslim affair (Laurence and Vaisse, 2005).

Conclusion

Trajectoires et Origines (2008) was a signal achievement for French social statistics. Overcoming constraints on collecting ethnic data, it enquired about respondents' and their parents' religious affiliations. Ignoring republican insistence that the only identity of concern to the French state is whether someone is a citizen, the *Trajectoires* survey accepted the category of second-generation immigrant, thereby allowing for estimates of intergenerational success in integration. Moreover, overcoming the data problems of standard household surveys, *Trajectoires* oversampled the immigrant population in France, yet had sufficient numbers of the majority population to allow for sub-group analyses as well as comparisons of immigrants to natives. Finally, the range of questions in *Trajectoires* was broadly cast, allowing us to extract from the codebook questions that spoke to four of the six dimensions of integration – psychological, social, economic, and navigational – identified in recent work on integration metrics ([Harder et al., 2018](#)).

This paper takes advantage of the impressive qualities of the *Trajectoires* dataset first to ask whether the integration of immigrants in France that previous research had found successful, held for four of the six dimensions of integration. The answer was a resolute positive. We then asked whether Muslim immigrants into France faced higher barriers to integration success than comparable Christians; and if so, what mechanisms could explain relative integration failure. Here we found significant intergenerational failures of Muslims, and especially on three of the dimensions, viz. psychological, social, and economic.

This finding of a Muslim disadvantage compelled us to search for mechanisms. First, we looked at whether the growing integration gap among Christians and Muslims could be solely the result of discrimination on the labor market. Second, we looked at it could be explained by the attraction of a cosmopolitan Islamic identity for young Muslim second-generation immigrants, leading them to abjure the attractions of French society ([Tournier, 2013](#)). Since we found neither of these existing explanations satisfactory, we turned to alternative explanations. We looked at naturalization rates; here the data reveal that first generation Christian

immigrants were more likely to naturalize, and to naturalize at a younger age than their Muslim counterparts. The evidence suggests that this is at least in part due to Christian immigrant advantage in the French marriage market. Moreover, the growing lack of trust in French police among Muslims immigrants, likely due to their sense of unjustified police harassment, could also explain the growing integration gap.

More generally, this paper makes an advance on our understanding of immigrant integration. It emphasizes that the same macro policies (here, coming from the French state) can have differential effects on different populations, even controlling for language and skills. Since a substantial number of Muslim immigrants and refugees are on the route to permanent residence in Europe, learning how best to integrate them into their host communities represents a major challenge. Through its identification of the separate dimensions of integration, the areas where the Muslim disadvantage take place, and the mechanisms driving it, this paper contributes to an ongoing conversation about integration and its challenges for other immigrant accepting societies.

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Appendices

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A Description of variables on integration measurement

Note: All variables are recoded such that a higher value indicates a **higher** level of integration.

Psychological integration

We constructed the *psychological integration index* by adding the following three variables and by rescaling the index on a scale from 1 to 5. The index is coded missing if any of the components is missing.

- *I feel French (1-4)* is constructed using the survey variable `x_apparf` (“Opinion de l’enquêté par rapport à la proposition : je me sens français”). It is coded on a four-point scale where 1 indicates no agreement at all with the statement and 4 indicates full agreement. 369 missing observations (1.88 percent).
- *I feel at home in France (1-4)* is constructed using the survey variable `x_moifr` (“Opinion de l’enquêté par rapport à la proposition : je me sens chez moi en France”). It is coded on a four-point scale where 1 indicates no agreement at all with the statement and 4 indicates full agreement. 276 missing observations (1.41 percent).
- *People see me as a Frenchman (1-4)* is constructed using the survey variable `x_vufri` (“Opinion de l’enquêté par rapport à la proposition : on me voit comme un Français”). It is coded on a four-point scale where 1 indicates no agreement at all with the statement and 4 indicates full agreement. 886 missing observations (4.51 percent).

Economic integration

We constructed the *economic integration index* by adding the following three variables and by rescaling the index on a scale from 1 to 5. The index is coded missing if any of the components is missing.

- *Monthly income (1-5)* was constructed using the survey variable `p_salmens_ego` (“Salaire net mensualisé d’ ego salarié, en euros”). We first impute zero to those that did not answer the question as coded in the survey variable `p_salnet_dra` (“Indicateur de réponse sur le salaire net (tous emplois confondus)”). We then replace values above the 95th percentile by the value at the 95th percentile. We then divide by the square root of household size (`npers` “Nombre de personnes du logement”), and finally we turn it to a five-point categorical variable following the recommendations in Harder et al. (2018).
- *Is currently working (1-5)* was constructed using the survey variable `situae` (“Situation professionnelle”). It is a binary variable where those that are currently employed are coded as 5 and those that are not are coded as 1.
- *Opinion about standard of living (1-5)* was constructed using the survey variable `a_avis` (“Opinion sur le niveau de vie du ménage”). It is coded on a five-point scale where 1 indicates that the household can barely make ends meet and 5 that the household lives comfortably.

Social integration

We constructed the *social integration index* by rescaling the following variable on a scale from 1 to 5.

- *Contacts with family or friends outside of France* was constructed using the survey variable `a_news` (“Contacts avec de la famille ou des amis qui vivent dans un autre pays que la France, un DOM ou un TOM”). It is coded on a three-point scale where 5 means never, 3 sometimes and 1 often.

Navigational integration

We constructed the *navigational integration index* by adding the following three variables and by rescaling the index on a scale from 1 to 5. The index is coded missing if any of the components is missing.

- *Needed help in the last year with administrative procedures* was constructed using the survey variable `a_aadm` (“Besoin d’aide pour des démarches administratives au cours des 12 derniers mois”). It is a binary variable where 0 indicates yes and 1 indicates no.
- *Possesses a drivers license* was constructed using the survey variable `a_permis` (“Possession du permis de conduire”). It is a binary variable where 0 indicates no and 1 indicates yes.
- *Possesses a bank account or permanent postal address* was constructed using the survey variable `a_cptper` (“Possession d’un compte bancaire ou postal personnel”). It is a binary variable where 0 indicates no and 1 indicates yes.

Index construction

The *integration index* was constructed by adding the social, navigational, economic and psychological integration index and rescaling it on a scale from 1 to 5. The index is coded missing if any of the components is missing.

B Summary statistics

Table B.1: Summary statistics: Multi-dimensional Integration

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Integration index	18,204	3.55	0.75	1	5
Psychological Integration index	18,298	4.10	1.11	1	5
I feel French	19,268	3.32	0.98	1	4
I feel at home in France	19,361	3.58	0.71	1	4
People see me as a Frenchman	18,751	2.87	1.17	1	4
Economic Integration index	19,540	2.83	0.95	1	5
Monthly income	19,637	1.62	0.85	1	5
Is currently working	19,637	3.73	1.86	1	5
Opinion about standard of living	19,540	3.17	0.94	1	5
Navigational Integration index	19,637	4.35	0.95	1	5
Needed administrative help					
in the last year	19,637	0.87	0.34	0	1
Possesses a driver's license	19,637	0.74	0.44	0	1
Possesses a bank account or					
permanent postal address	19,637	0.85	0.36	0	1
Social Integration index	19,637	2.85	1.69	1	5
Contacts with family/friends outside of France	19,637	1.07	0.85	0	2

Note: This table presents summary statistics on the main variables used to construct the multi-dimensional integration index.

C Sensitivity analysis

This paper shows that Muslims differ from Christians in their integration prospects, even after accounting for differences in observable characteristics (country of origin, age, gender, family situation, region of residence and education). Is this difference attributable to religion, or instead to unobservable differences between Christians and Muslims immigrants? Using the method proposed by [Altonji et al. \(2005\)](#), we find that differences in integration between Christians and Muslims in the first-generation could plausibly result from selection on unobservables (Table C.1). For the psychological integration index for example, the Altonji ratio is equal to 0.49 which indicates that the selection on unobservables would need to be smaller than (.49 times as large as) the selection on observables to explain away the Muslim effect. However, among the second-generation, the selection on unobservables would need to be much stronger (7.7 times as large) to explain away differences in integration observed between Christians and Muslims.

Table C.1: Altonji ratio

	First generation	Second generation
Integration index (std)	1.74	2.12
Economic Integration (std)	1.00	1.49
Psychological Integration (std)	0.49	7.70
Social Integration (std)	-1.89	3.39
Navigational Integration (std)	0.55	0.00

Note: This table reports six ratios based on the coefficients of two individual level regressions. The first one, the “restricted” one, does not include any controls, while the second, the “full” one, includes the full set of controls (country of origin, age, gender, family situation, region of residence and education). Calling the first coefficient β^R and the second coefficient β^F , the reported ratio are calculated as $\beta^F/(\beta^R - \beta^F)$. In the first column, the sample is restricted to first-generation immigrants and the coefficient of interest is an indicator variable for whether the respondent is Muslim. In the second column, the sample is restricted to second-generation immigrants and the coefficient of interest is an indicator variable for whether the respondents’ mother is Muslim.