Journal of Intercultural Communication, **20**(2): 42-55

Selling Spain: Tourism, Tensions, and Islam in Iberia

Jessica R. Boll[1]
Carroll University, Wisconsin, USA

Abstract: Spain's relationship with Islam is both phobic and -philic, attitudes revealed in policy and practice throughout the country. This paper examines the ways in which Spain's unique multicultural, multi-religious past affects the nation's present, specifically with regard to tourism. The aim is to situate Spanish concerns amongst the broader context of cultural tourism by exposing how Spain's history is concurrently sold to Muslims and non-Muslims and providing insight into how the representation of this history reflects (or rejects) the nation's current circumstances. Although Spain's tourist industry often capitalizes on Iberia's Islamic past, marketing the peninsula as a leading destination for both "halal tourism" and for those seeking glimpses of medieval al-Andalus, Christian-Muslim tensions continue to plague the nation as controversies, prejudice, and violence abound.

Keywords: Spanish tourism, halal tourism, al-Andalus, Islamophobia, Islamophilia.

1. Introduction

"Spain is different." …But not too different. While the Franco-era slogan intended to capitalize on Spain's reputation as a land of mystery and intrigue – the threshold to Northern Africa and to the cultures of the exotic East – the tourist industry simultaneously strove to present a modern, developed nation that was assuredly European. Today Spain struggles with these same competing tensions to be both different from and like the rest of Europe, specifically with regard to Islam. At once proud of and threated by its Moorish past, efforts to market the spaces and traditions inherited from medieval al-Andalus exist alongside policies, practices, and media portrayals that reveal an underlying Islamophobia and belie the celebratory discourse of the tourism industry. This paper will examine Spain's ambivalent relationship with Islam, aiming to situate Spanish concerns amongst the broader context of cultural tourism by exposing the ways in which the nation and its history are sold to both Muslim and non-Muslim tourists and by providing insight into how the representation of this history reflects (or rejects) the realities of contemporary *convivencia*.[2]

A variety of methods including review of promotional materials (tourism brochures, videos, websites), social media, newspapers, and scholarly publications, along with on-site observations and secondary data analysis, were employed to identify issues related to Spain's Muslim community and Islamic identity, and the promotion of such identity to tourists. This study contributes to the existing literature on cultural tourism, filling the gap regarding such tourism in Spain by exposing the dilemma within which the Spanish tourist industry is caught: namely, pitching a history whose descendants are scorned by much of contemporary society.

The paper will begin by considering similar cases of discord between the romantic representations and the realities of minority populations elsewhere, followed by a discussion of the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in Spanish media and a comprehensive examination of the evolution and efforts of the Spanish tourist industry, including Spain's engagement with a new subset of the industry known as halal tourism. The paper will conclude by

[1] MacAllister Hall 313, Carroll University, 100 N. East Ave., Waukesba, WI 53186, USA. Email: jboll@carrollu.edu.

[2] *Convivencia* is a Spanish term without an exact English equivalent, most often translated as "coexistence" yet implying a harmonious relationship between involved parties.

contextualizing the controversies and contradictions exposed in the previous sections by situating the tourist enterprise amidst more extensive tensions surrounding Islam in Spain.

2. Comparative cases

Ethnic tourism, defined by Yang (2011: 312) as such activities as visiting indigenous villages or ethnic theme parks, attending cultural festivals or events, watching folk dances or traditional ceremonies, or simply shopping for indigenous crafts and souvenirs, is increasingly popular as tourists seek out diversity and the tourist industry looks for ways to distinguish locales. The same is true of the more inclusive category of cultural tourism. Yet there often exists a marked incongruity as efforts and areas that seemingly celebrate diversity contradict the discrimination experienced by the minority communities featured by such tourism.

Numerous scholars have studied cultural tourism around the globe and raised abounding concerns regarding authenticity, commodification, distortion, voyeurism, and the appropriation of cultural meaning that often accompany such tourism (Oakes 1992, Smith 2001, Wall & Xie 2005). For instance, Kelly-Holmes and Pietikäinen (2014) discuss the commodification of the Sámi culture in the transnational Sámiland (covering territory in Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Russia); Boukhris (2017) critically analyzes racial tensions in France through the Black Paris project; and Shaw et al. (2004) examine the challenges and conflicts associated with the development of two districts in east London – Brick Lane as "Banglatown" and Green Street as a multicultural quarter – and reference other European examples such as the district of Kreuzberg in Berlin, home to migrants from Turkey and Yugoslavia after the wall was erected in 1961 and since featured in guidebooks as a "bohemian" neighborhood of the German capital. Researchers note issues of reductionism, stereotyping, exoticization, deculturation, and dehumanization in these and other cases.

Various scholars have also studied the increased interest in Jewish history and culture since the collapse of communism in central and eastern Europe, often accompanied by resurgent anti-Semitism (Corsale 2017, Dean 2004, Wiesel et al. 2004). Of further concern in these areas is the fact that the consequent Jewish-themed festivals, exhibitions, souvenir shops, restaurants, museums, and memorials are most often produced and managed by non-Jews, thus denying Jewish communities a central role in the management and promotion of their own heritage. Cities such as Prague, Budapest, and Cracow highlight their multicultural past to present a narrative of tolerance and cultural vigor, yet such promotion by the tourist industry without the participation of Jews themselves underscores issues of illegitimacy, misrepresentation, and exploitation (Corsale 2017). This lack of agency of the minority groups on display is yet another common theme in cultural tourism.

Beyond Europe, Yang (2011) has written of the views and concerns of the Han Chinese with regard to their representation and employment at the Yunnan Ethnic Folk Villages in Kunming, China; Attanapola and Lund (2013) have studied the situation of the Veddas in Sri Lanka; Koot (2016) discusses tourism centered upon the indigenous South Kalahari Bushmen in South Africa; and Bott (2018) has researched ethnic tourism in northern Vietnam, where minority indigenous groups are represented in ways that reproduce race and gender tropes and where such tourism has served to further marginalize minority women. This is also the case in many areas of Latin America, where scholars have long studied ethnic tourism in relation to the countless indigenous cultures of the region. For instance, Theodossopoulos (2012) has investigated the exoticization of the Emberá in Panama; Craven (2016) has written of the refusal of the Nazaret community to be toured in the Colombian Amazon; Vargas (2018) has considered tourism's effect on the indigenous Mayans in Palenque, Mexico; de la Maza (2018) has analyzed tourism in multiple indigenous territories in Chile; and Wierucka (2018) has examined the relationship between tourism and the Huaorani tribe in Ecuador.

Elsewhere in the Americas, researchers have looked at the ubiquitous Chinatowns (such as Anderson's [1995] study of Vancouver's "Little Orient") and the manifold problems related to American Indian tourism, among which privacy is a leading concern. Harkin (2003) notes the irony of the fact that those cultures most protective of personal privacy attract the largest numbers of tourists. As with other cases of cultural tourism, Harkin also discusses concerns of authenticity, suggesting that the Mashantucket Pequot Museum in New England typifies Baudrillard's hyperreality as a simulacrum of former times that – from the tourist perspective – is superior to the original (2003:581). The quest for authenticity has become a driving force of tourism (Hall and Page 2009, Harkin 2003, Mitchell & Murphy 1991), yet ironically the desire for the authentic has resulted in the (necessary) production of the staged: "since the object of the tourist's quest is in fact the lifeway itself, with nothing left out, it is imperative that the tourist encounters be staged. Otherwise, tribal people run the risk of entirely losing their privacy and ultimately, their lifeways themselves" (Harkin 2003:578). Inauthenticity has thus become a mechanism to protect both privacy and practices.

Even with the pervasiveness of contrived culture though, lost identity and "forced" assimilation are common concerns of cultural tourism. Although many governments ostensibly encourage cultural pluralism, and the tourist industry promotes cultural tourism as a manifestation thereof, oftentimes there is a resultant social push toward integration, and individuals are unwillingly assimilated into the mainstream (Schnell 2003). Conversely, some minority groups experience deepening alienation as they are expected to service visitors and must act a part to fulfill preconceived notions of themselves (Shaw & MacLeod 2000). Exacerbated isolation and reduced self-esteem are thus additional corollaries when culture is packaged for tourist consumption. A case in point is that of Spanish Muslims in the Andalusian city of Granada, who have been driven to the remote Polígono neighborhood, devoid of resources and under constant surveillance by local authorities (Rogozen-Soltar 2017). Such geographic and social marginalization has been the case for Muslims throughout Spain, who epitomize the disparity between the idealized representations and the harsh conditions regularly experienced by minorities around the world. This dissonance is most conspicuous in the media, where both Muslims and Islam are under constant attack. As the public's most extensive and persistent encounter with cultural difference is often through mass communication, an examination of Spanish media portrayals will thus initiate the analysis of Islam in Spain.

3. Media representation

The perception of Islam in Spain has been studied extensively (de Bunes Ibarra 1989, Perceval 1997), along with the conflation of the Moors of al-Andalus and contemporary Muslims (Boll 2018, Calderwood 2014, Zapata-Barrero & De Witte 2010), and the experience of Muslims living in Spain today (Planet Contreras 2018, Rogozen-Soltar 2017, Rosón 2016). The focus has overwhelmingly been on historical tensions and residual biases: attitudes manifested in Spanish media. Driven by public impressions of peoples and places, tourism has an intimate, interdependent relationship with the media (Crouch, Jackson & Thompson 2005; Månsson 2011; Stepchenkovas & Eales 2011).[3] It is surprising, then, that Spain's tourist industry tends to celebrate its Moorish past despite the media's exceedingly negative portrayal of both Islam and Muslims.

[3] Crouch, Jackson, and Thompson (2005: 2) term the bridge between tourism and the media the "tourist imagination", defined as "the imaginative investment involved in the crossing of certain virtual boundaries within the media or actual boundaries within the physical process of tourism". While the overlap between the two industries is often examined in terms of the images presented of the tourist destinations themselves, in the present article the focus is the perception of the peoples, cultures, and religion behind the spaces. The interdependence nonetheless remains.

Numerous studies and scholars (Afshar 2013, Marranci 2004, Peña-Ramos & Medina 2011) have examined Islamophobia expressed in European media, and in Spanish media in particular (Beck 2012, Fundación 2010, Observatorio 2017). Such media often employ a series of stereotypes in their representations of Islam, characterizing the religion and its followers as irrational, inferior, aggressive, intolerant, and monolithic. Muslims are recurrently portrayed as the antithetical "other", the attention given to Muslims in Europe with a concurrent failure to recognize Muslims from Europe (Marranci 2004). In this way, the media tends to overlook Islam's scientific and humanistic contributions to European society (Vernet 2006): what Medina-Bravo, Rodrigo-Alsina, and Guerrero-Solé (2018) refer to as "historical amnesia" regarding Islam's significant role in shaping modern Europe.

Medina-Bravo, Rodrigo-Alsina, and Guerrero-Solé (2018) note that the Spanish public often fails to recognize its own prejudice and widely accepts the Islamophobic discourse presented by the media. This Islamophobic discourse both reflects and incites societal opinions, affecting individuals' actions and public policy alike. Nonetheless, there exists a fascination with Spain's Islamic past, a fascination upon which the tourist industry has recently begun to depend (Calderwood 2004, Rogozen-Soltar 2017, Ruggles 2011: 34, Tremlett 2008). Andalusia, Iberia's southernmost autonomous community that continues to exhibit the most Moorish influence, has become a top destination much for this reason. Yet this remote region wasn't always as popular with tourists, especially those sites distant from the Mediterranean coast.[4] As recounted below, Spain's tourism sector has evolved notably in recent decades to not only recognize but revere the cultural heritage whose contemporary representatives are so often denigrated in today's media coverage.

4. Spanish tourism

Spain is currently the world's second most popular tourist destination: a stark contrast from its marginal status when European tourism developed in the Eighteenth Century.[5] Officially engendered in 1905 when King Alfonso XIII created the National Commission for the Promotion of Tourism, the Spanish tourist industry has long been a centralized, state-guided entity operated for multiple objectives. During the Franco dictatorship, tourism became a means both to boost the economy and improve foreign relations after the Spanish Civil War. To that end, and to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the regime, Minister of Information and Tourism Manual Fraga Iribarne introduced the now-famous slogan "Spain is different" in 1964. Drawing on the notion that had been circulating since the late Eighteenth Century that Spain was unique, exotic – anachronistic even – the government officially branded an international identity that would persist for decades. Images of festivals, folklore, and flamenco presented an eccentric yet accessible locale to which Europeans could quickly and affordably escape. Yet this image presupposed a national homogeneity, hinging upon a denial of internal difference: what Afinoguénova and Martí-Olivella (2008: xii) call "unified theme-park 'difference'". Spain was different from the rest of Europe, but Spaniards were presented as alike, as regional, political, cultural, and linguistic distinctions were intentionally omitted.

[4] For instance, London's 1951 *Sunday Times* identified Andalusia as only for those travelers with time and money (Barke & Towner 1996: 18).

[5] In 2017, 82 million visitors travelled to Spain, breaking records for the fifth consecutive year. Tourism in Spain presently accounts for 11% of the economy (Asenjo Dominguez 2018), increasing by 12% in 2017 alone (Agence 2018). Numbers are expected to continue to rise in coming years as Spain remains a trendy destination for international travel. The Andalusian city of Seville was recently named the "best city in the world to visit" in the popular Lonely Planet Best in Travel 2018 publication, marking the first time a Spanish city topped the list (Schmalbruch 2017).

After Franco's death in 1975, the tourist industry expressly determined to reverse the image of a backward nation that was distinct from the rest of Europe; but there were multiple irregularities and difficulties regarding the development of this sector during the first post-Franco years (González and Moral 1996, Maiztegui-Oñate & Bertolín 1996). The Spanish sun took center stage in the 1970s and '80s; but by the '90s, there arose a crisis of the coastal tourism model and a need for differentiation (Afinoguénova & Martí-Olivella 2008: xxii). As Spain's shores became insufficient, the result was new marketing strategies that portrayed Spain as a destination with more to offer than just a budget beach vacation. Through rural and urban tourism campaigns in particular, the industry shifted the focus away from the coastline to the nation's interior and began to tout – for the first time – Spain's internal diversity and (multi-)cultural heritage.

This approach continues today, a primary emphasis of which is the peninsula's medieval Islamic past. Much like the Orientalist fascination of Eighteenth-Century Romantics, contemporary travelers explicitly seek out Moorish Spain, and the industry has begun to capitalize on this interest. The travel agency Al-Andalus Experience (https://alandalus-experience.com/) promises to help travelers "discover the secrets of Muslim Spain" for instance, while the official tourism portal of Andalusia (https://www.andalucia.org/en/home) offers a number of cultural routes within the category of "Routes of the Heritage of Al-Andalus". The Legacy of al-Andalus, a public foundation of the Andalusian regional government that aims to educate on and support the cultural patrimony of region, also promotes a series of cultural routes that showcase the Muslim period.[6] The art and architecture from al-Andalus have become iconic of the entire country, featured on websites, brochures, signage, and menus.[7] Today Spain's most visited site is the Alhambra palace in Granada, former residence of the Andalusi sultans and representative of the glories of Muslim Spain. The remnants of al-Andalus not only draw those interested in what is perceived as Spain's exotic past, however; these locales have also become top stops for halal tourism, a relatively new subset of the tourist industry specifically aimed at the increasingly influential body of Muslim travelers.

5. Halal tourism

Halal tourism markets services and activities compatible with Islamic tenets and practices, with such offerings as hotels with separate pools for men and women, restaurants that prepare halal-certified food, facilities that don't serve alcohol, and itineraries related to Islamic culture. Spain has recognized the economic potential of this market and begun to engage with this sector of late.[8] Drawing upon its Muslim heritage – and despite the ubiquity of pork products and alcohol – the country has become a leading destination for halal tourism. According to the Global Muslim Travel Index 2018 published by CrescentRating, the foremost authority on halal-friendly travel, Spain ranked #2 on the list of Muslim inbound destinations for non-OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) countries and #8 overall in terms of having an environment that supports Muslim travelers (CrescentRating 2018).

---

[6] Calderwood (2014:41) criticizes The Legacy of al-Andalus foundation for failing to truly engage with Spain's Muslim community, and argues that the cultural routes suggest that visitors can "inhabit the subjectivity" of Andalusi Muslims.

[7] Not all tourism efforts in recent years have sought to draw attention to Muslim Spain; the Mezquita in Córdoba is a prime example. In 1998 the Catholic Church, which administers the site, changed the name from "Mosque-Cathedral" (familiarly known simply as the Mezquita, or "Mosque") to the "Cathedral (former Mosque)"; in 2010 this awkward designation was reduced to "Córdoba Cathedral." After years of public protests, though, the Church conceded and announced in 2016 that it will revert to "Mosque-Cathedral". See Altares (2015) and Boll (2017) for more regarding the controversies surrounding the Mezquita's administration and operations.

[8] The Global Muslim Travel Index 2018 estimates that Muslim visitors' spending will reach $220 billion by 2020, with 156 million visitor arrivals globally (CrescentRating 2018).

Halaltrip, the largest halal and Muslim-focused travel platform, named Spain – Andalusia in particular – the top destination for Islamic heritage in 2016. It lists the Andalusian city of Granada second on their list of "10 Destinations Every Muslim Globetrotter Must Visit in 2017" and included Barcelona as one of the "9 Best Muslim-Friendly City Breaks in Europe for 2018" (Noohu 2017). The London-based company Islamic Travels (http://islamictravels.com/) spotlights "Spain: 8 Centuries of Islamic Heritage" as one of the feature tour on its website, while Visit Al Andalus tours (http://visit-alandalus.com/), a travel agency based in Granada, organizes halal tours exclusively in Spain, Portugal, and Morocco.

Although the same product – Islamic Spain – is explicitly marketed to Muslim and non-Muslim visitors, it is nonetheless done so differently. A telling example of this disparity is the official tourism portal of Spain, https://www.spain.info.[9] Of the 30 different versions of the portal, only three – the English and Arabic versions for citizens from countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) alliance (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman), along with the version in Persian – differ in terms of images and information. The phrase "Come to Spain, and smile" headlines the home page of these three versions – a phrase imposed upon the central image of a (curiously) fair-skinned couple holding a map.[10] An interesting omission here is a link to the "Spain is Culture" portal that is found on the other versions.

A site maintained by the Ministry of Culture and Sport, the "Spain is Culture" portal (http://www.spainisculture.com) "promotes and disseminates the cultures of Spain". Declaring itself as "a web site with the best of [Spain's] cultural heritage", it is noteworthy that the site is not directly presented to a population from which that very heritage is largely derived.

Although markedly excluded from the other versions of the site, "Halal tourism" is one of the six main tabs on the three variants mentioned above. Featuring a photograph of tiles in the Alhambra Palace in Granada, the "Halal tourism" page (https://www.spain.info/gcc/en/halal) directly addresses Muslim travelers and proclaims the country to be "a good halal destination for your holidays", one that "takes your needs into account and makes you feel comfortable during your holidays". The page continues, "Spain is a country that accommodates all religions" and later points out that many of the dishes are "based on Arab cuisine". Sections of the page list halal restaurants and hotels, religious services in airports, official mosques throughout the country (more than 250), and religious celebrations, and links are included to various other websites including the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain, the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities, and Arab House: an organization founded in 2006 that serves to connect Spain to the Arab world through seminars, conferences, workshops, publications, films, exhibitions, and other cultural activities.

In April of 2018, the Andalusian tourism board released a video titled "Andalusia your roots, your destination: Halal Tourism" (Vive 2018). Set to music that is distinctly Middle Eastern and highlighting images of top sites that date from al-Andalus, the video is worthy of note because it ostensibly blurs the host/guest, home/away, self/other polarities traditionally determined by travel. Here the spaces visited are, in fact, the ancestral home to the guests, and this spatial legacy is the very emphasis of the travel itinerary. Halal tourism in Spain calls for

[9] For an in-depth analysis of the language and design of the international versions of the site during the "I need Spain" campaign, see Helfrich(2018).

[10] Helfrich (2018: 76) notes that Spain's visual branding is intimately connected to the tourist experience, a "promise to be fulfilled once the potential tourist enters the country". She points out that the implied consumer is always visually present in the advertising for Spain, yet here the image of the consumer presented is strikingly different from typical halal consumer targeted by the site. While Turespaña (the government institution that has directed the marketing of Spain in the global arena since 1928) has long aimed to foreground the tourist perspective in its marketing, here they seemed to have missed the mark – either intentionally or not.

a Derridian deconstruction of the dichotomies of travel; yet with emphases on "roots", "legends", and "legacy" the video firmly establishes Islamic Spain as bygone. Muslim travelers are invited to "experience" and to "feel" Andalusia – verbs that necessarily imply temporality. Andalusia is a "destination" – a noun that again reinforces the status of outsider – decidedly not "home".

In October 2016, the same organization published a video titled "Andalucía your roots, your destination: Sephard Tourism" (Vive 2016). Virtually the same language is used here to invite Jews to travel to Andalusia, with the same relegation of Jewish Spain to the distant past. The script proclaims: "Andalucía is the ancestral home of one of the largest Jewish communities in the world. Here are your homes… [your] prayer spaces. We feel close here to your words, celebrities, place names, names, monuments, songs, cuisine, urban design, traditions, legends…." Although similar in tone, the words "home" and "prayer" are employed here but notably absent from the Halal Tourism video – not even the words "Islam" or "Muslim" are mentioned explicitly in the first video. In the public eye, Jews are undoubtedly less threatening today than Muslims, both for the virtual absence of a Jewish community in contemporary Spanish society and for the (erroneous) automatic association of Islam with terrorism. While still treated as a temporary guest to Spain – the video clearly establishes an us/them dichotomy ("*We* invite *you* to experience…" [italics added]) – the Jewish visitor is kept less at arm's length than the Muslim visitor.

Nonetheless, attempts to use the supposed *convivencia* of centuries past to attract Jewish tourists in many ways parallel the efforts of halal tourism campaigns. Flesler and Pérez Melgosa have examined this appropriation of Spain's Jewish past by the tourist industry, a strategy they read as fruitful both economically and "as a way to justify caring for a heritage connected to those parts of Spanish culture which had been banned, censored, and persecuted" (2008:65). Yet the assuagement of historical guilt is exposed as a subordinate outcome by the repeated justification that the Jewish network enterprise (the *Red de Juderías*) is fundamentally driven by economic motives, underscoring the continued dissociation from and malaise with regard to Spain's Sephardic heritage. Unlike the video on Sephardic tourism, though, Flesler and Pérez Melgosa (2008) note that the so-called Centers of Interpretation (*Centros de Interpretación*) instituted throughout Spain cater to a Gentile rather than a Jewish audience, educating on the basics of Judaism instead of serving as sites that explore and expose the nation's Sephardic legacy. Halal tourism by its very definition caters to the Muslim visitor, yet both the industry at large and mainstream Spanish society clearly consider that visitor extraneous to modern Spain. This attitude reflects underlying, centuries-old tensions pertaining to Islam that continue to plague the nation.

6. The bigger picture

The ambivalence with which Muslims are treated by the tourist industry is symptomatic of broader issues in Spain. Juxtaposed with heightened interest in the nation's Islamic history is increasing Islamophobia. According to the Demographic Study of the Muslim Community (*Estudio Demográfico de la Comunidad Musulmana*) published by the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (*Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España, UCIDE*), there are more than 1.9 million Muslim citizens in Spain, primarily in Catalonia and Andalusia; approximately 800,000 are Spanish Muslims and 1.1 million are immigrants, principally from Morocco (Unión 2018). Both categories of Muslims suffer from prejudice, assault, and various forms of persecution.[11]

[11] Rogozen-Soltar (2017) examines the differences between the experiences of migrant Muslims versus those of converts in her comprehensive study of Muslims in Granada.

The European Islamophobia Report 2017 details the difficulties endured by Muslims in Spain, distinguishing between institutional Islamophobia and citizen Islamophobia (Aguilera-Carnerero 2018: 600).[12] The report cites statistics published by the non-profit organization Citizen Platform Against Islamophobia (*Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia, PCI*), who reported 546 incidents of Islamophobia in Spain in 2017. Such incidents included physical attacks on the people and spaces of Islam; verbal stereotyping and disparagement; discrimination and harassment in schools, at the work place, and in social settings; and anti-Islamic political campaigns and statements (Plataforma 2018: 5). Women and children count significantly among the victims, together representing 25% of all incidents reported in 2017 (Plataforma 2018: 5).[13] Muslim women constitute the most targeted group, after the category *Islam and Muslims in general* (Plataforma 2018: 24).

Other occurrences include vandalism and destruction of mosques and of Muslim-owned businesses, establishments, and property; campaigns and demonstrations against the opening of new mosques and businesses[14]; protests against the wearing of hijabs and the denial of basic rights; verbal aggression and threats; proliferation of hate discourses by extreme-right politicians and the media[15]; and defamatory articles, videos, and posts on social media.[16] Cyber-hate is of particular concern, having risen sharply in recent years and accounting for 70% of the Islamophobic incidents reported in 2017 (Plataforma 2018: 5). The Observatory on Islamophobia in the Media (*Observatorio de la islamophobia en los medios*) found that 66% of the news about Islam in Spain during the first half of 2017 was Islamophobic (Observatorio 2017). Andalusia follows Catalonia as the autonomous community with the second highest number of "offline" incidents documented in 2017, amounting to 13.75% of the total cases reported (Plataforma 2018: 16). Many of the problems in Catalonia were subsequent to – and resulted directly from – the August 2017 terrorist attack for which DAESH claimed responsibility (de Blas 2017).

One section of the PCI report explicitly discusses the marketing of Al-Andalus, citing a discourse of denial, manipulation of history, and Islamophobic interpretations of history that aim to discredit and negate the Islamic legacy of Spain (Plataforma 2018:6).[17] Numerous scholars have likewise brought up concerns with said marketing, recounting the same problems of authenticity, superficiality, commodification, and exploitation found at other sites of cultural tourism.

Granada's Albayzín neighborhood has been deemed a "Muslim Disneyland" by Rogozen-Soltar (2017), termed "Moorishland" by Tremlett (2008), and described as a "game

---

[12] Rogozen-Soltar (2017: 116) makes a similar distinction between "casual racism" and formalized, institutional discrimination, defining the former as that encountered during casual encounters in the public sphere.

[13] PCI notes that the actual number of cases of Islamophobia is much higher than that indicated in the report, as only incidents reported to PCI and to related agencies and confirmed news stories are included.

[14] A notable example is Tarragona's so-called "kebab law": a zoning law initially proposed in 2015 that intended to limit both the number and concentration of Muslim-owned businesses to prevent what officials termed immigrant "ghettos" (Frayer 2015).

[15] Unfortunately, examples in this category abound. In January of 2017, former president of Madrid and the Senate and former minister of culture Esperanza Aguirre tweeted that January 2, the anniversary of the Catholic re-occupation of al-Andalus, is "a day of glory for Spaniards" because "with Islam we would not be free" (Hedgecoe 2017). Agustín Conde, Secretary of State for the Defense, stated that one of the targets of the Spanish army was "to prevent his daughter from wearing a burqa" (Eldiario.es 2017). José Manuel Calzada, director of the Ministry of Education in Melilla, ended a tweet regarding the terrorist attack in Barcelona with #StopIslam (Aguilera-Carnerero 2018: 603).

[16] Aguilera-Carnerero (2018:610) offers a sample of social media accounts whose primary objective is to spread hate against Muslims; examples are Observe Islamophilia (*Observa Islamofilia*), National Fight (*Lucha Nacional*), No Islam Spain (*No Islam España*), An Islamophobe, Passion for Spain (*Pasión por España*), and Alt-Right Spain (*Alt-Right España*).

[17] For example, in June of 2017 the Bishop of Córdoba proclaimed the Great Mosque of Córdoba to be "just Byzantine art"; "the Moors merely paid for the construction work" (Albert 2017).

of smoke and mirrors" by Calderwood (2014: 49). Such scholars criticize the simulacra-like nature of the neighborhood, one that presents tourists with Moroccan-style restaurants, tea shops, and souvenir stores but occasions cultural stereotyping, discrimination, and the commercialization of Islam. It is a highly-regulated, highly-policed area that masks the difficulties of life in Spain as a Muslim.[18] Muslims are presented as artifacts of al-Andalus, as medieval and contemporary Spain are conflated to an artificial, ahistorical moment. Disregarding past and present conflict, the tourist industry strategically appropriates Spain's Moorish history to sell a story of *convivencia* that may have never existed in the first place.[19] Many researchers assert that tourists are aware of the artificiality of the product they consume – "the sellers and buyers all know that what they are buying or selling is a fake" – yet they knowingly subscribe to it anyway (Afinoguénova and Martí-Olivella 2008: xiii).[20] Disbelief is willingly suspended for the sake of an experience perceived to be culturally, temporally, and geographically remote.

7. Conclusion

Travel at its core is a means of escape, a quest for difference that results in a commodification of that difference. The success of the Spanish tourist industry today thus remains dependent upon proving its difference, despite the fact that Spain no longer is the obscure territory of centuries past. Developed, industrialized, and fully integrated into the European Union, Spain must therefore market a *different* difference than in former branding campaigns. The subcategories of travel introduced in the 1990s have evolved to include – embrace, even – peoples and (hi)stories previously excluded from Spanish society. Contemporary tourism efforts admit a plurality that has been historically denied while carefully negotiating between the notions that Spain is distinct – distinct enough to warrant the trials of travel – yet fully modern and European (read: non-Muslim) as its northern neighbors. Perhaps even more than other destinations, Spain mediates competing pressures to be both same and different.

In ways intrinsically linked to power, throughout the past century the Spanish government and public alike have used tourism to endorse a specific Spanish identity. This has involved privileging certain voices while silencing others to present an image of the nation consonant with the political agenda. Yet, at the same time tourism affords power to the industry and to the institutions behind it, tourist demands drive the market and help shape the very product being sold. Tourists thus serve as both broker and buyer, at once constructing and consuming the image of Spain. Non-Muslim tourists come seeking exotic, non-European peoples and spaces within the safety of Europe proper, and the industry accommodates that desire. Because Spain is a top destination for halal tourism, Muslim travelers are now a powerful component of the equation. Yet, at the same time, Muslim residents experience violence, prejudice, and discrimination on virtually all fronts. Spain's relationship with Islam is phobic and "philic" at once: an ambivalence reflected in policy and practice in the tourist industry and beyond.

Spain finds itself in a predicament familiar to sites of cultural tourism around the world: charged with selling a contested history that has alternately been rejected and revered, suppressed and celebrated, defamed and displayed. Today, Muslims in Spain are witness to –

---

[18] Rogozen-Soltar (2017) examines the criminalization and policing of Muslim migrants in both the Polígono and Albayzín neighborhoods of Granada. Muslims are under constant surveillance in the residential Polígono, while authorities increasingly criminalize and persecute Muslims employed in the touristy Albayzín – despite the seeming celebration of the Moorish legacy there.

[19] Scholars are increasingly questioning the extent to which Christians, Muslims, and Jews truly lived together in harmony in medieval Spain. See, e.g., Fernández-Morera (2016).

[20] Afinoguénova and Martí-Olivella refer to Boorstin's (1961) notion of tourism as a manufactured pseudo-event.

and victims of – all of the above. The prevailing narrative presented to tourists and the realities of Spain's contemporary *convivencia* are at odds, as discrepant as the factions of Spanish society itself. The tourist industry, media, government, and public at large must acknowledge these contradictions to determine the most effective strategies moving forward, for the sake of both Muslims in Spain and those cultural tourists in search of authentic experience.

About the author

Jessica R. Boll, PhD, is associate professor of Spanish at Carroll University in Waukesha, Wisconsin, USA. Her research centers upon early modern Spanish-Ottoman relations, contemporary Christian-Muslim relations in Spain, shared spaces, and contested perceptions of place. Her investigations combine geography, history, cultural studies, literary studies, Mediterranean studies, and Ottoman studies. She has recently published articles related to the legacy of al-Andalus in contemporary Spain, Spanish tourism, the controversies surrounding the Mosque-Cathedral (Mezquita) of Córdoba, Cervantine captivity, and the depiction of Istanbul in early modern Spanish literature.

References

Afinoguénova, E. & J. Martí-Olivella (2008). Introduction: A nation under tourists' eyes: Tourism and identity discourses in Spain. In E. Afinoguénova & J. Martí-Olivella (eds.), *Spain Is (Still) Different: Tourism and Discourse in Spanish Identity* (xi-xxxviii). Lanham, MD, USA: Lexington Books.

Afshar, H. (2013). The politics of fear: What does it mean to those who are otherized and feared? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, **36**(1): 9-27.

Agence France-Presse (2018). Spain set to replace US as second most popular tourism destination. *The Guardian*, January 16, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/16/spain-set-to-replace-us-as-second-most-popular-tourism-destination (accessed July 30, 2020).

Aguilera-Carnerero, C. (2018). Islamophobia in Spain: National Report 2017. In E. Bayrakli & F. Hafez (eds.), *European Islamophobia Report 2017* (597-616). Istanbul: SETA. http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Spain.pdf (accessed July 30, 2020).

Albert, M.J. (2017). El obispo cree que la Mezquita es arte bizantino y que "los moros" sólo pagaron por las obras. *Cordópolis*. http://cordopolis.es/2017/01/15/el-obispo-cree-que-la-mezquita-es-arte-bizantino-y-que-los-moros-solo-pagaron-las-obras (accessed July 30, 2020).

Altares, G. (2015). La oportunidad perdida de Córdoba. *El País*. http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2015/01/23/actualidad/1422042671_875492.html (accessed July 30, 2020).

Anderson, K. (1995). *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Asenjo Dominguez, A. (2018). Spain international tourism breaks records for fifth straight year. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-economy-tourism/spain-international-tourism-breaks-records-for-fifth-straight-year-idUSKBN1F01EI?il=0 (accessed July 30, 2020).

Attanapola, C. & R. Lund (2013). Contested identities of indigenous people: Indigenization or integration of the Veddas in Sri Lanka. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, **34**(2): 172-187.

Barke, M. & J. Towner (1996). Exploring the history of leisure and tourism in Spain. In M. Barke, J. Towner & M.T. Newton (eds.), *Tourism in Spain: Critical Issues* (3-34). Wallingford, UK: C.A.B. International.

Beck, L. (2012). Moros en la costa: Islam in Spanish visual and media culture. *Historia Actual Online*, **29**: 93-106.

Boll, J. (2017). Irony made manifest: Cultural contention and Córdoba's Mosque-Cathedral. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, **34**(3): 275-302.

Boll, J. (2018). Uncommon denominators? Christian-Muslim relations and the legacy of al-Andalus in contemporary Spain. In G. Truda & J. Spurk (eds.), *On Migrants Routes in the Mediterranean. Political and Juridical Strategies* (97-112). Fisciano, Italy: ICSR Mediterannean Knowledge.

Boorstin, D. (1961). *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. New York: Vintage.

Bott, Esther. (2018). Among the piranhas: The troubling lifespan of ethnic tropes in "tribal" tourism to Vietnam. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, **26**(8): 1291-1307.

Boukhris, L. (2017). The Black Paris project: The production and reception of a counter-hegemonic tourism narrative in postcolonial Paris. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, **25**(5): 684-702.

de Blas, E.G. (2017). La islamofobia se desata en las redes y llega a la calle tras los atentados. *El País*. https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2017/08/22/actualidad/1503428186_516127.html (accessed July 30, 2020).

de Bunes Ibarra, M.A. (1989). *La imagen de los musulmanes y del Norte de Africa en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII: Los carácteres de una hostilidad*. Madrid: CSIC.

Calderwood, E. (2014). The invention of al-Andalus: Discovering the past and creating the present in Granada's Islamic tourism sites. *The Journal of North African Studies*, **19**(1): 27-55.

CrescentRating (2018). *Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2018*. Singapore: CrescentRating. https://www.crescentrating.com/halal-muslim-travel-market-reports.html (accessed July 30, 2020).

Corsale, A. (2017) Jewish heritage tourism in Bucharest: Reality and visions. *The Geographical Journal*, **183**(3): 261-271.

Craven, C. (2016). Refusing to be toured: Work, tourism, and the productivity of "life" in the Colombian Amazon. *Antipode*, **48**(3): 544-562.

Crouch, D., R. Jackson & F. Thompson (2005). Introduction: The media and the tourist imagination. In D. Crouch, R. Jackson & F. Thompson (eds.), *The Media and the Tourist Imagination: Converging Cultures* (1-13). London: Routledge.

Dean, M. (2004). Local collaboration in the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. In D. Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (120-140). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

ElDiario.es (2017). El secretario de Estado de Defensa: "Las Fuerzas Armadas están para que a mi hija no le ponga un burka nadie." *elDiario.es*. http://www.eldiario.es/politica/secretario-Defensa-Fuerzas-Armadas-burka_0_627838461.html (accessed July 30, 2020).

Fernández-Morera, D. (2016). *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise: Muslims, Christians, and Jews Under Islamic Rule in Medieval Spain*. Wilmington, DE, USA: ISI Books.

Flesler, D. & A. Pérez Melgosa (2008). Marketing *convivencia*: Contemporary tourist appropriations of Spain's Jewish past. In E. Afinoguénova & J. Martí-Olivella (eds.), *Spain Is (Still) Different: Tourism and Discourse in Spanish Identity* (63-84). Lanham, MD, USA: Lexington Books.

Frayer, L. (2015). In Spain, proposed "kebab law" angers Muslim business owners. *LA Times*. http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-spain-muslims-20150505-story.html (accessed July 30, 2020).

Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo (2010). *La imagen del mundo árabe y musulmán en la prensa española*. Seville: Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo. http://tresculturas.org/tresculturas/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Informe-CICAM-1.pdf (accessed July 30, 2020).

González, P. & P. Moral (1996). Analysis of tourism trends in Spain. *Annals of Tourism Research*, **23**(4): 739-754.

Hall, C.M. & S.J. Page (2009). Progress in tourism management: From the geography of tourism to geographies of tourism – a review. *Tourism Management*, **30**(1): 3-16.

Harkin, M. (2003). Staged encounters: Postmodern tourism and aboriginal people. *Ethnohistory*, **50**(3): 575-585.

Hedgecoe, G. (2017). Spanish row over Islamic past remarks. *The Irish Times*. https://www.pressreader.com/ireland/the-irish-times/20170104/281844348309685 (accessed July 30, 2020).

Helfrich, U. (2018). I need Spain: New ways of representing the tourist experience. In G. Huld (ed.), *Strategies of Adaptation in Tourist Communication: Linguistic Insights* (73-94). Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

Kelly-Holmes, H. & S. Pietikäinen (2014). Commodifying Sámi culture in an indigenous tourism site. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, **18**(4): 518-538.

Koot, S.P. (2016). Contradictions of capitalism in the South African Kalahari: Indigenous Bushmen, their brand and *baasskap* in tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, **24**(8/9): 1211-1226.

Maiztegui-Oñate, C. & M.T. Areitio Bertolín (1996). Cultural Tourism in Spain. In G. Richards (ed.), *Cultural Tourism in Europe* (267-281). Wallingford, UK: CAB International.

Månsson, M. (2011). Mediatized tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, **38**(4): 1634-1652.

Marranci, G. (2004). Multiculturalism, Islam and the clash of civilisations theory: Rethinking Islamophobia. *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, **5**(1): 105-117.

de la Maza, F. (2018). Tourism in Chile's indigenous territories: the impact of public policies and tourism value of indigenous culture. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, **13**(1): 94-111.

Medina-Bravo, P., M. Rodrigo-Alsina & F. Guerrero-Solé (2018). Audience contradictions in the negotiation of controversial media content: The case of Muslim women journalists in niqab. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, **47**. http://immi.se/intercultural/nr47/medina.html

Mitchell, L. & P. Murphy (1991). Geography and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, **18**(1): 57-70.

Noohu, M. (2017). 9 best Muslim-friendly city breaks in Europe for 2018. *Halal Travel Blog*, December 20, 2017. https://www.halaltrip.com/other/blog/best-muslim-friendly-city-breaks-in-europe-for-2018/ (accessed July 30, 2020).

Oakes, T. (1992). Cultural geography and Chinese ethnic tourism. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, **12**(2): 2-17.

Observatorio de la islamophobia en los medios (2017). El 66% de las noticias sobre islam de 6 diarios españoles son islamófobas. http://www.observatorioislamofobia.org/2017/09/22/66-las-noticias-islam-6-diarios-espanoles-islamofobas/ (accessed July 30, 2020).

Peña-Ramos, J. & I. Medina (2011). Interpreting Muslim religious interest groups in Spain: Frames, organization, and influence. *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, **8**(4): 387-400.

Plataforma Ciudadana Contra la Islamofobia (2018). Informe Anual Islamofobia en España 2017. http://pccislamofobia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Informe-Islamofobia-en-España.-PCCI-Informe-Anual-2018.pdf (accessed July 30, 2020).

Perceval, J.M. (1997). *Todos son uno. Arquetipos, xenofobia y racism: La imagen del morisco en la historiografía española durante los siglos XVI y XVII*. Almería, Spain: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses.

Planet Contreras, A.I. (2018). *Observing Islam in Spain: Contemporary Politics and Social Dynamics*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

Rogozen-Soltar, M. (2017). *Spain Unmoored: Migration, Conversion, and the Politics of Islam*. Bloomington, IN, USA: Indiana University Press.

Rosón, F.J. (2016). Daily life and conflict in the Albayzín neighbourhood of Granada. In N.M. Dessing, N. Jeldtoft, J.S. Nielsen & L. Woodhead (eds.), *Everyday lived Islam in Europe* (135-146). London: Routledge.

Ruggles, D.F. (2011). La estratigrafía del olvido: la gran Mezquita de Córdoba y su legado refutado. *Antípoda: Revista de Antropología y Arqueología*, **12**: 19-37. https://doi.org/10.7440/antipoda12.2011.03

Schmalbruch, S. (2017). The top 10 cities to travel to in 2018, according to Lonely Planet. *Insider*. https://www.thisisinsider.com/lonely-planet-best-cities-to-travel-to-in-2018-2017-10 (accessed July 30, 2020).

Schnell, S.M. (2003). The ambiguities of authenticity in Little Sweden, U.S.A. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, **20**(2): 43-68.

Shaw, S., S. Bagwell & J. Karmowska (2004). Ethnoscapes as spectacle: Reimaging multicultural districts as new destinations for leisure and tourism consumption. *Urban Studies*, **41**(10): 1983-2000.

Shaw, S. & N. Macleod (2000). Creativity and conflict: Cultural tourism in London's city fringe. *Tourism, Culture and Communication*, **2**(3): 165-175.

Smith, V. (2001). Power and ethnicity in "Paradise": Boracay, Philippines. In V. Smith & M. Brent (eds.), *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Issues of the 21st Century* (141-152). New York: Cognizant Communication.

Stepchenkovas, S. & J.S. Eales (2011). Destination image as quantified media messages: The effect of news on tourism demand. *Journal of Travel Research*, **50**(2): 198-212.

Theodossopoulos, D. (2012). Indigenous attire, exoticization, and social change: Dressing and undressing among the Emberá of Panama. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, **18**(3): 591-612.

Tremlett, G. (2008). Foreword: "Welcome to Moorishland." In S. Doubleday & D. Coleman (eds.), *In the Light of Medieval Spain: Islam, the West, and the Relevance of the Past* (xi-xx). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España (2018). *Estudio demográfico de la población musulmana*. Madrid: UCIDE. http://observatorio.hispanomuslim.es/estademograf.pdf (accessed July 30, 2020).

Vargas, A. (2018). The tourism and local development in world heritage context: The case of the Mayan site of Palenque, Mexico. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, **24**(9): 984-997.

Vernet, J. (2006). *Lo que Europa debe al Islam de España*. Barcelona: Acantilado.

Vive Andalucía (2016). Andalucía your roots, your destination: Sephard Tourism. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZrNdh3RnbY (accessed July 30, 2020).

Vive Andalucía (2018). Andalusia your roots, your destination: Halal Tourism. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbibGQGUuo8 (accessed July 30, 2020).

Wall, G. & P.F. Xie (2005). Authenticating ethnic tourism: Lidancers' perspectives. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, **10**(1): 1-21.

Wiesel E., T. Friling, R. Ioanid & M.E. Ionescu (eds.) (2004). *International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania: Final Report*. Iaşi, Romania: Polirom. https://www.academia.edu/42253077/FINAL_REPORT._INTERNATIONAL_COMMISSION_ON_THE_HOLOCAUST_IN_ROMANIA._Editors_Tuvia_Friling_Radu_Ioanid_Mihail_E._Ionescu._Polirom_2005_415_pp (accessed July 30, 2020).

Wierucka, A. (2018). Living with strangers: Huaorani and tourism industry in the 21st Century. *Anthropological Notebooks*, **24**(1): 97-110.

Wright, R. (2017). found: Spain travel posters. *EndlessMile*. http://endlessmile.com/found-spain-travel-posters (accessed July 30, 2020).

Yang, L. (2011). Minorities, tourism and ethnic theme parks: Employees' perspectives from Yunnan, China. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, **28**(2): 311-338.

Zapata-Barrero, R. & N. De Witte (2010). Muslims in Spain: Blurring past and present Moors. In A. Triandafyllidou (ed.), *Muslims in 21st Century Europe: Structural and Cultural Perspectives* (181-198). London: Routledge.