

Key Findings from *Muslims in Paris Report*

July 2012

Identity and Inclusion

- Ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds—not religion—are deciding factors according to French Muslims in their experience of exclusion and discrimination. This contradicts mainstream political and media debates which point to Islam as the source of division between France and its Muslim population.
- Family and community ties unite Muslims and non-Muslims in Paris. Family was described as the most important aspect of individual identity for Muslims and non-Muslims. For those Muslims born in France, religion rated lower than for those born abroad.
- There is a keen sense of belonging from Muslim and non-Muslim respondents to their neighbourhood and city and, to a lesser extent, the country.
- In the 18th *arrondissement* everyday concerns transcend apparent differences among residents. Although seen as a diverse neighbourhood, the residents of the 18th *arrondissement* expressed concern about the limited opportunity for meaningful multicultural interaction in France despite apparent ethnic and cultural diversity.

Media and Politics

- The media and political preoccupation with the religious identity of French Muslims has detracted from the socio-economic inequalities faced by many in areas such as the Goutte d'Or regardless of their religious and ethnic background.

(over)

- There was a strong feeling among participants that certain public figures and the hostile media discourse on Islam and Muslims have had a powerful and detrimental impact on the public's perception of French Muslims.
- Paris is home to numerous nationalities. Electoral disenfranchisement is a particular challenge in the 18th *arrondissement* with its large non-EU population. Added to this is a mistrust of national institutions, particularly the government, which was reflected by a high percentage of all survey respondents regardless of religion. The lack of political participation—considered a key condition for integration—is a challenge for France which transcends religious or ethnic background.
- France's refusal (as well as many other European countries) to consider ethnic or religious-based data concerning its citizens does not facilitate a nuanced understanding of factors leading to inequality. The lack of data on France's citizens creates the illusion of equal access for all while concealing vast inequalities for the country's minorities and marginalised groups.

Work, School, Police

- Survey respondents felt that being a Muslim did not diminish access to employment or education; but that public stigma and misperceptions about Muslims created barriers.
- While wearing the headscarf was not perceived as a current issue in education, discrimination against women who choose to wear outward symbols of their religion remains a particular barrier in accessing employment opportunities.
- Mistrust towards the police is high. Experiences and perceptions of police discrimination as felt by Muslims is a source of tension and concern.

For more information

Muslims in Paris can be downloaded at:

(address to come)

To order a hard copy of the report, please contact Csilla Tóth at cstoth@osi.hu