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Review of Mikaela H. Rogozen-Soltar, *Spain Unmoored: Migration, Conversion and the Politics of Islam*, and Avi Astor, *Rebuilding Islam in Contemporary Spain: The Politics of Mosque Establishment, 1976-2013*

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Mikaela H. Rogozen-Soltar's *Spain Unmoored: Migration, Conversion and the Politics of Islam* and Avi Astor's *Rebuilding Islam in Contemporary Spain: The Politics of Mosque Establishment, 1976-2013* are welcomed additions to our understanding of Muslims and Islam in democratic Spain.

Dr. Rogozen-Soltar's monograph is the result of extensive field work over various years in the southern Spanish city of Granada. Rogozen-Soltar's knowledge of Spanish and Arabic, as well as her acute observation skills and wonderful writing style, makes her particularly well suited to carry out an ethnographic study of the interactions between three sets of people: ethnic Spaniards converted to Islam, immigrants from Muslim majority countries, and the ethnic Spanish community at large.

While Rogozen-Soltar's book is well grounded in anthropological theory, it is not dragged down by jargon or theoretical disquisitions unrelated to the subject matter at hand. On the contrary, Rogozen-Soltar centers her narrative on the analysis of field experiences and uses theory to enrich and contextualize her analysis. Field notes drive her narrative and facilitate the connection with the reader.

Rogozen-Soltar directs her gaze to observe how Granadino culture and everyday interactions among residents intersect with historical narratives and myths. She identifies two contradictory positions among Granadinos: the *convivencia* position "casts contemporary Granada as a site of successful multiculturalism rooted in a history of peaceful pluralism," while the *malafollá* position considers Granada as "an exclusionary, inhospitable society resulting from a history of unholy unions and cross-cultural interactions gone awry" (xvii). Her initial questions are why would a city define its ethos and character so specifically in terms of its engagement with cultural and religious diversity and why would it do so in such contrasting ways?

As opposed to other scholarship on conversion and migration that tends to separate these two phenomena and focus primarily on one or the other, Rogozen-Soltar examines them together to see foreign-born Muslims and non-migrant Andalusians (Catholics, converts, and secular) as co-producing one another's subjectivities and social positions. Looking at converts and Muslim immigrants together allows Rogozen-Soltar to identify their differing experiences of belonging and exclusion, as well as the tensions that arise between them. Rogozen-Soltar explains that children born to convert parents refer to themselves as converts

despite having been born into the faith. This is because the terms convert and migrant have become social categories tied to relations of inequality. Ethnic, racial, national, gender, and class boundaries separate Granada's Muslims and allocate them different placements within competing, historically rooted imaginaries of Muslim Spain.

Rogozen-Soltar's Chapter 1 examines what she calls "everyday historiography." Her aim is to trace how residents articulate narratives about Granada's Muslim past and how these narratives impact current Andalusian regional identity and the place of Islam in the region. In Chapter 2, "Paradoxes of Muslim Belonging and Difference" and Chapter 4 "A Reluctant Convivencia: Minority Representation and Unequal Multiculturalism," she describes the strategies used by converts and Muslim migrants to carve out space for Islam in the city. Their strategies diverge and exclude each other at times. While converts claim that Islamic conversion is an inherently Spanish process, they are merely following the historical precedent of medieval Iberians. Migrants articulate their pride and sense of belonging as descendants of the Moorish conquerors that build the city and are thus cast as dangerous, unacceptable, and un-Spanish.

Chapter 3 is an original take on spatialization of religious and racial inequalities. By studying two neighborhoods, the touristic Albayzín, sometimes called "Little Morocco" or "Muslim Disneyland", and compare it to a peripheral post-industrial zone called the Polígono, a notorious "Moroccan Danger Zone," Rogozen-Soltar argues that, contrary to superficial analysis that would assign Islamophilia to the former and Islamophobia to the latter, the exclusion of Muslims occurs within the celebratory context of the Albayzín, while they are included as members of the neighborhood in the marginal Polígono.

Chapter 5, "Embodied Encounters: Gender, Islam, and Public Space" explores prevalent racial and gendered discourses about Islam, the body, and proper public sociability. It reframes headscarf controversies in Andalusia by considering them in relation to other bodily practices central to the embodiment of normative sociality in urban Granada, for instance consuming pork and wine while socializing in public places or showing public displays of affection. While headscarves are often considered "obstacles" to inclusion, the other normalized practices that entail subtle but pernicious social exclusion as well go unnoticed.

Rogozen-Soltar's monograph is overall excellent. I would just have combined Chapters 2 and 4 and added a missing chapter on "Embodied Encounters" for men. While Rogozen-Soltar covers very well issues of gender as they pertain to women, the analysis of masculinity is sorely lacking. Overall, however, Rogozen-Soltar proves how Europe's Muslim past continues to influence its presence and questions monolithic rosy narratives that herald Spanish *convivencia* (interfaith harmony) as the answer to Europe's multicultural challenges.

Avi Astor's *Rebuilding Islam in Contemporary Spain: The Politics of Mosque Establishment, 1976-2013* is a well-researched and well written monograph, the first one entirely dedicated to the conflicts over Mosque construction in Spain. Astor also spent many years doing field work in Spain and he also finds a good balance between sociological theory and analysis of the plentiful evidence he gathered during field work. Astor places the historical narratives on Islam in relation to contemporary concerns about internal migration, urban development, social inequality, and the marginalization of working-class neighborhoods.

It may not be as well-known as it should that hostility toward mosques since the 1990s has been greater in Catalonia than in other Spanish regions. Astor aims to find out why.

Chapter 1 analyses Spain's open and inclusive policy towards Islam in the 1980s and 1990s and how the official recognition of Islam translated into political support for the construction of major mosques and a revival of Spain's Islamic heritage that acted as a magnet for tourism. Chapter 2 explains that an increase in the number of Muslim arrivals, as well as a perception of them as threats after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, halted previously welcoming narratives and increasingly framed Islam as a social problem to be managed and controlled, rather than an aspect of Spanish history to be celebrated and recovered. Chapter 3 delineates how internal Spanish migrants have been positioned socially and spatially in Catalonia. Chapter 4 shows how the social and spatial marginality of these internal migrants complicates the reception of Muslim immigrants and mosques in towns such as Badalona. Since not all anti-mosque campaigns have occurred in marginal areas, Chapter 5 looks at the conflicts in Mataró and Santa Coloma de Gramenet, where anti-mosque backlashes occurred in neighborhoods with high standing. In Chapter 6, Astor argues that the low incidence of anti-mosque campaigns in Madrid is due to the weaker socio-spatial divisions, as the urbanization of Madrid is more recent and even than that of Barcelona, and the absence of notable cultural and linguistic distinctions between internal migrants and native population in Madrid. In Chapter 7, Astor returns to Catalonia to address how public institutions have dealt with religious diversification by focusing on the approval of the pioneering regional law regulating centers of worship in 2009.

Astor convincingly proves that hostility towards mosques in Catalonia has been most pronounced in peripheral neighborhoods inhabited by internal Spanish migrants and their children. Astor draws on theories of prejudice and place-protective action to explain anti-mosque reactions. Building on Herbert Blumer's classic theory of prejudice as a "sense of group position", Astor explains that internal Spanish migrants in Catalonia felt socially alienated and discriminated against and opposing mosques became a means of contesting the boundaries that reinforce their marginalization. Anti-mosque campaigns have served as

mechanisms for marginalized communities to gain visibility and contest the neglect by public institutions of their neighborhoods. Narratives of urban injustice, compounded with Islamophobic positions fueled by anti-immigrant parties, emerged particularly in areas traditionally marginalized.

For residents of higher status neighborhoods, opposing mosques is a “means of preserving the boundaries that shield their communities from the social stigma and urban problems associated with immigration and ethno-religious diversification” (12). A mosque is constructed as a threat to their community because it could lower the values of their properties, act as a magnet for future migrant neighbors (associated with higher crime and social conflict) and divert into religious use space public funds that could be used for needed infrastructure.

One of the strengths of Astor’s monograph is to highlight “how meso-level factors particular to distinct regional and local settings amplify or mitigate the extent to which generalized prejudices become active social forces” (13). This approach would have been even more effective had Astor delved deeper into how regional narratives of belonging interconnect with anti-mosque campaigns. One of the factors that is sorely missing from the analysis is how Catalan nationalism has contributed to reinforce anti-immigrant sentiments in the region. First, by marginalizing socially and spatially those areas where internal migrants from other Spanish regions settled. Second, by setting a political and social agenda that prioritizes the socioeconomic concerns and cultural needs of ‘native’ Catalan speakers. Since Astor focuses on urban injustices and neighborhood grievances between peripheral areas and city halls, the responsibility of higher political levels becomes invisible.

In two instances, responsibility for an outcome that deprived Catalan Muslims of their religious rights cannot be solely squared in local politics. First, regional political leaders and institutional authorities alike were complicit in depriving the local Muslim community in Premià de Mar from building what would have been in 2000 the first purpose-built mosque in Catalonia in modern times. While Premià de Mar was not the first anti-mosque conflict, it was the first one that drew all political levels and parties. By forcing the local Muslim community to renounce its plans to build a mosque in the central plot it owned and had all legal permits for, Premià de Mar set a precedent that the religious rights of Catalan Muslims were contingent on anti-mosque activism. While Astor acknowledges that former president of the Generalitat, Jordi Pujol, tried to position himself in the middle and Pasqual Maragall, leader of the Socialist Party of Catalonia, “accused political elites and parties on the Right of exploiting issues of immigration for political gain,” a discussion of the role of Catalan nationalists, both on the right and left of the political spectrum, in anti-mosque conflicts is lacking (39).

Second, Barcelona is, together with Athens and Liubjana, one of only three large cities in Europe without a grand mosque. Astor rightly explains the lack of a

grand mosque in Barcelona by suggesting that the window of opportunity in the 80s and 90s that was used in other cities like Madrid or Valencia closed without having built one and the new transformed environment against Islam made it politically fraught to pursue it afterwards. I have argued elsewhere, however, that Catalan nationalists, both on the left and the right, are to be blamed for the Barcelona “mosque that never was” because they have prioritized the historical connection of Catalan nationalism with Catholicism over the rights to equal treatment of Catalan Muslims and have disregarded the symbolic power that a great mosque could offer their city. After reading Astor’s monograph, a reader unfamiliar with Catalan politics could be forgiven for concluding that Catalan nationalists have had little to no role in anti-mosque campaigns.

The academic study of Muslims in Spain has been elevated by the anthropological work of Rogozen-Soltar and the sociological approach of Astor. We are lucky in the field of Spanish migration studies to have such theoretically refined and empirically rich monographs in our hands. Make sure to enjoy them as much as I did.

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