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## Journey into Europe: Islam, Immigration, and Identity

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By Akbar Ahmed

Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2018, 592 pages, \$34.99, ISBN: 9780815727583

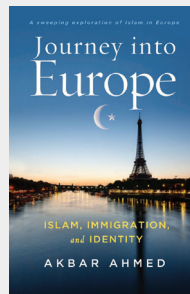
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Reviewed by Ali Hüseynoğlu, Trakya University

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*Journey into Europe: Islam, Immigration, and Identity* is the last installment of a four-volume series written by Prof. Akbar Ahmed. The text is composed of three parts and nine chapters. It starts by outlining the historical presence of Islam in Europe and continues elaborating theoretical discussions about modernity and tribalism in respect to the (re) construction of European identity and the formation of nations from ancient times to the present. The second part is about various types of Muslims, i.e. natives, immigrants, and converts, and their struggle to locate their Islamic identity within the broader European one. The final part highlights a number of lessons derived from the whole research and proposes a more pluralist European identity respecting ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. It concludes with ten steps as “solutions to the crisis facing Muslims in Europe” (pp. 507-516).

In addition to serving as the former high commissioner of Pakistan to Great Britain and Ireland, Professor Akbar is the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington DC. In his earlier three works that started after 9/11, Ahmed elaborated a vast array of matters regarding the presence of Muslims, primarily in the American context, thus contributing to the growing academic scholarship about the West and the Muslim world. This is his only book dedicated to issues of Muslims living in Europe. It is the product



of four years of intensive and meticulous work which Prof. Ahmed conducted together with a team of researchers between 2013 and 2017. The methodology of the book has to do more with the disciplines of sociology and anthropology than history or political science. Yet, as Ahmed underscores, this cannot be counted as a “standard textbook of anthropology” (p. 34). Theoretically speaking, the book reflects upon the main discussions of Max Weber’s understanding of modernity and modern nations, and Ibn Khaldun’s take on tribalism; it takes both intellectuals’ interpretation of identity into account in order to understand the main dynamics of European identity.

One of the strongest aspects of this study is that it is primarily composed of extensive ethnographic fieldwork, insightful observations, and face-to-face semi-structured interviews with hundreds of Muslims and non-Muslims on the ground. Thus, along with the theoretical discussions, it also provides a wealth of significant information about the fundamental themes of Muslims on the situation at hand. Generally speaking, it is not so common to come across studies providing such a rich polyphony of Muslim and non-Muslim voices in a single manuscript.

The book aims to problematize the reader’s views about the limits of Muslim identity in various parts of Europe by questioning to what

extent Muslims are marginalized, otherized or incorporated within European societies. For this purpose, it analyzes robust interactions between various Islamic identities with majority non-Muslim ones, in which the former struggles unabatedly to find a place inside the latter, even though Islam per se is deeply embedded in the multireligious past of Europe.

The book provides many real-life stories about Muslims belonging to different ethnicities who try to integrate themselves with the non-Muslim-majority societies in which they live, and how they cope with instances of getting stereotyped, excluded, and prevented from having a higher status due to their religious affiliation. In his book, Ahmed directs the attention of the reader to the rising far-right nationalism across the European continent parallel to the increasing numbers of asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants. For Ahmed, this juxtaposition frequently erupts through physical or discursive hate crimes, Islamophobia, discrimination, and the marginalization and even demonization of Muslims in regional or national contexts. By the same token, the author does not hesitate to censor the voices of some Muslims opting for violent actions, including those joining terrorist groups such as ISIS.

*Journey into Europe* investigates to what extent European nations are ready to accept Islam and incorporate it into their own formation of identities. In this process, Ahmed puts forward three categories of European identity: primordial, pluralist, and predator. The first two categories emphasize Europeans' senses of primordial identities such as blood or race, tribalism, and uniqueness of cultural and historical belongings. Predator identity is more chauvinistic, aggressive, and belligerent in the face of an external threat to the identity of a tribe, thus constituting a possible threat to the fundamen-

tal principles of European modernity such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

In his book, Ahmed highlights the need for a more pluralist European identity respecting, tolerating and incorporating various ethnic, religious, and cultural identities into larger contexts. Accordingly, he draws lessons from the past of the continent by giving the example of *la convivencia* (coexistence) in al-Andulus, a pluralist society where Muslims, Christians, and Jews coexisted harmoniously under Muslim rule in Andalusia. For Ahmed, this model was also evident later in the Christian kingdom of Sicily and across the Balkans under the administration of the Ottoman Empire (p. 106). Ahmed emphasizes contextuality, pointing to both the merits and the outdatedness of *la convivencia*; he pushes the reader to think about the implementation of a new version of the concept to meet the needs of a more inclusive and peaceful Europe. For Ahmed, Muslims and non-Muslims should cooperate for the common good of a New Andalusia; though a long, difficult, and painful process, it would definitely be more open, democratic, plural, and diverse than today's European identity which is based primarily on primordial values, blood, and the imagined "purity" of its citizens: "The convivencia of Andalusia is a European antidote to the European problem of predator identity" (p. 521). Yet the book refrains from commenting extensively on the challenges that this model is likely to face in the event of its application in practice. Nor does it dwell deeply on the economic aspects of marginalized and discriminated Muslim groups, or their interactions with non-Muslim immigrant groups sharing similar experiences across Europe.

Still, *Journey into Europe* can be counted as one of the most influential and eye-opening contributions which provide detailed information about the past and present of Mus-

lims in Europe derived primarily from the experiences and ideas of many Muslim and non-Muslim figures, scholars, clergy, and ordinary people across the continent. It is also a tremendously essential, original, and timely contribution for a contemporary Europe where lack of respect and intolerance toward internal or external “others,” especially Muslims after 9/11, continue to grow. In this respect, this long and thought-provoking intellectual inquiry by Prof. Ahmed and his team of researchers is highly useful for both beginners and advanced readers questioning the past and present of Islam in today’s Europe.

Having read *Journey into Europe*, it is actually hard to disagree that there is now more need than ever for the promotion of religious pluralism and the coexistence of diverse identities for a more prosperous, democratic and pluralist Europe for all. For this purpose, while on the one hand European states should halt any kind of discriminatory policies violating the rights of Muslims, the latter need to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens of their countries and contribute to the promotion of the core norms and values of Europe at all local, national, and international levels.

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## The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty and the Logic of Competition

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By William Davies

London: SAGE Publications, 2017, 223 pages, \$24.00, ISBN: 9781526403520

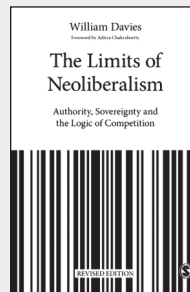
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Reviewed by Yahya Aydın, University of Southampton

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During the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, neo-liberalism first emerged as a reaction to the worldwide recession, and is associated with the retrenchment and privatization of the welfare state. The main aspects of neo-liberalism can be explained in terms of open, competitive, and unregulated markets; a liberated state in terms of all its forms. Based on this general view and expectation about neo-liberalism, William Davies discusses the limitations of neo-liberalism in relation to authority, sovereignty and competition, with attention to the key role of politics and the market.

*The Limits of Neoliberalism* is well-organized and includes contributions from some key



scholars (i.e., Hayek, Coase and Schumpeter), as well as interviews and policy documents to discuss the history of competition in order to better examine the transformation and current situation of neo-liberalism in the U.S., the UK, and the EU, with special attention to the 2007-2008 financial crisis. In the first chapter, Davies defines neo-liberalism as the “disenchantment of politics by economics” (p. 6). Based on this view, he discussed value, ideology, authority, and justification in terms of economic efficiency. The quantitative results of the economy become more important than the qualitative. The results of this chapter show that everything converts to a form of market in contemporary life due to neo-liberal policies. He suggests that we “will