

PALAK PANDEY

Social Europe not a pipeline dream: a Rawlsian take on fortified unjust Europe

In the wake of the global crises as a repercussion of the Russo-Ukrainian situation the extensive need for integration, cooperation and more importantly **just action** has become the paramount need of the hour for Europe.

The rise in the right ideologies pan Europe citing similarities to the People's Party policies towards migrants that caters to the right agenda, the **social welfare** of the people of Europe rests in dust.

The liberal democratic order has been the failed god of Eastern Europe, post-Cold War, the forced **imitation and assimilation** for **modernisation and integration** respectively from the west has vehemently led the Eastern European countries to get hit by a wave of majoritarianism. The east is worst affected by migration and amid the war situation the east remains most vulnerable to another **migrant crisis** which has already started to happen, amid this the claims of the parties in power and other groups with their emphasis on fortifying Europe by citing mere context less historical events and apparent lessons learnt as their explanations for the same. Because the policies of integration and values of tolerance have been lost in implementation there exists this resentment towards the said values (essentially values of the west) because it has been demonized. This has been the resultant of the **canonical representation** the current form of governance has assumed especially in the east.

The aspect of **social justice** coined by the philosopher John Rawls under his anecdotal "veil of ignorance", talks about a just society that does not work on **presuppositions about individuals**, how the process of allocation of resources, in this case the migrants accessibility to opportunities, land and food. Rawlsian social justice would entail giving everyone a **fair chance to lead an economically productive life**, which the Europeans have systematically been denied.

The entities arguing for the fortification of Europe come from the protectionist view, the people's party built on the idea of cosmopolitanism, and the "free market" has **reversed the expected outcomes** and now inhabit a Europe that has been suffering economically, the prolonged recession and humanitarian crises.

The migration issue calls for **solidarity in the EU**, post the adoption of the **European asylum policy, the EU asylum agency** there has been a shift in policies in many countries that include Denmark being the lead actor in Europe's anti migration policy.

Belgium received the highest number of asylum seeker applications in 2022, going up by more than 40 %, the data holds for itself when there are more than 300000 people illegally migrating to Europe, these incidents are coupled with mishaps like the Italy small boat disaster which calls for urgent action. And the path of social justice shall be the most viable for the European Union to tread upon given the failing policies and crashing international image amid the prolonged war.

The forces at play that contribute to the problems of Europe are in direct opposition to **individualism and cosmopolitan values and not multiculturalism**. The relevance of the aforementioned arguments only highlight how European Union has largely been descending in its position of power, with the unfair policies, the ignorance of the possible ways of handling the **shortcomings of state capitalism in a humane way** by the European Union and the **rich poor disparity** to make it further difficult to gain consensus and prevent the population to look towards **extremist ideological leanings**.

The ideas around social justice in the modern context are **accentuated by academia**, and advocates for a new wave that would ultimately uplift the overall humanitarian values that EU focuses upon.

Countries like **Poland** with their approach towards their borders, the fencing of their shared borders with Ukraine on the order of the president is a case in point to understand how **xenophobic Europe** has started to seem in the international forefront and how it has handled situations elsewhere.

The issue of internal migration would also be used to argue against the current policy framework at EU, when **post-Cold War unregulated migration** from the central and the Eastern European countries to the West in search for "better opportunities" in the free single market has resulted in the **lack of availability of workforce** in the smaller economies this parity poses a threat to the overall European **agenda of cohesion**.

The Rawlsian **veil of ignorance** would provide Europe the platform to actually deliver upon the values it upholds when it looks at migrants to be a **part of its own nation state**, the possibility of application of the whole concept of social justice would be possible only through the means of a **supra national action**.

Therefore, the Europeans need to decide what kind of Europe they want to be a part of, a Europe that is sensitive to the human, just to the suppressed, integrative and protective or a xenophobic, zealous around the idea of walled borders and closed for migrants and closed for justice.

With respect to the aforementioned remark, the idea of social Europe so easily deemed a pipe dream, seems like one of the most viable options for the future of Europe if it has to fight multiple crises that are economical, ideological as well as humanitarian in nature. The climate crisis lingers on.

References:

European Parliament. (2019, July 4). 2019 European Election Results.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/tools/widget-country/2019-2024/>

Interview With Noam Chomsky: Is European Integration Unraveling? (n.d.).

<https://chomsky.info/01252016-2/>

Krastev, I., & Holmes, S. (2021, June 22). *How liberalism became 'the god that failed' in eastern*

Europe. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/24/western-liberalism-failed-post-communist-eastern-europe>

ThePrint. (2023, March 9). *Belgium adds beds for migrants as EU faces rising arrivals.*

<https://theprint.in/world/belgium-adds-beds-for-migrants-as-eu-faces-rising-arrivals/1431243/>