European Security vs Islam and Refugees

Name

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The issue of national citizenship has been a major area of discussion among many political analysts. A large section of this discussion has been centered on a state's exclusivity in defining the conditions for exclusivity of its own citizens as well as the universal inclusiveness of each individual within and across the national boundaries (Chataway, 2010). Despite the clamor for human rights that have seen nations unable to dictate what happens to other states, many researchers still feel that the capability of certain states to exercise their freedom is being harbored by their neighbors who want to control everything that happens to those around them.

Balibar, E. (2005). Strangers as Enemies: Further Reflections on the Aporias of Transnational Citizenship, *Globalization and Autonomy Online Compendium* discusses how states treat those who do not belong to their nation as enemies and how this has made it virtually impossible for these perceived strangers to belong to attain Cosmo political citizenship. According to Balibar, there still exists a virtual fence that makes it impossible for certain nations to belong to other nations or even to enjoy citizenship in their own countries. To make his point clear, Balibar points out the imaginary of Israel fence that is built deep within the Palestinian nation making it impossible for the Palestinians to enjoy freedom within their own nation (Balibar, 2005).

The author points out that even though this Israel fence is important because it prevents suicide bombers from entering the Israel territory, it is also supposed to prevent Palestinian workers from assessing employment in Israel, divide the Palestinian society, bar farmers from their land, as well as come up with a one-sided delineation of a state border incorporating illegal colonies from the Colonies of the West Bank within the national territory. The author also

mentions the Spanish fence which is meant to prevent immigrants from Morocco from crossing over to Spain in search for employment (Balibar, 2005).

Even though these fortified borders are more prevalent in the modern day, Balibar notes that such walls "have existed throughout history, and have been associated with conflicts represented as clashes of civilizations, resistance against a "barbarian" threat, and confrontation between political systems" (p. 3). What the author is trying to say in this passage is that these fences are not without reason but they are triggered by something deeper, a need to protect one's territory and to ensure that their sovereignty is guaranteed. Even though this was traditionally thought of as a European phenomenon, the author notes that many nations have adopted this approach and gives the example of the United States which is erecting a wall in its border with Mexico to ensure that Mexican immigrants do not cross over to US territory (Balibar, 2005).

Balibar notes that one important facet in the discussion of the border that separates nations is the determination of who is a stranger. The issue of who is a stranger and who crosses the border and for what reasons forms a big part of this analysis. To answer this question, Balibar notes that it is the prerogative of the national state to make a determination of who is a stranger as well as what actions are considered as strange. The condition of the borders is the main determinant of who become the stranger as well as the meaning of being foreign. The main problem is that individuals who have been assimilated are considered as neighbors thus making the concept of strangers less understandable. This makes the concept of national less meaningful. What is more strange according to Balibar is that the qualities that make one a stranger in one area can be fully accepted in another state thus making the concept more obscure (Balibar, 2005).

The issue discussed by Balibar is further highlighted by Hurd, E. (2006). Negotiating Europe: The Politics of Religion and the Prospects for Turkish Accession. *Review of International Studies 32,* 401-418. In this article, Hurd discusses the manner in which people are refused their cosmopolitical rights on the basis of their culture. In this article, Hurd sees the European opposition to the accession of Turkey to the European Union as the result of a cultural war. According to Hurd, Europe is seen as a Christian club where outsiders are not welcome. For this reason, the Turkish people majority of whom are Muslims are seen as outsiders and hence the reason why the EU has consistently fought the nation's attempts to join the union. According to Hurd, the opposition to the Turkish accession comes from both the secular and religious quarters throughout Europe. The nonreligious groups worry that bringing in a big Muslim nation to the EU would jeopardize the Continent's tradition of gender equality and tolerance of alternate lifestyles. The traditionalists believe that allowing Turkey to ascend to the EU would threaten the very concept of Europe as a Christian civilization (Hurd, 2006).

On her part, Hurd believes that the Turkish accession refusal is stirred not only by the idea that this act would jeopardize the Christian civilization but rather because Turkey has no official religion and for that reason agreeing to the proposal would endanger both the Christians and the secularists. This has brought to the spotlight the question of what it means to be both secular and European. This means that what Turkey believes in is not the problem but the problem is rather brought by the constantly evolving sense of identity among the Europeans. This means that apart from being a religious issue, the Turkish case is also a cultural issue as it threatens both the region's religion and culture (Hurd, 2006).

For a long time, the refusal by the European Union to allow Turkey's accession to the union has been based on economic and political issues. However, Hurd believes that even if

these issues are ironed out the European Union will still reject this accession. This is because the issues that led to the refusal are deeply rooted on the relation of religion to identity as well as the Turkey's drifting away from the European-driven Kemalism towards a different variety of secularism. Perhaps what has made this refusal to appear as though it is based on religious grounds is the hate for Muslims that has been accompanied by this refusal. However, this is just an issue that is beneath the surface as most researchers feel that bringing in Turkey into the EU would make the region to lose its identity. The fact that the EU has been rejecting the Turkish accession to the EU for over three decades means that there is a bigger issue that goes beneath the obvious (Hurd, 2006).

Conclusion

The issue of national citizenship has been a major area of concern among political scientists. Although citizens from other nations have rights that make them eligible to live in other states, most nations have erected fences and boundaries through which they determine who is eligible to enter into their nation and who is not. The criteria through which an individual is accorded membership into these nations is complicated as the qualities that make one to be accepted in one state can be the very basis through which they are rejected by another nation.

References

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