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CPPL 100

Final Paper

16 December 2020

### Modern Day Leadership

In the global free media, the society of today is marked by its many issues. Every day, headlines talk about how the world is going to ruins and how nothing can ever be fixed anymore. Quite a pessimistic outlook on the world, but also quite in line with the trend of nihilism that has taken the world captive. However, while the world is not all bad, it is true, that even now, it faces a lot of problems, ranging from people not being able to access basic necessities to social issues which target certain members of society. One such situation is the refugee crisis and the rising right wing nationalistic views that have come gained traction in Europe because of the crisis. The social repercussions of this mass influx of mainly Arabic refugees has completely changed the political stage in Europe. One leader who has been doing relatively well with the crisis, trying to work within the delicate conditions is Angela Merkel. She is one of Europe's best crisis managers and continues to earn her title with this crisis as well. Given the nuances of this crisis and the widespread consequences it has, I would like to follow Angela Merkel's style of leadership in this situation.

The crisis was spurred by the arrival of over a million refugees to Europe in 2015 (Evans, 2020). Many of the refugees were fleeing war based violence and conflict in their home countries, mainly Syria, and saw Europe as a safe haven (Evans, 2020). It has since become a bigger issue due to problems with integration, assimilation, and islamophobia. A major issue was the idea of "us" vs. "them" which made it hard for people to accept assimilation since they didn't

like blurring the line between European and refugee (Guimond et al., 2010). The refugee crisis has become a bigger point of contention due to the crime committed by refugees which make headlines all the time, especially violent and sexual crimes (Evans, 2020). Take New Year's Eve in Cologne, Germany or the recent decapitation of Samuel Paty. Often discussions of these crimes delve into islamophobia or xenophobia. Guy de Launey, a Balkans correspondent for the BBC explains, "some nationalist politicians have attempted to use the crisis to stir up support. In general, sympathy [...] appears to have declined. People are protesting against asylum centres and compassion fatigue has taken root" (Evans, 2020). With the refugee crisis blurring into regular immigration, opposing immigration has become a more popular idea in Europe and in some countries, like Sweden, is even adopted by center left politicians (Evans, 2020). The European political arena has been drastically changed by this crisis.

Throughout this crisis, one leader has done the relatively best job, Angela Merkel. She has avoided a lot of her counterpart's mistakes, although Germany still has its problems. A member of Germany's center right, her most shocking career move was an open door policy for over a million Syrian refugees in 2015 (Oliviera & Kroet, 2017). A choice she was initially praised for in Germany, Merkel has stood by it, even with the change in public opinion (Kellerman, 2019). In addressing the refugee crisis and finding a solution, I think that would be difficult given its size and complexity, but I would at least work towards improving public opinion and bringing peace within communities divided by this issue. I find Merkel's pragmatic decision making to be quite effective and would love to emulate her style while avoiding her mistakes, especially the mistake of alienating a significant number of my voter base. I don't know how possible that would be given how charged this topic is, but I would try my best. The steps I would take to solve this would be to recognize which refugees need the most help and

target intervention programs towards them. I would also try to counter media fear mongering and help my constituents realize that crime is crime, there is no need to bring in people's national origin and religion, especially through speeches and reaching out to smaller groups. Following that line of thought, I would also be strict towards religious extremism on both sides while not alienating followers of a religion. I would make the distinction between a believer and an extremist clear and use that to guide my policy. Throughout this I would try to make sure my leadership was inclusive. As suggested in a paper by Schneider and Somers, I would make sure my leadership would "encourage an organizational identity that reflects variation as well as self-similarity" (2006). Identity is a major factor that is causing the division in Europe due to the refugee crisis, so I believe that as a leader I should promote the idea of a European or a global identity. Above all, I would emulate Merkel's calm and rational policy and thought process in attempting to resolve this situation.

Refugees are not a new phenomenon, especially in modern society. They come from all parts of the world and settle in all parts of the world. Unfortunately, discrimination against them is also not a new concept. The refugee crisis in Europe led to the greatest amount of migration, both refugees and economic migrants, to Europe since World War II (Oliviera & Kroet, 2017). It was unprecedented, yet it was handled relatively well by the German Chancellor working with a nation divided. Given the nuances of this crisis and the widespread consequences it has, I would like to follow Angela Merkel's style of leadership in this situation. Her work was not perfect, but relative to the other European countries, Merkel has done the best in dealing with the refugees. While this crisis may not be resolved soon, Merkel has set a good example for Germany and the rest of Europe for the future and one that I would emulate if I was to resolve this crisis.

## Works Cited

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