

ONE

## *Europe: Turbulent and Mighty Continent*

GREECE WAS DYING in the summer of 2013, and the drama around the event was as poignant as anything Sophocles has written. I was in Athens to deliver some lectures, but I was witnessing, if press reports were to be believed, what appeared to be the imminent downfall of the cradle of Western civilization and the disturbing inertia toward its plight displayed by the rest of the European family of nations. The pillars of a functioning state were shaking: inflation, unemployment, and the national debt were out of control, and law and order on the verge of collapse. The dying process was confirmed when one day state TV was abruptly and indefinitely suspended as employees could no longer receive their salaries.

The last straw was the steady trickle of desperate refugees arriving from North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia swelling the ranks of those impoverished migrants already present. Squeezed by the economic crisis, the traditionally hospitable Greeks vented their frustrations at the unending numbers of refugees and immigrants as they sought aid and refuge; and the greater the economic woes, the greater the popularity of the Far Right parties and the more extreme their rhetoric of hate. Groups like the Golden Dawn, with their swastika-like emblem, were parading about dressed up as faux-Nazis, giving Nazi salutes, and even displaying pictures of Adolf Hitler. Their target this time around was the mainly Muslim refugee and immigrant community. Their message was simple and effective, and it was influencing how people thought about the subject: Muslims were not part of European identity, nor had they contributed anything to Western civilization. In short, Muslims had no right to be in Europe. Clearly, the cherished European ideals of humanism and multiculturalism that allowed for

the accommodation and integration of immigrant communities were being challenged.

It was with this foreboding sense of being on the cusp of history that I found myself that hot summer in a crowded basement with members of the Muslim community. It was Friday, and I had been invited by the Muslim leaders of Athens to join the prayers and address the congregation after the formal sermon. Appreciating the downtrodden state of the community, I was determined to make an appearance, as I thought my visit would be a small gesture of support.

As I collected my thoughts to address the congregation, some 400 in number, I was strangely unsettled to contemplate that in Athens, a major European capital that has a Muslim population of several hundred thousand, there was not a single actual mosque. The “mosque” I found myself in was a large, dark, and dank parking garage of a particularly sinister aspect. The low ceiling with ugly aluminum air ducts, the absence of any cooling facilities, and the sickly smell of the sweat and desperation of the worshippers packed tightly into its confined space created a claustrophobic atmosphere. I have never been a fan of underground parking lots, having seen too many scenes in movies of ravening, crazy, blood-thirsty men wielding machetes or chainsaws running amok there. And this was as menacing a basement as any good Hollywood director of a B movie could imagine. My instincts were not wrong. Members of the congregation described incidents in which neo-Nazi thugs had blocked the entrances to similar makeshift mosques in Athens; some had even been firebombed. The community lived in terror, as one young male Egyptian migrant confirmed: “The neo-Nazis placed notices outside of our mosque, threatening to slaughter us like chickens and burn down the mosque if we did not leave the country.” With a shiver of anxiety, he added, “We are living like dogs here.”

The congregants were mostly men from the Middle East and South Asia—Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, and Pakistanis. I could see the beads of perspiration on the drawn and unshaven faces looking up at me. Their impoverishment hung over them like a dark cloud. I felt empathy for the immigrants whose only crime was their frantic need to seek refuge abroad for their families and themselves from the chaos and persecution at home. They had undertaken a hazardous journey to Europe in leaky boats and overcrowded vehicles, determined to find safety. The Syrians among them were escaping Bashar al-Assad’s chemical and mustard-gas attacks, the use of cluster bombs, the destruction of their homes, and the real danger of the slaughter of their families. They had come to Europe

hoping to salvage their lives. But here, it was a congregation of broken dreams.

My speech that day was one of the most difficult I have delivered in my life. But it was not the stifling heat, the audience, or the venue that made it so; it was the brutal realization of the plight of my community of Muslims—the *ummah*. Throughout their lives, Muslims evoke the two greatest names of God in Islam—the Compassionate and the Merciful—and dream of a world of peace and justice for which they must strive. Here, as I stood up to speak, I saw little evidence of these noble ideals. I could not help but wonder if the condition of this community was indeed a metaphor for the global *ummah*.

I felt a mild sense of unease at the free-floating anger and desperation that permeated the community and hinted at menace. These men had nothing to lose, and I could imagine the most desperate among them prepared to lash out in an unpredictable and even murderous manner. Their predicament needed to be handled with urgency, sympathy, and resolute common sense. This, I felt, was Europe's ticking time bomb.

In my sermon I could not just say that their lives would improve overnight in their present situation or that they would find peace if they were sent home; on the other hand, if I offered them empty words of optimism, they would sense the hollowness of my message. Yet if I did not give them some hope, I would be failing my fellow Muslims by not comforting them. It took all my optimism and faith, therefore, to deliver a message of hope. I asked them to take inspiration from the example of the Prophet of Islam, who had faced enormous challenges throughout his life, including assassination attempts, with patience, compassion, and courage. As for their mosque, I told them that a mosque is defined by the power and beauty of the faith in the hearts of its worshippers, not by the calligraphy and tiles of its building. This basement, I said, is as beautiful a mosque as any in the world.

Afterward we sat on the floor in a corner and the congregants gathered around me. They were bursting to tell their stories. Many told me of their ordeal as refugees and immigrants; they wanted to share the utter misery of their lives with me. Several of them remarked that they felt abandoned by their own communities and that I was, in fact, the first Muslim of any note who had bothered to visit them. They had never even seen an embassy official joining them. The young Pakistani men told us in hushed voices of being chased, kicked, and beaten by mobs while the public looked on or joined in. The police had stood by watching and in fact appeared to collude with the mobs. Some who had been in Greece longer than the

more recent migrants spoke with sorrow of what once seemed a pleasant and welcoming land but had recently turned hostile against immigrants, especially Muslims. One of these early migrants, who said he had once belonged to the defense services in Pakistan, confessed that staying in Athens was too dangerous a risk. He was preparing to uproot himself after a successful two decades: his European dream had evaporated. They all noted the hostile role of the media in projecting an image of Muslims that conflated three words—Islam, terrorism, and migrants—and thereby created problems for them.

But even here in Europe as destitute refugees who had lost everything, Muslims were not learning lessons. They had brought their sectarian and ethnic rivalries with them. As we sat down to talk, several Arabs said to me earnestly, as you are an Islamic scholar, could you tell us whether as Sunnis we should consider the Shia to be Muslims? If not, asked a Syrian man, were they then liable to be punished by death? They had clearly been wrestling with the question, and it could be understood only in the context of the savagery inflicted on them by Assad in Syria and his Iranian supporters. I replied by asking whether the Shia believed in the Quran and accepted the Sunna and the example of the Prophet. They replied, yes. Then, I said, they are Muslim, and we must respect that fact. In Islam, only God decides who is a good or bad Muslim, I reminded them. They slinked back in apparent acquiescence.

Present were some leaders of the community including Naim Elghandour, an Egyptian businessman and president of the Muslim Association of Greece, and his Greek wife, Anna Stamou, a convert to Islam and the first candidate who wore a hijab to stand for a seat in the European Parliament. We had met at a lecture I gave soon after my arrival in Athens to a high-level interfaith gathering and at a well-attended public talk hosted by the prestigious Onassis Cultural Center. Both events were moderated by the renowned Greek scholar Sotiris Roussos, a fellow alumnus of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. Later Anna, who is active in the Muslim Association, kindly assisted me in arranging excellent contacts with the local Muslim population of Xanthi in northern Greece near the Bulgarian border.

The Muslim community quickly became aware that I had been warmly received not only by Professor Roussos but in their respective offices by Bishop Gabriel of Diavleia, the chief secretary of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece and the second-highest-ranking member of the Greek Orthodox Church, and George Kalantzis, the Greek government's secretary general for religious affairs. Roussos called the failure to build the



*Author and his team in Athens with Bishop Gabriel, the second-highest-ranking figure in the Greek Orthodox Church*

Athens mosque Greece’s “shame.” Bishop Gabriel, a prominent supporter of the mosque idea and of the Muslim community, described his work in the streets feeding migrants and said that he was “obliged to act as a true member of the Church” to see the migrants as people created in the image of God. The American ambassador received me at the U.S. embassy, and the British ambassador invited me to call on him at his residence, where, as an admirer of the Romantic Poets, I was delighted to read a letter by Lord Byron on display at the entrance. The Pakistan ambassador hosted a dinner in my honor. The leaders of the Muslim community were following my progress with a certain amount of pride and satisfaction. My arrival at the mosque thus had the effect of raising morale.

Present with me was Frankie Martin, my former student and a trusty assistant on all my major research projects for more than a decade, who was completing his master’s degree in anthropology at Cambridge University. “Although I’ve worked with Professor Ahmed for many years and visited many mosques around the world, I was shocked and unprepared for what I encountered in Athens,” he observed. “It was so saddening to think of the Syrians, Pakistanis, and others desperate to reach a better and

safer life in Europe only to find a reality in Athens where they are stalked and brutalized simply because of who they are.” Harrison Akins, my assistant at the time, had accompanied me from Washington, D.C., and described what he saw: “I couldn’t help but be saddened by the fact that this claustrophobic space was where they went to find any measure of peace and solace from what I can only imagine to be an intolerable situation as immigrants in Athens.” Also present was Ibrahim Khan Hoti, my teenage grandson, who had flown in from Islamabad, Pakistan, and was the advance guard for his mother, Amineh Hoti, who was to meet us later in London. He was astonished: “I was surprised and greatly disappointed to see that in one of the most famous and renowned cities in the world, one that has such a grand history and one that was the birthplace of democracy, a system that, ideally, should represent all walks of life, there was no legal mosque. It is still ironic when you see that Greece was once in the Ottoman Empire.”

The refugees in that basement in Athens were like the first heavy drops of rain that precede the monsoons. The rains came shortly afterward and became a flood as hundreds of thousands of refugees arrived in Greece hoping to travel north to safety. Their arrival affected the way people saw Islam and their own national leaders. For a short while, Angela Merkel of Germany was elevated to cultural sainthood for her magnanimous response, and Viktor Orbán of Hungary was vilified in the media for his pusillanimous and hostile reception. Reputations were being made and destroyed and saints and villains were being created in the public mind by forces outside the political arena of Europe. Muslims had once again arrived on the continent and were directly affecting its internal balance and structure.

To some Europeans the presence of Muslim immigrants represented a third invasion—after the Arab and Ottoman invasions of centuries past. Yet the contrast between this latest Muslim invasion of Europe and the first one could not be greater. Islam first came to Europe when General Tariq ibn Ziyad, representing the Arab Umayyad dynasty in Damascus, landed in Spain in 711 and battled the Visigoths. His victory would eventually result in one of Europe’s most celebrated civilizations—al-Andalus. There were moments in the turbulent sweep of Iberian history when different societies lived, worked, and prospered together. Muslims were then associated with art, architecture, literature, and philosophy. Their culture promoted libraries, colleges, and baths. They were also known for tolerance and acceptance of other cultures and religions. Their learning, confidence, prosperity, and power stand in stark contrast to the Muslims of Europe today. In another cruel contrast, the Muslims of al-Andalus

reflected the glow of a powerful Arab superpower whose territory was larger than even the Roman Empire, whereas today they come from fragmented and violent societies in the throes of genocidal convulsions.

From this uprooted and broken Muslim community in Europe have emerged those who have repeatedly committed sickening acts of violence, killing themselves and others, regardless of religion, age, or gender, with the utmost heartlessness. After our visit to Athens, instances of Muslim terrorism exploded across Europe. Nothing was sacrosanct nor off limits—airports, editorial offices, cafés, nightclubs, sports stadiums, passenger trains, a promenade in a coastal city. The murder of an eighty-five-year-old priest in a church in Normandy by two Muslim teenagers in July 2016 prompted Pope Francis to declare, in an uncharacteristically somber mood, that “the world is at war”—while hastening to add that “it is not a war of religions.” Pope Francis was not succumbing to the idea that the West and Islam were involved in a long-term “clash of civilizations,” as propounded by scholars like Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington and publicly invoked and supported by prominent politicians like François Hollande and Manuel Valls.

One thing was abundantly clear: it was a matter of life and death to understand the European Muslims. From the presidents and prime ministers of Europe down to ordinary journalists, the question on people’s minds was how to convert Jihadi John to Malleable Mustafa and Jihadi Jane to Loyal Leila. The problem was that this question could not be answered without proper understanding and knowledge of the Muslim community—its definition of its own identity, its leadership patterns, its religious and political players, the role of the imams, the position of mothers and women in the family, and relations with government and the broader public. While few people had the answers, these were precisely the questions that needed to be addressed.

The current dynamic agitating Europe is Islam; the long-drawn-out wars between Catholics and Protestants, the struggle against the Ottomans, the steady and large-scale migrations to America, the world wars, and the confrontation between the West and the Soviet Union are no longer center stage. On philosophic, political, and cultural levels, Islam is central to the discussion about Europe. Islam affects a wide range of people, from young Muslims unsure of what to make of their faith and its place in Europe to the leaders of the Far Right who project their political philosophy and strategy as a war against it.

In that encounter in the gloomy basement in Athens, I witnessed the problems of Europe today. I saw the need to conduct a detailed study of

Europe based on fieldwork to look at precisely these issues. I saw the desperate need to discover a paradigm or method for the future that would allow Europe's different cultures and peoples to understand one another better in order to live together in peace and harmony. To do so, we needed to locate an effective conceptual frame for our study in the context of the social sciences. I thus consulted the scholars who could best guide us.

### *Max Weber, Ibn Khaldun, and European Identity*

The ideas of Max Weber, a German sociologist living in the university towns of Bismarckian Germany, and Ibn Khaldun, a sociologist of tribal societies born almost half a millennium earlier on the edge of the Sahara desert in North Africa but with experience of working in Europe, help us explore ways to understand modern Europe. Weber and Ibn Khaldun have interesting similarities and differences that are reflected in their lives and work. Their ideas continue to fascinate contemporary scholars and commentators. There is a constant stream of new books and articles about them. *Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society: New Translations on Politics, Bureaucracy, and Social Stratification* was published in 2015 by the husband-wife team of Tony and Dagmar Waters; and the historian Stephen Frederic Dale published *The Orange Trees of Marrakesh: Ibn Khaldun and Science of Man* the same year.

The new material on Ibn Khaldun continues to be adulatory, with Dale echoing the renowned British historian Arnold Toynbee, who called Ibn Khaldun's historical writing "undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever yet been created by any mind in any time or place." Tony Waters, on the other hand, conscious that he is living in a celebrity culture dominated by entertainers, has felt the need to liven up Weber's image and advertises his own book with a blog post declaring that "Max Weber was a funny guy!" It begins, "That's right, Max Weber, the dour looking social theorist on the cover of your social theory text made jokes." But those looking for the satire and bite of Jon Stewart or Bill Maher will be disappointed. Weber is cited making mildly critical, but distinctly unfunny, comments on academics and politicians.<sup>1</sup>

Weber and Ibn Khaldun both lived in societies that were undergoing dramatic change. The German people had been traumatized as never before by the invasion and occupation of their lands by Napoleon Bonaparte early in the century in which Weber was born. By the end of the century, Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor, reversed the national humiliation that France had inflicted on the Germans by not only defeating the French but



also crowning Wilhelm I the emperor of a newly united Germany in the Palace of Versailles, outside Paris. Thus Weber witnessed the birth of the mighty German nation as well as its subsequent defeat in the First World War and the collapse of the German monarchy.

Ibn Khaldun's tribal world was also crumbling around him. He saw the rapid rise and fall of tribal dynasties. The Arab world itself was fading away from the world stage. There would be vast and powerful Muslim empires after Ibn Khaldun—the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals—but they would not be Arab.

Weber placed his work in the context of modernity. He saw himself as an economist and used economic arguments to explain social and religious behavior. The title of his magnum opus, *Economy and Society*, published posthumously in 1922, makes explicit the connection between economics and sociology, and perhaps his best known work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), explains the growth of Northern European capitalism as the result of the Calvinist—that is, Protestant—work ethic. Weber's modernity was based on the twin pillars of rationality and reason: society chose to do things the way it did because they were the most logical and rational way of doing them. In contrast, Ibn Khaldun's tribal society organized and conducted life on the basis of tribal tradition and codes because of the assumption that this was the tried and tested way of previous generations and would be perpetuated in the succeeding ones.

Citizenship for Weber's modern man in the ideal thus presupposed a democratic order and equality for all. In contrast, Ibn Khaldun's tribesmen idealized group cohesion and, when they became the rulers of dynasties and empires, Islamic law, which does not favor one tribal or racial group over another and provides rights for religious minorities. In both cases, however, the assumptions and worldview of society, often unwritten and unstated, were normatively interpreted to reflect the dominant group. Thus minority groups in both political environments, whatever the theoretical arguments about equality, were dependent in some profound and often not-so-subtle ways on the goodwill of the majority population. The minority was therefore disadvantaged and constantly vulnerable to prejudice and even violence. Here was the chink in the armor of both modern and tribal societies, whatever the protestations of equality in the eyes of the state and the law, in the case of Weber, and Islamic compassion or the tribal code of hospitality, in the case of Ibn Khaldun.

It is important to note when discussing theorists like Weber and Ibn Khaldun in the social sciences that their theoretical interests need to be understood not as descriptive realities but as imagined constructions or

ideal types, to use a Weberian concept. The categories and models, for example, those concerning the modern state or tribal society, are neither watertight nor permanent in nature. Otherwise such exercises would run the genuine risk of reductive reasoning and essentialism, which easily transform into broad stereotypes. They are merely useful starting points for taxonomic exercises.

There is an assumption in the writings of the sociologists of modernity like Max Weber that the modern nation-state, whatever its flaws, is the most advanced and therefore most desirable stage of human political evolution. Modern European societies, including, by extension, those influenced by them, as in North America, are analyzed and viewed in terms of modernity—that is, that they are essentially democratic, that their leaders are accountable and will uphold the principles of human rights, justice, and liberty, and that the electorate is the best judge of the nation's destiny. In the ideal, neither blood, nor caste, nor class will sway decisions for employment and advancement. Such societies are deemed modern and progressive. In contrast, societies like tribal ones in other continents are cast by Western commentators as backward and primitive. There is clearly an assumption, more openly stated perhaps until a half century ago, that advanced societies were innately distinct from tribal ones and were therefore superior. In time, it was hoped by the more optimistic and generous commentators of modernity that those tribal societies would become more like Western ones.

For Ibn Khaldun, the pressing question was to discover the principle that held tribal societies together and could prevent the disintegration of societies that he observed around him. At the heart of Ibn Khaldun's analysis was the nature of tribal society, which is defined through shared bloodlines and held together by what he called *asabiyyah*, or social cohesion. Simply put, when *asabiyyah* was high tribal groups were strong, and when it was low they were weak. In his cyclical model of history, tribal groups with strong *asabiyyah* came down from their mountains and out of their deserts to cities to dominate city folk, whom he described as having become effete. In time, the new tribal settlers, too, became soft and after three or four generations were vulnerable to fresher and more united tribes from the mountains and deserts. Ibn Khaldun idealized tribal societies in being just and noble. They provided honor and dignity to their members. He presents a plausible theory of the principles that hold small-scale tribal societies together and allows us to see the processes over time that weaken these ties, thereby transforming communities.

We see the process of the disintegration of *asabiyyah* in the very act of migration as tribal groups today from, for example, the Berber areas of North Africa arrive to create new lives in Europe. Families disintegrate over time, and the new generation in particular is left with only bits and pieces of *asabiyyah*. This loss of *asabiyyah* means that individuals are no longer rooted in their past tribal identity, and if they have not acquired a strong European identity, will be in a state of confusion about which norms and values to follow. Without guidance, the individual will be vulnerable to being misled, even into committing acts of violence.

There were fundamental differences in the approach to power and politics of Weber's modern man as distinct from Ibn Khaldun's tribal one. The former gained power to reinforce the law, the latter to provide patronage to the community and clan. To the former, not upholding the law was a perversion of normative values, to the latter not assisting kin was betraying the essence of social order. To both, these processes appeared natural and the only possible normative way of doing things. However, Weber was intellectually ambiguous about modernity. He was fearful of the dangers of people having to live in "bureaucratic iron cages" and becoming mere "cogs in the machine." He was aware that the pursuit of rationality and bureaucracy could lead to the curtailing of freedoms. His ethnic background would place him squarely as Germanic in terms of his identity, yet his thinking was not consistent with that of the National Socialists.

There are other differences between the two scholars beyond the obvious ones of two men living half a millennium apart and belonging to different cultural and religious traditions. Ibn Khaldun came from a self-consciously tribal background. He could trace his ancestry to one of the oldest tribes of the Hadramaut in Yemen, which was then and still remains a profoundly tribal society. Weber, on the other hand, was from a solid Protestant upper-middle-class family that provided him a comfortable life at home and, eventually, an established career as an academic. His father was a wealthy and senior civil servant with excellent contacts in government and academe. His mother was an orthodox Calvinist whose Puritan morality remained with Weber to the end, although diminishing in later life. In the life of Ibn Khaldun there is migration, danger, and disaster; he lost both his parents when still a teenager, and at one point he lost his wife, his family, and his entire library in a shipwreck. Weber's life was relatively sedentary and free of adventure, although he did suffer what is generally known as a mental breakdown, not unheard of in the lives of highly intelligent and sensitive people.

There is also a difference in their approach to knowledge itself. Ibn Khaldun lived at a time when Muslim civilization encouraged individuals to develop their skills in the whole array of human learning. A philosopher could grapple with issues raised by Plato and Aristotle in the morning, dabble in theological enquiries arising from a study of the Quran in the afternoon, and write love verses in the evening. In addition he could travel vast distances over many years to investigate the world, seek a fortune, or perform pilgrimage and still be recognized in lands distant from his birthplace. Ibn Khaldun was a polymath, in keeping with the norms of his civilization—apart from dabbling in politics he was a prominent jurist, poet, philosopher, historian, sociologist, and anthropologist. In many ways, he was a classic exemplar of what would come to be known as the Renaissance man.

In contrast, Weber lived at a time when modern Western societies were promoting the idea of specialization or concentrating one's time and effort in developing skills in a particular subject or profession. In the drive to specialize, professionals were urged to focus on their profession and not defuse their talents and interests. Those who dabbled perhaps led more interesting lives but invariably lost out on promotions and consolidation of their careers. A man of his times, Weber concentrated in his general area of academic work. While he saw himself as an economist, his great contribution is in the sociology of religions. There is no record of his indulging in either philosophy or love poetry, though he earned a law doctorate. Weber's work needs to be seen in the context of his life: he was a turn-of-the-century German scholar who was born when Europe dominated the world and Germany dominated Europe. Implicit in Weber's worldview is the classification of a static and otherworldly Orient in comparison with a rational, dynamic, progressive, and constantly improving Occident. The ancient societies of India and China were dominated by mysticism, asceticism, and otherworldly ideas, while European ones—which were in the process of intermeshing the two systems of capitalist enterprise and bureaucratic state apparatus—were essentially different.

As we know, these fundamental assumptions of Weberian modernity are being challenged today as events unfold on the world stage. Take China and India, both once dominated by Europeans. Both have surged ahead in economic terms, outpacing European societies and even posing a threat to the preeminent position of the United States. Confucian and Hindu work ethics have done very well for their societies. India in particular has shown that a traditional society can allow its ancient religion and culture to flourish while at the same time being part of a thriving process

of globalization. Besides, even a cursory reading of the literature available on ancient Chinese and Indian societies would confirm that Weber misread the nature of those societies as otherworldly. Descriptions in the celebrated *Kama Sutra*, a text that titillates pleasure seekers even today, confirm a society fully appreciative of the sensual life, and the *Arthashastra* describes political machinations, intrigues, and skullduggery on a scale that would bring a blush to the cheeks of Machiavelli. Similarly, early Chinese history confirms the importance of military power and wealth in informing political and social life. It is significant that Confucius emphasized stability, order, and the good life, not withdrawal from and rejection of the world.

As for Weberian modernity, the European state had too easily compromised the essential features of Weber's definition of a rationally and neutrally administered bureaucratic state. The reality was that Weber's modern state could be unjust, unfair, and irrational in violating the basic norms of human society both during Weber's lifetime and after his passing. Germany, Italy, and other European countries in the 1930s and 1940s, with the rise of the Nazis, provide examples of compromised Weberian modernity. Just as modern European states are failing to deal with their Muslim minority fairly and justly today, thus failing the test of modernity, they failed then to treat their Jewish and other minorities fairly and justly, leading directly to the horrors of the concentration camps and the decimation of the Jewish people in the Holocaust.

The core principles of modernity in both Europe and the Muslim world were challenged after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. In Europe, the challenge came as local economies faltered, unemployment rose, and disillusionment grew following the arrival of asylum seekers. People began to fall back swiftly and unambiguously to their imagined core identities. It was not long before people became aggressive in promoting their own identity. With that, some of the fundamental precepts of modernity—in particular, the core beliefs that all are equal before the law regardless of race and religion and that human rights are to be upheld at all costs—were challenged. There was even talk of mass deportation and worse as far as the minorities were concerned.

In the Muslim world, not long after gaining independence in the decades following the Second World War, Muslim rulers inexorably moved to becoming dictators. They fell back on tribal support to prop up their regimes. Under Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the Assads in Syria, or Muammar Qaddafi in Libya, the pattern was the same: brutal regimes depending on their tribal base and promoting the cult of the dictator using torture and

repression. In spite of the blatant violations of human rights, the regimes continued to project themselves as progressive and modern. But no one was being fooled, least of all their own people.

The compromises and challenges to modernity were more complex in Europe, the birthplace of modernity, than in the Muslim world, which, steeped in tribal culture, was still struggling with the concept. But the end result was the same. A new form of analysis had to be located. Modernity in Europe was also struggling, as we found during our fieldwork, to maintain its Weberian character. Consequently, we see the reassertion of traditional European identity with its emphasis on blood, lineage, and the group cohesion of the “native” people. Weber had pointed out the nature of traditional and charismatic authority—what we call “tribal”—that defined pre-modern societies. As was common at the time, he saw a linear progression in the trajectory of societies moving toward modernity. There were clearly demarcated stages of evolution in discrete categories as societies moved from “primitive” communities to modern ones based in large cities that reflected their industrial and economic development. It was widely agreed that modern societies had left primitive societies behind in economic, political, military, and intellectual ways. Yet today, as the European state begins to compromise on Weberian notions of modernity, we see the reemergence of older forms of identity. This is where we move from Weberian to Khaldunian territory.

Weber may have been hard put to explain the Muslims running amok in the heart of Paris and the million migrants turning up in his homeland, but to Ibn Khaldun it would have been clear in the context of his theories: the movement of communities in search of better lives from one part of the world to another, which was often accompanied by violence and dislocation. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), for Ibn Khaldun, would be nothing more than a product of the disintegration of *asabiyyah* and thus a collapse of tribal leadership and tribal law. The results were the worst excesses of human behavior. The absence of justice and compassion, for Ibn Khaldun, would indicate a return to the age of *jabiliyyah*, or ignorance. The tribal societies in which ISIS operated were thus in the throes of a bitter and violent battle to re-create *asabiyyah*. Without understanding what was going on in those societies, it became difficult to effectively vanquish ISIS, as we saw in spite of so many different countries, Muslim and non-Muslim, joining together to combat it. The Weberian take on ISIS would be that modernity, with its emphasis on rationalism, genuine democracy, accountability, human rights, and the rule of law, had come to a juddering halt in the Middle East.

For Weber, the emphasis on racial identity in German society represents an abandonment of modernity and a reversal of the forward trajectory of progress. Society is thus moving backward away from rational bureaucratic forms toward those of traditional and tribal ones. The Germanic notions of the *Volk* or the people, the fatherland, purity of the bloodline, and the idea of the nation itself all fed into an extreme form of ethnic identity that drove Germany into two world wars and the horrors of the Holocaust. Today, many Germans are reacting to the sudden arrival of a million migrants from distant lands as a threat to their cultural and social mores—that is, to the internal cohesion of *asabiyyah*. Once again, blood and culture are acting as discrete factors to separate the natives from the migrants. Similar developments are taking place in other European countries.

For the purposes of our study, I do not see the discussion in terms of Ibn Khaldun versus Max Weber but rather Ibn Khaldun and Max Weber. We maintain that we cannot understand European society today without putting the two together. While Ibn Khaldun gives us a tribal frame to look at societies, Weber places them in the context of modern states. There is more use to Ibn Khaldun in European society than the advocates of Weber would care to admit, and we explore the reemergence of an earlier identity in Europe with its emphasis on blood and lineage keeping that in mind. This method will resolve the issue of how best to frame our study of European societies.

### *Tacitus, the First Anthropologist of Germanic Society*

While Weber and Ibn Khaldun provide, in their separate ways, a convincing frame and context in which to understand European society, we need to turn to a man who lived long before either Weber or Ibn Khaldun and left behind a masterly ethnographic foundation for the study of Europe. Tacitus, the Roman historian and statesman, who wrote his famous book *Germania* in the first century AD, provides a baseline, an extant text, and a credible conceptual frame to examine the Germans who have dominated Europe through their military and economic power.

If we define an anthropologist as one who studies a community objectively over a period of time to examine its history, leadership, organization, and values with a degree of empathy, allowing for a depth of understanding with the purpose of writing about it, then Tacitus is perhaps Europe's first true anthropologist of Germanic peoples. Tacitus's seminal ethnographic survey of the Germans, whom he described as living in tribal groups, most

likely based on face-to-face encounters with people who had first-hand knowledge of the region, perhaps Germans themselves, and access to official Roman sources, was brief, dispassionate, and objective. It explained the geography and customs of the German tribes, which in time came to be the standard against which German peoples, wherever they lived, measured themselves. It is noteworthy that Tacitus attempted to preserve his objectivity even while arguing that the German tribes posed the most serious threat to Rome itself.

Tacitus's description of German tribes mirrors what British anthropologists have called the "segmentary lineage system" among African tribes. The concept of the segmentary lineage system, which I discuss in my book *The Thistle and the Drone* (2013), describes social groups that live according to defined codes of honor, emphasize hospitality, courage, warrior prowess, and revenge, and dwell in generally remote and economically deprived territories marked by tribal boundaries. They are egalitarian and exhibit "nesting attributes" of clans and sub-clans that form a neat geometric pattern as part of a larger lineage system that traces descent from an eponymous ancestor. According to Tacitus, Germanic peoples shared all these characteristics and even traced their descent from a single common ancestor, Mannus, whose three sons were the progenitors of the main German tribal divisions. Mannus himself was the son of the Earth-born Germanic god Tuisto.

The Germans were also governed by councils of male elders who resolved conflicts. Simplicity and austerity marked their societies, which were generally egalitarian because no one man could accumulate enough resources to actually dominate the group, and leaders were *primus inter pares*. Tribal identity gave pride to the members of the community. Tacitus additionally found purity in tribal bloodlines: "all have the same bodily appearance, as far as is possible in so large a number of men: fiery blue eyes, red hair, large bodies which are strong only for violent exertion."<sup>2</sup> There was another similarity between Tacitus and the British authors who wrote of such tribal societies: Both depicted these societies in a somewhat idealized and even romantic manner.

In spite of the turbulent changes of fortune over the millennia, the Germans, wherever they lived in Europe, but especially in their heartlands, clung to three features of their identity that would bind them together—the German language and pride in its achievements; the lands and territories on which they lived, which always at their core remained German in spite of political shifts; and finally the idea of belonging to a common Germanic people with a shared culture that comprised legendary gods and iconic leaders, writers, and artists who generate pride and reinforce German identity.



While many would probably be reluctant to associate the word with a modern Western nation, especially one as prosperous and powerful as Germany, I would suggest we could with fair confidence recognize among the German peoples attributes of what Tacitus called a tribe. Tacitus's description of the German people as tribal was shared by none other than Julius Caesar, who is widely credited with giving the name "German" to them. To my mind, the characteristics enumerated above are sufficient to apply the term tribal to the German people.

While modern Northern European nations like England, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries are indisputably Germanic in origin, other countries, too, claim links: for example, French identity incorporates Clovis and Charlemagne, both mighty Germanic warriors of the Frankish tribal confederation that gave France its name; Italy claimed an *Aryan* identity under Mussolini based on the invasion and rule of Germanic tribes around the time of the fall of Rome; and the Spanish aristocracy long claimed descent from the Germanic Visigoths, which they used to define a Spanish identity based on blood lineage. While the Germans were fortunate in being "discovered" by Tacitus early in recorded history, there were, and are, communities throughout Eastern Europe with their own distinct tribal identity. These include the Slavs, such as the Poles, Czechs, and Serbs, the Hungarians, and the Baltic peoples.

### *Tribal Europe*

However tribal in origin, European societies like the Germanic peoples have been influenced over the centuries by Christianity, feudalism, monarchy, foreign invasions, long-drawn-out religious wars, imperialism and overseas colonization, and finally the advent of modernity and the modern state. These developments have tempered tribal identity, but they have not removed it altogether. Neither did the growth of state power, including the expansion of centralization, industrialization, education, and transportation, as well as immigration. What did happen, though, was that tribal identity in its raw and purest expressions evolved and developed to adjust to changing social and political situations.

*The Thistle and the Drone* identifies the tribal base of modern states such as Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan—both named after tribes. This is also the case in Europe. In the context of the modern European state, particularly in Northern and Eastern Europe, because the state is dominated by a majority ethnic group, the minority is not treated either equally or fairly. Try as it might, the minority will invariably find itself on the outside, especially

when the majority revives the idea of defining identity on the basis of blood, culture, or land, the key concepts of tribal identity.

Tacitus noted the essential difference between a world-dominating military civilization with multiple varieties of people such as the Roman Empire, based in the city of Rome, and the German tribes who were seen as uncivilized, uncouth, and monolithic communities living on the periphery. Yet what he saw as tribal when writing of German society, modern European commentators such as Max Weber failed to recognize. Even anthropologists whose primary professional focus is the different types of societies could not quite acknowledge what stared them in the face: the tribal base and nature of European society.

### *European Primordial and Predator Identity*

To better understand and analyze European society we present three categories of European identity. The first two are *primordial identity*, which defines those societies that value their own unique traditions and culture, and *predator identity*, which defines those that promote their identity through chauvinistic, aggressive, and militaristic expressions, often targeting societies that differ from them in ethnic or religious terms. The third, *pluralist identity*, will be discussed below.

Predator identity is activated in a variety of situations, including the desire to aggressively defend the “purity” and identity of the tribe, especially when faced with an external threat. In this context, when we use the term “Far Right,” as we have in this study, to describe a political movement or position, we are referring to predator identity. We may sum up the relationship between the two identities thus: primordial tribal man yearns for peace but is prepared for battle if necessary; predatory tribal man looks to battle and considers peace a sign of weakness. We suggest that tribal societies are dimorphic—that is, different varieties of the same species. Thus primordial identity and predator identity as we are using them are illustrations of this dimorphism.

Primordial identity is tribal in essence and memory, if not in form, structure, and substance. It is a re-creation of an already imagined construction—that is, the tribe. Primordial identity allows the community to feel a sense of association with some features from the past and reinforces its desire for group pride in its special status. Primordial identity in Germanic society, for example, has evolved into various overlapping codes of behavior that stress one or other aspect of the original tribal identity. These codes include *Heimat*, meaning homeland, with mystical, rural, and

anti-modern connotations; *Volk*, or the particular spirit of the people based in blood, soil, and the culture and traditions of the ancestors; *Aryan*, a supposedly scientifically determined original and pure racial identity going back thousands of years and typified by blonde hair and blue eyes; *deutsche Tugenden*, or German virtues, commonly associated with Prussia, which include efficiency, austerity, discipline, and self-denial; *Leitkultur*, meaning the leading or dominant culture in society typically juxtaposed with the foreign culture of outsiders; *hygge*, or a state of warmth, good feeling, and coziness one experiences with others of the community, especially in the frigid Scandinavian winters; and *janteloven*, the law of Jante, which is used in Scandinavia to describe unspoken rules that govern society, especially the idea that one should not think oneself greater than or above anyone else and that no outsider should ever presume to be above the native group as a whole or to be a part of it. Janteloven underlines the egalitarian nature of tribal identity and remains a desirable ideal in primordial identity today.

While original tribal identity can accommodate outsiders through the social mechanism of what anthropologists call “affiliated lineages” in which their protection becomes a matter of honor for the tribe, primordial and particularly predator identity deny space to anyone not related by blood. The proponents of Aryan and Volk forms of identity such as the Nazis, for example, never accepted the existence of affiliated lineages, insisting on purity of blood. This was despite evidence to the contrary, such as in the descriptions of the Norse tribes provided by Ibn Fadlan, the Abbasid envoy who lived among them and wrote about their customs in the tenth century. Ibn Fadlan was allowed to live with the tribes even though he was not of their bloodline. The Nazis, of course, had a specific and sinister agenda. They promoted and personified predator identity, justifying it on the basis of the purity of the original tribal lineage, which denied a place for those who were not part of the tribe. The target for the Nazis was the minorities, especially the Jews. In their desire to reclaim the purity of the original German tribes, the Nazis attempted to manufacture a society that never existed.

Given the central importance of identity in Europe, it is clear that the traditional definitions of left and right in Western democracies can no longer accurately explain the growing reality of politics on the ground nor carry the theoretical burden of concepts that reflect such a range of political belief as to render taxonomy almost meaningless. The Right today attempts to convey the views of those who have traditionally conservative and benign positions regarding family and country to those who, at the extreme, talk of “concentration camps” and “making soap” with reference

to the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities. The confusion is not abated when terms such as extreme Right, right wing, Far Right, and alt-right are used interchangeably. A similar problem confronts the current analyst explaining the movements on both the left and the right, both of whom may have regard for their traditional culture, as “populism,” another term currently in vogue to describe the political movements surging across Western societies (see, for example, the 2016 book *The Populist Explosion* by John Judis). It is for this reason that we look at European societies through the categories proposed in this study, which are informed by the discipline of anthropology.

### *European Pluralist Identity*

Europe also has another historic identity besides the one derived from tribe and blood, which we are calling pluralist identity. This identity emphasizes learning, literature, and art and above all, promotes the idea of coexistence among Jews, Christians, and Muslims—or, to use the recently coined Spanish term to describe it, *la convivencia*. Several examples present themselves: Andalusia, Sicily, and parts of the Balkans, especially Bosnia. Andalusia, a region in modern Spain, is also the name of the central part of al-Andalus, the Muslim name for the Iberian Peninsula, which Muslims ruled from Cordoba more than 1,000 years ago. Whatever the controversies and debates about the past, the reality is that there were periods in Andalusian history when people felt that if they had not yet attained a state of philosophic and civilizational harmony they were well on their way to doing so. Therefore, in this study, we refer to the Andalusian model to suggest a pluralist society from the past that, suitably adjusted to our times, provides an alternative European identity to the one based in notions of tribe and race found especially in the northern and eastern parts of the continent. Indeed, Andalusia acts as a valid alternative or antithesis to the thesis that Europe is essentially formed of societies with a highly developed notion of primordial identity that can develop in dangerous predatory directions targeting minorities.

The Andalusian model was directly shaped by Muslim thought and culture and had a profound impact on Europe, influencing the development of the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment. Even when Muslims lost power, as in Sicily, the Andalusian model was maintained, most notably, in the case of Sicily, by King Roger II and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. We find scattered evidence of the Andalusian model remaining today, especially in Southern Europe.

The idea was compelling enough to attract the attention of scholars across the Atlantic; Tamara Sonn of Georgetown University has spoken of the United States before 9/11 as a “New Andalusia.”

A theme that runs through our study is the belief that the idea and practice of successful modernity that subsumes human rights, civil rights, and democracy is under threat. Today, the arrival of more than a million refugees and the rising controversy surrounding them feeds into the propaganda of Far Right groups challenging the very foundations of modern Europe. These groups have had the cumulative effect of reviving an exclusionary European identity based in blood and lineage. The rising Islamophobia and anti-Semitism must be curbed if Europe is to put its house in order. Acts of violence are adding up and are beginning to shake confidence in Europe’s postwar project. There cannot be a stable and successful modern Europe without equality and justice for all.

The answer to the violence and tensions between religions in Europe today and the sense of alienation and confusion in Muslim youth is to revive and strengthen the Andalusian model as an alternative to that of a monolithic tribal society. It allows us to appreciate the rich variety of religions and cultures on the continent today even far beyond what our ancestors could imagine—for example, the Andalusia of a thousand years ago did not have the Hindu, Sikh, and Chinese communities that are thriving in today’s Europe.

Yet because the Andalusian model is dated, impractical, and has little legitimacy, considering the chaos in the Muslim world, we need to think of a synthesis of our thesis and antithesis. If the thesis represents tribalism and ethnic exclusivity and the antithesis, the Andalusian model, is no longer possible, a synthesis needs to aim for a Europe that is genuinely pluralist and universal and thus living up to its greatest ideals, while recognizing and respecting indigenous culture and identity in the form of a New Andalusia. It must take into account the desperate need for a strong moral leadership reflecting both wisdom and compassion while transcending religious, cultural, and national boundaries.

### *The Deep Structures of European Society*

Europe presents a complex array of societies and a bewildering range of political entities with different and rich histories that explain the relationship with their varied Muslim populations. Countries like the United Kingdom and France have an imperial past that at one stage colonized vast swathes of overseas lands, including Muslim ones. Countries like

Germany and Denmark have a limited history of colonization but nonetheless encouraged Muslims to immigrate as guest workers after the Second World War. European states like Spain, Italy, and Greece share the Mediterranean Sea with Muslim populations from across the waters and have a history of social, political, and economic interaction with them. There are also states with majority native Muslim populations, such as Bosnia, Albania, and Kosovo.

Considering the diversity of European societies, we attempt clarity by looking closely at European social structures and aim to penetrate them to excavate what lies beneath. The celebrated linguist Noam Chomsky has posited that all sentences have two structures: a phonetic or surface structure and a semantic or deep structure. The surface structure determines how a sentence sounds; the deep structure determines the nuance in how a sentence is understood. This terminology has been borrowed by anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz and Claude Lévi-Strauss and applied to their anthropological studies. “One can become conscious of one’s grammatical categories by reading linguistic treatises just as one can become conscious of one’s cultural categories by reading ethnological ones,” argues Geertz. Deep structures, he maintains, can only be observed by analyzing the aggregate of a society’s surface structures, or the society’s ideas, habits, patterns, and institutions, and by “reconstructing the conceptual systems that, from deep beneath” the surface of society, animate and give it form. Ultimately, Geertz explains, “The job of the ethnologist is to describe the surface patterns as best he can, to reconstitute the deeper structures out of which they are built, and to classify those structures, once reconstituted, into an analytical scheme.”<sup>3</sup>

By looking at the layers beneath the surface and seeing and locating the symbolic forms of society, we are able to reconstruct the foundations even though they may not exist in their original form. By that understanding we can draw conclusions as to how a certain people arrived at where they are today, why they arrived in the way they did, and what was saved and what was lost on the journey. This exercise is vital when dealing with societies that have undergone fundamental transformations as European ones have in the past few centuries—the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the world wars of the twentieth, and the globalization of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In the case of the Germans, for example, we know the story begins 2,000 years ago. We would be presenting an incomplete picture if we simply took contemporary society and assumed that is how it is, without an understanding of its deep structures.

The question arises, how much can those from outside the culture really penetrate the deep structures? The answer is provided in the work of European scholars who have made lasting contributions to the study of tribal societies. Some of the most significant work in European anthropology—from that of Bronislaw Malinowski to Meyer Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard and later Lévi-Strauss, Edmund Leach, Ernest Gellner, and Fredrik Barth—is based in fieldwork in Africa, Asia, and, in the case of Lévi-Strauss, South America. It can be argued that anthropology as we know it would be in danger of ceasing to exist if this corpus of material were to be removed from it.

I believe it is not only possible but time that we accept that anthropologists of any origin or background can penetrate the deep structures of any society they choose to examine if they do so through a correct use of the anthropological method. Anthropology must show signs of self-confidence and maturity by assessing the work of its practitioners on the basis of the rigor of their theoretical frame and quality of their fieldwork research and set aside considerations of ethnicity, nationality, or religion to judge the quality or excellence of anthropological work.

### *The Contentious Term Tribe*

In using the word *tribe* in this study I am conscious of the controversy around it. Perhaps it is such a difficult concept because it obstinately challenges the fundamental principles of evolution as they have been understood in the West. Tribal groups, seen particularly through a Darwinist, Marxist, imperialist, or secularist lens from the nineteenth century on, were either overlooked or relegated to mere social curiosities that should have evolved into the next stage of human development. Tribal members, if they were recognized at all, were seen through the haze of anthropological studies as primitive people who were faced with the evolutionary reality of extinction or radical adaptation. It was acknowledged—and various respectable studies confirmed the fact—that though tribes had survived into our times, they lived in the remote areas of the world. The citizens of modern society lived in glittering cities with lively centers of learning, libraries, theatres, museums, and cafés, or on ordered farmlands.

Tribalism in Western anthropology and culture thus came to define exotic groups with strange customs and codes living in distant lands. After the Second World War, anthropologists like Edmund Leach tended to shy away from the word *tribe* itself, while some American anthropologists,

most notably Morton Fried, abjured the term. Bowing to fashion, the generation that followed Leach rejected the term altogether as toxic racial and ideological abuse. But their rejection of a definition that the local group itself used was merely another sign of outsiders imposing their own understanding on another culture. If the tribe calls itself a tribe, then the rejection of the term by outsiders, responding more to debates within their own societies than the self-perception of the group under study, rests on shaky methodological ground.

Rather than rehash old arguments in the dispute, suffice it to say that the term *tribe*, while eschewed, is still alive and well in mainstream anthropology. Raymond Scupin's authoritative *Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective* (2016) has no fewer than four references to the classic anthropologists of tribal societies, including E. E. Evans-Pritchard and Fredrik Barth. Prominent contemporary scholars such as Marshall Sahlins, Steve Caton, and the late Walter Dostal used tribe as a central concept in their work, especially in African and Middle Eastern societies.

I argue that the understanding of tribalism as a concept exclusively applicable to “developing” societies in places like Africa and Asia is an incorrect one. Tribalism is far more enduring and prevalent than thought of by social scientists. The classic attributes of tribes are present in modern European societies, however heavily they are buried or disguised, in cultural norms, language, rhetoric, symbolism, and assumptions of who “we” are. History, I argue, is not linear. Just over half a century ago we were shocked to discover the horrors that modern Europe had inflicted on itself—dragging the planet into its essentially tribal wars that cost almost 100 million human lives and giving the world an example of what extreme tribalism can lead to in the mad frenzy of bloodlust that was the Holocaust. While Germany grapples to redefine its character, we hear of Far Right groups across the continent rejecting the implicit humanism of the cry “Never Again.” While the majority of Europeans have not abandoned the slogan “Never Again,” there are loud and insistent voices shouting “Again.”

If Germany in the 1930s reflects predatory tribalism out of control in its obsession with blood and purity, then its remarkable generosity in 2015 in welcoming the flood of asylum seekers also reflects hospitality—another classic characteristic of traditional tribal society. Yet the aggressive promotion of German tribalism is far from finished. The emergence of Far Right political movements such as Pegida (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West) and Alternative for Germany (AfD), the attacks on foreigners and Muslims, refugee shelters, and mosques, and



the disturbing reemergence of anti-Semitism reflect a deep-seated hostility to all that is “impure.”

What happens then when Muslim tribal groups with their own notions of ethnic purity find their way to Europe? The answer may be found in *The Thistle and the Drone*. To these tribes, the Prophet of Islam embodied their faith, and in addition they saw in him the ideal tribal chief. As tribal custom and tradition prevailed in these communities, Islamic law was only imperfectly understood and applied. Honor killings and female genital mutilation, two common practices in tribal societies, including Muslim ones, were not sanctioned by Islam but were and are widely assumed to be “Islamic.” Even revenge, central to the tribal code of honor, was categorically rejected in Islam. Economic pressures or persecution in their ancestral lands have forced hundreds of thousands of tribal peoples from Morocco to Central Asia to migrate to Europe. Once in Europe, their old tribal identity did not disappear. On the contrary, in the new environment they clung to their tribal identity with tenacity. However, Europeans who were unfamiliar with Muslim tribes tended to look at them as part of the nation in the Muslim world from where they have migrated. For example, the Kurds who arrived in Germany from Turkey, against which they had been fighting for autonomy for decades, were seen simply as Turks. To a degree, this was understandable: Kurds entered Germany carrying Turkish passports. The same was true for the Berbers from Algeria who have been in conflict with the central state since before Algeria’s independence. Once in France, Berbers found their tribal ethnicity subsumed into the general category of Algerian.

After 9/11, Europe once again gave these tribal groups another identity; this time they were all seen as Muslim. So the Turk in Germany, whether Kurd or Turk, or the Algerian in France, whether Berber or Arab, would now be called a Muslim. Europeans were interested in Islam because they associated it with Muslims, who were responsible for acts of violence. It was understandable that, for most Europeans, considering the nuances of Muslim society, especially where that involved taxonomic exercises, was a waste of time. To them, the matter was quite simple: Islam was on a collision course with Europe, and anyone from the Muslim world might be a Muslim terrorist or sympathizer. But however many identities were grafted onto the tribal groups and semantic changes made in describing them, their identity rooted in lineage and code could not be so easily obliterated. Even those born in Europe were finding that while their Islamic identity was always shaky at best, their tribal identity gave them a sense of community and kinship. It is no coincidence that so many of the

Muslim acts of terror can be explained by the code of revenge, which is discussed in greater detail in chapter 8.

Although all these groups are Muslim, there is a distinct difference between populations from the center, such as the Turks in Turkey, Arabs in Morocco and Algeria, or Punjabis in Pakistan, for example, and the Kurds, Berbers, or Pukhtun, respectively, who live on the periphery. The groups representing the center and those tribal societies on the periphery have different histories, cultures, social organizations, and leadership. Those from the periphery are also famous as hardened fighters and men of their word. Properly handled, with respect and dignity, they can be a great asset to the European societies they are now part of. The problem is that mishandling them can just as easily provoke the code of revenge and set them on a collision course with the authorities. Europe thus faces two problems: The urgent need to understand Islam and the need to understand tribal Islam. This line of inquiry is uncharted territory with anthropological, theological, and policy implications. It is an area that needs to be more fully investigated in the future for European governments to better understand their own immigrant populations, especially those with a tribal background, and thereby improve their counterterrorism efforts. It will also help authorities in the Muslim world deal with their minorities in a more effective and harmonious manner. In this study of Europe, however, the focus is on the broader Muslim community on the continent and its relationship with Europe both in the past and the present.

### *Fieldwork Methodology*

This volume is part of a quartet of studies that I conceived in the days following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to explore and examine the relationship between Islam and the West from four different perspectives. The first, *Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization*, published in 2007, was based on fieldwork in nine countries and examined how people in the Muslim world viewed the West and what was occurring in their societies after 9/11. The second study, *Journey into America: The Challenge of Islam*, published in 2010, was concerned with how people in the United States saw Muslims and the place of Islam in American identity, and involved visits to a hundred mosques in seventy-five U.S. cities. The third volume in the quartet, published in 2013, was *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam*. *The Thistle and the Drone* was concerned with the perspective of tribal peoples living in the interstices between states where the U.S.-led war on

terror was being conducted. This present book—the fourth and concluding volume of the quartet—is concerned with the European interaction with Islam and involves an in-depth examination of both its historical roots and the current situation, based in fieldwork conducted across the continent.

Accompanying me for this project was a core team of two male and two female field assistants—Frankie Martin, Harrison Akins, Amineh Hoti, and Zeenat Ahmed. In addition, individuals joined us for short periods of time to contribute to the study. I owe gratitude to all of them and a number of other people without whom the study would not have been possible, and I would like to thank them all most warmly. As the list is long, I have acknowledged them at the end of the book.

The three previous studies in the quartet inform the current project on Muslims in Europe. Muslim immigrants in the West, both the first and the succeeding generations, could be broadly identified as falling into three overlapping but essentially opposed categories, as discussed in *Journey into Islam* and *Journey into America*: literalist Muslims, modernist Muslims, and mystic Muslims. With the caveat that these categories are neither watertight nor permanent, we identified and interviewed individuals in each category. Our categorization of the three identities that we found in the majority population in *Journey into America* helped us understand identity in European society, which was different and yet reflected American society in some aspects. As in the study of America, we also divided Muslims in Europe into three categories—immigrants, indigenous Muslims, and converts. The first generation of immigrants in Europe faced great hardships in low-paying jobs in factories or driving buses—unlike those doctors and advanced students from middle-class families who arrived in the United States and very quickly became part of the American dream. It would take two generations before the immigrants in Europe stabilized their position in society.

Whatever their persuasion—literalist, modernist, or mystic—Muslims faced racial and religious prejudice. They were seen in terms of stereotypes as immigrants. There is also a significant difference between American and European Muslims in terms of the composition of the community: In the United States, there is a significant number of African American Muslims whose Islam, they repeatedly told us, went back to the time their ancestors were forcibly brought as slaves from West Africa, while Europe has indigenous Muslim populations, largely in the Balkans.

It is important to point out that the terms *Islam* and *Muslim* are often used interchangeably in the media and by commentators. In fact, the

behavior of some Muslims, especially in acts of violence, has little or nothing to do with Islam itself. The discussion in our study is not so much about theology, text, and the sacred as it is about society, leadership, and interpretations of how to live as a practicing member of the faith in our current times.

Even a cursory glance at the large numbers, some 5,000 or so, of European Muslims who left Europe to fight with ISIS in the Middle East, raises concerns about the extent of the integration and adjustment of Muslims into European society. Not that the commentators and experts on Islam and counterterrorism who should be providing clarity and direction have helped much. Many who have emerged almost overnight, smelling resources, international conferences, and a heady if brief recognition, with their own theories and terminology, have only succeeded in creating further obfuscation. Their rhetoric and jargon—Islamism, Islamic radicalism, jihadism, Salafi-jihadism—in the way they are used, are so far removed from their sociological and theological moorings as to have little real meaning. We therefore avoid such words and rest our taxonomic exercises instead on neutral ethnography based in observable behavior and detailed interviews conducted in the field. Our categories are therefore led by our fieldwork findings. The reader is thus able to use the same data and is free to interpret it in different ways if necessary.

### *Exploring Europe*

Early European anthropologists set sail for distant lands to study exotic tribal rituals and erotic mating habits of the “savages,” a term they used freely in the titles of their subsequent studies, for example, Bronislaw Malinowski’s *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927) and Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *The Savage Mind* (1966). Decked out in khaki shorts, knee socks, and solar topees, clutching binoculars, notebooks, and tape recorders, and suitably inoculated against deadly tropical diseases, they disembarked on the Pacific Islands or headed into the Amazon rainforest or the African hinterland. We, too, ventured forth to do our fieldwork; only our destination was Europe itself.

The nineteenth-century explorer Henry Stanley is thought to have coined the term *dark continent* to describe the lack of sources and data that plagued European understanding of Africa. Because Europe has been studied and written about for literally thousands of years, our problem was quite the opposite—not a dearth of data, personal accounts, and histories but a surfeit of them. Yet in another sense—one that is emphasized by the critics of



*Author and his team in front of the British Parliament*

Europe—Europe is indeed a dark continent. These critics cite the wars, the genocides, and the massacres of the twentieth century (for example, Mark Mazower’s *Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century*, 1998). For them, the idea of learning from or imitating European ways was “an obscene caricature,” as the Caribbean-born anti-imperialist Frantz Fanon wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth* in 1961. Critics of Europe’s imperial past listed the atrocities committed by colonialists in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere.

There is another Europe, however—the Europe of Shakespeare, Goethe, Mozart, Da Vinci, and Cervantes. This Europe in its art and humanistic thought reflects not only Western civilization in its finest expression but also because it derives from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, points to the historic links with the Muslims in places like Andalusia and the Greeks.

The idea of Western civilization deriving from European thought and experience is a dominant “grand narrative” that is seen variously as an extension of imperialism or globalization today. The founding fathers of the United States, on one side of the globe, and the founding fathers of India and Pakistan on the other, drew inspiration from Enlightenment thinkers and the parliamentary practices of Europe. In the case of the United States, Europe is in its very DNA. From the ideas of the Enlightenment that shaped the founding fathers, to the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, which define the meaning of America, to the

language of the United States, to America's widespread fascination with Shakespeare and Homer, Europe has contributed to the idea of America and shaped its dominant Christian white culture and identity. In the most profound way, Europe truly is the definer and shaper of the modern world. If Africa can claim to be the continent where the history of man began and Asia where the great religions originated, then Europe can justifiably argue that it gave birth to modernity; for the modern world, Europe is thus the mother continent.

Some of the ideas most influential in shaping global history have been European, and their impact is still with us: ideas we can trace back to the Greeks—discussions of the city-state, democracy, and philosophy; ideas developed from the Abrahamic religions coming from the Middle East—one invisible, omnipotent God in heaven and commandments that must be obeyed; ideas of feudalism with its strict social divisions; ideas of religious crusades that sent hundreds of thousands of young Christian warriors to conquer the Holy Land in the Middle East; ideas of empires that took Europe beyond its own shores and boundaries to other continents; ideas of Darwinism and the selection of species; of Marxism and the ideal of each according to his need; of fascism and society based in a hierarchy determined by bloodlines; of socialism, secularism, and atheism; and the development of liberal social, political, and economic ideas that shaped the modern world.

We saw evidence that despite immense economic and social pressures, European humanism has survived, and we will present examples in this book. We noted how certain societies, for example, the Greeks, already struggling, faced the full brunt of the refugee crisis with a heroic humanity reminiscent of their ancestor Hercules and his myriad labors, while other more prosperous northern societies, Germany being the exception, locked their doors and closed their hearts to the suffering of the refugees.

European humanity, I suspect, was behind the affectionate concern for my welfare expressed by my distinguished Dutch colleague and friend, Professor Bram Groen. He was concerned that my study would evoke European “pride,” as Europeans may not appreciate an outsider writing about them. However, and precisely for the same reason, when I informed the great Noam Chomsky about our study, he noted that it was reversing the traditional paradigm in the social sciences: In this case, it was not Europeans studying African and Asian societies but an Asian author examining Europe.

Although this study focuses on Europe, and we maintain methodological rigor, it provides lessons for other major areas of the world in which majority populations are finding it difficult to deal with their minorities,

especially if they are Muslim. Countries like the United States, China, India, Russia, and Israel, all have Muslim minority populations, and there is a simmering tension between Muslims and non-Muslims. The study of Europe is therefore beneficial for those seeking answers to their own problems elsewhere in dealing with their minority communities.

### *European Connections*

I personally have much to appreciate in European culture and owe a great deal to those Europeans who over the course of a lifetime have befriended me and from whom I have learned so much. My team was equally beholden to Europe in different ways, either through ancestry—Frankie had links with the Italians and Harrison with the Scots—or, in the case of Zeenat, Amineh, and myself, having lived in Europe for long periods. My own studies were largely based in Europe and culminated in a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of London. Zeenat not only worked with me during fieldwork, doing valuable research with the women, but also helped finish the writing of the thesis. Amineh was educated at the London School of Economics and received her Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in anthropology. Both Frankie and Harrison obtained master's degrees from English universities—Frankie from Cambridge and Harrison from the London School of Economics.

My connection with Europe predates my studies, and in fact began at birth. I was born in British India, a subject of the king of England, who was also emperor of India. My grandfather, Sir Hashmatullah Khan, was honored with a knighthood for his services, and my father was a senior member of the British administration and contributed to the war effort as an honorary colonel along with 2.5 million South Asians who fought for the king against the Nazis. Another relative in an earlier century, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, created the historic Aligarh University patterned on Cambridge University and wrote *An Account of The Loyal Muhammadans of India* (1860). Sir Syed almost single-handedly created a modernist version of Islam, which has contributed immensely in shaping Muslim discourse and politics.

Even after the British left in 1947, and my father opted for the independent nation of Pakistan, European priests at Burn Hall, the boarding school I attended, taught us to read, write, and think in English. Reading in English opened vast, new, and fascinating worlds to my young imagination. I snatched every opportunity between classes to escape into the mountains and deserts of Africa with Allan Quatermain; to enjoy the adventures of Bertie Wooster, dreading bad-tempered aunts with strong

vocal chords and young females determined to marry him; and to read the tales of Lord Emsworth and his beloved Empress of Blandings Castle in a timeless England with its blue skies, scented gardens, and eccentric aristocrats. I was fascinated by the stories of the brilliant Sherlock Holmes using scientific methods and deductive reasoning to track down dangerous criminals. In our history lessons, we learned about the Tudors and Stuarts in England; in literature, we memorized the soliloquies of Shakespeare and the verses of Keats and Tennyson; and in geography, we mapped the rivers and mountains of England. We learned to play the English games of cricket and tennis with a passion. Indeed, my first trip to Europe to attend university in the early 1960s was exciting precisely because so much was familiar from my schooling, even though so much was new. One of the first things I did in London was to visit Baker Street to pay homage to my boyhood hero.

My education was both my predicament and my salvation; while it relegated my own culture and history to the background, it also gave me the reason and the capacity to reclaim it. It laid the intellectual foundations for me to remain the eternal student, constantly asking questions and looking for answers. From my early years at school I explored the philosophical conundrum contained in the eternal question, "Who am I?" The search for answers provided me a heuristic process and led me to unexpected places and peoples; I have been on a journey of discovery ever since.

### *Anthropological Present and the Universe*

While our fieldwork was not standard textbook anthropology, we made use of the anthropological method: we took part in participant observation, gathered fine-grained ethnography, recorded case studies, employed history to understand contemporary society, distributed questionnaires, and combined these with personal intimate interviews. We made cross-cultural comparisons and studied the present. We examined the relevant literature and history and consulted the experts in the field. Each member of the team was able to draw on his or her personal experience living, studying, teaching, and traveling in Europe. We therefore felt qualified to conduct an insider-outsider study of the continent.

As someone who has been writing about and practicing anthropology, and admires the discipline, it is with some regret that I need to place on record the observation that anthropology has never been able to fully move out of the shadow of the hard sciences and develop its own independent character. It therefore still carries a metaphorical chip on its shoulder—



“hey, physicists and astronomers, we’re scientists too, kin you may say!”—and in the public mind it is still associated with the stereotypical work of earlier generations describing fieldwork stories of an outlandish nature of “savage” or “tribal” peoples in remote parts of the world. So while the scientists are valued in society for their discoveries and journeys into space and the marvels they observe there, anthropologists are seen as little more than surveyors attempting to explain the exotic sexual and dietary practices of primitive societies. Had more anthropologists held onto what made their discipline special—that is, unraveling the mysteries of human societies and thus laying the very basis of intercultural understanding that, in turn, engenders compassion and empathy for the “other”—they may have been recognized as being uniquely qualified to seek a solution to the dangerous ethnic and religious conflicts raging in the world today. In this study we build on previous research based in the field to illustrate both the scientific nature of the discipline and its capacity to see humanity with objective compassion across the boundaries of culture and religion; indeed, there is an entire subsection in the last chapter, called “Witness to European Humanity,” which confirms that the discipline can carry the moral weight of the concept while remaining in the ranks of the scientists.

When I was taught the subject as part of my doctoral studies by its orthodox priests at the University of London, standard fieldwork methodology in anthropology rested on two shaky assumptions: that there was an anthropological present and that the fieldwork area constituted a discrete universe. The discipline had thus created for itself the problem of imposing artificial boundaries of time and space. Yet the strength of anthropology, like that of poetry, is that it attempts to capture the ongoing and unfinished business of life itself. Boundaries merely attempt to freeze and halt a process that can be neither frozen nor stopped. We look for beginnings and middles and ends, forever searching for neat boxes to divide and categorize the knowledge we possess. For purposes of tradition we mention both our anthropological present and our anthropological universe. Our fieldwork present stretches over several years between 2013 and 2017. Our anthropological universe is not a village but the entire continent of Europe.

### *The Nuts and Bolts of the Study*

*Journey into Europe* is not a chronological or encyclopedic account of European history, although we draw extensively on history. Neither is it a country-by-country compendium of facts and figures, a catalogue of flora

and fauna, nor a detailed, research-based description of every Muslim community in every country in Europe. It is a research project based on extensive fieldwork conducted by a team of trained scholars with varying degrees of links with Europe. The conclusions in the end will rest on the research and interviews. In that way our own predilections and prejudices are kept in check and evened out to arrive at conclusions that are as transparent and neutral as is possible in the social sciences. What we present as a result is the picture of a dynamic, complex, and changing continent. We have suggested certain ways to look at this overstudied part of the world. As with my previous projects in the quartet, *Journey into Europe* is part-autobiography, part-anthropology, and part-travelogue.

Of all my previous field projects, this one perhaps was the most difficult. The money was uncertain and arrived only at the last moment. Having a relatively large team made rich ethnography possible but also created a nightmare of logistics. The travel was relentless and complicated and always with pressure to make important interviews and meetings in time. There was high tension around the Muslim community in most parts of the continent—in a sign of the times, we were forced to “retreat” from at least two mosques. There was the problem of the different languages that we had to negotiate from one end of Europe to another. There was the constant pressure of time as we wished to conduct fieldwork during the university’s summer and winter breaks. Finally, our determination to achieve the high ambitions we had set out for the project created tension as we encountered delays and hurdles.

My team and I conducted hundreds of interviews, shot hours of footage, spoke to the media, and gave public lectures. We crisscrossed Europe to ensure a good representation of the different categories for purposes of our study: the United Kingdom, France, Spain, and Italy for countries with an imperial past; Germany and Denmark for societies with deep tribal roots that had welcomed Muslims as guest workers; and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Greece for European countries with an indigenous Muslim population. We visited Scotland and Ireland to gain a sense of tribal societies that were part of a larger empire. The northernmost city we visited was Edinburgh, the southernmost Melilla, the westernmost Cordoba, and the easternmost Xanthi in northern Greece. There was also the matter of selecting areas of Europe to visit that would be essential for the project while keeping in mind the limited time and resources. For example, to understand the migrants coming to Europe and interview migrants and local officials, we visited the three main entry points into Europe from the Middle East and North Africa—Greece, Italy, and Spain.

In the end we visited some fifty cities and towns and fifty mosques and spoke to about the same number of imams. We aimed for the standard cross section of society—men and women, old and young, rich and poor, powerful and ordinary. We interviewed scholars, students, politicians, and community and religious leaders. We also interviewed presidents, prime ministers, members of Parliament, chief rabbis, grand muftis, and a former archbishop of Canterbury. We sought out and spoke with leading members of Far Right parties that have targeted the Muslim community; in so doing we have recorded the reasons for their discontent and the real dangers their future plans contain. By the end of our journey, we had a veritable ethnographic treasure chest of interviews and transcripts, but owing to limitations of space we could use only a small portion of the material.

The pressure during fieldwork was unrelenting and could build suddenly and from unexpected quarters, as my daughter Amineh, who had come from Pakistan for the fieldwork, records:

As a daughter, I was always conscious of wanting to do more but it was also very challenging being a mother. I had a four-year old, Anah, in my care who I could not leave behind in Pakistan. We had some very positive moments—people in general relaxed more with a child around, women opened up, especially those with children, and the airlines always let our team go first to get our choice of seats in the plane. On the other hand, it was also a great responsibility to travel from place to place and hotel to hotel with baggage and a little child. At one point in Bradford, after I had conducted five interviews, one after the other, and dropped on the bed with exhaustion, Anah slipped from a ledge and fell onto a glass table in the hotel room. She became unconscious, and blood gushed out forcefully from her forehead, covering her entire face and eyes. Meanwhile, I had thrown her onto the bed in panic and held my pajama onto her cut, pressing tightly. My thoughts rushed to the recent tragedy in Pakistan when my niece, who was Anah's age, walked into a glass door and was cut in the neck, resulting in her death. Anah cried to God to help her and her older sister, Mina, who was particularly close to her and who would join us later. The ambulance arrived in several minutes. Along with my father we rushed her to hospital and spent a sleepless night making sure she was well.

The incident was another one of those that took us to a point of deepest reflection, that human life was most valuable, and at one point my father thought of packing me up with Anah and sending



*Fieldwork travel—Amineh and Anah Hoti*

me back home. But time helped heal the wound. Anah soon forgot the cut and my father got many chances to spoil Anah by buying her children's magazines, shifting the focus in our spare time onto the great value of close family ties.

Clearly, those who set out to seek knowledge must be prepared to cross many hurdles with patience and perseverance. In the end, the study yielded a film, a book and numerous articles, interviews, and public lectures. It was our small contribution to the continent that had given so much to each one of us.

*Journey into Europe* is divided into three parts, with each part containing three chapters, each further sub-divided into three sections. The first part explores two contending interpretations of European identity based in European history and culture. Chapter 2 examines the proposition that Europe may be understood in terms of a model of tribal identity based in blood, lineage, and land—what we call primordial identity. We focus on European tribal societies, including the Germanic and Eastern European peoples, to provide evidence of this interpretation. We discuss European tribalism in the context of history and society, noting its strengths, weaknesses, and dangers, especially when it is pushed to its extreme exclusivist form—what we are calling predator identity.

We then present in chapter 3 an opposing model of European identity exemplified by Andalusia, Spain, which was pluralistic in nature, attract-

ing Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and emphasized humanism and the pursuit of knowledge. Andalusia saw the flowering of art, architecture, and science. At the heart of this civilization was the idea, known as *la convivencia*, that the three great religious traditions could coexist. This identity was also present in Sicily and parts of the Balkans and had an impact on Europe beyond these regions.

Part 2 consists of ethnography and presents our findings from the field. Its three chapters reflect the three different types of Muslim societies—immigrant (chapter 4), native or indigenous (chapter 5), and convert (chapter 6). The third part of the study draws in the major strands in the discussions around Islam and contemporary European society. Chapter 7 examines anti-Semitism, the Jewish population of Europe, the relationship between Jews and Muslims over history, and their difficult relationship today. Chapter 8 explores the issues of refugees, terrorism, immigration, identity, multiculturalism, and the rise of Far Right movements and their impact on rapidly transforming European societies.

Winston Churchill called Europe a “turbulent and mighty continent” shortly after the Second World War. After decades of peace, Europe is once again facing turbulence. In the final chapter we examine the predatory rhetoric of ethnic hate that is now sweeping across Europe and, given Europe’s history, suggest the way forward, on the basis of our fieldwork findings, to avoid catastrophe. We suggest how Europe can forge a new identity out of its two main identities—exclusionary tribal and Andalusian—to create a synthesis for the Europe of the twenty-first century. This vision of a New Andalusia could be a beacon of moral and intellectual leadership to inspire the world.