Executive Summary

1. Introduction

This report is the principal output of "Integration and Security: Muslim Minorities and Public Policy in Europe and the United States: A policy forum presented by the CEVIPOF, Sciences Po and the Division of Global Affairs, Rutgers University-Newark," held at the Center for Political Research Sciences Po (CEVIPOF) in Paris on March 19, 2009. The Paris Forum concluded the second phase of a larger collaborative project by the 'Immigration, Integration and Security Network' (ISI). ISI is a multi-year policy research network that commenced in 2004 and is currently maintained through a trans-Atlantic partnership between the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University-Newark and the CEVIPOF. Contained in this report is a discussion of the key findings, lessons learned and recommendations of the Paris Forum deliberation for distribution to a range of stakeholders representing diverse elements of the policy community.

The Paris Forum addressed ways in which security policy post September 11, 2001 has affected the integration of Muslims and Arabs in the United States and Europe. Post 9/11 events such as the invasion of Afghanistan, the Iraq War, the 2004 train bombing in Spain and the 2005 public transit bombings in London provided the context of the exchange.

The following aspects of Muslim and Arab integration were at the core of the presentations, discussion and debate:

- The securitization of integration and the de-politicization of security policy;
- Notions of national loyalty and the role of religion;
- The dynamic relationship between civil security policy and the radicalization of Muslim minorities;
- Integration as a process, beginning with the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers;
- Mitigating xenophobia, policy as a reflection of public discourse and changing public perceptions.

Findings:

The security/insecurity paradox is a legitimate concern and clearly constitutes a radicalization push factor.

The securitization of integration is an impediment to the successful incorporation of Muslim and Arab minorities.

In the Muslim-Western context, the continued focus on the notion of "loyalty" can have a marginalizing effect, imposing a dysfunctional choice between religion and nationality.

Current policies present new impediments to the effective integration of refugees and asylum seekers.

While it is commonly thought that the U.S. does not have a formal integration policy, the U.S. has muscular policies that in fact address integration through affirmative action, recognizing ethnicity and supporting a multi-cultural society that is removed from the outdated conventional image of the melting pot paradigm.

The historical image of the inevitable upward mobility of the new immigrant is today a myth. Further studies on immigration are needed to understand its relationship to integration, security policy and implementation in order to address both the needs of immigrants (and their children) and the societies in which they live.

National security objectives currently compete with realizing rights-based approaches to integration. This phenomenon is known as the ‘securitization of integration’. Post 9/11, practising Muslim immigrants have often been suspected of being divided in their national loyalty and less patriotic than other citizens. A common perception is that Islamic norms and values conflict with those of the new country. Policing practices, such as racial profiling and detention for suspicion of terror without due process have negative effects without proven benefits to security. In this context, stigma, marginalization and xenophobia become ‘radicalization push factors.’ In effect, extreme security measures have countermanding effects resulting in a ‘security/insecurity paradox’: the struggle for security leads to greater radicalization.

Being born in the U.S. or in Europe has not prevented the growth of homegrown radicals and terrorism, regardless of whether young Muslims appear well integrated or to be suffering from economic or social exclusion. The recent arrest of four men in a plot to blow up two synagogues in Riverdale, NY and to fire surface-to-air missiles at National Guard aircraft at a base in Newburgh, NY, are products of the frustration and resentments that – in part - are fuelled by counterproductive aspects of the fight against terrorism. Three of the four men are U.S.-born citizens. The motivational causes of radicalism and terrorism therefore need to be elucidated; alternative policies and new approaches to integration need to be developed and implemented.

1 The ISI (Immigration & Security Initiative) is a transatlantic research network assembling a group of experts in the area of immigration policy, drawn from Europe and America. Their goal is to examine a series of hitherto unaddressed questions regarding the consequences of post-9/11 immigration policies in the European Union and the United States – for immigrants, governments and institutions such as universities and corporations whose performance has often been heavily influenced by immigrant flows.

2 In the U.S., only 25-30% of Arabs are Muslim. The reason why Arabs are distinguished in this report is because both are religiously diverse groups that have been subject to discriminatory practices since 9-11, regardless of whether or not their constituents are Muslim.
As a byproduct of the new security initiatives, more stringent immigration policies of receiving countries as well as administrative delays have adversely affected asylees and refugees, with implications for the pace and depth of their integration. Policy changes have resulted in diminished success rates in legitimate claims for asylum and the admission of refugees. Asylum seekers have remained in longer periods of limbo without legal access to employment. Nationality-based policies targeting Muslim and Arab countries have permitted the discriminatory treatment of asylum seekers justified by the exigencies of national security. Muslim and Arab minorities have faced discrimination, in part due to negative public perceptions. This tendency has clearly been exacerbated by the securitization of integration. In the face of media criticism of minorities and the preeminence given to traditional security approaches, countervailing public policies intended to promote inclusion have often fallen short in enhancing incorporation and civic engagement for Muslims and Arabs.

The Paris Forum produced a number of recommendations that seek to address these issues at the regional, national and sub-national levels. They include effective security policies that break the security/insecurity paradox; citizenship requirements that do not impose a choice between religion and nationality; new regulations that allow and encourage asylum-seekers and refugees to seek formal sector employment; implementation of an affirmative action approach to thwart discrimination; and the creation of a cohesive information framework for the integration of policy. These recommendations offer hope for a shift in individual attitudes and public perceptions towards mutual respect, understanding, acceptance and social inclusion: the foundations in building against radicalization.

2. Partners

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