

This essay is part of the final project in “English Written Communication”. In this final project, students have to express their opinions or comments about a recent news event in the world.

Cultural Hurricane in Cologne

Group 2

More than a million refugees from Central Asia and North Africa flock into Europe because of civil wars in their home countries. It is so-called European migrant crisis. Many European countries are unwilling to accept these considerable refugees. Only Germany adopts open attitude to welcome migrants. However, instead of being blessed, German faced the nightmare as the return from refugees.

In refugee crisis of Europe, a significant numbers of refugees from Syria, Iraq and North Africa wandered from place to place. Finally, they entered to Germany. According to official statistics, there were 20 thousand refugees flooding into Germany on September 5 and 6. Without doubt, Germany was a friendly place with open arms for homeless refugees. The experts analyzed that Germany was refugees’ best choice because it could provide fine security and shelter for refugees. For example, Germany was affected by social democracy, whose goal was to make everyone had basic living condition. As a result, Germany supplied free accommodation and allowance to refugees. Moreover, the government passed the specialized legislation, law of refugees’ application procedure and sanctuary welfare, which made their management of refugees more methodical. Therefore, Germany had more complete institution for refugees than other countries in Europe.

After embracing the refugees, however; the Germany were stepping toward the unexpected threat. Abruptly, Cologne New Year gang assaults stunned German. In the

last day of 2015, the streets were decorated with colorful and glittering bulbs. The atmosphere was delightful. It was the time for celebration and party, however; some of the revelers went too far. At around 10:45 p.m., up to 1,000 drunk men with ethnic background occupied the square in front of the station. "They were drinking vodka, whiskey and martini by the bottle," a witness recalled. Women had to endure the air of alcohol and sweat to go through the intoxicated crowd. Once in a while, there were hands sliding across female's bodies. With alcohol, these refugees became wilder and more aggressive. By setting off firecrackers carelessly and even threw them toward thousands of people, they began to make chaos. The refugees just acted willfully. People were torn apart. The gangs grabbed from women's behinds, robbed them of their purses, pulled them into their midst, tore their shirts, thrust fingers in their jeans, and even raped them. Instead of cheering, the square was filled with chaos, fear, and scream. Despite these confusion, the police failed to do anything. Thousands of police were transferred to the boundaries to assist the immigration procedures. Without sufficient capacity to respond, the remained police could only stare at those crying female. The refugees turned to be more arrogant. They even tore their resident certificates and sneered at the police, "You can't arrest me. Merkel invited me here!" It was not until 4:00 a.m. in January 1st that the situation calmed down. Although the city went back to its pace as usual, the terrible trauma left scars on citizens. Pepper spays were sold out. People hide their purses under the coats and brought rape alarm with them. Cologne was now under the atmosphere of anxiety.

After Cologne assaults, three immediate responses from federal government, humanitarian organization, and NGO reacted to this situation. "Outrage over these disgusting attacks and sexual assaults." says by Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany. The responses for Cologne assaults from federal government are showed on

law changes. First, government proposes to make it easier to deport asylum-seekers who commit crimes. Second, government will implement tougher laws to give women more protection in sexual violence. Originally, rape happens on women suffering sexual attacks only in dangerous and unprotected environment. Since the original definition of rape in law is limited, the new legislation not only loosens the definition of rape, but also makes groping punishable in more cases. Besides, another direct reaction is from PEGIDA, a humanitarian organization advocating anti-Islamic and anti-immigration in Germany. After Cologne assaults, PEGIDA holds a demonstration around 1300 people to oppose open-door migrant policy. PEGIDA emphasizes on the resistance to Islam, violence, and sexual discrimination, rather than those Muslim immigrants who have integrated in German society. Moreover, there is other voice from international nonprofit organization. The Fuller Project for International Reporting, focusing on woman in foreign affairs and women's rights, calls on that Germany must take a hard look at violence against all women. For German woman, it is certain that more cultural clashes will emerge with more than a million migrants having entered Europe. Female refugees, who actually make up a third of the refugee fleeing to Europe, face sexual abuse, including from their own intimate partners. However, women's safety and rights are usually ignored. Thus, after Cologne assaults, the Fuller Project for International Reporting appeals to consider this as an opportunity to reinforce the idea that women protection and women's rights should be widespread all over the world.

As far as German were concerned, Cologne assaults led to significant changes from psychological situation to social atmosphere. German were in panic. Lacking the sense of security, they snapped up the self-defense weapons, such as Pepper Spray. Also, they attended the self-defense courses, Krav Maga, which was an Israeli

technique designed for the street. In addition, their attitude toward refugees were not genial as before. A research from INSA indicated that more than 60% German expressed negative attitudes toward refugees after Cologne assaults. With a myriad of psychological disturbances, they aimed their spears at government. They altered their political standpoints to right wing ideology, a conservatism which was against the immigration of refugees. In April 2016, Angela Merkel's approval rating was at 45% which was historically low.

Cologne assaults show a lack of realization of culture difference. From the news report, many witness pointed out that most suspects looked like North African and Middle Eastern people. Why are most suspects from Muslim world? Back to the suspects' behaviors which show they don't respect the female. The reason behind the behaviors in Cologne assaults is that female right for Islam is mostly much lower than males. According to the survey between 2008 and 2012 from the Pew Research Center in Washington, whopping 87% Muslims from the Middle East and North Africa assumed wife should always obey their husband, and only a third of Muslims agreed women had rights to get divorced. Although Aiman Mazyek, chairman of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, claims men and women are equal in front of God and the law, in fact, totally different notions of equality exist between the global Muslim mainstream and the West. Moreover, Koran is often used to justify patriarchal and misogynistic convictions. Because of the religious difference, value conflict is inevitable. In Muslim society, patriarchal inclinations are normal, but in the West, equal rights for women are reasonable. According to Spiegel Online's information, a female attendant said when working as ground personnel, Muslim men often had problem with her. To avoid the unpleasant situation, the company often sent a male coworker instead. Another case is Muslim offenders often contempt female judges

with gestures or face expression to show no respect on females. Different cultures between Muslim and the West will cause culture clash, sometimes not just only patriarchy but also panic for females.

It is great that Germany receive homeless refugees. However, on refugees issue, Germany should not unilateral receive them, instead, both of them should realize and respect each other's culture difference. Consequently, that can lead them to a harmonious future.

This essay is written, revised and edited by the students in Group 2 in the course “English Written Communication” at the Center for Language Studies in National Chung Cheng University.