

2015

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Anahita Vasudevan

University of California, Berkeley, avasudevan1@gmail.com

Kevin Ratana Patumwat

University of California, Berkeley, rpatumwat@gmail.com

Kevin Fulgham

University of California, Berkeley, kfulgham@berkeley.edu

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Recommended Citation

Vasudevan, Anahita; Ratana Patumwat, Kevin; and Fulgham, Kevin (2016) "A Multiracial Republic? The Challenges Faced by the Maghreb Population in France," *Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union*: Vol. 2015, Article 10. DOI: 10.5642/urceu.201501.10

Available at: <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/urceu/vol2015/iss1/10>

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A MULTIRACIAL REPUBLIC? THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE MAGHREB POPULATION IN FRANCE

ANAHITA VASUDEVAN, KEVIN RATANA PATUMWAT, AND KEVIN FULGHAM

University of California, Berkeley

ABSTRACT

As European society becomes more multiethnic and multiracial, Member States of the European Union are faced with the need to formulate adequate policy responses to immigration and integration issues. France has had a distinctive history, lasting over five decades, as a recipient country for non-European immigrants from the Maghreb region of Northern Africa. Over time, discrepancies in living conditions between Maghreb immigrants and the wider French society have only deepened. To investigate the current state of the Maghreb community in France, this analytical paper pursues the following questions: How does the persistence of political, economic, and social differences affect the position of Maghreb immigrants in French society? What efforts are being made by the French government to minimize disparities between the Maghreb population and the wider society? What is the relationship between the French model of integration and the policies of other EU states on immigrant integration?

KEYWORDS

French Immigration, Maghreb, immigrant assimilation, integration, minorities

PART I: INTRODUCTION

FRENCH COLONIAL TIES TO MAGHREB REGION

France has a history of interactions and political ties with the Maghreb region of Northern Africa, which consists of countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, that began during the colonial period. As a strong colonizing power during the 1830s, the French landed in Algeria with the idea of collective colonization and cooperation from Algerians in order to modernize and “Westernize” the African nation (Balch, 1909). The French, faced with tension from the Prussian and German states, sought to enter Algeria and augment the French-speaking population in order to make up for the decreasing growth rate of native French-speaking people (Balch, 1909). Subsequently, generations of Algerians under French rule grew up surrounded by French laws, language, and culture (Balch, 1909). The French continued to hold colonial rule in Tunisia and Morocco until 1956, and Algeria gained independence from France in 1962 (“France Timeline,” 2012).

DEFINITIONS OF MIGRANT AND INTEGRATION

According to the International Organization for Migration’s “Glossary of Migration,” a “migrant” can be defined as a person who moves from one place to another, often across countries, to improve their living conditions and future prospects (Perruchoud, 2004). The process by which immigrants become accustomed and accepted into the host society is known as “integration” (Perruchoud, 2004). Due to Maghreb immigration, France became a multiethnic state, and the roles of immigration and integration became increasingly important in forming the social identity of immigrants and successive generations.

IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION INTO FRANCE (1960S-1990S)

In the Post-World War II period, the French government took measures to repatriate immigrants. However, by the 1950s, the low immigrant population forced the French government to recruit more immigrants to expand the workforce (McNeil, 1998). Although the French government originally preferred to allow European immigrants across the border to work in France, a larger interest came from the population of France’s former colonies, which still proved to be “culturally compatible” (McNeil, 1998). Between 1946 and 1975, France’s immigrant population doubled, reaching 3.4 million people, the largest group of which was from Algeria (McNeil, 1998). Most migrants were single men who arrived in France predominantly for work, but by the 1970s, women and children journeyed to France to reunify their families (McNeil, 1998). However, in 1974, France ended inward immigration (McNeil, 1998). Finally, following René Giraud’s theory of the “threshold of tolerance”—which holds that there was a point at which a minority group’s population would become high enough to cross the threshold and increase conflict between ethnic groups—Maghreb immigrants in France were treated with hostility because of their self-sufficient and entrepreneurial nature in comparison to other immigrant groups (McNeil, 1998). Thus, immigrants were relegated to the suburbs of major cities in France to live in low-income group housing that, over time, became more permanent settlements and widened the discrepancies in living standards between immigrants and the rest of France.

RIOTS AND CURRENT EVENTS (2005-PRESENT)

In October 2005, the Parisian suburb Clichy-sous-Bois experienced over three weeks

of rioting, unrest, and violence by Maghreb immigrants who were protesting discrimination, racism, and economic bias, bringing to light the sense of disenfranchisement felt among these immigrants. The particular incident that sparked these violent riots was the death of two young boys who were electrocuted after being chased by police because they seemed suspicious (Smith, 2005). As a result, Maghreb immigrant groups held riots to bring the high rates of unemployment and marginalization among Maghreb groups to the French government's attention. In general, "though France has a policy of officially ignoring ethnic differences in favor of French identity, its people have been slow to open their arms to newcomers who are told that they should enjoy the same rights" (Smith, 2005). Protests against these indirect—yet prevalent—exclusionary practices have manifested, in some cases, in extremist Islamic radicals recruited in the suburbs of France (Smith, 2005). Even in 2015, the threat of extremist violence among the Maghreb youth population became a reality with attacks by the Kouachi brothers (one of whom had outside terrorist links with Al Qaeda in Yemen) on the headquarters of the political cartoon magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, that left twelve people dead (Madi, Ryder, Macfarlane, Beach, & Park, n.d.).

PART II: RESEARCH QUESTION AND THESIS

RESEARCH QUESTION, SIGNIFICANCE, AND METHODOLOGY

The unique situation of Maghreb immigrants in France highlights nuances surrounding the research question of integration models in France. Due to significant cultural differences between generations of Maghreb immigrants, the children of first generation Maghrebis are known as *beurs*, who have established themselves as a distinctive part of society. Both first and second generation Maghrebis from Northern Africa have particular cultural traits, including language, religion, and traditional practices, that set them apart from French society, making integration even more difficult. These cultural differences of Maghreb immigrants coupled with actions of wider French society makes integration more difficult. This paper seeks to identify major factors that contribute to this separation as well as examine how the role of Maghreb immigrants in French society changes based on these factors. In addition, this paper will address the efforts currently being made in response to difficulties in immigrant integration by the French government to minimize disparities among immigrant living conditions as well as the effectiveness of those responses. Finally, this paper compares the French model of integration with that of Belgium, which has a similar immigrant situation, and the policies Belgium has enacted to facilitate Maghreb integration. This paper uses government documents, news articles, and historical sources to assess and compare integration models in France and Europe, as the global significance of integration is increasing due to the spread of radicalization of immigrant youth that could potentially be the result of poor integration.

OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE OF THESIS

In analyzing the historical background of Maghreb immigrants in France and the persistence of political, economic, and social challenges faced by Maghreb immigrants while integrating into French society, these obstacles create greater instances of marginalization and frustration that can manifest in radicalization and violence. In an attempt to mitigate the prevalence of extremist immigrants, the French government currently promotes a set of policies, at both the national and local levels, that seeks to improve the lives of Maghreb

immigrants living in the *banlieues*, or suburbs, while also minimizing the economic, social, and political inequalities that exist between the city and the suburbs. Although these policies do exist, the French government's inefficiencies, such as overlapping jurisdictions and lack of influence in implementing techniques, makes integration difficult. By comparing the French model to other models within the European Union, this paper hopes to both recognize similarities and offer more efficient methods to adopt in France.

PART III: IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION INTO FRENCH SOCIETY

POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES

Immigrants in France face two-fold difficulties when navigating French government policies because immigrants are not given ample support from the government and are often not given the chance to represent themselves in government bodies. For example, current integration policies in France dictate that the jurisdiction of immigration laws can last up to five years concerning immigrants in France, meaning that beyond the five-year initial settlement in France, immigrants no longer receive consistent government support (Escafré-Dublet, 2014). At the same time, Maghrebis in France are often not represented at all: In 2007, the National Assembly did not include any Maghrebis among its members, although many of the Maghrebis were French nationals (Bloemraad & Schönwälder, 2013). In some cases, candidates in France sought to attract an electorate of immigrants and multi-ethnic groups, but the representatives selected were unconnected to both the electorate and targeted ethnic community (Bloemraad & Schönwälder, 2013). Finally, this lack of support from the government and immigrants' under-representation in government affairs leads to reduced economic opportunities and social dilemmas for Maghrebis.

ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

Maghreb immigrants originally moved to France to become part of a temporary workforce, but they have now become a permanent minority population in France. However, despite the fact that Maghreb immigrants play an integral role in French society, they have faced economic difficulties imposed by the greater French population, forcing them to reside in low-income housing projects in the suburbs. Even if Maghreb immigrants try to overcome their current economic conditions, according to the Migration Policy Institute, the physical exclusion of living in the suburbs makes it more difficult for immigrants to find jobs and gain admissions to the top universities in the cities (Escafré-Dublet, 2014). As a result, they have to settle for unskilled labor jobs in higher crime neighborhoods, which perpetuates their living in the suburbs and continued economic and social marginalization. This economic predicament is particularly imposing for young immigrants who were born and educated in France and actually face underemployment because they possess skills beyond those required for their current jobs and are underrepresented in higher skilled jobs (Escafré-Dublet, 2014). Simply put, these young immigrants face discrimination because they compete with other French citizens of comparable skill, creating an inescapable and frustrating situation.

SOCIO-CULTURAL ISSUES

Maghreb immigrants currently face a dual national identity that is split between Maghreb nations and France; there are many socio-cultural issues related to this identity

crisis that create difficulties for Maghreb immigrants in educational, religious, and cultural aspects. As an immigrant to France who mostly speaks Arabic, the difficulty of gaining language education and educational recognition in the form of a French diploma creates workplace barriers for first generation immigrants (Escarfé-Dublet, 2014). As the majority of the current Maghreb population is Muslim (a result of the Arab invasion of Northern Africa in 647 CE that converted the majority of the population from Christianity to Islam) there is often a tension between the Islamic population and French republican society (“Maghreb,” 2014). For example, as recently as 2010, the European Court of Human Rights created a ban on the *niqab*, the Muslim full-face veil, mandating that citizens who breach this law would have to undergo instruction on French citizenship (“European Court,” 2014). This government response underlines the cultural clash between the immigrants’ own culture and the culture of the host country, which reinforces the sense that France considers its immigrants outsiders. This *niqab* ban also indicates a different take on gender roles between French and Maghrebi society; for instance, Maghrebis may view the *niqab* as a symbol of privacy and modesty. In comparison, in France, there is general acceptance of women taking on more responsibility and independence in both the domestic and professional spheres. These issues surrounding the role of women, religion, and education, create divides in communities, which makes community building difficult and contributes to a lack of civic engagement among immigrants, which then affects their political representation and economic opportunities.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

France is currently home to the largest Islamic community in Europe, which is comprised of approximately five million Muslims (Engler, n.d.). Due to the limitations of the French republican ideals of secularism and the French integration model, the occurrences of violence from the extreme right have increased since the 1990s (Engler, n.d.). In response to these events, the French government instituted the Law of Equal Opportunities in 2005 to avoid discrimination and enhance youth immigrant integration (Engler, n.d.). However, the scope of the Law of Equal of Opportunities is confined to issues regarding social cohesion and fair practices in hiring employees and does not include issues of education and community building as precautionary measures against extremism. Regarding the future of Maghreb immigrants in France, efforts to ameliorate the French integration model will have to concentrate on the sources of marginalization, new demographic trends of diminishing French birth rates and large inflows of immigrants, and the establishment of a social system that incorporates immigrants as long-term residents of France (Engler, n.d.).

PART IV: EXISTING FRENCH GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND RESPONSES

FRENCH REPUBLICANISM

France’s traditional national model of integration can be called the “assimilationist” model. In some cases, the model is referred to as the “republican” model, as it draws upon a set of values which is seen as fundamental to the nature of the French state. In contrast to the United States, which recognizes the ethnic diversity of its population (an approach known in France as ‘communitarianism’), the French state is religiously and ethnically blind. In other words, it does not recognize the relevance of ethnic or religious differences, treating citizens instead as part of one monolithic, national ‘French’ community.

This approach is reflected in the French government's refusal to collect census data on its citizens' ethnicities, limiting itself to more general indicators such as 'naturalized citizens' or 'foreign-born' (Escafré-Dublet, Lelévrier, & Tenfiche, 2014). In addition, there is a strong social expectation that all members of French society adopt 'mainstream' French values and abandon their affiliation with other communities. The idea of distinctive communities constituting themselves separately around different identities has long been treated with hostility by national politicians, exemplified most prominently by Interior Minister Charles Pasqua's statement made in 1993 distinguishing between a 'multiethnic' republic, which he considered acceptable, and a 'multicultural' republic, which it was not (Dikeç, 2006).

INTEGRATION POLICY AS URBAN POLICY

As a result of the French state's color-blind approach, policies aimed at the Maghreb community are frequently framed as urban policies, labeled collectively as *Politiques de la Ville*, which are managed by the Ministry of Urban Affairs (*Politique de la ville*, 2011). In 1996, the French government labeled approximately 750 urban areas across the country as ZUS (*Zones Urbaines Sensibles* - Sensitive Urban Zones) (*Zone urbaine sensible*, n.d.). While economically disadvantaged neighborhoods are the nominal target of these policies, a large number of ZUS areas coincide with the country's Maghreb-heavy suburban neighborhoods. ZUS areas are eligible for a number of special incentives provided by the government. For instance, tax and social security contribution exemptions are provided to companies that are located in ZUS areas and have a certain number of ZUS residents as employees (*Politique de la ville*, 2011). ZUS areas and other neighborhood-oriented policies form the backbone of the French government's socioeconomic policies towards the Maghreb community.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION FRAMEWORK

Amid increasing concern over the expanding socioeconomic disparities between French society and its Maghreb community, the late 1990s and early 2000s saw the beginning of a shift away from the ethnicity-blind "republican" model and towards an implicit recognition of diversity through the creation of an "anti-discrimination" policy framework (Escafré-Dublet, Lelévrier, and Tenfiche, 2014). Several new government organizations were established, including the HALDE (*Haute Autorité de lutte contre les discriminations et pour l'égalité* - High Authority for Equality and Combating Discrimination) and the ACSE (*Agence nationale pour la cohésion sociale et l'égalité des chances* - National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equality of Opportunity). HALDE was tasked with providing counseling as well as taking legal action on behalf of victims of discrimination, primarily in the areas of employment, education, and housing (Escafré-Dublet, 2014). Through the creation of HALDE, the workplace has become another focus of government anti-discrimination policy. ACSE can be seen as the local-level arm of the French government, providing funds to nonprofit organizations operating in designated underprivileged localities in various domains, including those overseen by HALDE, but also others such as healthcare and access to cultural opportunities (*Politique de la Ville*, n.d.). While these organizations have undoubtedly contributed to the direction of public resources to the integration of the Maghreb community, they remain constrained by the deeply ingrained republican civic model. Due to the aforementioned norm against the collection of ethnic data, ACSE does

not have the statistics that would allow it to estimate its impact in the ethnic communities (Escafré-Duble, 2014).

PART V: CASE STUDIES: PARIS AND MARSEILLE

PARIS

Policies towards the Maghreb community in the Paris metropolitan area have been shaped by local administrative boundaries. Much of Paris’s Maghreb community does not live in the city limits of Paris proper, but instead lives in various small suburban municipalities, the *banlieues*, which are separate from the city. Beyond perpetuating a sense of class and race-based exclusion, this structure has posed difficulties for coordination of policy between the municipal government of Paris, where many members of the community work, and the local governments of the *banlieues*, in which they reside.

As a result, attempts have been made by the French government to re-configure administrative units in the Paris region to respond to the fact that the city and the *banlieues* function as a single urban unit. President Nicolas Sarkozy presented the ambitious “Grand Paris” project in 2007 (Enright, 2012). The project included sweeping policy changes, notably in transportation. Despite the proximity of the *banlieues* to the center of Paris, public transportation options for residents of the *banlieues* are limited, amplifying a sense of isolation from the city. It is not uncommon for residents of the *banlieues* to have never set foot in Paris’s vaunted cultural institutions, located only a few miles from their homes (“Forgotten in the Banlieues,” 2013). The “Grand Paris” project aims to reduce geographical segregation by constructing several long subway lines, collectively known as the “Grand Paris Express.” The new lines will reach into Paris’s periphery far beyond the current system, which is heavily Paris-centric, allowing *banlieue* residents to travel between *banlieues* without having to enter Paris.

“Grand Paris” also initially called for the suppression of the *banlieue* municipalities and their absorption into Paris, but this reorganization plan was withdrawn due to resistance from the leaders of the suburban municipalities and due to fears that a centralizing approach would limit opportunities for bottom-up initiatives in favor of uniform top-down policies (Erlanger, 2009). Instead, “Grand Paris” would be constituted as an *intercommunalité*, a structure that allows for greater administrative cooperation between different local governments while preserving their individual existence.

MARSEILLE

Marseille is the second largest metropolitan area in France. Approximately one quarter of the city’s population is of North African descent, a result of its proximity to the region and its history as a Mediterranean commercial port. Marseille provides an illustrative counterpoint to Paris, as it is a relatively successful example of integration of the Maghreb community. Notably, the city was virtually untouched by the 2005 urban riots. Marseille’s success can be attributed to the fact that, among other reasons, Marseille’s Maghreb community sees itself as a constructive stakeholder in the city.

In contrast to Paris, there is no stark division between the city’s center and its periphery. Maghreb residents are not confined to the outskirts of the city, as the city’s central neighborhood is also home to a visible community of Maghrebis. Government-built low-

income housing units in Marseille were not located exclusively on the margins of the city, with the units being dispersed across the urban area (Mitchell, 2011). In addition, the city center contains multiple urban recreation areas, including beaches, which are widely used by Maghreb and non-Maghreb youth alike. The lower degree of geographical segregation acts as a tool in promoting social cohesion.

Furthermore, local officials in Marseille have consistently adopted an approach that slightly diverges from the national “republican” model by engaging in dialogue with community leaders representing Maghreb residents. This framework is represented by the city’s *Service de relations avec les communautés* (Service for Community Relations), a department tasked with managing relations between the city and identity-based communities as well as relations between the communities themselves (Mitchell, 2011). When it was founded in 2001, this department was unique in France. A prominent organization operating under this department is *Marseille Espérance*, which brings together the city’s political officials and religious leaders (Mitchell, 2011). The leaders act as a force of unity, acting as mediators in community conflict as well as giving statements in favor of tolerance when racial tensions flare up nationally or locally. Efforts such as this contribute to assuring Maghreb residents that their interests are recognized and respected by the city, and act as a bulwark against ethnic segregation that is pervasive in other cities such as Paris.

PART VI: CASE STUDY COMPARISON WITH BELGIUM

MOROCCANS IN BELGIUM

Moroccan populations in Belgium are the most similar to the closest comparison to French Maghreb populations as a result of comparative migration history and integration issues. Similar to the influx of Maghreb immigrants into France, following Algeria’s de-colonization in the 1950s, Belgium experienced an immigration influx through guest-worker programs. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Belgium signed a series of bilateral agreements relaxing the regulations on migrant workers from countries such as Morocco and Turkey in 1964. Moroccan immigration has dramatically increased since 1964. Between 1995–2000, 26% of naturalized Belgian citizens were of Moroccan origin (Wets, 2004). However, more than half of the Moroccan population is of Berber descent, a group that partially emigrated for political reasons. This is in sharp contrast to the economically motivated migration of French Maghrebis (Alba and Waters, 2011). Furthermore, to the French Maghrebis’ predominantly suburban location, Belgium’s Moroccan population is centered in the Brussels Metropolitan area (Kesteloot and Cortie, 1998). Due to Belgium’s political split between the Flemish and French communities, the Flemish Community Commission and the French Community Commission are the first points of contact for migrant integration (Mandin, 2014). Each Commission has its own integration priorities; however, both provide similar services such as adult education, language skills, resettlement, and legal aid (Grégoire, 2003). The following section will look at political, economic, and socio-cultural integration as key determinants of integration as a whole.

Political Representation

A key measure of political integration is political representation, as it is a quantifiable measure of political integration within the established system. Belgium’s model of political integration is a mixture of British multicultural and French assimilationist approaches

(Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2002). In the 1980s, this unique model was enshrined in the new nationality code, easing citizenship requirements for second-generation Moroccans and increasing the economic and political power of Moroccan populations (Lesthaeghe, 2000). This reflected the idea that Moroccans could retain their original cultural identity and still integrate into Belgian society. Eventually, these laws allowed ethnic enclaves to generate their own political representation. Moroccan political representation grew to include up to 20% of the city council members in the Greater Brussels area (Jacobs and Swyngedouw, 2002).

HOUSING

It is important to understand established housing disparities between the Moroccan population and ethnically Belgian population in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the government's economic and employment policies. In Belgium, the majority of the Moroccan population is centered in inner-city Brussels (Alba and Waters, 2011). A significant segment of this population is second-generation Belgians of Moroccan ancestry. The Moroccan population has a lower degree of economic integration and a higher unemployment rate compared to ethnic Belgians centered in low-income areas surrounding Brussels. Brussels and Belgium create housing policies that favor home ownership and single-family suburban housing that are affordable to international skilled workers and ethnic Belgians. The lack of affordable multi-unit housing forces the migrant Moroccans into the "The Pentagon" neighborhood of inner-city Brussels where there are limited economic possibilities (Kesteloot and Cortie, 1998).

YOUTH RADICALIZATION

Youth radicalization is a significant European area of concern because the youth movement's failure to integrate could result in social instability. Similar to France, the youth form a majority of Belgium's immigrant population; Moroccans and Turks comprise a majority of Belgium's total youth population (18–25 years). The lack of economic opportunity combined with the influx of radical *imams* has increased the possibility of youth radicalization. Belgium, disproportionately, remains a source of international *ihadists* per capita (Kesteloot and Cortie, 1998), (Higgins, 2015). This is attributed, partially due to the lack of economic integration, but also to anti-Islamic policies originating in Flanders. The era of Islamophobia in Flanders grew in 2012 with the banning of the full-face veil, coinciding with the electoral rise of right-wing party and anti-Islam *Vlaams Belang* (Jacobs and Swyngedouw, 2002). Flanders, as opposed to Wallonia, places more emphasis on integrating into a homogeneous identity. Brussels tries to combat rising Islamophobia through the Center for Equal Opportunity and Fight against Racism (CEOFR), a government agency that works to report racism, provide intercultural communication, develop sports leagues, and ensure equal opportunity job prospects (Jacobs and Swyngedouw, 2002). The government hopes that by providing sports and economic opportunities, youth will be persuaded to integrate into Belgian society through cultural, social, and economic socialization, substituting radical mosques for sports pitches and jobs.

EDUCATION

Education remains a key component for economic advancement and social integration in the Moroccan population. Currently, the children of immigrants who arrived in the 1960s are entering the educational system; furthermore, this generation has grown up in Belgium and has been educated through the Belgian system, creating an effective test of Belgian policies. A majority of the first-generation Moroccan population has no formal education; in the second generation, 39% of the Moroccan male population had attained secondary education (Lesthaeghe, 2000). This is significantly higher than other ethnic immigrant populations. However, the population without any formal education is also higher in the Moroccan population. The strong disparities in educational attainment result from various economic developments, poor education facilities, and the cultural importance of education.

PART VII: SUPRANATIONAL EU POLICIES AND THE FRENCH MODEL

OVERVIEW OF EU POLICIES

From French assimilation, British multiculturalism, nativist, and international ideologies, the European Union's policy on integration reflects the diverse interests of the EU member states. Issues of assimilation, migrants from outside the EU, and integration remain critical and contentious policy issues that underwent significant changes in 2004 and 2011.

In 2004, the European Commission proposed that each EU Member State should have its own integration policy supported by a set of common EU principles (Lesthaeghe, 2000). In 2011, the European Commission's Directorate General on Migration and Home Affairs proposed the "European agenda for the integration of non-EU migrants," a comprehensive guide underlining common EU integration program funding policies and EU social policies (European Commission, 2011b). This proposed set of policies was non-binding but connected to several European Commission funds. In 2011, the European Union set down the European Agenda, which reaffirmed integration would be primarily handled on a local and regional level, while the EU would deal with supranational policies designed to reduce systemic poverty (European Commission, 2011b). The EU would accomplish this through the European Union Integration Fund, totaling 825 million euros from 2009-2013, providing member states with initial capital for integration projects and poverty alleviation (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2015b). The Directorate Generals on Migration and Home Affairs' policy recommendations argued that integration was a EU priority because of the expanding scope of the EU and the impact of market integration on EU member states. The EU's support for integration was further emphasized in the Stockholm Programme of 2009, a comprehensive evaluation of EU human rights laws, and the Europe 2020, the EU's economic growth strategy for the next decade (European Council, 2010).

EXAMPLES OF EU POLICY

In contrast to the EU's policy of delegating integration to local levels, some examples of supranational EU initiatives on housing, education, and cultural integration policies include several European Funds and educational attainment funds.

The European Commission (EC) acknowledges that it is common for migrants outside of the EU to migrate between EU member states, seeking economic opportunity. For this

reason, the EC recommends housing integration at the local level to assist the new populations. However, on the EU level, the European Commission provides funding through the European Social Fund (2014–2020) to stimulate growth and integrate services for new third country nationals (Directorate–General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2015). This fund wants to integrate third country nationals into the EU economy, as per Europe 2020.

Another directive in the European Commission Working Paper of 2011 is access to education (European Commission, 2011b). The EC predicts that by age 15, third-country national children are already 1.5 years behind in education (Lesthaeghe, 2000). The European Commission has identified language skills as a primary factor that is impeding socio-economic mobility and cultural integration. Combating this, the EC is focused on early childhood education through the desegregation of schools along economic and ethnic strata (European Commission, 2011a). The EU has a fund that invests in new early education programs that strives to keep all states economically competitive.

Cultural integration is a key component to prevent tensions between third nation migrants and ethnically native populations. The EU realizes that culture is a significant impediment to integration and several working papers and policies are focused on cultural integration. The EU works on intercultural communication through an EU wide “Year of Intercultural Communication” that focuses on reducing cultural tensions across the EU, especially targeting intercultural cities, with large multicultural populations (European Commission, 2005). The EU theorizes that cultural alienation leads to radicalization of youth and impedes migrant integration.

PART VIII: CONCLUSION

The unique history and culture of the Maghreb region and its interactions with France have created the conditions in which immigrants live today. A result of political underrepresentation, economic exclusion, lack of education, and religious tensions, disparities between immigrant populations and mainstream French society continues to grow. These disparities create cleavages in society that are potentially destabilizing in the long run and may contribute to radicalization of immigrant youth. Within France, Maghrebis in different urban areas face unique circumstances as seen in the cases of Paris and Marseille. In comparison to other policy regimes in Europe, with respect to Belgium, youth radicalization remains a significant problem for large integrating populations. As the European Union takes a retracted role in integration policies, future integration will have to exist at the local and national levels through European Union funding. As long as there is limited effort to integrate migrant priorities into the dominant ideology of the host country, integration will continue to remain a constant threat to preserving immigrant identity and social cohesion in France and other European Union nations.

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