



**Mikaela H. Rogozen-Soltar.- *Spain Unmoored: Migration, Conversion, and the Politics of Islam* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 290p.**

*Spain Unmoored* is an ethnographic-cum-anthropologist account of interreligious social zones of encounters among residents of Granada. Rogozen-Soltar's book is premised on the coexistence of both convert and migrant Muslims in Spain and the differences between them; the tension between Islamophobic antagonism towards Muslims and Islamophilic celebration of Granada's Moorish legacy; and historically rooted angst about what Islam in Granada means for the Andalusian region's place at the margins between Europe and North Africa. Her focal point is on the social encounters between and among overlapping and miscellaneous communities of Catholic and secular Andalusians, Muslim migrants, and converts to Islam. The author is paying attention to what occurs in the spaces where these people are drawn together, to the conflicts that sometimes divide them, to the aspects of their lives that are undesirable in shared spaces of interaction, and to the hierarchically configured political and social processes that mould their encounters and separations.

Conducting her research in a zone of encounter shaped by unequal multiculturalism presents unique difficulties with respect to the ethics of representing inequalities. Moving between diversely different communities of Muslim migrants, European converts to Islam, and Catholic and secular Spaniards, Rogozen-Soltar's research brought her into contact with a miscellany of people and enabled her insight into both their social encounters and their mutual avoidances. The author carried out the research for this book in a variety of institutional, neighbourhood, and social settings within the city of Granada between 2001 and 2011, including two consecutive years from 2007 to 2009. The fieldwork included participant observation, media analysis, historical research, and ethnographic interviews. The social settings are comprised of a convert-run mosque and Islamic Studies Center, a convert women's association, a Moroccan women's association, shops in the *Albayzín* tourism neighborhood, the streets and cafés of migrant neighborhoods like the *Polígono*, and two NGOs where Rogozen-Soltar worked as a volunteer. It was through these NGOs that she encountered many of her non-Muslim, Andalusian, and Spanish research participants and interlocutors.

*Spain Unmoored* starts with a prefatory chapter on the history of Granada and its long relationship with Islam and Muslim population who have lived and currently live there. In 711, the Umayyad conquest brought Islam to the Iberian Peninsula. In the XI<sup>th</sup> century, a Berber leader established his independent kingdom with the city of Granada as its capital; it became the longest-held Muslim kingdom in Medieval Spain. Until 1492, when it fell to the armies of the Catholic monarchs, Fernando and Isabel, Granada was a cosmopolitan and tolerant city with large population of Jews and Muslims living together with Christians, a time now regarded nostalgically as

*convivencia* (literally living together/interfaith harmony). By 1501, the monarchs had mandated that Muslims and Jews either convert or leave. Most converted, but many left the Peninsula. The term *Moro* (Moor), which had to the Muslim inhabitants of the Maghreb, North Africa, originally a Berber world, and later to all much-lauded Muslim medieval kingdoms and populations in the Iberian Peninsula became an irreverently derisive term in Catholic Spain. It remains so in the popular speech today.

In five extended chapters, the author broaches the matter of zones of interactions in the city of Granada. In chapter one, “Historical Anxiety and Everyday Historiography,” Rogozen-Soltar claims that residents of Granada used historical narratives to negotiate their ambivalence about the contemporary meanings of Moorish heritage, expressing widespread anxiety about the relevance of medieval Islam for Granada’s belonging in Spain and Europe. She postulates that ongoing negotiations of Andalusian regional identity are closely associated with long-running debates about the place of Islam in Andalusia’s past and present. Through ethnography of what she dubs “everyday historiography,” whose shades of Islamophobia and Islamophilia display both anxiety and nostalgia for *al-Andalus*, the author traces how residents differently remember the long-ago Muslim past, which figures centrally in both analyses of Andalusia’s modern marginality and arguments about the place of Islam in the region today. Historical anxiety about Islamic Spain conditions Muslim migrants’ and converts’ experiences of belonging and difference in Granada.

Chapter two, “Paradoxes of Muslim Belonging and Difference,” delves into the various strategies for carving out space for Islam in the city. The author focuses on the specific ways Muslims – migrants and converts – strive for and experience rootedness in the city of Granada in particular and how they struggle to maintain and create connections to dispersed communities (the global *ummah*, Morocco, and the Moroccan diaspora). While both converts and migrants undermine notions of minority betweenness by promising, seeking, and insisting on belonging in Granada, their claims also mirror unequal multiculturalism. Converts are sometimes able to achieve recognition as Andalusians, Spaniards, or Europeans by articulating values and aesthetic styles that coincide with positive popular images of *al-Andalus*. Many migrants, almost always racialized beyond recognition as Andalusian or Spanish, are more likely to articulate local belonging in terms of themes like ancestry and prior presence on Spanish territory, which are in turn received as threatening by Islamophobic sectors. These predicaments of rootedness and remoteness highlight the diversity of Muslim experiences in Granada.

Entitled “Muslim Disneyland and Moroccan Danger Zones: Islam, Race, and Space” the third chapter proves the need to ethnographically lay bare exclusions inherent in apparent spaces of inclusion, and to ask what happens when spaces of urban social exclusion become the main places where Muslims and migrants are included. Religion is entangled with race, an issue Rogozen-Soltar takes up by comparing how Islam displays itself into two contrasting neighborhoods: the touristy center of Granada, *Albayzín* –the city’s medieval, Moorish quarter, which dates back to Spain’s eight-hundred-year Muslim period (711-1492) –sometimes called “Little Morocco” or “Muslim Disneyland,” where European converts live, and an outlying postindustrial zone called the Polígono, a geographically, politically, and

economically marginalized area that is linked with Islamophobic exclusion and the ghettoization of many Muslim migrants. Through her different research participants, the author comes to the concluding portraiture that Islamophilia may seem to map onto the *Albayzín* and Islamophobia onto the Polígono, that exclusion of Muslims occurs within the festive context of the *Albayzín* and that Muslim migrants are included as members of the neighborhood in the disenfranchised Polígono.

Unequal multiculturalism between European converts and Muslim migrants is the thematic fulcrum upon which the fourth chapter, “A Reluctant *Convivencia*: Minority Representation and Unequal Multiculturalism,” rotates. Rogozen-Soltar traces how converts’ and migrants’ different social positions within Spain emanate from and sustain distinct strategies for minority representation and experiences of the moral and political stakes of managing how their communities figure in Spanish imaginaries of Islam. The chapter delineates converts’ and migrants’ simmering tensions over the racial and gender politics of minority representation and related questions of religious authenticity and authority as well as these two groups’ efforts to represent Islam to wider publics in Granada.

The fifth and last chapter of *Spain Unmoored*, which is dubbed “Embodied Encounters: Gender, Islam, and Public Space,” is closely laced to the previous one as it brings into conspicuous focus the topic of unequal multiculturalism. It probes into how unequal multiculturalism influences and responds to ubiquitous racial and gendered discourses in emergent Andalusian debates about Islam, the body, and proper public sociality. The chapter confers headscarf debates in Andalusia, reframing the now ever-present issue by deeming it in relation to other bodily practices fundamental to the embodiment of normative sociality in urban Granada, including socializing in public places, consuming pork and wine, and public displays of affection. While headscarves garner most public attention as bodily practices that create “obstacles” to inclusion, Andalusian embodied social norms themselves often create gendered, raced zones of subtle but pernicious social exclusion. The chapter asks how convert and migrant women differently respond to this exclusionary challenge.

Mikaela H. Rogozen-Soltar’s *Spain Unmoored: Migration, Conversion, and the Politics of Islam* is an intriguing survey as it departs far away from a traditional ethnographic study of Muslim migrants or Muslim converts, centring around the interfaith encounters between four different groups: migrants, converts, and people who identify as Catholic and secular Andalusians, the so-called host or mainstream society receiving Granada’s new Muslims. The only caveat that can be borne in mind is that in using individual lives to dismantle stereotypes, one risks having to describe not 4 but 232,770 (the population of Granada in 2015) standpoints because even the groups are divided by gender and class and individual histories. Because of its association with historical imaginaries of the Moors, Granada “appears either as a linking bridge or as a dividing fault line between civilizational complexes” (Ballinger 1999, 1). In spite of being engaged in a long historical process of unmooring, Granada is likened to an “unmoored boat”; “it can crash into things, or become caught in a current and float off indefinitely. Unmooring thus evokes a dangerous dislodging and lack of attachment (225).”

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