

FIVE BULLETS ON MERKEL'S ROLE IN THE REFUGEE CRISIS

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- Merkel's management of the Euro crisis actually hinged on the architecture of non-political institutions, with financial markets acting as an enforcer of fiscal discipline and the German Constitutional Court defining terms that Berlin exploited when negotiating with its partners.
- Mario Draghi's bold correction of market influence reduced Berlin's political leverage. Similarly, the German Constitutional Court took a backseat to the European Court of Justice. In fact, after the ECB's interventions, Merkel's strategies for rescuing the European economy gradually became less pivotal. Formally, Merkel's leadership remained intact, but her leverage on other governments has substantially withered.
- At the advent of the refugee crisis, Merkel assumed a leading role once more. Her famous claim "We can do it," addressed at the German public, was actually predicated on European consent that she took for granted. She did not bother to consult, not to mention coordinate, with the area's other leaders.
- Most of the other governments declined to cooperate with Merkel's vow to open Europe's doors to all Syrians searching for a haven. Merkel suddenly appeared powerless, unable to tackle what had become her biggest challenge and the most vital political issue.
- Her success at designing a compromise, albeit an expensive one, with the Turkish government, again without consulting the other European partners, is either a demonstration of real political leadership or stubborn, misguided persistence. It is still doubtful that the compromise will prove solid and durable. This will be the real test for Merkel's European leadership. If it fails, Europe may finally discover that it needs a true sharing of political sovereignty instead of individual leaders.