

Thoughts on the Sense of Belonging in Granada
The Alhambra and the Ayuntamiento as Sites of Belonging

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Abstract:

The reign of the Muslim empire of Al-Andalus in the Iberian Peninsula, which started in 711, ended in 1492 with the Reconquista of the city of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs. Today Granada's tourism is central to its economy and culture and the Alhambra, the old Muslim city of the Alhambra, is a large component. Research has often put the Alhambra and its history in conversation with the Jewish quarters of the city, however, I will explore how it is that the Alhambra and the Ayuntamiento, Granada's city hall, affects Granada's citizens' sense of belonging. I will look at the process of *empadronamiento*, which occurs as a way to reach a sense of belonging in the city and compare it to other non-legal processes which allow for the same feeling. This will be put in conversation with the Alhambra's historical position as well as its tourism. By looking at the Alhambra, and Granada's tourism, I will explore how much of Spain's Muslim past is truly celebrated. The celebration of Spain's Muslim past will also be seen through the lens of *convivencia* which assumed coexistence despite race or religion. Through these conversations and the words of my interlocutors' words I will attempt to answer the question of how the Ayuntamiento and the Alhambra impact Granada's residents' sense of belonging.

Keywords: *citizenship, belonging, tourism*

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Introduction

In 2016 I travelled to Spain for the first time through a language exchange program in Sevilla. While living in Sevilla for a month and a half I visited a few other cities but the one that stuck out the most was Granada. The city's architecture fascinated me and I was during our weekend visit. I was haunted by its beauty as well as a history that I had not learned about yet seemed so prevalent. While touring the Alhambra, Granada's old Moorish castle, I learned more about the region's Muslim past but was shocked by how our tour guide spoke of the matter. She seemed to think of the history of Al-Andalus as a mere aside from Spain's history and not a kingdom that existed for nearly eight centuries. In the fall of 2019, I was reminded of this as I talked with a friend I had made while in Spain and decided to go back to Granada for my semester abroad. I knew that my thesis topic would be inspired by my trip there, but I did not know to what extent.

While I was studying abroad, I often found myself questioning whether I belonged or not in Granada. Although I held a visa that gave me legal standing in the city and understood the language better than most of my classmates, I did not feel a sense of belonging in the city. When I talked to some of my professors and friends, some expressed similar feelings, but others felt a lot more at home in the city than they had expected. This stayed on my mind when we had to leave the city due to COVID and came back up towards the end of the semester when my classmates spoke about missing the city. The conversations I had with my friends made me wonder what made it possible for some to feel like they belonged in the city.

It's this feeling of belonging, along with notions of citizenship that I explore the idea of throughout my thesis. I focus on two different ways of "belonging"; belonging culturally and belonging in a legal sense of citizenship. When I speak of cultural belonging, I focus on how one can know the culture of a city, its practices, and its history. I explore how this knowledge helps one belong in a city like Granada. Knowing one's way around the city can give oneself a sense of belonging while knowing its history can provide another.

Citizenship is an idea centered around having record of oneself which states that one is legally within the city and/or country and assumes ties with that location. Citizenship provides a "thick" idea of belonging; an idea of belonging we are used to, where one belongs somewhere because the law says that they do. Within Spain their process of *empadronamiento*, which translates to census in English, allows those without legal citizenship to create a legal record of themselves. I consider *empadronamiento* to be a form of bureaucratic belonging as it allows one to create a record of yourself which can in fact help immigrants pursue legal citizenship later on.

Through this census record one achieves a "thick" kind of belonging, possible without knowing the history of the Alhambra and Granada. One can belong physically, given their residence, even if they do not know the city which is something my interlocutor who was born and raised in the city resonates with. Cultural belonging can be held in Granada by knowing the history of the Alhambra or its people for example. Many of my interlocutors, who were not born or raised in the city, find that this is the kind of belonging they have achieved within the city. Even those who are Spanish citizens and have gone through the process of *empadronamiento* find that the sense of

belonging is what is important to them, not the legal belonging that comes with citizenship.

In recent years literature has shifted away from seeing formal citizenship, which is tied to legal processes, as what is most important and instead places one's sense of belonging despite legal status as more important. Using theories on belonging and citizenship, I see one's sense of belonging as a dream one seeks when they move. The roles which we take on within a city, whether it be citizen or tourist, inform how I see my interlocutors' views on tourists and tourism as a whole and in turn their place in the city.

Alongside the notions of belonging and citizenship is the notion of memory. While most of us may not realize it, our memory and recollection of history of a particular location is often tied to whether we feel like we belong. For some it might be harder to belong in a place where they cannot tie to its history. Literature on historical memory discusses *lieu de memoire*, places of memory in English, locations in which one can see the history of the city or country. This idea of *lieu de memoire* places the Alhambra as a memory site; I, however, discuss that it can also be a tourist spot and source of income for the city.

While reading up on the Alhambra one of the most popular topics that came up was the idea of *convivencia*. *Convivencia*, which translates to coexistence in English, is a notion that is believed to have existed in the kingdom of Al-Andalus. This notion explains the relations between Muslims, Christians, and the Jews all throughout the kingdom. I explore whether *convivencia* is a myth in Granada today and within its history given that it can provide a sense of belonging for everyone. Today the

autonomous community of Andalusia claims *convivencia* as an important historical fact as well as a reality within the region today.

The cities which make up Andalusia today are cities which were once part of the Nasrid Kingdom of Al-Andalus and Granada is one of them. The Nasrid Kingdom, or Emirate of Granada was founded in 1238 and was the last Muslim kingdom in the peninsula until 1492. The reign of the Nasrid Emirate ended when the last city, the city of Granada, was surrendered to the Catholic Monarchs, Queen Isabella I of Castile and King Ferdinand II of Aragon. The surrender of the last stronghold of the Muslim kingdom in the peninsula on January 2, 1492 is something celebrated in the city. The day of celebration, *Día de la Toma*, naturally came up in my research.

My thesis focuses on the notions of citizenship and belonging in Granada. To explore this, I see the city through two important cultural and legal locations. The decision to look at physical locations in the city stems from my own love for the city's architecture as well as the literature on historical memory. I see my interlocutors' sense of belonging through the Alhambra and city hall, the Ayuntamiento. While they may not both be *lieu de memoire*, the two locations mean something to most of my interlocutors. The Alhambra is a place that reminds many of Spain's Muslim past while the Ayuntamiento is a location for legal processes, such as *empadronamiento*.

Given the global pandemic I was not able to conduct the traditional ethnographical research I had originally hoped for, but technology helped bridge that gap. I conducted a series of one or two hour interviews over Zoom with professors from my abroad program and friends I made before and during my trip. In total I interviewed eight people and ended up with fourteen interviews in total. During these interviews I

asked my interlocutors what their history with the city was like and whether they felt like they belonged in the city. These conversations were had in relation to the city's tourism, the historical aspect of *convivencia*, and the two historical sites. I chose to do interviews for my thesis because although I had read up on the notion of belonging and had experienced being in Granada myself, that was only one experience. Additionally, I wanted to learn more about others perspectives on the sites that I was focusing on.

The topic of human rights, particularly in relation to non-legal noncitizens came up often during these conversations as well as in my own research, however, I did not interview anyone in the who belongs in this category. Given this, I have to acknowledge that my research is very skewed since everyone who I interviewed was either a Spanish citizen or a legal noncitizen resident.

The history of the Alhambra

Since the 9th century the Alhambra has been a palatial city, Christian Royal Household, and a military fortress, then in 1870 it was declared a historical monument.¹ The name is likely derived from the color of its walls which in Arabic is “the red” due to the red hue of the *tapial* of which the walls were built.² *Tapial* is a material of rammed earth which was commonly used throughout the eight hundred year rule of the Muslim kingdom.

¹ “DISCOVER | ALHAMBRA AND GENERALIFE- History,” Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, accessed December 1, 2020, <https://www.alhambra-patronato.es/en/discover/alhambra-y-generalife/history>.

² “Alhambra | Palace, Fortress, Facts, Map, & Pictures,” Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed February 25, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Alhambra-fortress-Granada-Spain>.

After the initial construction on the hill of Sabika in the 9th century the area was left unconstructed, often serving as a place of refuge during invasions.³ In the eleventh century, the first minister of the city of Granada, Samuel ibn Nagrella, began the reconstruction of the abandoned buildings on the hill of Sabika and installed his palace on it.⁴ Small aspects of this construction remain today. It isn't until the fourteenth century when Al-Ahmar, founder of the Nasrid dynasty, begins the reconstruction and installs his court in the Alhambra, beginning the construction which we see today. The Alhambra reached its full splendor in the second half of the 14th century, which coincides with the reign of Yusuf I and the second reign of Muhammad V. During these reigns the Comares Palace and the Court of the Lions are built.⁵

After the fall of the Nasrid kingdom in 1492, the Alhambra was established as the Royal Household.⁶ In 1526, Carlos V decided to construct the palace which bears his name within the Alhambra itself.⁷ Throughout the following centuries the Alhambra went through smaller reconstructions and periods of abandonment. During the Napoleonic occupation, the Alhambra faced demolition in 1812 and remained in abandonment for nearly half a century.⁸

³ "DISCOVER | ALHAMBRA AND GENERALIFE- History."

⁴ "DISCOVER | ALHAMBRA AND GENERALIFE- History."

⁵ Robert Irwin, *The Alhambra* (Harvard University Press, 2004), http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.haverford.edu/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/ZTAwMHhuYV9fNTA4NDQxX19BTg2?sid=66eadf1b-5691-465e-b1dd-dc08b20228cb@sdc-v-sessmgr01&vid=0&format=EB&lpid=lp_vi&rid=0.

⁶ Irwin.

⁷ Irwin.

⁸ "DISCOVER | ALHAMBRA AND GENERALIFE- History."

In the 1830's due to Washington Irving's writing of *Tales of the Alhambra*, society started recognizing the importance of the Alhambra and its gardens.⁹ Following the revolution of 1868, the Alhambra was separated from the Crown and became property of the State.¹⁰ It was then that it was declared a "national monument". Since, Spain and the Junta de Andalucía have come to a commitment to preserve and protect the Alhambra as a site of World Heritage, a decision supported and enforced by the UNESCO World Heritage Center.¹¹ By a Royal Decree on 27 July 1943 the gardens of the Alhambra and the Generalife, the summer palace, which was built between the twelfth and fourteenth century, were declared Historical Gardens.¹²

Today the Alhambra is known as one of the world's top attractions and one of the biggest sites of income for the city of Granada. While I was there, I saw many school children going on class trips to learn about the history of the old city as well as its architecture. Many of Granada's citizens often would tell me I had to visit, and some would even offer to go with me saying they would never get enough of it.

Since the start of the pandemic Granada has faced a large decrease in tourism, as have many large touristic cities in the world, leaving the Alhambra mostly empty. In recent months there has been an increase of encouragement by the city's government for its citizens to visit the Alhambra. One of my interlocutors called the experience

⁹ "DISCOVER | ALHAMBRA AND GENERALIFE- History."

¹⁰ "Alhambra y generalife," Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, accessed February 26, 2021, <https://www.alhambra-patronato.es/descubrir/alhambra-y-generalife>.

¹¹ "World Heritage - Patronato de La Alhambra y Generalife," accessed February 26, 2021, <https://www.alhambra-patronato.es/en/discover/alhambra-y-generalife/conservacion-y-proteccion/urbanismo/patrimonio-mundial>.

¹² "World Heritage - Patronato de La Alhambra y Generalife."

magical, explaining that it was rare to see so little people within the historic walls. For *El Día de Andalucía*, Andalucía Day, the Alhambra joined the patronage of the city in its celebrations by offering online interactive workshops which focus on a wide range of topics, from the history of the site to poems about it as well as cooking classes.

The history of the Ayuntamiento

At first the leadership of Granada was based in the Madraza, near the Cathedral, until it was moved to the building it occupies today in Plaza del Carmen housed in the old convent of Carmen in Granada.¹³ After the Spanish confiscation, the convent was ceded by the State to the City Council in 1848.¹⁴ This convent was organized in two enclosures of cloisters, one as the old convent and the other as the new convent, today only the cloister of the new convent remains.¹⁵ At the time the City Council did not have enough money to completely adapt the building and to reduce costs, the "old cloister" was destroyed, and the land was adapted to form a new square, which would give entrance to the town hall.¹⁶ This work was started in 1857 and the materials from the demolition were reused in the Ayuntamiento building itself with the official inauguration in 1858, although the renovation continued until 1861.¹⁷ Over time the Ayuntamiento has been maintained and conditioned, restoring the original elements, although it preserves little of the old convent.

¹³ "Centro: Ayuntamiento de Granada. Casa Consistorial," accessed February 25, 2021, <http://www.granada.org/inet/wagenda.nsf/mobce/5D410BF914AA2664C1257C700036E655>.

¹⁴ "AYUNTAMIENTO DE GRANADA - GRANADA - RINCONES DE GRANADA," accessed December 1, 2020, <https://rinconesdegranada.com/ayuntamiento-de-granada>.

¹⁵ "AYUNTAMIENTO DE GRANADA - GRANADA - RINCONES DE GRANADA."

¹⁶ "AYUNTAMIENTO DE GRANADA - GRANADA - RINCONES DE GRANADA."

¹⁷ "AYUNTAMIENTO DE GRANADA - GRANADA - RINCONES DE GRANADA."

Today it serves as a historic and administrative building, with its plaza being a highly visited space for protesters, mainly for human rights. One of the most recent protests being one against the electric company which has been cutting the power of citizens on the outskirts of the city despite having paid their bills.

One of the most notable events for the Ayuntamiento is *El Día de la Toma*, celebrated on January second, which celebrates the conquest of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs. The day has many events such as the mass held at the Cathedral, where the Catholic Monarchs Queen Isabella I of Castile and King Ferdinand II of Aragon are buried, however the most notable is the procession which begins here.¹⁸ The procession goes around Granada with its citizens carrying a replica of the banner that Ferdinand gave to the city and culminates at the Ayuntamiento.¹⁹ There the citizens of Granada celebrate by waving the monarchs' flag and with the chant of "Granada" and "Que" from the Ayuntamiento's balcony.²⁰ The celebration first began in 1516 after the death of King Ferdinand II and since the 90's it has gained a lot of negative attention from the left wing who feel that the celebration does not support or respect the racial diversity of the city.²¹ The procession on this day often including many dressing up to "kick out the Moors", an act which many see as shocking given how

¹⁸ "The Royal Mausoleums and the Crypt – Royal Chapel of Granada," Capilla Real de Granada, accessed February 25, 2021, <https://capillarealgranada.com/en/the-temple/the-royal-mausoleums-and-the-crypt/>.

¹⁹ "Celebration of the Conquest of Granada (La Toma de Granada)," Portal de Turismo de la Provincia de Granada, November 6, 2013, <https://www.turgranada.es/en/fichas/celebration-of-the-conquest-of-granada-29624/>.

²⁰ Granada Hoy, "Día de la Toma: Mariana Pineda y las 4.000 banderas de España," Granada Hoy, January 2, 2019, https://www.granadahoy.com/granada/Dia-Toma-Granada-2019_0_1315068860.html.

²¹ "Significado Del Día de La Toma," Course document, accessed February 25, 2021, http://ipaz.ugr.es/wp-content/files/miradasalmundo/sesion19/Significado_del_D%C3%ADA_de_la_Toma.pdf.

much the city and its citizens claim to be proud of their Muslim past. Additionally, it is disappointing to many given the high population of Muslims in the city, particularly the neighborhoods closer to the Alhambra.

Conclusion

Throughout my first chapter I will explore my interlocutors' sense of belonging. I discuss this alongside the process of *empadronamiento* and notions of citizenship. In my second chapter I will look into the tourist aspect of the city and its impact on the city and its citizens. I discuss the disappointment from my interlocutors when talking about the Alhambra by looking at the Alhambra's Muslim background as a marketable aspect of the region of Andalucia instead of as something to be proud of as it is commonly described by Spain's citizens. My last chapter continues to focus on Granada's Muslim background and *convivencia*. I put this term in conversation with the events of *El Día de la Toma*, a day which celebrates the expulsion of the Moors from the peninsula.

I **Citizenship and Belonging**

This chapter talks about my interlocutors' sense of belonging. In this chapter we hear from almost all of my interlocutors. The only one that I do not include in this chapter is Ana, who is the only one of my interlocutors who was born and raised in the city. For some of my interlocutors this sense of belonging is something that they have achieved as they have come to understand Granada and its people while for others it is something tied to their legal status. For others, however, it is still something they are working on. My interviews with my interlocutors show that city's history is closely tied to most their sense of belonging. Throughout the chapter we see citizenship as something that can be important but is not the end all be all for one's sense of belonging. The legal process of *empadronamiento* can be a step in finding one's sense of belonging while for others it can simply be a nuisance.

Empadronamiento, which translates to census in English, is the result of the process of *empadronarse*, where one registers themselves on the *padrón*, the town's list local inhabitants.²² While the *padrón* is the city's legal census document, *empadronamiento* is the process of *empadronarse*, registering oneself. The legal act of *empadronamiento* is required in all cities Spain after someone has lived within the city for longer than six months and is done at the city hall, the Ayuntamiento.²³ *Empadronamiento* is not only important to provide the city with accurate numbers of its citizens but because other legal procedures require you to demonstrate your or registry

²² "Certificado de Empadronamiento: What Is It and How Do I Get It?," SpainGuru, April 7, 2015, <https://spainguru.es/2015/04/07/empadronamiento/>.

²³ "Certificado de Empadronamiento."

certificate.²⁴ To *empadronarse* in Spain one needs the housing rental contract and a copy of it, their original passport, and copy of the residents register form which can be found online.²⁵ From my conversations with my interlocutors as well as personal online research I have learned that *empadronamiento* is separate from a person's legal status in the country. I learned that it can actually benefit immigrants down the line as it is a record of how long one has lived in the city and country.²⁶ Due to COVID the act of *empadronamiento* is not limited to the *Ayuntamiento's* walls, however, some still prefer to do the process in person. Those who have moved to the city find comfort in sites such as the Alhambra and acts like that of *empadronamiento*.

Questions of Cultural Identity discusses the notion that identity and citizenship are ideas meant to make one understand what and where home is.²⁷ In chapter two, *From Pilgrim to Tourist*, Zygmunt Bauman states

One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs; that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence. 'Identity' is a name given to the escape sought from that uncertainty

The first part of Bauman's statement focuses on the definition of culture we are used to, the "variety of behavioral styles and patterns" or the social culture of a place. The second part focuses on the importance of finding one's place amongst this and gaining acceptance of those around you. This acceptance is made easier when one

²⁴ balcellsg, "Empadronamiento in Spain: Definition and What to Do," *Balcells Group* (blog), August 12, 2019, <https://balcellsgroup.com/empadronamiento-resident-register/>.

²⁵ balcellsg.

²⁶ balcellsg.

²⁷ Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London; Sage, 1996), 19.

has legal status within a city. You can feel like you belong by understanding a city and its people through its culture, but you can also belong legally within the city or nation's borders. It's this idea of the dual ability to belong that grounds my research on why people feel like they do or don't belong in Granada.

Theory on Citizenship and Belonging

While I was reading about citizenship and the idea and feeling of belonging many books became important to my understanding. *Cities and Citizenship* is the one that informed most of my theoretical background to understanding citizenship and belonging. In their introduction to *Cities and Citizenship*, James Holston and Atjun Appadurai discuss that formal citizenship is no longer something that everyone is rushing to have.²⁸

formal citizenship is less necessary for access to substantive rights is also clear: although it is required for a few rights (like voting in national elections), it is not for most. Indeed, legally resident noncitizens often possess virtually identical socioeconomic and civil rights as citizens.²⁹

“Formal” citizenship as Holston and Appadurai puts it is not as desired anymore because someone can feel part of a city without having to be a legal citizen of it, additionally, it means not having to deal with the tedious tasks that citizens do, such as jury duty and taxes.³⁰ In no longer searching for formal citizenship one can understand why it is that people can instead search for the feeling of belonging.

In Etienne Balibar's chapter of this book, *Is European Citizenship Possible*, Balibar provides an explanation of what it means to be a citizen. Balibar explains that

²⁸ James Holston, *Cities and Citizenship*, Public Culture Book (Durham [N.C: Duke University Press, 1999), 3–4, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822396321>.

²⁹ Holston, 3–4.

³⁰ Holston, 4.

citizenship is often seen as what marks the distinction between citizens and foreigners particularly pertaining to the rights and the obligations, they each hold.³¹ Balibar believes that

Citizenship can only exist where we understand a notion of city to exist-where fellow citizens and foreigners are clearly distinguished in terms of rights and obligations in a given space...provided that those belonging to these subcategories do not enjoy those rights of sovereignty reserved for full citizens.

Following Balibar's train of thought one understands that a foreigner is different from a citizen given their rights within the city and nation-state. Holston and Appadurai's statement in the introduction appears to support Balibar's as they state that

what it means to be a member of society came to be understood, to a significant degree, in terms of what it means to be a rights-bearing citizen of a territorial nationstate.³²

However, Holston and Appadurai make it clear that formal citizenship is less necessary for access to substantive rights, something which is true in Spain where many noncitizens are provided medical and legal assistance despite their legal status. While we may perceive noncitizens and citizens as different because of their legal rights given the definition of citizenship that is based on legal status, that does not always encompass how some see themselves or the reality they live.

It is because of these two conflicting views on citizenship that I focus on the idea of belonging instead. I follow Holston and Appadurai's idea that people are no longer searching for legal citizenship and are moving towards a feeling of belonging in a certain space. Since Balibar would place a resident away from a citizen, so I do not wish to define my interlocutors "status" in the city in terms that have legal strings. I do

³¹ Holston, 198.

³² Holston, 1.

not mean that these strings don't matter, throughout my thesis we will see that they do but I simply mean that you can feel like you belong without access to certain rights such as voting. My idea of belonging comes from personal understanding as someone who has moved, cities and countries, several times as well as definitions of the idea of belonging. Oxford Learner's Dictionaries defines the sense of belonging as

the feeling of being comfortable and happy in a particular situation or with a particular group of people.³³

The Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research similarly describes it as

the *sense of belonging and identification* involves the feeling, belief, and expectation that one fits in the group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group.³⁴

Given these two definitions I define belonging as the feeling of comfort in a particular location and the belief and feeling that one fits in with those in that location and is accepted by them.

Empadronamiento and Belonging

In his chapter of *Cities and Citizenship* Bauman, discusses the many roles of people within a city. While describing a tourist he states,

Jonathan Matthew Schwartz advises us 'to distinguish the homesick searching from the nostalgic yearning'; the latter is, at least ostensibly, past oriented, while the home in homesickness is as a rule 'in the future perfect tenses. . . . It is an urge to feel at home, to recognize one's surroundings and belong there.' Homesickness means a dream of belonging; to be, for once, of the place, not merely in.³⁵

In discussing tourists Bauman moves on to those who visit a city and find their place within the city. It's this process of a human finding their place as a way to escape

³³ "Belonging," in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com), <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/belonging>.

³⁴ Shibu Raman, "Sense of Belonging," in *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*, ed. Alex C. Michalos (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014), 5828–31, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_2646.

³⁵ Hall and Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 30.

homesickness that I believe most of my interlocutors have gone through. A majority of them do not see their existence in Granada as a yearning for the past as Schwartz describes it, but rather as a completion of the “dream of belonging” as Bauman explains it. This process of course is not something easy for everyone and not all of my interlocutors have accomplished it or have had to. *Empadronamiento* is something that some of them have been able to access in their search for a sense of belonging in the city.

As I’ve mentioned before, *empadronamiento* is required not only to live in the Spain but to live in any city after six months of being in this city. This means that although noncitizens can escape the majority of tedious tasks that Holston and Appadurai describe they cannot escape all of it. However, it also means that achieving the feeling of belonging possible through a legal process that does not necessarily mean formal citizenship. Of my interlocutors three have gone through this process in the city of Granada and all of them were born in Spain and at one point saw their place in the city as mere tourists. I explore this transition from tourists to citizens in the city as tied to their sense of belonging and *empadronamiento*.

Carla is a 40 year old woman from Badajoz, Extremadura which is located five hours from Granada and only twenty minutes from the border with Portugal. Carla has lived in Granada on and off for fifteen years since throughout those fifteen years she has studied and worked abroad in different countries. Three years ago she settled down and bought her home in the Realejo neighborhood of Granada, which is located down the hill of the Alhambra. I met Carla in my first week in Granada as she was my orientation professor and have maintained a friendship with her since.

During my conversation with her Carla shared that although she did not permanently live in Granada until recently, for the last fifteen years she always considered Granada her “home base”. One of the questions I asked my interlocutors was very straightforward, did they feel like they belonged? Carla’s answer was a clear yes.

I believed that from the beginning... In Granada, in the end, there are quite a few people who are from other places and who quickly like to fall in love with the city and want to be here. So, I think the same thing happened to me and I quickly felt integrated, even though I was born in another place.

Carla’s words of feeling a sense of belonging so early on was one that I found shocking since it was not an experience I had had personally. Additionally, as I thought about her words, I could not help but think about Bauman’s words about tourists and homesickness. I found that Carla’s words about falling in love with the city are what made it possible for her to find her sense of belonging. As we talked about her home in the Realejo Carla brought up the *Ayuntamiento* and *empadronamiento*.

The history of the *Ayuntamiento* is something I have never thought about. I have not been curious since in Granada there are so many historical monuments and well, it is just one more ... but in reality, the *Ayuntamiento* of Granada as an institution has several buildings and, in the one in the center, only some administrative procedures are carried out... I have visited it to do papers ... There is a thing called *empadronamiento*, which is when you have to register that you live in that city. That’s why I went. When I got my home.

For Carla *empadronamiento* seemed like one of the tedious tasks Holston and Appadurai mention. Carla does not realize that it allows others to see her as someone who belongs and provides a legal record of her belonging in the city. The *Ayuntamiento*, the place which makes this possible, is just another historic building in her mind.

Like Carla, Rodrigo seemed to see the *Ayuntamiento* and *empadronamiento* in a different light. Rodrigo, in his forties, was a professor of mine while I lived in Granada

and taught classes on film and social justice. In his classes he often talked to us about how he had always considered himself a nomad until 2017, when he finally settled down in Granada in the Albaicin neighborhood. He had spent most of his teens in Granada which is only an hour away from his hometown of Jaen which also happens to be a city in the autonomous community of Andalucia. Rodrigo explained to me in our conversation that he had always been drawn to Granada,

I always had a very close connection with the city of Granada, despite not living here... some friends of mine lived here, they studied here. There was a certain cultural vibe and cultural life much more nurtured here than the city in which I was born... I always felt very free and breathed better every time I set foot in this city for a few days

This “cultural vibe” that Rodrigo speaks of is Granada’s Muslim history and artistic atmosphere which differs from many other cities in Spain. Granada’s artistic atmosphere, which is largely influenced by flamenco and poet Federico Garcia Lorca, led Rodrigo to take part in several film and theater productions in the city and later on settle down in the Albaicin. The transition from tourist to citizen of a city that Bauman or “falling in love with a city”, as Carla described it, was possible for Rodrigo because of Granada’s vibe. For Rodrigo the feeling of comfort associated with belonging seems to be tied with this notion of feeling free and feeling like one can breathe better. This feeling was made even more real by the act of *empadronamiento*.

For a self-proclaimed nomad like Rodrigo, leaving a physical record of his residence is a bigger deal. This was obvious as we talked about the purchase of his home. His partner and him bought it while they were living in the United States and in fact looked forward to finally settle down in Granada.

We bought a house in the Albaicín, for three years I have felt very deeply connected to the city. I am registered in the city. I do not live for rent, but I already live in a house that I

own. My son was born here...A friend of mine says that one belongs to the place where he pays his taxes, one is from the place where he pays his taxes

When he talks about being registered, Rodrigo is in fact talking about *empadronamiento*. While his words cannot be heard I would like to share that he shared these words with an incredible amount of excitement and pride. The tasks that Carla, Holston and Appadurai consider tedious are a sign of belonging and pride for Rodrigo. Most would not think about taxes as something to hold pride over, but Rodrigo shared that if he had to pay taxes anywhere else he would be upset. However, his view of the location where this all happens is like Carla's one of disregard.

The times I have been to Ayuntamiento have been in this last stage of my life, and if I'm honest, they have been in the last year and a half. They have been simply for administrative procedures. I have gone for the *empadronamiento*, to ask information about the taxes of the house, to make the appointments of the card and of my son. It has been a totally bureaucratic relationship.

While he is aware that *empadronamiento* gives him a place in the city, the Ayuntamiento does not seem to matter and is just another building or entity. Rodrigo holds the feeling and legal aspect of belonging and finds them important, Benjamin on the other hand holds the legal record of belonging but has not yet felt the sense of belonging his coworkers do.

Benjamin was the director of my abroad program and Carla and Rodrigo's boss. He is fifty years old and originally from Coruña, Galicia which is in the nine hours away in the north of Spain. Benjamin has lived in Granada for nearly two decades and like Rodrigo, owns a house in the Albaicin. Having lived in the city for so long Benjamin has had to go to the Ayuntamiento for *empadronamiento* and also regarded it as a bureaucratic place in his life. When we talked about his place in the city, Benjamin was one of the only people who did not feel like he belonged.

I'm definitely not a Granadino, and I think people don't see me as one you know. I'm a resident, I'm a neighbor of Granada.

Benjamin explains his status as a resident, given the fact that he is registered as such. Granadinos as Benjamin states are the citizens of Granada and it is not a term simply reserved for legal or registered citizens of the city. However, it is clear that since people do not see him as one, he cannot see himself as one.

When I asked him why he believed this he explained,

I love the city. I feel like I'm part of the city but I'm also an outsider. People from Granada, or what we in the Albaicin call Granada, which is anything outside of the Albaicin, see me as a little bit of an outsider... I think I am perceived as almost as a foreigner, even though I'm a Spaniard.

Based off of my definition of belonging and that of the Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research, Benjamin's words show that acceptance is a big part of the sense of belonging. There was shock and disappointment in Benjamin's words as he spoke about not feeling like he belonged despite being a Spaniard himself, something which my other two interlocutors did not face. I do not have answers for why this is but it does bring up the question of what makes people accept someone into their community over others.

A Sense of Belonging

Since not all of my interlocutors have gone through the process of *empadronamiento* their sense of belonging, or "dream of belonging" as Bauman explains it, is not tied to this legal process. Their sense of belonging stems mainly from the culture that Rodrigo explains drew him into Granada from a young age. For Arturo, a twenty-one year old bisexual Spanish-American from Colorado, whose family comes from Sevilla a city located two and a half hours away that also forms part of Andalucia,

Granada's culture is something that made him feel at home. During our time abroad he explained to me that he had picked to study abroad in Granada because he felt the city would be more welcoming than that of Sevilla. He had visited Granada often due to its proximity to Sevilla and noticed it was quite different from conservative Sevilla but with similar cultures.

Culturally, I guess, the romantic notion of what an Andalucian is, I kind of fit into pretty well with like the whole flamenco thing, you know...

Given that Sevilla and Granada are in the same region they share a lot of similarities such as the type of music, food, and history. The romantic notion of an Andalucian is closely tied to these things, specially flamenco as Arturo described. However, it was not just the culture of Granada that provided him comfort but the language itself.

I can speak fluently without even having to think about it. That's super validating. And it really felt like home to some degree. There's something about the Spanish language that makes me feel at home. I can't explain it any better than that.

As someone who has lived in the United States the majority of his life with a few two week visits to Spain a year, being in a Spanish city for longer than that was quite different. He explained that he does not speak Spanish in the United States as often as he would like. As we talked, I could relate to Arturo because although I had not felt like I completely belonged in Granada I had found some comfort in hearing and speaking Spanish despite being so far from home. Our conversation also made me think of what our friend Pilar had said about speaking Spanish in Spain and how this had affected her sense of belonging.

Pilar, like Arturo, was in my orientation group while abroad. We became close friends over the few weeks we were able to spend in Granada and even traveled to other cities together. Pilar and I have a lot in common which made our conversations

wonderfully comfortable. She like me is twenty two years old, Latinx, went to a private high school, and is an anthropology major. When we talked about the idea of belonging the first thing she brought up was the language.

One thing I was worried about before I went was that I speak Spanish already and it's not the same Spanish. I thought, "What if it's like, kind of frowned upon?" What if they say, "You don't speak this superior Spanish?" I worried about that people were going to give me like shit for not speaking "proper" Spanish. And luckily, I didn't have many instances... there was one time where I was at a bar and ordered something and someone was like, "Oh her Spanish sounds like an accent" And I just ignored it. That was the one time anyone commented on it, at least directly in front of me.

I can understand where Pilar was coming from because that was a worry I had had myself the first time I went to Spain. I was glad to hear that she had not had many of those experiences and figured that was why she felt more comfortable in the city.

Unlike Pilar I had been teased repeatedly by others for my choice of words for certain objects. However, something Pilar and I did share was similar was our awareness of our own identity. When we talked about it she revealed,

It made me recognize more things about my past, my own ethnicity, and my family history... I know Mexico was colonized but it just seems like such a long time ago. And then being in a city that very openly celebrates Christopher Columbus and this idea... well see that's the thing. I think about it as an idea but it's very real reminders that that happened. And somewhere in my family history that happened. Like "Oh, yes. Spaniards in Mexico very directly impacted my family line." I don't think I felt like my identity changed but I was just more aware of that part of it.

When Pilar states that Granada is a city that openly celebrates Christopher Columbus, she does not say this because it is a common topic of conversation in the city, but because there is a statue of him and Queen Isabel on one of the main streets. Seeing this can be quite shocking for someone who has grown up seeing this man as the villain in the story. I say this because I, like Pilar, was also shocked the first time I saw it the first time I visited the city in 2016. Pilar says it best when she explains that what happened in her family and country's history is not just an idea but a reality. A reality

that she saw every day, at least four times a day on our walks to and from school.

Despite this reminder, however, Pilar still considered herself as someone who belonged in the city.

I don't know. I don't think I would have considered myself one of the tourists.

Pilar made the transition that Bauman speaks of when he speaks of the dream of belonging and she did it without *empadronamiento*.

Another of my interlocutors who also has not had to go through the process of *empadronamiento* herself is Ana. Ana was born and raised in Granada and is now a twenty year old student at the local university studying communication and translation. Ana is an interesting case given that when I interviewed her, she was living outside of Granada for the first time for an extended period of time.

I have always lived in Granada with my mother and my father. I went to school, the institute and then when I started university, I wanted to go somewhere else, but in the end the degree I wanted to study, translation and tourism, Granada was one of the best cities to do it. This year is the only year that I am not living in Granada and well, I have missed it a lot.

Ana, unlike the rest of my interlocutors has always had a sense of belonging in Granada and now associates the city with a kind of nostalgic yearning. This became clearer as we talked about her time abroad and her views on Granada now that she is no longer there.

Although I always wanted to go out of Granada, I always said "This is a very cool city, Granada is my home" and now I feel it even more. I feel like I'm from Granada even more now...Right now, I miss it a lot and when I was in Granada it gave me a little pride to say "Look, I live in this city where this beautiful, very cool monument is."

While hearing Ana talk about how much she misses the city I remembered that Arturo and Pilar shared a similar sentiment. For some the city is a place that they find comfort in and where they can be an even more true version of themselves.

Self-love and Belonging

In *Culture's In-Between*, from *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Homi K. Bhabha touches on the book *Beloved* by Toni Morrison to discuss how cultural and communal knowledge can be seen an act of self-love.³⁶ Bhabha argues that by working toward increasing one's knowledge of their own culture/community one is committing an act of self-love. I apply Bhabha's thought to how my interlocutors who have relocated to Granada have worked hard to learn the city's culture and through this act have found their place in the city. Many of my interlocutors who moved to the city expressed that learning about aspects of the city made them feel like they belonged. For Carla knowing all of the best spots to send her students no matter what they were looking for was something that made her feel like she finally belonged.

Amongst these aspects are the city's artistic expression seen around the Albaicin, the "young" and queer vibe of the city, and the Alhambra's history.

Arturo shared with me that to him Granada was like heaven,

I can be myself there. You know, it's like a pretty young city, there's college kids everywhere. I wouldn't be the only guy with painted nails there, probably. So it just feels in that sense a lot more open than someplace like Sevilla, which to me is a little bit more conservative, you know?

While we talked Arturo could not help but apologize for comparing Granada to his family's native Sevilla. As he talked more about why he felt like he belonged in Granada, Arturo talked to me about Granada's flamenco and gypsy history. I knew this was something important to him as I had seen him sit outside our abroad center's balcony playing on his flamenco guitar many times during our short stay.

³⁶ Hall and Du Gay, 53.

One of my other interlocutor's Maria shared similar opinions to Arturo in regard to the city's queer scene. I met Maria a few months before my trip to Spain and had talked to them several times about what to do in the city since they had lived there for a whole year and we had similar backgrounds. Maria is a 22 year old, queer Puerto Rican-American visual artist from New Jersey. Maria had visited Granada on a two week work trip taking images of sites in the city and the larger Andalusia area. As we talked about their adventures in the city during that first trip Maria explained,

I was with quite a few queer people. I didn't really go in thinking that we were going to have all of these cool fun queer experiences there. While I got there, I was really happy.

It was the sense of comfort that they felt during that two week trip that made them go study abroad in the city the entire next year. Maria continued to tell me what it was like to live in the city for a year and described their walking trips around different neighborhoods in the city and what they saw on these trips.

It really made me happy to see how many people take social justice seriously in that city, because there was a lot of graffiti everywhere which was all very politically charged talking about tourists and colonists. Which was kind of funny because I was like, you guys are Spaniards, like, you're the colonists...but also, I understood, and it was cool to see that they're thinking about these things because something I'm passionate about.

As we talked more about social justice in Granada, Maria talked about how important it had been for them to get involved while they were there. They described it as freeing and while they shared their experiences with me, I could not help thinking back to Bhabha's words on self-love. Maria got to know the city's culture of social justice and by participating in the culture they not only participated in acts of self-love but love for their new community.

In his chapter Bhabha also discusses that this act of "self-love...is also the love of the 'other'". In the case of my interlocutors the "other" who they find themselves

loving is their own Muslim history, culture, and their neighbors. Most of my interlocutors talked about the importance of Granada's Muslim past and present. They explained that they city would not be as it is if it were not for the architecture during the Middle Ages that the Muslim reign brought as well as the current inhabitants of the Albaicin, the old Muslim quarter of the city. Majority of those who permanently live in the Albaicin are migrants from North Africa, primarily Morocco. While two of my interlocutors who live in the Albaicin do not fit this profile, they explained that it is because of this population that they chose to buy their home in this part of the city. When talking about living in the Albaicin Benjamin stated,

I'm not a religious person myself at all. But I think this diversity makes the neighborhood richer, more tolerant.

Benjamin speaks of the Albaicin's diversity as something that is important, and he alludes to the idea that this diversity is one based on religion given his previous statement. Given that Spain is a largely Catholic country many of its citizens are in fact Catholic and that often makes religion a topic of discussion when talking about migrants in Granada; especially those from North Africa as they are all considered to be Muslim. In my conversation with Rodrigo, he stated

Not many other people come to this part of the city, unless it is to see the Alhambra one day exclusively.

When I asked him why he thought that was he explained that it is because of the population in this part of the city. While some claim their Muslim heritage and love their neighbors that remind them of the city's past the same cannot be said for others. This is something that I will touch on often throughout my thesis.

History and Belonging

Through my interlocutors' words so far it is clear that their sense of belonging is deeply tied to their own sense of self and identity. For some being queer, Latinx, or Spanish has impacted their sense of belonging in Granada. History, however, also has something to do with this. Some feel like they belong in the city because the city caters to people who love art, theater, history. Granada's history, particularly that tied to its Muslim origin is largely placed as a tourist attraction. This is seen through the use of many sites in the city as tourist locations such as the Alhambra, the baths, and other buildings from the Middle Ages. For many of my interlocutors Granada's tourist aspect is not something that makes the city better.

I think that in the world of tourism sometimes the value of the city together with the Alhambra is lost. Like the two things are connected and belong to the same history. It would be ideal to get to know the Alhambra, the city, and the context in which the monument is located but that's not the reality.

Carla points out that while many get to know about the Alhambra, they do not get to know about the city as a whole. However, as I will explore more in depth later, they do not learn as much about the Alhambra as one would expect, and this is not the case simply about the city's most important monument. When I spoke with Ana, she shared with me that she was not taught much of her city's Muslim history throughout her time at school.

I bring up Granada's Muslim history in now as I talk about belonging because although none of my interlocutors are Muslim themselves many shared that the city is not a welcoming place for everyone, particularly those within the Muslim community. A perfect example of this is the events on el *Día de la Toma* which celebrates expulsion and exclusions of Muslims from the peninsula. Amongst these events is the procession

which signifies kicking the Moors out of Christian Spain. In recent years there has been growing concern for the day's events and how they do not represent acceptance of all of Granada's citizens, the Muslim community in particular. There have been local newspaper articles on the controversy from both sides, however, the majority are in support of the day and its events. Amongst those comments are statements such as

- 1: sympathizers of the extreme left and various allegedly cultural groups identified with radical emblems and republican flags, tried to break the peace and harmony of a holiday that at no time insults, represses or humiliates...all the people of Granada and tourists just want to enjoy a peaceful celebration and a tribute to the Catholic Monarchs.³⁷
- 2: That's great! Finally a *Día de la Toma* without controversy (or loud polemicists).³⁸
- 3: Costly celebrations with public money.³⁹

The last two are from earlier this year when the day was celebrated within the Cathedral and not in public due to the pandemic. Some clearly are in support while others are shocked to see the government using the people's money to hold the event given everything that is going on in the world. From what I had read in news articles and had heard while in Granada I believed that it was a well-known fact considering how much of a controversy there is around it. I learned from Carla, however, that is not something celebrated or even known by many who were not born and raised in the city.

People like me, from other parts of Spain, well we go home around Christmas. So, it's a very Granada day, for the people from Granada and the people who have grown up in Granada. It is not a celebration in which people who are not from Granada participate. Even if you feel like you belong in Granada, like me, in your heart, but you haven't grown

³⁷ "Day of the Taking of Granada," Granada around the World, <https://www.grnadaporemundo.com/dia-de-la-toma-de-granada/>.

³⁸ Granada Hoy, "Así ha sido el Día de la Toma de Granada de 2021: atípico, sin público y en la intimidad de la Catedral," Granada Hoy, January 2, 2021, https://www.grnadahoy.com/granada/Dia-Toma-Granada-2021-intimidad-Catedral_0_1534346733.html.

³⁹ Hoy.

up here, then you don't have that party integrated into you. In fact, I didn't know that this party existed only until a few years ago.

Carla's use of the feeling in your heart that you belong were very striking to me because it showed me that she fully considers herself a Granadina, but even then, she is still outside of an event like this. To go even further, if she someone who is Spanish and Catholic does not feel welcome by the events on this day someone who is Muslim will likely not either.

While *Día de la Toma* mainly focuses on the expulsion of the Muslim community from Spain it is important to mention that they were not the only group expelled from the country at this time. Sephardic Jews and many gypsy communities also had to escape and find a home outside of the city, and Spain as a whole.

My mom's last name, comes from a history of expulsion, because we changed our last names when my family converted from, you know, being Sephardic Jews, to Christianity. And so like, there's just so much violence there.

While Granada places itself as a present day city of diversity its history nor can the reality of the today can be ignored. When I talked to Ana, the only one who was born and raised in the city she expressed,

I identify in the end with what is typical of the city. With the atmosphere that is breathed in Granada of art, of history but not that historical aspect... When I think "I'm from Granada", I don't think about this division that there was before. For me Granada is one. You know?

When Ana talks about "that historical aspect" she is speaking about Granada's celebration of el *Día de la Toma*. As she speaks of the atmosphere of history, she is referencing the city's historical aspect as seen through its architecture. She explained to me that there was something about "an older city" that made her feel at home.

However, she like many in Granada, see the city as a unified people despite events that say otherwise.

¿Que es ser Andaluz?

Earlier I mentioned that Arturo felt like he belonged because his family is from the same autonomous community that Granada is located in and he is not the only one that felt this way. Rodrigo also added that he felt comfortable in Granada because of the similarities in “social practices to where I grew up”. He described these social practices as collective celebrations, social sentiments, and even mealtimes. These social practices are usually tied to this idea of being *Andaluz*, but what does that mean?

I first heard about being *Andaluz* when I visited Sevilla in 2016. My host family explained to me that it was what differentiated people from Andalucia from the rest of Spain. They placed their accent, *ceceo* which many think of when they think of a Spanish accent and regional dishes under what it is to be *Andaluz*, the question which heads this section of my thesis. Nearly five years later I know it is more than just the accent of those from Andalucia and the dishes that are custom in the region but also a notion tied to the history of Al-Andalus. However, while I know more about what being *Andaluz* is I do not claim to know exactly what it is because I myself am not from there and have not lived there enough to truly grasp its meaning. I inform my idea of what it means to be *Andaluz* by the words of my interlocutors, primarily those who are from the region and continue to live in the region as they reside in Granada.

I bring this idea of *Andaluz* into my thesis because of its historical ties to the region of Al-Andalus. In *Afterlife of Al-Andalus*, Christina Civantos explains that,

The cultural aspects of *andalucismo* include highlighting and celebrating the characteristics of Andalusian culture that are understood to be a part of its Andalusí heritage. It would be difficult to ascertain the degree to which such a cultural continuity exists since the official historical record indicates that almost all moriscos were expelled and any remaining morisco cultural or religious practices were aggressively quashed⁴⁰

What Andalucians celebrate today as their Andalusí cultural heritage may in fact not be as it once was.⁴¹ However, to many it has become an especially important part of their *Andaluz* identity. The rise of importance of Andalucian heritage stems more recently from the transition to democracy from the Franco regime which encouraged homogeneity. Today this notion of *Andaluz* is seen not only as culturally important but as politically important. Civantos explains that

Aside from Toledo, the cities most associated with the height of Andalusí civilization—Cordoba, Granada, and Seville—are part of the present-day region of Andalusia facilitates the identification between that region and al-Andalus. Additionally, although geographically al-Andalus and Andalusia are not identical, the etymological connection between the place names has served to heighten the perceived connection between the contemporary Spanish region and the former Muslim political and cultural entity.⁴²

Andalusia as a region has more of a foothold in politics in comparison to other regions thanks to its connection to the past, a past which lasted nearly eight centuries.

Civantos goes on to explain that this connection is something that the region can use politically through essentialism. She goes on to explain Spivak's use of the term essentialism as "the political expediency of minority groups temporarily essentializing themselves" where they can achieve political goals by "glossing over differences and

⁴⁰ Christina Civantos, *The Afterlife of Al-Andalus: Muslim Iberia in Contemporary Arab and Hispanic Narratives*, SUNY Series in Latin American and Iberian Thought and Culture. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017), 35.

⁴¹ I write Andalusia and write about those who reside in the region with a c to honor my interlocutors who spell Andalusia in that way and to distinguish from the period of Al-Andalus.

⁴² Civantos, *The Afterlife of Al-Andalus*, 35.

pointing to a simplified group identity”.⁴³ This simplified group identity places citizens in cities, such as Granada, Sevilla, and Cordoba under being *Andaluz*.

Civantos goes on to explain that this idea of being *Andaluz* is not only politically important but economically important as well. As I will discuss more in depth in the next section, Granada and the region of Andalucia use its Muslim heritage as a big bullet point in their tourism. Civantos describes Andalucia as a “an economically depressed region that has been viewed from the outside as an extension of North Africa.”⁴⁴ She explains that after being seen this way for so long and it being something negative, they changed the narrative and found a way to embrace their *moro (Moor)* connection to benefit the region.⁴⁵ The citizens of Andalucia, primarily in the bigger touristy cities, have come to embrace the accomplishments of Al-Andalus, like the Alhambra, the Mezquita-Catedral de Córdoba, and even the Giralda.

Conclusion

My own experiences and my interlocutors’ words have shown that you can feel like you belong by understanding a city and its people through its culture, but you can also reach this “dream of belonging” through legal residence. *Empadronamiento* can be a step in finding this sense of belonging as it was for Rodrigo, but it can also just be a requirement you have to fulfill by law. Finding one’s place in a city is an individual act and does not look the same for everyone. For some of my interlocutors it can be and of self-love as it is the acceptance of ones being in a new location and finding comfort in

⁴³ Civantos, 35.

⁴⁴ Civantos, 36.

⁴⁵ Civantos, 36.

that. For others feeling like they belong made them see the parts that are harder to love about Granada. Tourism and the increase in interest in Granada's, and Spain's, Muslim history has been very impactful within the city and the region. However, Civantos explains that another way to perceive this instead of a true embracing of the region's Muslim past, is as an appropriation an essentialization of "another group—actual Muslims"⁴⁶ This essentialization and not true acceptance can be seen by some's views on *Día de la Toma* and the city's portrayal of its history. Civantos states that

the concept of *lo andaluz*—that which is Andalusian—is a myth that has been accepted as true.⁴⁷

In the following section I will talk more about the myths of not just *lo Andaluz* but of Granada and its historical memory. I talk about this notion of myths in order to explore whether Granadinos are truly proud of their Muslim past or if its simply a bullet point for tourism. Additionally, through this we see how tourism impacts Granada's citizens and their sense of belonging.

⁴⁶ Civantos, 37.

⁴⁷ Civantos, 36.

II

La Alhambra: Tourism and Memory

This chapter touches on whether the Alhambra can be seen as an example of *lieu de memoire* or not. In my interviews with my interlocutors there was one resounding theme: their frustration of having so many people within a space and not feeling like the space was respected. Through my interlocutors' words we see that it can fulfill this role as an example of *lieu de memoire*, but it also cannot given its large tourist aspect.

In Saskia Sassen's chapter *Whose City Is It? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims* found in *Cities and Citizenship*, Sassen explains globalization's impact on cities. She states that "global cities are sites for immense concentrations of economic power and command centers in a global economy, while traditional manufacturing centers have suffered inordinate declines."⁴⁸ Within Spain, Madrid has become the global cities that hold the nation's command centers while its other cities have turned to cultural tourism to sustain their economies. Madrid's downtown has started to look like a smaller New York City with electronic billboards on all of its stores making the city more modern and cosmopolitan. As Sassen explains, a city with more traditional values has had to shift toward a more modern society, going as far as making tourism one of their most important sources of income. Granada in comparison to Madrid has slightly shifted towards being a modern city but has mainly focused on turning their history into profit. When talking about his life in Spain, Arturo pointed out that

COVID has shown that Spain needs tourism to function essentially, like that's our economy. And it's been our economy for so so long so you have to like it because it's

⁴⁸ Holston, *Cities and Citizenship*, 183.

giving you money. Tourists are helping you live essentially, even if you don't directly work in tourism.

For Arturo tourism is simply part of what makes the nation Spain.

Granada is located in the southern autonomous community of Andalucia a name derived from the name Al-Andalus, the name of the Iberian Peninsula while under Muslim rule. Given Granada's history as the last city that fell to the Catholic Monarch, this is the narrative that Granada's tourism exploits beside the residence of the poet Federico Garcia Lorca who was killed during the Spanish Civil War. When one visits Granada some of the most popular sites to visit are the Alhambra, Albaicin, Sacromonte, the Realejo, the *Catedral*, and Lorca's home. The poet's home is the only one that is not directly involved in the history of the fall of Granada. The Realejo is the Jewish quarter of the old city, Sacromonte is the gypsy quarter of the old city, and the Albaicin is where most of the city's Muslim population lived and continues to live today. The Cathedral is where one can find King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella's remains, possibly the biggest sign of the city's catholic conquest.

Within his chapter of *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Zygmunt Bauman discusses the many roles people can occupy within a city. Bauman describes a tourist as someone who "is on the move... he is everywhere he goes in, but nowhere of the place he is in... The tourist moves on purpose...The purpose is new experience."⁴⁹ Throughout this chapter when I discuss a tourist I will be focusing on the purpose that Bauman states a tourist has, that of a new experience. For many tourists visiting Granada, the new experiences are not found on the main streets near the Burger King

⁴⁹ Hall and Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 29.

that is practically in the center of the city, but the Alhambra, the Albaicin, Sacromonte, the Realejo.

The Alhambra is known around the world for being a historic wonder, especially after it was declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1984. When people think about traveling to Spain, the Alhambra is one of the places everyone tells them to visit beside Madrid, Barcelona, and maybe the *Giralda* in Sevilla. The Alhambra, which was declared a national monument in 1870, is one of the nation's oldest national monument with ties to several historic periods for the nation.

I think we understand, at least pre-COVID, that mass tourism is here to stay... I see why it becomes such a massive tourist attraction. That building represents a lot artistically, ideologically and historically in Western Europe. It is a major draw for people from all over the world...And I think it's understandable. I don't know if it's necessarily good for the monument itself. But, you know, in the larger context of mass World Tourism, it's only natural that it happens.

Benjamin, like Arturo, sees tourism as a key part to not just Spain's reality but to the rest of the world especially when in reference to the Alhambra. In recent years, the Alhambra has received about 2.7 million visitors per year which means nearly a forty to fifty billion income for the monument a year. While I was not able to find when exactly the Alhambra opened its door to tourists, over the past decade the number of visitors has increased by more than half of a million.

In my last visit to Granada, I only got to visit the Alhambra once and I only entered its museum that's found in the Palacio de Carlos V, but it was that visit that caused me to question how Granadiños feel about the Alhambra's tourism. As I walked through the museum, I found myself feeling claustrophobic due to the large amount of people around me. Half of them were students in my architecture class and the other half were other tourists. I say tourists accepting the fact that myself and my classmates

were also tourists within this space. Due to the pandemic, I was not able to further explore my own feelings and thoughts on tourism within the Alhambra's walls.

Historical Memory vs lieu de memoire

In Sassen's chapter she touches on how dominant culture encompasses different parts of a city.⁵⁰ She argues that dominant culture is constantly shifting and not everyone identifies with dominant culture because since it is constantly shifting not everyone has enough time to grasp onto it.⁵¹ Following Sassen's train of thought, if things in a city are constantly shifting making it difficult to feel like one belongs, then that might be why some find comfort and a sense of belonging in a monument such as the Alhambra that has been around for so long. In *Ideologizing the past*, Fairchild Ruggles touches on the rise of recognition of Spain's Muslim past. It is possible that this rise of interest in the past is due to the fast changing culture of the present. In Sassen's discussion on dominant culture in a shifting society she adds that "while corporate power inscribes these cultures and identities with 'otherness,' thereby devaluing them, they are present everywhere."⁵² For Granada the cultures and identities that were devalued and ignored were the Muslim, gypsy, and Jewish. This was done shortly after the conquest of the Catholic Monarchs but also during the Franco dictatorship. Recent interest in Granada's Muslim culture and history is likely a result of the end of the Franco dictatorship. For Granada its Muslim culture is evident

⁵⁰ Holston, *Cities and Citizenship*, 189.

⁵¹ Holston, 191.

⁵² Holston, 189.

all throughout the city in its architecture but also in the people's language, music, and food as my interlocutors point out:

Maria: You see the architecture and you see just like even just the people like you see it. And the food that is there, like you know, it's very prevalent.

Benjamin: The Muslim present is also tangible, in the architecture, in the form of the city, in the food, and the music. As a northern Spaniard I think I see things a little bit differently being from there. But in Granada that clash of history is very evident.

In *Afterlife of Al-Andalus* Civantos introduces the term *lieu de memoire*. Civantos explains this term to mean that certain places, objects, or events can have special significance related to group's remembrance and identity.⁵³ The term *lieu de memoire* was popularized by French philosopher and historian Pierre Nora. In English one can understand the term to be sites of memory. In the article *Between Memory and History* Nora explain that memory and history are not synonymous because memory is a living act as it can be forgotten and remembered.⁵⁴ History on the other hand is a "representation of the past" that can be problematic because of its intellectual nature.⁵⁵ Given Nora's view of history and memory it makes sense that the term is *lieu de memoire* since it's the act of memory and remembering that Nora states is happening in these sites. From my readings on the Alhambra and my conversations with my interlocutors I have come to see that the Alhambra can example of *lieu de memoire*. The Alhambra is a part of Granada's physical and historical skyline. It has become integral to Granadiños identity, as well as Spain's history particularly in relation to the

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⁵⁴ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 8, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520>.

⁵⁵ Nora, 8–9.

Muslim past of the city and the time period of Al-Andalus. However, as Nora points out the history of the site has a problematic representation of the past.

One of the questions I asked my interlocutors during our conversations was whether they considered the Alhambra a site of remembrance, *lieu de memoire*, in comparison to the city which is much more modernized with the exception of the Albaicin. Arturo explained that for him the Alhambra is a big visual that reminds him of Spain's past. He added,

When I went, I was interested in what was being said, I thought it was like all really cool. The architecture was beautiful. But I also always question what narratives are being told to us in that moment, you know, and what isn't being told especially. They always say they were kicked out of Spain in 1492, this was like the last bastion, but they never really talk about the context... It was horrific it you know. La *Reconquista*, they weren't reconquering anything, they were actually conquering all these Emirates and califates that had been there for 800 years, and they just like fucking kicked them out.

It's clear that for Arturo the Alhambra is a site that reminds him of Granada and Spain's Muslim history and culture, however, as Nora pointed out it's a problematic perspective of history. Arturo questions what narrative is being told because it's quite common in Spain to tell the narrative from a winner's perspective where the winners are the Catholic Monarchs. Benjamin had a similar perspective,

There are still people who reject it and see it as a parenthesis in the history of Granada. Some people glorify it and see it as a period of splendor of Granada. As for myself, I don't know, I see it as all of that. I see it as, of course, a reminder of a Muslim past. A reminder of the effects of the cancellation of our Muslim culture in Spain, and in Granada. Also, the kind of the distorted glorification. But also, in recent years, I think for many of us it's a reminder of who we were as Spaniards, and who were Spaniards were eight or 900 years ago

For him it is an example of *lieu de memoire* because it has this problematic history that Nora speaks of and at the same time has a changing memory attached to it. For Benjamin, unlike Arturo, there is a recognition of the shift of perspective in recent years given that he is much older than Arturo.

When talking with my other interlocutors about the Alhambra as *lieu de memoire* the idea of pride and idealization came up as well. The Alhambra provides tourists and Granada's citizens a look in the Iberian peninsula's Andalusian past.⁵⁶ However, that look into its past is an awfully specific one, one primarily for tourists. In my conversation with Arturo he explained,

The story is told in a way that'll get the most money, that'll sensationalize it the most... A lot of times it can feel like people are going about it through this lens of sensationalism and they don't really truly want to know the real story or like what it is to be a citizen of this country, they want to know is the story that will be the most fun or interesting, so they can go back and tell everyone.

In her article Ruggles discusses the idealization of the Alhambra through its tourism by tourists as well as Granada's citizens. Arturo's words show that it is an idealization done by Granada's citizens, particularly those in who work in tourism, to appeal to tourists. Ruggles explains that the Muslim past of Granada is simultaneously admired as something that distinguishes Spain from the rest of Europe but also resisted.⁵⁷ She explains that this sense of admiration is likely due to interest in cultural identity after the death of Franco which I previously pointed out.

Nora states that "history is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it."⁵⁸ The suppression of Spain's Muslim past was successfully carried out during Franco's rule and has only recently become a topic of interest for some within Spain. The search for this Muslim past is complicated by the fact that,

⁵⁶ D. Fairchild Ruggles, "Ideologizing the Past," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 3 (2013): 574, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743813000512>.

⁵⁷ Ruggles, 574.

⁵⁸ Nora, "Between Memory and History," 9.

There's this "history" of Spain that was dominant until not that long ago. And I think there's still probably some elements of that in the way history is taught with the idea of the Reconquista. It is a ridiculous concept because... the Iberian Peninsula became Muslim and that was what Spain was for many centuries. Then in the 19th century it was kind of romanticized and the Alhambra was kind of rebuilt in what at the time was kind of a romantic view of the Muslims in Spain.

The history that Benjamin speaks of is that which became law under Franco's dictatorship. Benjamin's words support both Nora and Ruggles' arguments. The Alhambra is both a romanticized and idealized site with a problematic view of its history. It's a space that fits into the romantic view of Muslims in Spain with its beautiful architecture which is only discussed with the narrative of the Reconquista.

In her article Ruggles adds that the "past and present of national monuments often... complicate their utility as 'patrimony' and 'heritage'".⁵⁹ Ruggles argues that the Alhambra serves both as a place of remembrance for Granadiños to interact with their culture as well as a tourist site. It functions as both "patrimony" and "heritage", as patrimony the Alhambra is serving as a tourist site. However, it is also a site of heritage or *lieu de memoire*. For Pilar the concept of the Alhambra 'patrimony' and 'heritage' is something she clearly saw in her homestay where there was a sense of pride from her host mom tied to the monument.

I think I would say that it seems like a point of pride... I think that was because my host mom used to be a tour guide there. And she had taken like art history classes so she would talk a lot about what it was like when she would do her tours and stuff like that. And she always seemed just like, super proud of it. And, like proud of the fact that she had worked there... I don't know, I think if I hadn't gotten that connection, and like, heard my host mom talk about it then I would see it as kind of like a scapegoat. Because I don't feel like I really got a big sense of like, it being a big part of the culture, outside of like my homestay.

Based on Pilar's words the Alhambra is a heritage site which brought pride to her host mom, but this pride was due to her host mom's personal tie to the Alhambra as a site of

⁵⁹ Ruggles, "Ideologizing the Past," 574.

patrimony. Yet again the Alhambra shows that it can be an example of *lieu de memoire* but it cannot escape its problematic ties to tourism and an idealized history.

La Alhambra no es Disney World

Pilar was one of my interlocutors who like me was a student abroad right before the pandemic started. Her experiences with the Alhambra are mainly centered around class trips either with our Islamic architecture class or her watercolor class. When asked about her perception of the city's tourism she responded,

They're all concentrated in this one part of the city... It was always very striking to me when we did visit it or like would walk near there like how many people there are because I feel like just walking around Granada, I didn't really see that many tourists... except on that one walkway that was always crowded with tourists and tour buses that would take you up to the Alhambra... it just seemed very different than the rest of the city.

The walkway that she's speaking of is El Paseo de los Tristes which is on the other side of the Darro River and the Alhambra. The name translates to Promenade of the Sad Ones since it was the street taken by funeral processions on the way to the old cemetery. It's one of the ways to get to the Alhambra and a common location for wandering tourists as it has a clear view of the Alhambra.



Taken by me while walking along el Paseo de los Tristes.

When talking to Arturo about tourism in Granada I mentioned El Paseo de los Tristes since we had often gone on walks through this street on our way up to different lookouts. Arturo did not remember the street's colloquial name, but he did recall it being "super full" and recalled experiencing a sense of discomfort whenever we passed by. When I asked why he replied,

I don't know, I felt almost like a tourist in there than I did a citizen of the city. It felt kind of weird and removed to some degree.

I cannot speak to Arturo's feelings, but I can agree that walking through that street made me feel like a tourist as well, likely due to the feeling of being in a herd of tourists whenever we walked through there. As we got to know that part of the city better, we

took other routes to avoid El Paseo de los Tristes despite the beautiful view it had of the fortress.

While I've touched on my interlocutor's views on how the Alhambra serves as *lieu de memoire* and hinted towards their feelings toward the Alhambra's tourism it's important to touch on it specifically. I went into my interviews with my interlocutors aware that they were likely to have different levels of interactions with the Alhambra and that knowledge was something that excited me. Some were students who had likely walked through its walls for class and others were citizens who had likely visited the site several times due to their jobs and many visits from friends and family. The Alhambra is known for drawing in many kinds of visitors into its walls, gardens, and towers. What I did not expect was the resounding disdain for tourists since majority of my interlocutors were not born and raised in Granada and at one point were likely tourists.

One of the first questions I asked my interlocutors was how many times they had visited the Alhambra and why they had visited the site. Some said it was because everyone had told them to visit while others said it was a requirement for a class or job. Rodrigo laughed upon asking my question and replied,

If you asked me how many times I have visited the Alhambra, I cannot tell you how many. I have visited it many times ...

Then he proceeded to get up and walk around his house as he said,

We have a terrace at home, on the top floor, and we go up a lot to get some fresh air, especially now, in times of COVID

By the time he finished this statement he was at his terrace showing me the Alhambra.

There was a sense of pride as he continued to talk about the view and how lucky he was to be able to look at it every day.

During their interview Maria described to me the first visit they made to the Alhambra in which they were tasked with photographing a class walking through the Alhambra while on a tour led by an American University student,

I definitely felt weird. There was a family there that was very obviously American, and of course, they were white. The way the way that they were talking about the Alhambra was as if they were walking through an open house kind of thing. They were like, "Wow, I would put this over here." And I was like, okay well, this isn't a real estate opportunity, this is something cultural. They weren't reading anything or taking anything in... I felt kind of hypocritical because I wasn't taking as much in because I was doing a job there... there were definitely a lot of people that were speeding through and not really looking at the place and were being disrespectful about some of the stuff there.

Maria's story relates directly to Bauman's description of the tourist's world. Bauman states that it is a world "fully and exclusively structured by aesthetic criteria."⁶⁰ The aesthetic aspect of the Alhambra is something that can be seen in the words said by the American family in Maria's story. They walked through the Alhambra and rather than seeing it as a site of historical memory they saw it as a site to please their aesthetic, like an open house of artifacts as Maria states.

Maria's sentiments toward the Alhambra's tourism also tie to Bauman's explanation of what tourists seek from their new experience. For them it's almost natural for a historical site to become a tourist site

especially if it's an "exotic place". Tourists like taking selfies and being geo tagging these spaces... they're not treating it with respect.

As I talked with Rodrigo, he told me a story that connected with Maria's words about the lack of respect for the Alhambra.

Some time ago I was (in the Alhambra) looking through a window at some orange trees that are in the courtyards of the Alhambra and the sun was entering in a beautiful way. I was absorbed. I was there staring open-mouthed. And suddenly someone comes and says "Please, can you move I'm going to take a picture" and I stayed like "What?"

⁶⁰ Hall and Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 30.

Rodrigo explained that he felt upset that his moment had been ruined and simply for a picture. Bauman states, "the tourist is a conscious and systematic seeker of experience, of a new and different experience, of the experience of difference... The tourists want to immerse themselves in a strange and bizarre element."⁶¹ Although Maria does not use the words strange or bizarre to describe the Alhambra, they do use the term exotic, which is very much the perception people have of the Alhambra. An exotic site that allows for a view of Muslim Spain. Maria's story and their opinions were shared by some of my other interlocutors as is clear by Rodrigo's story. However, my interlocutors also felt that they were hypocritical of tourists since they had also done the same. Arturo, for example, recalled that visiting the Alhambra was a weird experience because it was not something he had planned, it had just happened because a friend gave him tickets. He said being there

made me kind of question, am I from this place? Or am I just visiting this place? It's a place where I literally a citizen of this place, but I'm acting in a way, that's not how a citizen would, I guess, is what I'm trying to say... it's why I definitely have a love hate relationship with tourism just in general.

Later he added that it was because outside the Alhambra's walls he felt like a Spanish citizen and a citizen of Granada, he felt Andaluz but while on the tour he felt like part of the crowd of tourists. He discussed how it's tied to how much the site is sensationalized. Rodrigo like Arturo felt like the site sensationalized and he explained

I know that we need tourism. There needs to be tour guides and people selling tickets, but the Alhambra isn't Disney World, it's not a theme park. You got to a theme park to have fun but that's not what you should come to do at the Alhambra. It's not a place to sensationalize, its history.

Yet again we come back to the idea of tourism being needed and accepted within Spain but the recognition that this place should be respected.

⁶¹ Hall and Du Gay, 29.

As I've mentioned before Pilar, unlike the rest of my interlocutors, has not gotten the chance to see the Alhambra in its entirety. When I asked her how she felt about it she responded,

I've talked a lot with like friends about this. And I'm thinking about how everyone says that it's something you should visit but I don't necessarily feel like I missed out that much. I think that's because we studied so much about it for architecture and learned so much of the history. I have to remind myself "Oh, yeah, I didn't actually visit it." But I don't know that I would go back to Granada, just because my friends said I missed out.

As our conversation continued Pilar shared with me that she was actually glad she had gotten to learn about the Alhambra in class and not just through a tour because she felt like she wouldn't have learned as much. I bring this up because based on a comment Maria made during their interview Pilar is likely correct.

Our tour guide wasn't one of the people who work at the Alhambra, they were from the university we partner with, so their job was to really talk about it. We spent a lot of time there because he would stop at like, very specific places and talk about the significance of each thing. I think that we were kind of lucky because it was their job to make sure that we understood because this was technically a class that I was following. Some of the Alhambra's tour guides were very, very speedy to get you in and out but I thought the point was like to be there.

From Maria's words on the difference between her tour guide and those who work in the Alhambra it is likely that what Pilar and I learned about the Alhambra in our class is far more than what we would've gotten from out of a tour.

However, from my conversation with Benjamin I'm also even more aware of how lucky Pilar and I to have gotten to learn about the site.

My kids went to school in Granada, and they were never taken to the Alhambra which I think is preposterous. I took them many times, and they still go, you can see it from my house. But you know, the kids are raised in Granada, and they're not taken to the Alhambra... I remember looking at my kids' textbooks, and it's definitely not central to the curriculum. But neither is it at the University of Granada.

After hearing Benjamin tell me this about the lack of existence of the Alhambra in the curriculum, I asked why he thought this was and he explained that it was both the school system and the Alhambra who are at fault.

It's just not given enough impulse in the curriculum for schools to take students which I think is terrible. I think the Alhambra itself should also take the lead; I'm not just blaming the public school system. You were asking me about mass tourism, and I think what they see is the money that's behind all the tourists. As an institution it should take responsibility first of educating its population and the young students of Granada and reserving more time and more space for that, even at the expense of eliminating a certain number of tourists. But they're not doing that.

I was saddened, yet at the same time not awfully surprised. My conversation with Ana proved how true Benjamin's words were. She explained that she had never gone to the Alhambra because of anything school related, it had all been personal interest. I even reached out to my architecture professor who works at the University of Granada and she explained that it is not widely taught because there is not much interest within the student body, however, she does teach those who come to her personally. She told me that the only time she fully teaches class on the Alhambra, both its history and the architecture, is when she teaches at the abroad center I attended.

My conversation with Carla shed a light on the fact that the history of the Alhambra is not just glossed over in tours but decontextualized in tourism.

Travel agencies sell Andalucia packages, and you have a visit to the Alhambra, but not Granada. That is, they go to the Alhambra and leave. I think this is a bit sad because the Alhambra belongs to Granada. It's like part of other things, it's not just the Alhambra and that's it. I think that in the world of tourism sometimes the value of the city together with the Alhambra is lost and that the two things are connected and belong to the same history. The ideal is to get to know the Alhambra and get to know the city and the context in which the monument is located.

Carla's word about how the Alhambra belongs to Granada is true. Without the city and the history of the city one cannot understand the architectural changes that happened within the Alhambra itself. The monument was altered and forgotten several times given who was in power in the city of Granada, it was not a place separate from the city.

It's clear from the way that Granada's government markets the Alhambra that they want it to be a heritage site and publicly it is one, it's a World Heritage site by

UNESCO standards. It has the potential to be *lieu de memoire* for Granada's citizens, however, as Benjamin has pointed out neither the school system nor the administrators of the Alhambra itself have previously pushed for this to be the case. Its primary purpose is not that of heritage but rather of patrimonial income.

COVID and its effect

The Alhambra closed its doors mid-March 2020 due to COVID-19 and reopened its doors three months later on June 17. Since its reopening it has been operating at half of its capacity to implement sanitation protocols.

Of my interlocutors only Ana, Benjamin, Carla, and Rodrigo half have been in Granada during the pandemic. Out of all of them only two, Carla and Rodrigo, have remained there the whole time. Benjamin, who left Granada shortly after the start of the pandemic, stated that he had left because Granada simply was not the same. When asked about the Alhambra he said,

It is both beautiful and creepy for how quiet it is...it's a good time to appreciate the beauty of silence.

He explained that for the first month he appreciated being able to see it from his house and appreciate its beauty and the silence around it. However, not being walk through the Alhambra's halls made it seem like an empty place. Carla, on the other hand has remained in Granada the whole time, only leaving for short periods of time to visit family in Badajoz. Since the reopening of the Alhambra, she has visited twice and explained that the experience was almost magical. She described to me how exciting it had been to walk through the site and be able to see everything without a large cloud blocking her view. What struck me the most is that she added that this was the first time she visited where she did not feel like a tourist.

In *Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe*, Kevin Robins questions what happens to identity in isolation.⁶² From my interlocutors' words on this pandemic and its impact on the city and the Alhambra I felt that Robins question was answered. COVID has provided some of Granada's citizens a chance to experience this. While some have left to be with family elsewhere other's have taken the time to explore their city's most known spaces and experience them in a new light. Their identity has gone from tourist to citizen within a space that they have been in before. One could argue this is also largely due to the city's own push to invite its citizens into the Alhambra instead of marketing it specifically towards tourists.

Conclusion

Lieu de memoire, heritage, or patrimony? The Alhambra embodies all three at once. It's a site that reminds Granadinos, as well as Spaniards, of the peninsula's Muslim heritage. However, its way of being a site of memory creation is cut short as many fill its halls with their cameras and do not take the time to truly learn the history of the site. It is both due to a personal lack of respect but also a lack of responsibility from the protectors of the Alhambra who focus more on getting people in and out of its doors than on teaching its entire history. The history they teach is the same one being taught in schools, one where the Muslim past of the nation is just a parenthesis as Benjamin calls it. They use the building to symbolize them leaving behind the Franco era and a new acknowledgement and interest for their Muslim heritage, but the site is also just another site of patrimony, of income. When talking about Granada's Muslim legacy Benjamin added,

⁶² Hall and Du Gay, 79.

It's probably not as ideologically charged, as it was, you know, under Franco. But the concept that the Arabs were foreign invaders that were here for a long period of time before they were expelled is still quite transparent in history books... We are who we are because we expelled the Moors. I think it's only natural that that at least part of the population still believes that, that this is kind of a re conquest, "these are people we expelled and they're coming back".

III

Convivencia: Myth or Reality

Throughout this chapter I discuss the notion of *convivencia* in Granada and Andalucia as a whole. I explore how this notion connects to the celebration of *El Día de la Toma*, which celebrated the end of Al-Andalus and the expulsion of the Moors from the peninsula. My interlocutors place *convivencia* as something that has been exaggerated throughout history and explain that *El Día de la Toma* is proof of this. While they do not deny the possible existence of *convivencia*, they do not believe that it is not as many in Andalucia explain it.

In present day Andalucia the concept of *convivencia* is a clear indicator of the region's history of co-existence. It is a widely celebrated idea throughout the region and thought to be one of the pillars of Al-Andalus. Civantos provides historical background to the *convivencia* aspect of Andaluz and in turn Granadino identity. The term *convivencia*, its translation being coexistence, was actually coined by a Granadino philologist and historian named Américo Castro. Castro's idea of *convivencia* came from his interpretation of how the Iberian peninsula enjoyed a Muslim-led tolerance between Muslims, Christians, and Jews during the Middle Ages.⁶³ He argued that Spanish society and the Spanish culture owed a lot to medieval Jewish and Muslim populations, as well as their descendants.⁶⁴ Civantos expresses that the term *convivencia* has "taken on a life of its own and is often used to refer to a

⁶³ Civantos, *The Afterlife of Al-Andalus*, 34.

⁶⁴ "Convivencia," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press, 2010), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198662624.001.0001/acref-9780198662624-e-1537>.

utopian vision of interfaith harmony”.⁶⁵ She explains that it plays a large role in Spain’s historiography and their tourism. In Rogozen-Soltar’s preface to her book she explains that when they first arrived to Granada, she was told that “Granada especially had been home to *convivencia*... *convivencia* had left a lasting mark on the south, making it different from the rest of Spain.”⁶⁶ Granada was likely highlighted as the “home” for *convivencia* since at some point it had be the capital of the Muslim empire as well as the last bastion of the Nasrid Kingdom.

Convivencia and Granada

These author’s descriptions of *convivencia* are very historical and idyllic; however, many of my interlocutors found that *convivencia* may just be a romanticized version of the past to attract tourists to the city, as well as to Andalucia as a whole.

In our conversation Arturo expressed his doubts on the validity of *convivencia* in the Middle Ages. He said,

Ideally maybe in that time it happened. It’s just hard to imagine, you know, a perfect little, almost like hippie community where everyone is just tolerant of each other... It’s very convoluted, I just don’t know if that was necessarily a possibility back then

For Arturo there is a desire for *convivencia* to have existed as it is portrayed but he is also aware that it is not likely. Benjamin on the other hand called it a myth. He stated that,

It’s true that there was a certain degree of coexistence in certain parts of al-Andaluz... there was a certain degree of tolerance in certain periods of the of the caliphate of Cordoba, in certain periods of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, particularly toward Jews... There was tolerance, mostly because being tolerant probably makes you more productive as a society...I think it serves a purpose, which is to nullify the ideology that the Christians were the good ones and they erased all the terror that came with Islam.

⁶⁵ Civantos, *The Afterlife of Al-Andalus*, 4.

⁶⁶ Mikaela H. Rogozen-Soltar, *Spain Unmoored Migration, Conversion, and the Politics of Islam*, New Anthropologies of Europe (Bloomington, Indiana; Indiana University Press, 2017), xiv.

Benjamin brings up a good point as he discusses the mythic aspect of *convivencia* when he says that it was likely that there was tolerance but not because they were accepting of each other, rather because it was what was more productive. Something that also interested me in Benjamin's words is how for him the word *convivencia* is used in reference to the Christian rule after the fall of the Nasrid kingdom. His words reminded me of how Arturo described why the use of *convivencia* came about.

You always wonder sometimes, if those narratives are written to make the people who came out on top, this being the Christians, make them feel okay.

Whether the term is tied to the Christian or Muslim reign of the region it is still thought of as a somewhat accurate representation of the past. Benjamin, however, called it an "idealization of our perfect coexistence" and explained that he felt like that's what people like to think is happening in Granada now. He added that he knew there was no perfect coexistence. He had heard enough from Granadinos to know this. I asked him what he meant by that and he replied,

Sometimes when I tell people I live in the Albaicin some say "*Eso esta lleno de Moros*" / "*This is full of Moors*" and I hate hearing that. I love the diversity of the Albaicin, the diversity makes the neighborhood richer. I think it's a great place to live in and coexist. But that's not the story in some other parts of Granada, that's for sure.

He continued to tell me that there were many times when he heard other citizens make comments similar to the one he had told me about, without any prior conversation on the topic. Pilar's story tells us something similar.

It is very clear that Muslims are still not very widely accepted in general. I remember, the first time we went out clubbing our host was like "Oh, yeah, by the way, when my son went for the first time, the bouncers wouldn't let him in because they thought he was Muslim and he'd have to be like 'Oh, no, my hair is just curly and dark.'" It was just so weird. I was just sitting there. She said it so casually... When she was explaining it, she wasn't making the distinction of "Wow, the bouncers are so racist. those actions were wrong." She was just focused on talking about how her son had to prove that he wasn't Muslim...she never specifically said anything bad about Muslims, or immigrants, but even the fact that told her son what to say about making a very clear distinction when it

shouldn't even matter. I think is probably similar to what other people feel where they say, "I'm accepting of immigrants, or I'm accepting, accepting of Muslims." But then, still having these ideas of "Well, they're very separate from us." I feel like there's still kind of an expectation of you should assimilate or at least try to, like, suppress that part of your identity to fit in. It's not even tolerance. Definitely not coexistence.

From my conversation with Pilar, as well as my own experience in the city, I know that this perfect coexistence is not a reality. Arturo, like Pilar and I had a similar opinion,

there are still people who have hatred in their hearts, everywhere and it's not feasible in today's day and age to say, "Oh yeah, we're living totally harmoniously together despite our differences."

Based off of Arturo's words on the current state of Granada, and the world, *convivencia* continues to be a desire but not a reality in his mind.

Convivencia and La Toma

Some of Spain's biggest holidays are tied to its religion. Daniela Flesler points out that besides those tied to the Catholic calendar such as Easter and the celebration of the Three Kings, the festivals known as those of the Moors and Christians are some of the most popular. Flesler adds that there has been an increase in their popularity since the 1960s, which is right in the middle of Franco's regime.⁶⁷ She adds that the festivals depict how the Christians defeated "the Moors militarily, thus conquering their violence" while also appropriating the Moors creativity and accomplishments part of Spain's history, not that of Al-Andalus.⁶⁸ Flesler also attests the growth in these festivals to the development of tourism in Spain in the last fifty years."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Daniela Flesler, *The Return of the Moor: Spanish Responses to Contemporary Moroccan Immigration*, Purdue Studies in Romance Literatures (Purdue University Press, 2008), 98.

⁶⁸ Flesler, 99.

⁶⁹ Flesler, 98.

On November 10, 1992 Spain signed an agreement with the Spanish Islamic communities. The agreement of cooperation explains that Muslims and their places of worship would be protected in Spain, given that Islam has “become ‘noticeably rooted’ in Spanish society” and has a “considerable importance in the formation of Spanish identity.”⁷⁰ Since the signing of this agreement there has been an increase in interest in Spain’s Muslim past, particularly the aspect of *convivencia*. Rogozen-Soltar states that for Granada’s citizens *convivencia* is not something of the past. For them Granada is still “home to harmonious coexistence among diverse residents” and that coexistence is “ensured by welcoming and civilized attitudes thought to stem from the city’s historical experiences with religious and cultural pluralism.”⁷¹ Granadinos claim that Granada is the “birthplace of successful multiculturalism” because of the city’s history of *convivencia*.⁷² *Convivencia* assumes that all of the people in the city, despite their race and religion, coexist harmoniously. However, there is not always harmonious coexistence in the city as exemplified by many protests at the Ayuntamiento. These protests range from agrarian protests as the one I saw in the spring of 2020, where tractors filled the street next to the Ayuntamiento to human rights protests against the city, which in this past year cut off electricity repeatedly to the outer parts of the city where majority of the city’s immigrant population live. These protests which occur at the Ayuntamiento’s plaza, Plaza del Carmen, as well as those around the *Día de la Toma*, show that Granada does not live in a state of *convivencia* today.

⁷⁰ Flesler, 1.

⁷¹ Rogozen-Soltar, *Spain Unmoored Migration, Conversion, and the Politics of Islam*, xv.

⁷² Rogozen-Soltar, xv.

El Día de la Toma, or *La Toma*, is another example of a festival with similar connotations as those of the festivals of Moors and Christians. The day celebrates the “taking” of the city by the Catholic Monarchs from Boabdil in 1492, the Emir of the city, despite the fact that by 1489 almost the entire kingdom had already been dominated.⁷³ Boabdil's decision to surrender was made after the Catholic Monarchs promised to protect his people, a promise which was not kept. Since King Ferdinand's death the day has been celebrated beginning

with a visit to the tombs of the Catholic Monarchs in the Royal Chapel and a Mass held in the Cathedral. Then there is a procession around Granada, with a replica of the banner that Ferdinand gave to the city. The event concludes when the banner is placed on the balcony of the City Hall.⁷⁴

During the Second Spanish Republic, the beginning in the Royal Chapel was eliminated as a way to separate the day's events from religion. However, it shortly returned during the Franco dictatorship and has stayed this way even after the democratic transition.⁷⁵ Since the 90s the day and the events that surround it have been under scrutiny as they have been considered racist. Some have even called for the event to be called *Día de la Tolerancia* (Day of Tolerance). The Day of Tolerance would highlight the history of *convivencia* of the Muslim period as well as the promise the Catholic Monarchs made to Boabdil when he left his city. When thinking about the Monarch's promise, Maria was very upset. They felt the Monarchs had been dishonest,

They said that they were gonna take care of them and then once they no longer got use out of these other people were like, all right see ya... I mean, there's still a large

⁷³ “Toma de Granada,” *Historia*, January 1, 2006, <https://canalhistoria.es/hoy-en-la-historia/toma-de-granada/>.

⁷⁴ “Celebration of the Conquest of Granada (La Toma de Granada).”

⁷⁵ “Significado Del Día de La Toma,” Course document, http://ipaz.ugr.es/wp-content/files/miradasalmondo/sesion19/Significado_del_D%C3%ADA_de_la_Toma.pdf.

presence of colonization and even white supremacy in Europe... this is their history, they have been the ones to cause displacement. We see it now through their treatment of Muslims at the start of the year

They felt that Spain's citizens continue their dishonesty through events like *Día de la Toma* and hide behind the pride they display toward their Spanish past, especially the idea of *convivencia*. While they claim to have pride over their past and use it as a tourist selling point, as I discussed in the last chapter, their celebration says otherwise. As they repeat the action of expelling the Moors from the peninsula through a procession on one of the city's main streets, they are kicking out those responsible for the history they say they are proud of.

Through my conversation with my interlocutors who have lived in Granada for a bit I learned that *Día de la Toma* is not a day celebrated or witnessed by all of Granada but rather those who were born and raised there. Carla, who has lived in the city on and off for nearly fifteen years, explained that it was not until five years into her time in the city that she learned of the day and its events. She expressed that when she finally saw it, considering that it occurs less than a block from her home, she did not want to partake in any way. She shared that in past years she had actually taken part in events that counter the celebration and compared *la Toma* to Columbus Day which is celebrated all throughout Spain. Benjamin, like Carla, shared that it was not something he knew about at first,

It's January 2, and I'm not from Granada so I usually spend my holidays with family and friends in other parts of Spain. I really don't want to be part of it. I've talked to lots of friends about it.

When I asked him to expand on why he did not want to be part of it he sighed and took a moment before answering.

Personally, I think it's a deep embarrassment even though I'm not part of it. I'm a resident and I feel extremely embarrassed that even in 2021, we're glorifying something that is the end of a period that was as good or as bad as any other period in the history of the city. That the people that lived there before 1492, were also Spaniards, who were not foreign invaders. That they were taken over with the promise of coexistence and that was nullified after just a few months. And that memory was systematically erased and destroyed, physically and emotionally for centuries. There's absolutely nothing to celebrate. There's a large Muslim community that even though it's not directly linked to that population, has been the new texture of the city. They are a big part of who we are as a city now. And I think if anything, we should be celebrating the Muslim past and the coexistence of different cultures and religions in our history. Something that's so polarizing, that's putting some part of the population against another and also glorifying, probably the most terrible period in the history of Spain, is beyond embarrassing

Benjamin's sentiment was shared by my other interlocutors as well. Rodrigo and Carla both used the word embarrassment to describe *La Toma*. For Rodrigo, someone who grew up near Granada and now owns a house in the Albaicin, like Benjamin, Granada's Islamic past is one of the highlights of the city. He felt shame in knowing that there is a celebration which would make light of almost a century of history and the many people who had to leave their homes on this day and several months later.

Unlike Benjamin, Rodrigo, and Carla who have moved to Granada and own homes there, Ana was raised in the city. Ana told me she had never gone because she was simply not interested, not because she was against it personally. When I asked her what her thoughts on the day were, she replied,

I was never informed about the historical aspect either. I see that since it is something important that happened in Granada, it should be celebrated, so that the tradition continues, so that the people of today also know it... In any historical aspect at the end there are two all points of view. It is necessary to try and maintain tradition, but if it is maintained it should be done by respecting those who do not agree with it completely. Changing it. Maybe actually teaching people about both sides.

Ana's words seem to align with the beliefs of those who push for a *Día de la Tolerancia*. The hope of those who push for this day is that by teaching

Granada's citizens and newcomers about the history of the day and changing its name both sides of history would at least be respected.

When talking about *La Toma* Arturo focused on the people who celebrate this day. He explained that for him the day was a symbol of the monarchy and those who take the street on January 2nd are probably in support of the monarchy.

I do not love the monarchy. They love the monarchy. All those fascists, they frickin adore it. I have nothing in common with them. I think celebrating, the kicking out of residents of a place is just such a horrific notion. I don't know why it's celebrated anymore. It should be like friggin banned or something. They're not standing for something that's important what they're standing for is just antiquated notions of just all kinds of horrible things racism and sexism and misogyny.

For Arturo, as for my other interlocutors, *La Toma* means more than just the start of Spain as a nation. It's a Spain that does not have valued of *convivencia* but those of conquerors.

There is no way to ignore the meeting in the Royal Chapel or the procession to the Ayuntamiento when talking about *La Toma*, however, the last act of the day is equally as important. Granada's tourist site states that the event concludes when the banner is "placed on the balcony" of the Ayuntamiento but that is not the whole truth.⁷⁶ The banner, which is a replica of that which Ferdinand gave the city, is not simply placed on the balcony it is waved about as someone from the local government performs the chant that goes

¡Granada! [Granada!]
¡Qué? [What?!]
¡Viva España! ¡Viva el Rey! ¡Viva Andalucía! ¡Viva Granada!
 [Long live Spain! Long live the King! Long live Andalucía! Long Live Granada]

Knowing the chant, it is clear why Arturo is reminded of the monarchy. Additionally, the fact that the banner and the Spanish flag are waved during this event is a clear nod to the Franco era. In Spain it is a rather unsettling sight to see a Spanish flag being

⁷⁶ "Celebration of the Conquest of Granada (La Toma de Granada)."

waved given that the waving of the flag was very common during the dictatorship which took many innocent lives and the freedom of the Spanish people.

Pilar, unlike the rest of my interlocutors, did not just give her personal perspective but also discussed what it must be like for the many Muslim immigrants that live in Granada.

If you (your family) had been in Granada, before 1492, and then now you're being treated as like, an immigrant... I feel like that was most of the people that I saw were people like selling stuff like street vendors. And then like some restaurants or things like that... I think it would just be like such a kind of like a slap in the face if you're living there and have to experience things like the procession of la Toma. I don't know, I think I just feel extremely uncomfortable... Like, there's this huge symbol, like, literally up there on that hill, of like, our past, in the city, and like, now, now my experience is so different.

Pilar reminds us that the Alhambra is a massive symbol of Spain's Muslim past in Granada, a possible example of *lieu de memoire*, and even with its presence the descendants of those who built it are not accepted. If *convivencia* had been real in the Middle Ages the city's Muslim citizens at the very minimum tolerated their Christian counterparts but today the opposite cannot be said. There are multiple events throughout the region and a very clear celebration against their culture and ancestors every year on what some of my interlocutors consider the start of years of persecution.

Conclusion

It is clear that *convivencia* is seen as an important part of Al-Andalus, Andalucia, and Granada. However, there is a lot of doubt surrounding its existence during the Muslim reign as well as the period shortly after its fall. There is however no doubt in the fact that it does not exist today despite how much it is publicized for tourism purposes. In her conclusion Civantos states that

Muslim Iberia can help us develop a more tolerant and just society, but not in the way that most people think. Not as a model per se but by looking at how the al-Andalus story is told and retold, we can learn about creating more equitable tolerance and more

intercultural harmony... The usefulness of the past lies not so much in identifying exactly what happened (was it tolerant or wasn't it?) but in using the past—our versions of it—to identify what we want for the future. the past into a better tomorrow... The *convivencia* associated with al-Andalus, to whatever degree and in whatever form it existed, cannot be transferred wholesale into the present but can be used to carefully adapt and transform—to translate—desired narratives into realities.⁷⁷

Civantos' words show that while Granada, and Spain as a whole, are not a present example of the *convivencia* they proudly portray through their history and tourism there is a way to achieve it. The same can be said for the rest of the world of course. Arturo spoke about *convivencia* as something typical to Andalusia; however, he explained that it is not something everyone can experience. He explained that he felt a connection to Granada and *convivencia* because he is Andalus something that my other interlocutors could not speak to because they either were not or had been born and raised in Granada. Additionally, he added that he had many privileges given that he is a white man. We live in a world where living in equitable tolerance is not a reality, but many are striving for it by doing as Civantos suggests and looking back at the past (at all of its versions) in hopes to move towards a better tomorrow. Toward the end of our conversation, Rodrigo said something that resonated with me as I thought of Civantos suggestion,

I would like people to be able to see in diversity a richness and not a poverty.

⁷⁷ Civantos, *The Afterlife of Al-Andalus*, 292.

Conclusion: Ideas of Belonging in Granada

One can feel like they belong due to their knowledge of a city and its people as well as through legal processes. Citizenship, which we often see as what marks the distinction between one who does or does not belong, is tied to the rights and the obligations of that person. For some these obligations are tiresome, however, for others like Rodrigo, who enjoys paying his taxes in Granada, these obligations influence their sense of belonging as well. The feeling of comfort in a particular location is influenced by whether one feels that they fit in with those in that location and is accepted by them. For Benjamin, who has lived in Granada for nearly two decades the lack of acceptance by Granadinos is what makes him feel like he does not belong in the city. The “dream of belonging”, as Bauman put it is, not easily achievable despite how much time one is in a city.

A location within a city can influence one’s feelings toward the city in many ways or serve as a vehicle for reflection. The Alhambra and the Ayuntamiento are perfect examples of this. For some of my interlocutors the Alhambra is both a marvelous historical site, an example of *lieu de memoire*, or an exploited site. As an example of *lieu de memoire* the Alhambra is meant to have special significance related to group's remembrance and identity. For many, like Arturo, this is the case as it is a reminder of Granada and Spain’s Muslim history and culture. However, the city and region’s use of the monument as a large tourist attraction. Although many understand that the city and country need tourism they all wish there was a way to preserve the monuments historical integrity both with tourists as well as Granada’s citizens. Unfortunately, although the

monument is visited by many not many know its true history and its ties to the city. This knowledge is lost by tourist but also Granada's citizens who must make a personal effort to learn about something that the region claims as important. The hypocrisy of this is not lost and is something my interlocutors pointed out many times.

The idea of what is *Andaluz*, which is largely exemplified through the Alhambra and its history, is an important historical concept. For Granada, the cultures and identities that were devalued and ignored after the fall of Granada were the Muslim, gypsy, and Jewish. Al-Andalus as a kingdom united these cultures and identities with its Christian citizens through *convivencia*, which today Spain uses as a marketable idea in tourism as well as politics. However, this idea of *convivencia* was likely a myth and continues to not exist within Granada. While some welcome those who are different than them as ___ explained there are still people who have hatred in their hearts. We see this through the events on the day of *La Toma* and the articles published about it.

The Ayuntamiento, is not seen for its history but for what it means politically. It is the location that gives some legal belonging, regardless of nationwide citizenship but also a place that prohibits the sense of belonging for Muslim immigrants during *La Toma*. For those who protest the day's events and propose to change the name and way it is thought of it is a reminder of the past. While they hope to teach Granada's citizens and newcomers about the true history of the day others are content with seeing it as the day that ended the Muslim invasion of the peninsula instead of the end of a longstanding kingdom.

The sense of belonging is something very personal and can be influenced by many things. Through my thesis I do not mean to assume that the Alhambra's history, *empadronamiento* at the Ayuntamiento, and notions of *convivencia* are the only things that can impact one's sense of belonging in Granada. I simply highlight these as the common thread I found in my conversations with my interlocutors.

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