



Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Centre de Politique de Sécurité, Genève
Genfer Zentrum für Sicherheitspolitik

Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security

GCSP Policy Brief Series

The GCSP policy brief series publishes papers in order to assess policy challenges, dilemmas, and policy recommendations in *all aspects* of transnational security and globalization. The series was created and is edited by Dr. Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan, Senior Scholar in Geostrategy and Director of the Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security.

Editorial of GCSP Policy Brief No. 2 Transcultural Issues, Globalization, and Global Security

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June 22, 2006

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Review and Critique

The current global security situation does not provide an ideal setting for improving intercultural understanding. France recently dealt with such transcultural issues when riots broke out in November 2005 as a result of the accidental electrocution of two teenagers as they hid in an electric power station believing they were being chased by police. One major aspect of the debate surrounding how to handle transcultural tensions is the role that Muslims play in Western societies. More specifically for the purposes of this brief, it is important to look at the transcultural issues that have been raised as a result of the West's reaction to Islamic fundamentalism. As the war on terror polarizes countries and societies, these issues and tensions enters the foreground as a genuine security issue. Young Muslims are becoming frustrated by the way in which they are grouped together with those that wish harm to the West, such as the individuals that orchestrated the London bombings in July 2005. Others find that they are born and raised in a European country and yet are not accepted as being Dutch, German, French, or Spanish due to their Islamic heritage.

Some countries are responding to this frustration by tightening their citizenship laws. One prominent example is the Netherlands, which tightened its citizenship rules as a direct result of the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004. Instead of furthering integration, however, such a reaction will only create more barriers that will need to be overcome.

In his policy brief "Transcultural Issues, Globalization, and Global Security", Dr. Fraser Cameron examines the current state challenges and dilemmas in terms of transcultural issues and tensions.¹ He focuses on the "transcultural issues raised by the West's response to Islamic fundamentalism." Dr. Cameron explains, to say the least, that the response has been divided. This divided response is certainly also a result of how countries have evolved, for instance whether it is a country which is accustomed to having immigrants working and living among them as in the case of the United States or if it is a country where this is a recent phenomenon such as in countries like France. This is an important point that is not addressed in the scope of the paper. Rather, the brief presents Western countries as a kind of group and outlines the challenges that this presents for the governing bodies of the EU. This is becoming especially prominent as the EU tries to distance itself from US policies, which it is finding to be a near-impossible task.

While the brief focuses on a few state challenges without directly linking them to transcultural issues and challenges, overall, the review of the issue was cohesive and succinct. It provides a clear trajectory of where policies *may* be headed in a few years' time and what policies need to focus on in order to make the "clash of civilizations" a thing of the past.

Dilemmas and Recommendations

Transcultural issues and the multicultural nature of societies create profound policy dilemmas for states. The quandaries raised by these dilemmas, as well as the policy decisions states have to make in response, are very sensitive and important issues, as they can have a widespread impact on state security. This is evident in the recent example of the international reaction to the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed in Western media.

Presented below are eight dilemmas and corresponding recommendations for appropriate policy reactions at the state level.



While it is not necessary to explain the importance of all of the dilemmas and recommendations, it is worth expanding on those that could have the most resounding impact. The first dilemma is important for any state dealing with these issues. In attempting to maintain state and human security in democratic societies, the preservation of civil liberties is non-negotiable. Second, any policy in this area should ensure that the peaceful majority of

any immigrant population do not fall victim to stereotypes that link them to the radical minority. Politicians must refrain from employing fear and xenophobic statements against groups or cultures for political reasons. The last dilemma that should be noted is the problem that immigrants face in terms of choosing between their native religious and cultural identity and the national identity of their host country.

State reactions to each of these dilemmas must be clearly formulated and justified, as well as encompassing and inclusive, in order to avoid angering large groups of immigrant and culturally diverse communities. If these recommendations are implemented in state security policies, there must be some form of accountability and regulation. The execution of such policies must ensure efficiency while protecting civil liberties. In addition, freedom of expression should be coupled with responsibility, and states should enact anti-hate legislation to protect these immigrant and minority communities.

Immigrant communities, through their representatives, must demonstrate loyalty to their adoptive country and contribute to its security and prosperity. If they have concerns about world events or about their host country's policy regarding issues that they care about, such as their culture or religion, their concerns should be demonstrated through the use of peaceful petitioning and the use of the mechanisms of democracy, including the electoral process and through free expression. In turn, host countries should facilitate the participation of immigrant communities in the democratic process. They should acknowledge their grievances and contributions and promote their inclusion and prosperity. Furthermore, through responsible and inclusive political statements, policies, media, and education, the state should avoid the demonization and exclusion of these groups. On the foreign policy front, host countries should strive to contribute to global justice and equality through effective, multilateral international policies that promote the resolution of conflicts around the globe; they should strive to implement policies that will not be perceived by immigrant communities as double standards and intentionally unjust.

Finally, there needs to be encouragement of the state on society towards the process of globalization instead of a fight against it. The forces in the globalization process that promote cosmopolitanism and diversity should be seen as strengths and viewed as a means toward furthering global security and harmony.

When applied, these recommendations will contribute to easing transcultural tensions and provide an environment where immigrant communities can also prosper while contributing to the welfare of the state instead of being victims or a cause of uncertainty and chaos.

Conclusion

The issues surrounding multicultural and transcultural issues are certainly not new; however, some of these issues need to be dealt with more effectively at the societal and state levels in order to make immigrants and communities feel more secure and stable. Without this, an environment of peace, security, and stability will never be achieved on a larger scale. States are certainly facing the dilemmas presented here, and they are not easily rectified, even by the suggestions that have been provided. States have to find the right balance between the opposing choices in these dilemmas, which will take time and patience. Only then will these transcultural issues truly start to see marked improvement at the societal level and will ultimately lead to a more secure international system.

References

¹ For the brief in its entirety, please see the policy brief series as a part of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy's Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security at <http://www.gcsp.ch/e/publications/Globalisation/index.htm>.