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A Hostile Neighbor: A Historical Analysis of the Problematization of Muslim Migration to Spain Department/degree: Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

Ellen Grove
Grand Valley State University

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Faculty Mentor: Keith Watts

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On February 18, 2017, protesters overwhelmed the streets of Barcelona, Spain, en route to the Passeig Marítim[1]. The demonstrators, numbering by various estimates close to 160,000, marched in solidarity alongside immigrants who led chants demanding that the Spanish government make good on its 2015 promise to admit and resettle 16,000 refugees[2]. This pledge, no small commitment itself, was a piece of a much larger joint effort by the European Union to relocate more than 120,000 individuals with refugee status throughout the continent[3], relieving pressures on Italy and Greece, which had been disproportionately affected by the growing crises in Africa and the Middle East. Spain's pledge to help facilitate such a massive relocation, however, now seemed ungenuine to the thousands of native Spaniards and immigrants alike who congregated along the seaside, waving banners proclaiming "Welcome Refugees" and "Enough Excuses." By that day, two years after the promise had been made, Spain had only granted asylum to 1,100[4] refugees, a mere fraction of the number that had been agreed upon.

Spain is not the only country that has failed to meet its quota delineated by the 2015 pledge, but this shortfall follows a much steadier and more established trend in Spanish immigration policy than is immediately evident. Spain's inaction is the product of a complex idiosyncratic history, throughout which Spain has endeavored to construct an emphatically European identity despite claims that the Muslim 'Other' has on Spanish culture, language, and territory. This history is a function of the nation's unique geography, differentiating Spain from

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[1] Catalan for waterfront, the Passeig Marítim was a symbolic destination for the demonstrators, as the Mediterranean claims the lives of more than 1,000 migrants attempting to enter Europe by sea every year.
[2] Wilson, Joseph. "More than 160,000 March in Barcelona to Demand Spain Takes in More Refugees." *The Independent*, 19 Feb. 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/barcelona-march-refugees-protest-spain-more-160000-people-thousands-catalan-a7587996.html.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

the rest of the European continent, and it has had far-reaching implications for contemporary sentiment towards Muslim migrants, as well as for the immigration legislation and politics that have been criticized in recent years for being restrictionist and discriminatory against Muslims.

Geography Is Destiny

Situated on the Mediterranean, separated from Africa by a nine-mile strip of sea that, in medieval times, was fittingly called Al-Zuqaq (*the Passage*)[5], Spain has long been a critical point of entry for many African migrants voyaging northward towards Europe. Even historically, before widespread globalization instigated the massive migrations from the developing world that we see today, Spain has occupied a unique position as the contact point between two civilizations—the *Christian West* and the *Islamic Orient*—that had been constructed in diametric opposition to each other. Embattled by these two warring identities, Spain has struggled for centuries to establish its own self-concept, opting in moments to embrace the Islamic heritage that gives Spain much of its character[6], and in others to deny any trace of Islamic influence or tradition. The past few decades, since the death of dictator Francisco Franco and the subsequent democratization of the country, have seen this struggle manifested in immigration legislation whose rhetoric suggests an enthusiastic embrace of multiculturalism, but whose implementation continually results in the exclusion of Muslim migrants from democratic society. These policies

[5] More commonly known as the Strait of Gibraltar, Al-Zuqaq is the Arabic name used by North African migrants and Berber armies who traveled to Spain by sea during the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula between the years 711 and 788.

[6] Andalucía, or *Al-Andalus* in Arabic, is a large region in the south of Spain to which the cities Granada, Seville, and Córdoba belong. These cities are renowned tourist destinations, lauded for their Islamic architecture that has been preserved for centuries. The extent of Islamic influence in Spain is not limited to Andalucía, however, as traces of Islamic culture can be seen within the Spanish language, *castellano*, which is spoken throughout most of the country, among countless other examples.

have birthed and raised a sub-society to which Muslim migrants, or anyone who sufficiently fits the definition of Other, are relegated. Consequently, despite the best intentions of the significant progressive factions of the Spanish populace, Muslim migrants find themselves trapped beneath a legislative and social ceiling that was built, both deliberately and subconsciously, to be too high to be reached. As a result, Muslim migrants are systematically denied legitimacy by Spanish society as a whole, forcing them to forge communities on the fringe and making them particularly vulnerable during moments of political and social tension. While Spain is remarkable in that it has borne witness to fewer explicit acts of xenophobia than many of its European counterparts in the recent years, Muslim migrants continue to struggle for representation from within a society whose architecture has intentionally excluded Islam throughout history.

Spain is one of the principal geographic foci when discussing the interaction between Christianity and Islam—the " quintessentially antagonistic 'other' in the European mindset" (Soyer 400). Throughout the course of a millennium, Spain changed ownership from Catholic to Muslim hands and back again, a process that turned the two religions into political opponents that transcended theological and doctrinal differences. While long periods of relative peace paved the way towards tolerance between the two distinct communities, there was still a conspicuous distrust that soured intercultural relations. Much of this distrust still persists today which, while not in any capacity exclusive to the Iberian Peninsula, has a deep, marginalizing effect on Muslim migrant communities within Spain. The wariness each group feels towards each other, while ameliorated by the increasing contact between migrant populations and native Spaniards, is a product of the fact that these groups have only recently been reacquainted.

Indeed, before the democratization of Spain following Francisco Franco's death in 1975, Muslims were a decidedly nonexistent religious and cultural group in Spain—a circumstance that strays far from coincidence.

Spanish Nationalists and the Noble Savage

The authoritarian dictatorship of Francisco Franco began following the Nationalist victory of the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939, which was precipitated by a failed military coup led by right-wing generals Franco and José Sanjurjo[7]. The uprising was intended to unseat the Republican government and thus reverse the democratic progress that right-wing conservatives feared was leaving the country susceptible to communist influence. The coup, in hindsight, was a relatively unsurprising culmination of tensions between the political left and right that had been germinating since 1931. That year, the landslide election of Manuel Azaña effectively transformed Spain from a monarchy into a republic, sending the then monarch Alfonso XIII into exile. This new regime, called the Second Spanish Republic, was formally established in December of 1931 and its constitution professed the new republic's commitment to modernization. One of the many changes that the constitution proposed was the right of the State to nationalize private property for the "purposes of social utility, thereby making possible an evolution towards socialism" (Jackson 45). This stood in marked contrast with previous regimes that protected the wealth of the elite.

The constitution was a reflection of the general trajectory that Spain's Western peers were headed on. The industrialization of much of Europe and the United States had created a

[7] Sanjurjo had been raised by Carlists--advocates of a political movement that supported monarchical rule in Spain and who sought the establishment of a separate line of the Bourbon dynasty. Franco enjoyed Carlist support throughout the war and his dictatorship.

well-defined, hierarchical society of which the working class, composed primarily of factory workers and unskilled laborers, constituted a significant proportion. The mobilization of the proletariat led to unprecedented reforms in wage and labor protections, as well as the rapid growth of labor unions and the development of the modern welfare state (Espuelas 358). Under the leadership of Republican Prime Minister Manuel Azaña, who entered office two months before the ratification of the constitution, Spain underwent an extraordinary program of political and social reform that attempted to close the gap between Spain and the rest of the democratic world (Casanova 151).

One of the most symbolic reforms that Manuel Azaña endeavored to usher through parliament was the formal, recognized separation of the Catholic Church and the State (Casanova 151). Gabriel Jackson[8] observed that "for over a thousand years the Church had been, aside from the Monarchy, the most powerful single institution in Spain" (Jackson 48). Catholicism had been an essential player in Spanish society since the Christian *Reconquista* (Reconquest)[9] of the Iberian Peninsula from the Moors[10], and the Church had been a noteworthy beneficiary of the largesse of the Spanish nobility for centuries. Consequently, this abrupt stripping of the Church's status was highly inflammatory, resulting in stark divisions between the increasingly irreligious left and the predominantly Christian right. Not only did it end the extravagant distribution of national funds to the Church, but it also diminished the power and influence of prestigious

[8] Jackson, an American hispanist, authored the book *Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939*, which followed the transition of Spain into a democratic republic and its subsequent dissolution years later into civil war.
[9] The Reconquista was period from 711-1492 throughout which the expansion of Christian kingdoms in Spain grew to combat Islamic rule and retake the territory that had been lost to the Umayyad caliphate in the 8th century. The Reconquista was completed in 1492 with the fall of Granada.
[10] The use of the word Moor, or '*moro*' in Spanish, has historically had derogatory connotations. Many authors choose to use the word when alluding to Muslims in Spain in historical contexts, although the word used conversationally today is almost always understood to be pejorative.

Catholic landowners, who began to see their wealth and privileges deprioritized in favor of the more pressing concerns of the working class. The separation of church and state therefore signified something much more than the secularization of politics—it implied a significant shift in power and economic dominance. It was from within this climate that Generals Franco and Sanjurjo planned their July 17th coup, with the aid of Muslim Moroccan troops that had been recruited from Spain's colonial enterprises in Africa (Allard 1).

Despite the efforts of the Azaña government to promote freedom of religious expression and deemphasize the influence of the Catholic Church, Muslims were still a distinct minority that received little to no attention by any governing body. Indeed, while the Republican government began to introduce philo-Sephardic legislation that promised the quick naturalization of Jews whose ancestors had been expelled during the Spanish Inquisition[11]—an attempt by the liberal government to make amends for the atrocities committed against the Jewish peoples of Spain centuries prior—there were no such policies for Muslims of Spanish origin (Wien 78). Spain's selective memory of its history of brutality towards religious minorities during the Reconquista and Inquisition is unlikely to be accidental. As Elisabeth Bolorinos Allard observed in her analysis of the role of the moor in the Spanish imagination during the Civil War era, the "Spanish occupation of Northern Morocco beginning in 1909 revived the character of *el moro* in the national narrative" (Allard 2). Not only had the labels of colonizer and colonized been affixed to these already fiercely defined civilizational adversaries, but the concept of the African Muslim, now reintroduced into political and popular discourse, was acquiring new racist tones that Franco echoed throughout the Civil War.

[11] The Spanish Inquisition was established in 1478 and initiated an era throughout which non-Christians were forcibly converted to Catholicism, or expelled from Spain

Franco had held military office periodically in Morocco in the years after the Rif War[12] and was, along with his co-conspirator Sanjurjo, among the most notable of the Africanistas—a "military subculture developed among the radically traditionalist and anti-democratic officer class in Morocco" (Allard 2). The Africanistas entertained an obsession with the presumed barbarism and masculinity of the Moroccan people; to the deeply religious and traditionalist Franco, the Moroccan warrior was the epitome of strength and integrity. The religious fanaticism of the Moroccan tribesmen who lived in the mountainous region of northern Morocco proved a minor complication, as they were devout Muslims, belonging to a religion that had been "portrayed as the violent antithesis to Christianity" (Allard 2). Even Franco, however, was able to reconcile to himself these glaring discrepancies, as he painted a common enemy of the pious Christians and Muslims: the "godless judeo-masonic-marxist alliance" (Allard 9) that he insisted was corrupting the noble Spanish name.

Conveniently, Franco's military position of power in Morocco gave him unique access to Moroccan soldiers, who were feverishly recruited to overthrow the Republican government and, once that failed, to take southern Spain in the name of the Nationalists upon the outbreak of the Civil War. These soldiers were more than just *carne de cañón*[13], according to professor of Arabic philology Rocío Velasco de Castro. They also were a psychological weapon, used to instill terror in Spanish citizens who had been fed sensational tales of the brutality and cruelty of Moroccan warriors during the Rif War, which had come to a bloody close only a decade earlier (Velasco de

[12] The Rif War began in 1920 between Spanish colonial forces and Berber tribes of the Rif mountainous region and lasted seven years as Spain attempted to establish control over the area. During this war, accounts circulated of Rif warriors brutalizing and mutilating Spanish soldiers, which informed the characterization of the savage Moroccan mercenary during the Civil War.

[13] In English, cannon fodder. In other words, Moroccan mercenaries were used in part because the Nationalist army was lacking in numbers and needed expendable soldiers.

Castro 212). Thus, the deployment of Moroccan mercenaries furthered the characterization of the Muslim as violent and savage. It also solidified, in the Republican mind, the conception of the Nationalist as disposed to extraordinary cruelty and bloodthirstiness.

A paradox arises when considering Franco's view towards the Muslim Other. He, along with the other Africanistas, while firmly rejecting every non-Christian religion, revered the Moroccan Muslim. These facts, while in apparent contradiction, are better explained in the imperialist context of the day and are later reflected in the colonial policies of the franquistas. Franco saw in the Moroccan Muslim a "weaker brother"—a representation that "affirmed the imperial destiny that the Nationalists imagined for Spain" (Allard 10). Franco was not blind to the shared cultural and racial ancestry of the Spanish native and the Moroccan, and he professed that a certain fraternity between the two prevailed, hindered only by Islam, which was presumed to be the "cause of the backwardness of the Moor" (Allard 10). This alleged *hermandad hispano-marroquí*, or brotherhood between the two nations, was convenient ideology for his purposes, but was unconvincing to most. After all, Franco had never learned to speak more than four words in Arabic (Velasco de Castro 210). Throughout his dictatorship, Franco maintained the image of the intellectually and culturally inferior Moroccan Muslim, a stereotype that would persist long after his death.

The Spanish Civil War ended officially in April of 1939, following the fall of Catalonia in January of that year and the subsequent occupation of Madrid. At the time of the Republican surrender to Franco and the Nationalist army, it was estimated that 200,000 lives had been claimed by the war, although the frequent practice of mass execution and the utilization of mass graves by both Republican and Nationalist forces make these numbers difficult to validate. The

newly established Francoist government was fiercely repressive and did not hesitate to use violence to silence dissidents and political opponents. As Franco famously expressed in the early years of his dictatorship, "We do not believe in government through the voting booth. The Spanish national will was never freely expressed through the ballot box. Spain has no foolish dreams" (Francisco Franco, 1938). True to his word, in the decade that followed, Franco ordered the imprisonment and execution of tens of thousands of individuals who challenged the authority of the Francoist government—an orgy of war crimes that came to be known as the White Terror. Under the self-designated title of 'el Caudillo de la Última Cruzada y de la Hispanidad,'[14] Franco conceived a regime that systematically dismantled the modernizing efforts of the Second Spanish Republic, heralding in a new era of traditionalism with the Catholic Church at the helm.

Francisco Franco's death in 1975 foreshadowed dramatic political, economic, and societal changes within the country. For nearly four decades, Franco had governed Spain with an iron fist, promoting strict Catholic values and conservatism through a process of cultural cleansing and offering little forgiveness to those who clung to leftist ideals of democratic participation in government and the protection of individual freedoms. His successors promoted the gradual transition of Spain to democracy, because they still had to operate within the confines of the legal system that Franco had taken great care to establish. Although Spain had been headed along a trajectory that lent itself to post-Franco democratization, particularly since Spain's entry into the United Nations in 1955, there were still plenty of Falangists[15] holding political office, and the threat of a right-wing military coup was of no small concern. Thus, the implementation of a democratic government had to be handled with great delicacy and tact, as

[14] Spanish for 'the Leader of the Last Crusade and of the Hispanic Heritage'

[15] Falangists are proponents of the far-right fascist political party Falangism, the conservative political ideology most strongly connected with Francoist Spain.

well as with a significant degree of faith that the speed and magnitude of change would not provoke unrest across the political spectrum.

While the legal process of democratization was underway, Spain was bearing witness to one of the most dynamic shifts in Spanish history on the societal level. The Movida Madrileña was a counter-cultural movement that took root in the years after Franco's death and signified a pronounced rejection of the Franco-era traditionalist values of modesty and submissiveness. While the movement was manifested principally in art and music, it also represented a liberation of progressive thought that had been lying dormant for nearly half a century. Originating in Madrid, the metropolitan eponym of the *Movida*, the movement brought artists, intellectuals, and hippies to the streets, both metaphorically and physically. New intellectual freedoms led to a sexual and creative revolution that inspired some of Spain's best-known cinematic pieces—many imagined and directed by the then fresh-faced Pedro Almódovar, who envisioned fearless transgender and lesbian protagonists, thus empowering groups on the margins of society whose humanity had been illegitimized by Francoist society. This cultural renaissance was running parallel to a shift towards secularization, motivated by Spaniards who were beginning to associate religiosity with the backwardness and repression of the Franco era. The Western World as a whole had been progressively inching away from religiosity, accelerated by the liberation movements of the 1960s and the spread of radical politics following World War II. As a result, the renunciation of Christianity symbolized a step away from Franco, as well as a step towards Westernization, which was understood by many to be synonymous with modernization.

As was to be expected, this moment of transition in Spanish history made the establishment of a coherent national identity challenging. Spanish society was endeavoring to

distance itself from the Francoist ideal of a gallant, pious, conservative Spain that was united by one language and one religion. Simultaneously, however, Spanish society was struggling to define a new identity for itself that could embrace modernity while still retaining characteristics of Spanish antiquity. This was made even more complicated by a Spanish citizenry that was diversifying as rapidly as the politics of the time.

Spanish Democracy: It's Not for Everyone

Although this era was giving voice to the oppressed in ways that had never been done before, new faces were flooding into the country that were starting to challenge the already fragile self-concept of the Spaniard. In 1980, just years after the end of Franco's dictatorship, the number of foreigners residing in Spain was approximately 182,000, representing 0.5 percent of the total population (Ullán de la Rosa 177). This number was increasing at the modest and relatively stable rate of 2 percent per year throughout the early 1980s (MPI). A significant proportion of these newcomers were white Westerners looking to partake in the convivial Mediterranean lifestyle that the newly democratized Spain was quickly gaining a reputation for (Calavita 539). They retired along the acclaimed Spanish coasts and drank Spanish wine, and their presence in the country went largely unchallenged, both by the native population at large, and by the law. Indeed, for a country whose geography places it at the meeting point of Africa and the rest of the European continent, oftentimes perceived as the nexus of two historically and culturally distinct hemispheres of the world, the influx of Westerners was a welcome sight. It gave Spain, a country with a millennium long identity crisis, the opportunity to profess its

Europeanness and distance itself from its African and Islamic roots that had long complicated its self-perception.

This tide of Western tourist-immigrants into Spain helped to advance, in a more subtle way, Spain's diplomatic endeavors to be recognized politically by the European Community as a democratized Western society, deserving of all the benefits and privileges granted to member states. However, the European Community, quick to notice Spain's newfound allure, began to suspect that the migrant profile into Spain was not going to stay predominantly Western for long. According to many, the hardline 1985 immigration law, the Ley de Extranjería, understood as a condition to Spain's accession into the European Community, was much too strict to be a justifiable response to the incoming migration flow of the previous few years, which during the early 1980s was little more than a trickle (Ullán de la Rosa 188). Spain's 1986 entry into the European Community sufficiently confirmed the suspicions of many: that the law was a disguised attempt to preemptively check immigration into Europe by severely inhibiting the ability of non-European Community migrants to enter Spain (Ullán de la Rosa 188).

The 1985 law, which demonstrated a stark disconnect between rhetoric and actual intention, had to accomplish a number of challenging goals. For one, Spain desperately needed to grow its immigrant population in order to develop a sophisticated modern economy, comparable to that of its European peers. Consequently, the law "proclaims that its purpose is to guarantee immigrants' rights and assure their integration into the host society" (Calavita 530), a promise that would encourage immigration to the country and thus provide an economic stimulus to the young and restless nation. However, Spain also had to bow to the demands of European Community nations, which were pushing for tighter border control even as their own economies

thirsted for the labor of Third World immigrants. As a result, the law was more successful at creating illegal immigrants, or *irregulares*, than it was at constructing an easily navigable legal framework for establishing migrants in Spain (Calavita 548).

Perhaps one of the only things the law did effectively and transparently was establish the difference between immigrants from the European Community and immigrants from elsewhere. Citizens of the European Community benefited from great mobility throughout the continent and enjoyed essentially the same rights and privileges as Spanish natives. They were also not subjected to the same visa requirements that non-European Community immigrants were. During the 1980s and into the 1990s, back when foreign visitors to Spain were principally composed of Western tourists and affluent retirees, there were no visa requirements. However, in 1991, visitor visas began to be imposed on Moroccans, who were starting to arrive in large numbers (Ullán de la Rosa 193). Worker visas were also introduced into immigration legislation, which were, as the name suggests, designed for low-skill laborers traveling to Spain in pursuit of employment opportunities. Such visas were usually riddled with contingencies, essentially guaranteeing that legal status, once obtained, was only "temporary and subject to continuous disruptions" (Calavita 531). Kitty Calavita, in her case study on immigration law in Spain, explores how these contingencies function as a mechanism for keeping Third World migrants in a state of legal limbo, thus maintaining a class of would-be citizens who, due to the inherent vulnerability of their status, must hide outside of mainstream society in order to avoid being arrested or deported. This further reinforces the image of the Other—distanced, private, and apparently disinterested in assimilating into Spanish society or embracing Spanish culture.

Throughout her study, Calavita remarks that every attempt by the Spanish government to introduce legislation to regularize and integrate Third World immigrants is undercut by the fact that such regularization programs are designed to support a migrant demographic that simply does not exist. For example, in 1996, reforms were introduced that allowed foreigners who had maintained uninterrupted legal status for six years to apply for permanent residence. However, Calavita observes, holding legal status for six years was almost always contingent on the individual being able to produce a formal work contract for the duration of their residence in Spain (Calavita 549). Not only were long-term contracts difficult to obtain in Spain (in 1996, 75 percent of work contracts in Spain were for three months or less), but employers were oftentimes reluctant to formalize contracts, since such contracts would require employers to pay a fair wage in addition to guaranteeing certain workers' rights (Calavita 535). Securing a work contract was one hurdle, but applying for a work permit and then verifying that the work permit covered the appropriate duration of time was another challenge entirely. In another illuminating example, Calavita points to a type of permit that lasts 9 months, but that can only be renewed after 12 months from the issue date, building in 3 months of illegal status (Calavita 551). As a result, the process of securing permanent legal residence in Spain is painfully cumbersome and generally impossible for migrants from developing countries, who are disproportionately affected by this legislation.

These regularization programs have also had the damaging effect of problematizing immigration. This was being done on the much broader European scale throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s with the creation of the border control agency FRONTEX in 2005, epitomizing a general trend towards the militarization of immigration (Ullán de la Rosa 189). Ceuta and

Melilla, Spain's two enclaves in Africa, have been the subject of considerable reprobation from humanitarian groups because of the extensive measures they have taken to keep out migrants and asylum seekers coming from the Maghreb and Central Africa. Amnesty International has routinely criticized practices by Spanish and Moroccan border control authorities, who have been observed rounding up migrants attempting to access Ceuta or Melilla and deporting them to desert regions near the border of Mauritania without sufficient food or resources[16]. Furthermore, the establishment of the *Centros de Internamiento para Extranjeros* (CIE, Detention Centers), as well as the introduction of policies that have intensified the presence and autonomy of deportation police along the borders, have further problematized immigration. The frequency with which the undocumented Black immigrant is associated with criminality has effectively "[eliminated] anything regarding human rights in relation to migrations" (Toasije 351).

Paralleling the efforts to physically impede Third World migrants' ability to enter Spain, politicians and popular media regularly exploit tropes associated with immigration in order to portray migration into the country as both a threat and a problem. Gema Rubio Carbonero, in her exposé investigating the rhetoric employed in political discourse surrounding the social representation of immigrants in Spain, comments on how politicians and popular media use words like *avalancha* (avalanche) and *ola* (wave) to paint the Spanish nation as the victim of a destructive natural force (Carbonero 272), effectively stripping away the humanity of migrants. Politicians also dog-whistle African and Middle Eastern migrants by expressing their concerns about the contrasting values and norms that certain migrant bodies might introduce to Spain.

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[16]The border fences at Melilla and Ceuta have been the stages for many clashes between African migrants and Spanish and Moroccan police forces in the past few years. The Spanish-Moroccan border fence is one of four physical barriers discussed in Al Jazeera's series Walls of Shame.
(https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/general/2007/11/2008525183732945911.html, http://www.amnesty.or.jp/en/news/2005/1025_444.html)

Susana Camarero of the conservative Partido Popular (People's Party) said in 2011 that "with the arrival of immigration, certain aggressive practices imposed by their religions, and which were considered to have been eradicated in Spain, now occur again" (Susana Camarero, PP. 3rd May, 2011). Dramatizing the effect that migrants from different cultures have on Spanish society accomplishes several goals. Often-hyperbolic allusions to "aggressive practices" of Muslims that threaten the peace and stability of Spanish citizens reinforce the image of Spain as a victim. Almost more pervasively, it references the historic presence of Islam in Spain, selectively recalling moments featuring the violent *moro* while failing to remember the horrors that Spanish Christians committed against Jews and Muslims throughout the better half of the last millennium. This perfectly illuminates how the medieval construction of the Muslim continues to be exploited today to further the perception that Muslims and Christians are inherently incompatible, thus creating a volatile environment for Muslim migrants who, defying the odds posed by deliberate legal barricades, are able to enter Spain.

The Immigrant Experience in Modern-Day Spain

Despite the difficulty that immigrants from the Maghreb and other predominantly Muslim nations have had in establishing legal residency in Spain, thousands still attempt to enter the country every year[17]. While many of these migrants intend to use Spain as an access point to the rest of the European continent, many gravitate to the country because of a "sense of kinship that [they] profess to feel toward Spain" (Encarnación 172). This proclaimed kinship is far from

[17] According to Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, 22,900 migrants from northern Africa were detected attempting to enter Spain in 2017.
https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news-release/migratory-flows-in-2017-pressure-eased-on-italy-and-greece-spain-saw-record-numbers-QK2Wcw

arbitrary. The Umayyad[18] conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in the year 756 initiated an eight century period, often referred to as *La Convivencia* (the Coexistence), during which Spanish Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived and practiced their religions among one another in relative peace. Although the degree to which this coexistence was amicable is disputed, it is well known that this era came to an abrupt and violent end in 1492 when Granada, the last Muslim stronghold in Spain, fell to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. It was at this moment that the Catholic reconquest of Spain was complete, resulting in the complete expulsion of the Spanish Jews and the forced conversion of the resident Muslim population to Catholicism. Yet despite the pronounced distaste for Muslims that characterized the following several centuries, Islamic heritage is still well-preserved throughout much of Spain, particularly in Andalucía, whose proximity to North Africa and the Mediterranean has permitted Islamic culture to endure in some capacity up through the present day. Consequently, many Muslim immigrants understand their own relocation to Spain as a sort of homecoming (Rogozen-Soltar 228).

The intimate connection that draws North African Muslims to Spain produces a conflict of ownership between Spanish natives and Muslim migrants. Mikaela Rogozen-Soltar, in her book *Spain Unmoored*, examines how Muslims and Spaniards alike engage with historical narratives of Islam in Spain in order to conceptualize their own Spanish identity, be it inherited or adopted. While her research is based in Granada, arguably one of the most symbolic sites of Muslim and Christian coexistence, it is easily extended to the rest of the Iberian Peninsula, as growing migrant communities within large metropolitan zones like Barcelona and Madrid result in more moments of cross-cultural interplay. Granada is the destination of choice for many

[18] The Umayyad dynasty was the second of four major caliphates after the death of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad. Forging the farthest west expansion of the Islamic empire, the Umayyad dynasty ruled in exile in Córdoba from 756 to 1031, dissolving upon the passing of the last caliph, Hishamm III, who had not designated a successor.

Maghrebi migrants due to the surprising visibility of Islam within the city, as well as the whispers of Moroccan heritage present in the architecture and the material culture of the town. The Albayzín, the historic Muslim neighborhood of Granada, boasts countless restaurants and *cafeterías* selling traditional Moroccan delicacies and shops featuring Moroccan curios and souvenirs. Located within sight of the Alhambra, the palace and fortress complex constructed by the Nasrids[19] in the mid-13th century, the Albayzín has become the backdrop for a number of complicated conversations surrounding the belonging of Muslims within Spain. The Albayzín, similar to how the Alhambra was seized during the Reconquista and subsequently transformed into the Royal Court of the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, has also been seized, in a more subtle way, by Western tourists and Spanish natives, whose embrace of the space serves the false narrative of contemporary *Convivencia*[20], or Coexistence. Within the Albayzín, Moroccan Muslims contend with discrimination on a number of levels, ranging from verbal harassment on the street while completing errands, to unfair treatment by police officers whose presence has increased within the neighborhood to combat "migrant crime" (Rogozen-Soltar 133). Equally disturbing is the treatment they endure from European converts to Islam, who have on occasion excluded non-white Muslims from worshiping in the same spaces as them. Rogozen-Soltar described an interview with a Moroccan man who had wanted to explore *la Mezquita Mayor de Granada* (the Great Mosque of Granada)[21] shortly after its construction and

[19] The Nasrid dynasty was the last Arab Muslim dynasty in the Iberian Peninsula, ruling from 1240 until the fall of Granada to Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492.
[20] La Convivencia is the period between the Umayyad conquest of Hispania and the expulsion of the Muslims and Jews by Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella in 1942.
[21] Rogozen-Soltar makes the observation that the name of the mosque is revelatory of the marginalization of non-white Muslims. For one, permission to build the mosque had been given after years of pressure by Muslim converts (similar requests by non-white Muslims were not taken as seriously). Additionally, the name the Great Mosque of Granada implies that it is the representative mosque of Granada, ignoring the plethora of mosques that Muslims had been worshipping in for years.

opening in 2003, but who was shooed away by several Muslim converts standing just inside the mosque (Rogozen-Soltar 177). This demonstrates that religion, although an important explanatory factor when analyzing intercultural tensions within Spain, is perceived as less problematic when it is being practiced by someone with the prefered complexion. Consequently, an insistence on the existence of a contemporary *Convivencia* is an argument that falls flat, given the vast discrepancies in how Moroccan Muslims are treated compared to their white neighbors.

The example of Granada is a more concentrated view of the Muslim migrant's experience in Spain. At the onset of the Great Recession in 2009, 13.5 percent of all foreigners (or 760,000 foreigners) in Spain hailed from the Maghreb (INE)[22], creating great potential for contact between Spaniards and Muslim migrants throughout the entire country. Although a substantial sum, studies have shown that Spanish natives consistently perceive the migrant population as being larger than it actually is. One study, designed by sociologists at the University of Almería, sought to quantify the degree of anti-immigrant sentiment in Spain by utilizing data collected by the National Statistics Institute and the International Social Survey Programme, which surveyed Spaniards regarding their interactions with and attitudes towards migrants. Their research showed that in 1997/1998, approximately 26.8 percent of the Spanish native population believed that there were too many immigrants, whereas by 2007, that percentage had grown to 61.9 percent (Garrido, Olmos 46). During the same time frame, the percentage of Spaniards who held the believe that the growing presence of immigrants in Spain was detrimental to culture increased from 17.4 percent to 36.5 percent (Garrido, Olmos 46).

[22]The Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Statistics Institute) is the official autonomous organization in Spain that collects demographic, social, and economic statistics.

Narrowing in on cultural concerns among native populations to explain xenophobia is an approach that is gaining popularity. Sociological research from recent years have suggested that "'symbolic' predispositions, such as preferences for cultural unity have a greater effect than economic dissatisfaction" (D'Ancona 570). This is particularly compelling when considering the case of Spain, given the plethora of historical upheavals that have challenged the continuity of a cohesive Spanish identity. In a different vein, the Spanish welfare state offers significant unemployment compensation, which has helped to alleviate poverty in Spain substantially since the 1980s, thus removing a degree of economic resentment that Spaniards may feel towards immigrants (Calavita 536). Furthermore, the fact that migrants from the Third World in Spain are often relegated to the underground economy, working hazardous physical jobs that are shunned by Spaniards, as well as unskilled tertiary jobs in large postindustrial metropolises like Madrid and Barcelona, means that Spaniards are rarely competing with migrants for employment opportunities (Ullán de la Rosa 178). As a result, it is more appropriate to consider the role that culture plays in analyzing xenophobic attitudes displayed by natives.

Conclusion

Muslims, more so than any other migrant group, have been conceptualized as culturally incompatible with the Spanish native. The rejection of Muslims by Spaniards is usually attributed to "a very ad hoc mixture of xenophobia and Islamophobia, a heritage of the idiosyncratic Spanish history, plus the recent image created by Islamic fundamentalist regimes and international jihadi terrorism" (Ullán de la Rosa 181). Since the 780-year-long Reconquista of Spain by Christian forces, the Muslim Other has been understood as the fundamental

adversary to the Spanish national, distanced by religion, tradition, and, particularly in contemporary conversations, complexion. These differences, informed by archaic concepts of religion and race, have produced a confusing environment within Spain for Muslim migrants who are drawn to the country by ancestral ties, but who are systematically marginalized by both the law and by society. In the recent years, the growing crises in the Middle East and Africa, in addition to the general migration patterns of the past several decades, have challenged host societies to discard prejudice and stereotypes. In the case of Spain, the challenge is amplified when the prejudice is written into history.

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