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Entangled histories of place and reconfigurations of diasporic home: Al-Andalus history and the Moroccan diaspora in Granada, Spain

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Abstract

In this paper, I contribute to scholarship on diasporic geographies of home and develop ideas around "diaspora transregions" and "diaspora cities." To do this, I examine Moroccan diaspora formations in the city of Granada in the south of Spain. I utilise the spatiality and history of Granada to reveal complex interpretations of diasporic home. In particular, I examine how the Muslim history of Al-Andalus – which is intimately embedded in the urban landscape of Granada and also entangled into the history of the wider region – impacts on Moroccan diaspora consciousness. This involves examining how histories and geographies of Al-Andalus are interpreted and experienced by those in the Moroccan diaspora, which in this analysis is a diasporic population primarily from northern Morocco. I analyse four intersecting impacts of history and place, including nostalgia and imagined geographies, religious and genealogical links to Granada and the wider region, identification with culture and the built environment, and finally the ambivalence of history on belonging. What this examination reveals is that the history of Al-Andalus and an identification with historical circular migrations between northern Morocco and southern Spain can engender a sense of being part of multiple diasporic journeys and settlements, and subsequently a 'homing desire' to multiple spaces. A key contribution here is the illustration of how entangled urban and regional histories can reconfigure more normative notions of the diaspora condition. Diasporic connections to deep histories of place and migration can rework senses of home and refute notions of a linear homing desire to a singular nation-state. This demonstrates that diasporic belongings are not always limited to the parameters of the nation, but rather are informed by the intersections of urban and regional cultures, religions, and histories.

KEYWORDS
Al-Andalus, diaspora, Granada, history, home, Moroccan migrants

1 | INTRODUCTION

The notion of home has been a central focus of empirical analysis and theoretical debate in the field of diaspora studies (e.g. Ashutosh, 2019; Blunt, 2005, 2007; Brah, 1996; Cohen, 1997, 2009; Safran, 1991; Tolia-Kelly, 2018). This has resulted in varied conceptualisations of how home takes shape in the diaspora condition, ranging from more fluid postmodern conceptualisations (Brah, 1996; Clifford, 1997; Hall, 1993) to more traditional categorical conceptualisations (Cohen, 1997; Safran, 1991). Despite ambiguity around the meaning of home, which reflects an ambiguity around what constitutes diaspora per se, there is a general understanding that one's sense of home in diaspora is multiple and constitutes multiple place attachments (Blunt, 2007; Thompson & Finlay, 2021). For instance, home is the lived experience of the locality where one dwells, but there is also an orientation to a homeland space, which Avtar Brah (1996) calls a "homing desire." This multiplicity in diaspora offers a reworking of normative notions of home and challenges spatially bounded notions of culture and belonging (Thompson & Finlay, 2021). Despite this reconfiguration of home, diaspora is still frequently predicated on a subtext of a singular notion of the "authentic" home (Ashutosh, 2019); a space of "origin" where the "roots" of a diaspora began to grow. Therefore, diaspora often remains, albeit resistantly, more orientated towards "roots" rather than "routes," especially when it is referencing the homeland. Adding to this is a greater recognition of the "geopolitics of diaspora" (Carter, 2005). In particular, the formation of diasporas can be based around the exclusionary logics of the nation-state and nationalism, and this can result in a rigid singular homeland gaze (Carter, 2005). This led Ashutosh to argue that theorisations of diaspora, even those with radical tendencies, have favoured "a linear routing back to the homeland" (2019, p. 898).

There are, nonetheless, bodies of scholarship that move beyond more conventional conceptualisations of diasporic home. An important contribution stems from research that is attentive to history and what could be described as more "complicated geographies" of diaspora and dispersal (Ashutosh, 2019). For instance, research that focuses on geographies of diasporic connections, routes, and circulations (e.g. Gilroy, 1993; Ho, 2006; Mavroudi & Christou, 2015), or what Ashutosh (2019) calls "diaspora transregions." These are the regions that are "shaped by histories of dispersal and connections across land and sea," illuminating "new terrains of belonging" and "multiple lines of connection" (Ashutosh, 2019, pp. 2, 5). Scholarship on diasporas of the transatlantic slave trade (Gilroy, 1993; Matory, 2005), Indian Ocean diasporas (Ho, 2006; Walker, 2012), and "double diaspora" communities (Parmar, 2019; Wacks, 2015) illustrates complex versions of diasporic home, connected to multiple and circular journeys of dispersal and settlement. What these studies offer is an historic depth to the analysis of diaspora formations, something that is considered to be often missing from contemporary social science diaspora research (Alexander, 2017). Another important body of research focuses on the role of the city in diaspora formations (Blunt & Bonnerjee, 2013; Finlay, 2019). Much of this research reconfigures geographies of diasporic home by asserting the significance "to many people living in diaspora of the city as home rather than the nation as 'homeland'" (Blunt & Bonnerjee, 2013, p. 221). Indeed, cities are spaces of complex and distinct histories, memories, and cultures and they provide important contexts to the formation of diasporas (Finlay, 2019).

In this paper, then, I contribute to scholarship on diasporic geographies of home and develop ideas around "diaspora transregions" and "diaspora cities." To do this, I examine Moroccan diaspora formations in the city of Granada in the south of Spain. I utilise the spatiality and history of Granada to reveal complex interpretations of diasporic home. In particular, I examine how the Muslim history of Al-Andalus – which is intimately embedded in the urban landscape of Granada and also entangled into the history of the wider region – impacts on Moroccan diaspora consciousness. This involves examining how histories and geographies of Al-Andalus are interpreted and experienced by those in the Moroccan diaspora, which in this analysis is a diasporic population primarily from northern Morocco. I examine four intersecting impacts of history and place, including nostalgia and imagined geographies, religious and genealogical links to Granada and the wider region, identification with culture and the built environment, and finally the ambivalence of history on belonging.

What this examination reveals is that the history of Al-Andalus and an identification with historical circular migrations between northern Morocco and southern Spain can engender a sense of being part of multiple diasporic journeys and settlements, and subsequently a "homing desire" (Brah, 1996) to multiple spaces, including the diaspora space of Granada. A key contribution here is the illustration of how entangled urban and regional histories can reconfigure more normative notions of the diaspora condition. Diasporic connections to deep histories of place and migration can rework senses of home and refute notions of a linear homing desire to a singular nation-state. This demonstrates that diasporic belongings are not always limited to the parameters of the nation, but rather are informed by the intersections of urban and regional cultures, religions, and histories.

In the next section, I discuss conceptualisations of home in diaspora and scholarship that have focused on complex geographies and histories of diaspora and homeland. Then, I provide further context to the research, including a brief historical overview of the city of Granada, reflections about Moroccan migrations to Granada and Spain, and an overview of the methodology applied in the research. Thereafter, I provide the core empirical analysis, examining how the history of Al-Andalus impacts on Moroccan diaspora consciousness, especially senses of home. I conclude by illustrating the core contributions of the paper to the concept of diaspora.

2 | COMPLEX GEOGRAPHIES OF DIASPORA AND HOME

In the most classic sense, diasporas are dispersed migrant populations who share a sense of common origin and "homeland," real or imagined, in a different geographical locale to where they live (Meer, 2014). As such, relationships between diasporas and home, alongside the notion of homeland, have been of keen interest to diaspora studies scholars (e.g. Ashutosh, 2019; Blunt, 2005, 2007; Brah, 1996; Cohen, 1997, 2009; Safran, 1991; Tolia-Kelly, 2018). Home is a key way to understand diaspora identity and belonging (Thompson & Finlay, 2021), and diaspora often provides a reconfiguration of more normative notions of a singular and sedentary home (Stock, 2010). In Brah's seminal work on diasporic home, she illustrates the multiplicity of home for those in diaspora. She asserts:

> Where is home? On the one hand "home" is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of "origin." On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of locality. (1996, p. 189)

Brah (1996) distinguishes between the "homing desire" for a symbolic place of origin and the sedentary home where the diaspora live – the "diaspora space." This illustrates that at the core of the concept of diaspora lies the notion of a remembered home. The archetypal remembering is of the place a person, family, or one's ancestors migrated from (Stock, 2010), and this place has commonly been framed around the scale of the nation-state (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Diasporic remembering is often conceptualised as a nostalgic desire for a "homeland," which is what Brah (1996) labels as a "homing desire." Brah utilises this notion of "homing desire," rather than "desire for the homeland," in an attempt to resist and critique discourses of fixed origin. Brah's conceptualisation of diaspora seeks to see "homeland" as fluid, multiple, and mobile, rather than a static and bounded place. Although this version of homeland is based around desire and imagination, the imagining often alludes to a singular place "that is seen as the place of 'origin'" (Brah, 1996, p. 189), where the roots of a diaspora begin to grow. Therefore, Brah's conceptualisation illustrates the multiplicity and complexity of diasporic home, but it does not necessarily provide, or want to provide, a complete dislocation from the idea of one original "homeland." Moreover, there has been greater recognition of the "geopolitics of diaspora" (Carter, 2005) and how diasporas can replicate the logic of the nation-state. Rather than being decoupled from homelands and essentialisms, diasporas can be formed around a rigid orientation back to a homeland and reproduce bounded notions of national belonging and identity (Carter, 2005). Nationalistic tendencies of diasporas are illustrated in concepts such as "diasporic nationalism" (Lie, 2001) and "long-distance nationalism" (Anderson, 1998). These critiques, then, demonstrate that despite diasporas' radical potential and ability to reconfigure normative notions of home, many theorisations favour a routing back to a singular homeland of origin and this is often framed around the parameters of the nation-state (Ashutosh, 2019).

Nonetheless, within the vast literature on diaspora there is scholarship that reconfigures more conventional conceptualisations of diasporic home. An important contribution stems from research that focuses on complex geographies and histories of dispersal and diaspora. In particular, scholarship that examines geographies of diasporic connections, routes, and circulations (e.g. Gilroy, 1993; Ho, 2006; Mavroudi & Christou, 2015), or what Ashutosh (2019) calls "diaspora transregions." These are the regions that are marked by complex histories of dispersal and "movements of people, commodities, and ideologies that interlinked the land and sea" (Ashutosh, 2019, p. 902). Diaspora transregions illuminate "overlapping and distinct spatialities" (Ashutosh, 2019, p. 904) of dispersal. Importantly, these spaces are not contained by the territory of the nation-state producing "new terrains of belonging" (Ashutosh, 2019, p. 902). The homing desire in diaspora transregions incorporate "multiple sites in the making of home" that go "well beyond territorial conceptions of the homeland" (Ashutosh, 2019, p. 902). To illustrate his argument, Ashutosh draws on research on African diasporas of the transatlantic salve trade (Gilroy, 1993) and Indian Ocean diasporas (Ho, 2006). For instance, Paul Gilroy's (1993) seminal work on the "Black Atlantic" illustrates how the transatlantic slave trade and ensuing connections and circulations between

Atlantic Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas, and Europe create an African diaspora space that is composed of complex "webbed networks" of home and belonging. Research on Indian Ocean diasporas illustrates a region where "the circulation of people has, over the centuries, created a web of overlapping transnational networks based on religion, kinship and trade" (Walker, 2012, p. 436). In particular, research on the Hadramis of South Yemen illustrates a diaspora that has, over thousands of years, settled and moved all around the Indian Ocean region (Ho, 2006; Walker, 2012). This has resulted in diasporic communities that are formed around complex histories of transregional networks and movements, rather than a linear trajectory between two nation-states. Research that focuses on migrants who are living in what has been termed a "double diaspora" also provides important insights (Guo, 2016; Parmar, 2019; Wacks, 2015). Double diaspora is used to describe those who have gone through two or more experiences of migration and exile. Examples include Sephardi Jews (Wacks, 2015), East African Asians (Parmar, 2019), and Chinese Canadians now living in Beijing (Guo, 2016). These multiple migrations transcended the notion of the unidirectional diasporic journey and the duality of diasporic home. An important point to make about these studies of diaspora transregions and complex diasporic journeys is they offer a historic depth to the analysis of diaspora formations, something that is considered to be often missing from contemporary social science diaspora research (Alexander, 2017). Instead of only offering a lens into more contemporary migrations, they examine the impacts of deeper histories of migration and mobility in the formation of diasporas.

Another important area of research examines the role of the city in the formation of diasporas (e.g. Ashutosh, 2019; Blunt & Bonnerjee, 2013; Finlay, 2019). Much of this research reconfigures more conventional geographies of diasporic home and stresses the significance of the city as a home and homeland rather than nation-states. Notions such as "diaspora cities" (Blunt & Bonnerjee, 2013), "diaspora urbanism" (Ashutosh, 2019), and "diasporic right to the city" (Finlay, 2019) illustrate the role of diasporas in city-making and how the specificity of urban contexts shape how diasporas are formed. Indeed, cities have distinct and complex histories, cultures, and memories providing an important context to forge diasporic identities and diasporic senses of home (Blunt & Bonnerjee, 2013; Finlay, 2019). This urban focus has provided an important rescaling of diasporic home, belonging, and identity, and contributed to broader critiques of "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

In summary, this brief discussion about diaspora and home demonstrates that complex transregional geographies of diaspora and dispersal and deep histories of migration and exile can reconfigure and expand more normative notions of home and the homeland. Moreover, I have also highlighted the significance of urban contexts, rather than the nation-state, for diaspora formations and senses of home.

3 | THE CITY OF GRANADA: HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

> The city has a history, it is the work of a history, that is, of clearly defined people and groups who accomplish this oeuvre, in historical conditions. (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 101)

The city for Lefebvre is an oeuvre, which is developed like a work of art. It is the history of the city and the specific groups who have inhabited the city in certain historical conditions that construct the oeuvre-like city. History and its diversity imbue and compound the city with multiple layers of meaning. For Benjamin (1999), the city is a space of memory, and it communicates affective memories and meanings through the lived experience of being in a city.

The city of Granada in southern Spain, in the autonomous community of Andalusia, is an oeuvre that exhibits a diverse and hybrid history. Muslim, Jewish, and Christian inhabitants, past and present, have all played a part in the construction of Granada. Especially pertinent to this research, Granada was the last stronghold of Al-Andalus (711–1492), making it greatly emblematic of Spain's Muslim past (Howe, 2012). It was in the 8th century, with the arrival of Muslims, when the Albayzín neighbourhood of Granada was established (Isac, 2007). Although the nucleus of the city dates back to pre-Islamic times, it was during the Al-Andalus period when Granada started to significantly urbanise (Isac, 2007).

The Emirate of Granada, which stretched from Almeria to Gibraltar and was also commonly referred to as the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, was the last bastion of Al-Andalus in Spain (1230–1492). Granada was the capital of the Emirate and as such has a great degree of eminence in Islamic and Christian imaginaries. During this period, the revered Alhambra palace was built by the ruling Nasrid dynasty. In 1492, Granada fell to the Catholic Monarchs, signalling the completion of the Christian *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula and the end of the Al-Andalus epoch (Coleman, 2003). Granada went through a process of Christianisation, and after the expulsion of the Sephardi Jews in 1492, Muslims were expelled from Granada and the Iberian Peninsula in 1609, with many going into exile in northern Morocco (Flesler, 2008). Despite

the cleansing of non-Christian identities, the Muslim imprint on the architectural and discursive nature of the city remains today and this history is used as a core part of the contemporary city's tourism branding.

Finally, more recent history between Spain and Morocco is marked by uneven colonial and postcolonial power relations. The colonisation of Morocco included a Spanish protectorate (1912–1956), which consisted of the northern Rif region and the southern Western Sahara, while France had control over the heartland of the country. Therefore, asymmetrical relations between Spain and northern Morocco were further embedded in the 20th century.

4 | MOROCCAN MIGRATIONS TO SPAIN AND GRANADA

Granada's population has diversified significantly in the last 30 years with the arrival of diverse ethnicities, religions, and nationalities. The city is again a multi-cultural space where various ethnicities and religions live and come into contact. According to official statistics, there were 16,468 migrants living in Granada in 2014, representing 7% of the total population (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2015). Established diaspora communities that now reside in the city include those from Morocco, Senegal, Romania, Bolivia, and China.

The largest diaspora is the Moroccan, with 4077 Moroccan-born residents officially registered in 2014, corresponding to a quarter (25%) of the total migrant population (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2015). According to Granada ACOGE, an NGO that works with refugees and immigrants, Moroccans were the first contemporary migrants to arrive and settle in Granada (Fieldwork interview, 2015). The Moroccan diaspora is characterised by a common regional identity, with many originating from northern Morocco, especially areas such as Nador and Tetouan. Berber is the predominant ethnicity of the majority of Moroccan migrants, corresponding with the high number of Berbers in the north of Morocco. The Moroccan diaspora has contributed to the re-establishment of Islamic worship in Granada, with the majority identifying as Muslim.

The experience and integration of Moroccans in Spanish society is considered to be distinctive, with Moroccans frequently perceived differently to other migrants. Flesler (2008), in her book about Spanish responses to contemporary Moroccan immigration, argues that Moroccan migrants are often framed as the contemporary embodiment of the medieval "Moor." Moroccans thus remind Spaniards about a part of their identity that they have tried hard to erase, which destabilises "Spanish identity as unequivocally 'European'" (Flesler, 2008, p. 10). Moroccan migrants in Spain are imbued with memories that are evocative of a complicated past, rendering them as a distinctive migrant group, which according to Flesler (2008) engenders racism and mistrust. Zapata-Barrero (2008) asserts that as a result of racism and xenophobia, the Moroccan community has some of the poorest living conditions and is one of the most marginalised segments of the foreign population. Paradoxically, the history of Al-Andalus has also been shown to work as a resource for Moroccan migrants and engender distinctive participations and belongings. For example, Howe (2012) argues that a factor that differentiates Spain from other European countries is the commitment of politicians, councillors, and NGOs to maintain a good dialogue with Muslim communities and this is in part due to the deep historical connection with Islam and Morocco. This active dialogue, he argues, allows for Moroccans and Muslims to have a better level of participation in Spanish society. Research conducted in Granada has illustrated how the distinctive urban history of the city, especially with respect to its deep connections to Al-Andalus, has enabled Moroccan migrants to gain a "diasporic right to the city" (Finlay, 2019). In this paper, then, I contribute to these debates and provide a detailed focus on how the Moroccan diaspora interpret the history of Al-Andalus. This provides an important focus on the narratives of the Moroccan diaspora and how they experience Al-Andalus history in Spain.

5 | METHODOLOGY: RESEARCHING MOROCCAN DIASPORA FORMATIONS

The findings in this paper are derived from eight months of ethnographic fieldwork in Granada in 2013/2014 and shorter two-week follow-up visits in 2015 and 2019. A core component of the fieldwork was a street ethnography (Kusenbach, 2003) in the lower Albayzín neighbourhood, an area commonly referred to as "little Morocco" (Rogozen-Soltar, 2007), as well as some other areas in the city centre. This involved spending time and conversing with Moroccan migrants in the numerous shops, street stalls, and cafes that make up contemporary multi-cultural Granada. In addition, some participants were recruited through social media and personal contacts at the University of Granada. Four core integrated

methods were utilised to gather data: semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, ethnographic observations, and visual methods such as photos and films.

The research sample largely consisted of a diasporic population who were born in the Rif region of northern Morocco, and many identified as Berber. The Berbers, also referred to as the Amazigh, are a pre-Arabic ethnic group who are considered natives of Morocco and much of North Africa. The Berbers are considered to have played a central role in establishing, developing, and maintaining Al-Andalus (Flesler, 2008). Therefore, this Rif and Berber aspect of the sample is particularly important to the findings as it is a population who have strong connections to southern Spain and Al-Andalus. With respect to gender, 40 men and 10 women participated. This engagement with more men was not a predetermined selection, rather it reflects the Moroccan migrants who inhabit, work, and use the streets where much of the research was carried out. Given the scope of the paper and the uneven sample between men and women, this analysis does not focus on diasporic gender differences. Finally, the majority of participants identified as Muslim, but there were different forms of identification with Islam, with some following the religion in a strict manner, while others considered themselves more culturally than religiously Muslim.

A thematic analysis was applied, and all data collected were fully transcribed, organised, coded, and analysed using NVivo. Themes and sub-themes were then interrogated in more detail through manual coding and analysis. The quotes used throughout the paper have been translated from Spanish into English by the author. To maintain anonymity, all of the names used in the paper are pseudonyms.

My positionality as a white, male, British national carrying out research with Moroccan migrants was frequently reflected on in fieldwork diaries. "Outsider" status is often considered to have ambivalent effects on the research process (Myers, 2010), and this resonates with my experiences, limiting engagement with certain people, while with others it seemed to foster an openness to conversation and the research in general. As such, the data gathered and discussed in this paper are drawn from a diversity of encounters and interactions, reflecting the diversity of standpoints that make up the Moroccan diaspora. There is a danger in cross-cultural research that Othering and power imbalances are reinforced (Myers, 2010), so much consideration went into how the research was conducted, especially the questions and language used in interviews and conversations. All oral interactions were carried out in Spanish, and I believe this was an important way of creating rapport and potentially reducing power imbalances. Neither participant nor I could claim ownership of the language we were communicating in as it was not our native tongue. This, to some extent, produced a level playing field of communication. Prior to conducting research conversations and interviews, hanging out in spaces of the Moroccan diaspora was an important way to familiarise myself with participants and to ensure they were comfortable to discuss their personal experiences and perceptions.

6 | THE HISTORY OF AL-ANDALUS AND SENSES OF HOME AND HOMELAND IN THE MOROCCAN DIASPORA

The layers of deep history that are embedded into contemporary Granada's material and discursive landscape allow one to connect with various historical periods. In particular and distinctively for a western European city, they allow one to connect to several different medieval religious civilisations, including Muslim, Christian, and Jewish. During the course of the research, it became clear that the history of Al-Andalus, both discursive and material, influences how many Moroccan migrants experience Granada and the wider region of northern Morocco and southern Spain. Needless to say, different interpretations of the history exist within the Moroccan diaspora population, but for the majority of participants in the research, Al-Andalus history impacts on their sense of home and identity, and this is what I examine in this paper. In particular, it impacts on diaspora consciousness and how the diaspora is formed in Granada. For instance, the contemporary place-making strategies of the Moroccan diaspora, especially in the central districts of the city, have involved appropriating the valuable history of Al-Andalus, a key component in the city's tourist imagery (see Finlay, 2019). Therefore, the history of Al-Andalus, alongside the ingenuity of the Moroccan diaspora, has shaped and enabled the construction of a contemporary place of diasporic belonging and home (Finlay, 2019). However, a distinctive feature of the place-belongingness engendered by the history of Al-Andalus is it can also produce a nostalgic homing desire for multiple places, including the diaspora space of Granada, which reconfigures the more normative notion of a nostalgic homing desire for a faraway symbolic place to incorporate a homing desire for the diaspora space of dwelling. Indeed, the history of Al-Andalus emphasises how the north of Morocco and south of Spain can be considered a diaspora transregion, marked by centuries of migratory circulations and journeys, allowing for multiple terrains of belonging and home.

In the following sections, then, I examine a number of different but intersecting ways the history of Al-Andalus shapes and impacts on diasporic senses of home and belonging, including nostalgia and imagined geographies, religious and genealogical links to Granada and the wider region, identification with culture and the built environment, and finally the ambivalence of history on belonging.

6.1 | Nostalgia and imagined geographies of Granada and Al-Andalus

> It used to be said that in the Maghreb, which originally comprised the northern part of Morocco and most of northern Algeria, when people saw a fellow Muslim looking sad they would say he was "thinking about Granada." (Trevelyan, 1985, p. 12)

Part of the potency of the history of Al-Andalus is it functions as a powerful discursive practice, which can construct a preconceived "imagined geography" (Said, 1978) of Granada in the consciousness and memory of many Moroccans. While Said focused on how "imagined geographies" of the East were constructed by the West through processes of Orientalism, the heritage discourses of Al-Andalus could be considered as a processes of "Occidentalism," which Bonnett (2004) asserts is the discursive practice of representing "the West" by the "non-West." The imagined geography of Granada that exists in the Moroccan collective consciousness is the product of hundreds of years of place mythologising through historical discourses, poetry, storytelling, songs, painting, and film. Ellinson states "whether it is viewed as a lost paradise of cultural splendour, a symbol of displacement and exile, a site of religious tolerance, or a past to be embarked on and learned from, Al-Andalus has proven to be a highly proactive site of nostalgic expression" (2009, p. 2). This demonstrates that the remembering of Granada is, in part, wrapped up in politics and power and is part of a broader political and cultural project to celebrate and not forget a time when Islam had power in Europe.

The discursive conception of Al-Andalus, and in particular Granada, as a place of nostalgic desire was evident in many of the narratives of Moroccan migrants in the research, demonstrating a common exposure to such discourses while growing up and living in Morocco. For example, during a conversation with Brahim, a shop worker from northern Morocco, he stated:

> In Morocco we study a module called Western Islam and we call Al-Andalus the paradise lost. There is a module in a history degree called the paradise lost, which is about Muslim Spain. Granada is mentioned a lot. It is seen as one of the most important cities in the history of Al-Andalus. So, we all know about it and what it once was. Muslims say there are two phrases about Al-Andalus; the Spanish say the Reconquista and Muslims say the loss – the loss of Al-Andalus. (Brahim, Male, northern Morocco)

As the quote highlights, Brahim was exposed to discursive place mythologising and imagined geographies of Granada through his education in Morocco, and the sentiments commonly conveyed in such discourses are highly conducive to nostalgic remembering of the city. A favourable and celebrated attitude towards the past, a sense that a time and place is lost, and a longing for this lost place and time are key elements that generate nostalgia (Yeoh & Kong, 1996), and these are sentiments often conveyed in representations that circulate about Granada during the Al-Andalus period (Ellinson, 2009). The nostalgic sense of loss of a period and place is entangled with a sense of being exiled from a home and this sense of a lost and other home is a key feature in the homing desire that characterises the diaspora condition. Therefore, discourses about Al-Andalus powerfully imbue Granada with homeland connotations and this can contribute to feelings of multiple diasporic homing desires. Importantly, these nostalgic sentiments of Granada exist, for some, in pre-migration geographical imaginations, allowing for distinct diasporic experiences of home and belonging.

6.2 | Religious and genealogical links to Granada

> It's important for me that Muslims lived here before. It makes me feel more part of the city. Our ancestors were here before, so it feels good. It is like you are in your own country. (Driss, Male, northern Morocco)

In this quote, Driss asserts that the knowledge Muslims previously lived in Granada, even though it was hundreds of years ago, makes him feel part of the contemporary city, and not so much like being in a foreign land. The heritage

of Al-Andalus establishes Granada as a city that is historically synonymous with the practice and worship of Islam. It is imbued with a particular religious significance and, in some respects, is perceived as a "sacred space" (Eliade, 1958) for Muslims. Importantly, the Muslim imprint in the city illuminates the historical entanglements and migrations between Granada, the south of Spain, and northern Morocco. Granada is not what Metcalf (1996) labels as a non-locative "Muslim space" that is only given meaning through ritual and practice and belonging to the Ummah.[1] Rather, the location of Granada is significant because of both the historical presence of Muslims in the city and the contemporary practice of Islam. Given that religion is frequently an important, although not essential, part of diasporic identity formations and belongings (McLoughlin, 2009), these deep memories of a medieval Muslim period can shape diasporic feelings of home and the homing desire. In particular, for those in the diaspora who consider Islam an important part of their identity, remembering Granada as a Muslim "sacred space" can allow for an ancestral and spiritual connection to the city. This imbues Granada with a religious identity of what could be considered a "homeland" space, and thus, can engender a homing orientation to the city. It is important to note that Granada is also synonymous with the removal of Islam, and it is a space where there was the implementation of a dominant Christian dogma that had no acceptance of Islamic practices. As a result, Islam in Granada is paradoxically an authentic part of the city, while also a foreign religion of the "Other." The religious history of Granada can provide Moroccans with both a sense of Islam belonging in the city and a sense that there was a deep intolerance to the practices of Islam. Indeed, the religious history of Granada is not stable, it can be read in multiple ways, and provides contradictory messages.

Overlapping the religious identifications with the city is the way the history of Al-Andalus provides autobiographical and genealogical links, which are considered a key component in having a sense of belonging to place (Antonisch, 2010). The notion that a family line can be traced back to the city of Granada, and ancestors of the Moroccan diaspora lived in Granada during the Nasrid epoch of the city, was articulated in several narratives collected from Moroccan migrants. To illustrate this, I will draw on conversations I had during ethnographic research in an internet cafe run by a Moroccan family in the centre of Granada. The cafe is owned and run by Youssef and his father. They come from Beni Ansar in the Nador province of northern Morocco, and we conversed on several occasions about the history of Granada and how they related to it. The following extract is from a conversation in the cafe on a quiet spring afternoon:

Father: My son believes he is from Granada, that he is Granadino.[2]
Youssef: Yes, yes, I really think I'm from Granada. My roots come from Granada. I'm not talking about Spain; I mean Granada, this city. Why do I have such white skin? This happens a lot in my family, my sister has red hair, and there are blonds too. It is because many of the Muslims from Granada moved to the north of Africa where I was born. The Spanish and Moroccans are very mixed together.
Researcher: So did the Nasrids move to your area in the north of Morocco?
Father: Let me explain a bit more. The last king of Granada was Boabdil. When he left Granada he went to Morocco. They took a boat and where did they get off? Well, they got off the boat in an area that is near Melilla and Nador. When they arrived Boabdil's Mum told them to wait there for a while near the coast, and later the King went on to Fez for important meetings. However, many of the Nasrids stayed there, in this place that is near Melilla and Nador, which is called Beni Ansar. We are the Beni Ansar. The kings of Granada are called "the kings" and where we are from is called Beni Ansar, which means "the sons of the kings." When I was young I said to my Grandmother – "are we Christian Grandmother?" She would say "what?" and I would say "people here call us the kings, like the Christians" and she always said "no, we are not Christian, we are the Beni Ansar, the sons of the kings of Granada."
Researcher: So, you really feel part of Granada then?
Youssef: Yes, I feel very much like Granada is part of me. This is where I'm from, my origin is from Granada, I'm from Beni Ansar, I'm from those people. Beni means sons, it means we are the family of Ansar, which is the family of the Nasrids.

For Youssef and his father, Granada's Nasrid history and the settlement of Nasrid refugees in the Nador region of northern Morocco is a powerful historical narrative. They appropriate this historical narrative as part of their family history, which provides them with genealogical links to Granada, and subsequently a sense of belonging to the city. Youssef goes as far as to say that he considers himself Granadino and he feels his place of origin is Granada. He talks as if he has returned to the place he was exiled from, and in some respects, the north of Morocco – his place of birth – was the place where he was in exile. This is how one would generally imagine the diaspora to relate with the place they had migrated

from, not the place where they are the 'foreign' migrant. This reconfiguration of diasporic home is because Youssef and other Moroccan migrants genealogically identify with historical back-and-forth migrations, resulting in an imagination of already being part of an exiled diaspora. They are drawing on the histories of 'webbed networks', journeys, and movements that mark the region of southern Spain and northern Morocco. Significantly, Granada is the place they claim to have been exiled from, thus they have returned to one of the imagined "homelands." Through genealogical claims to historical migrations and exile, they have an imagination of multiple homelands and belongings, and it can render Granada - the diaspora space - as one of their "authentic" homes.

Youssef also genealogically identifies himself with his region of birth in northern Morocco and in other conversations he talked about feeling part of the Berber tribe that originates from the Rif region. Yousef's narratives convey a sense of home that is not confined to the nation-state, rather he forms it around entanglements between the city of Granada and local areas in northern Morocco. This illustrates that histories of movement, migration, settling, resettling, and mixing between Granada and northern Morocco can be constitutive of multiple homing desires that are orientated more towards the entanglements of cities and regions, rather than the nation. The hybrid and plural history of this part of the world is manifest explicitly in its material and discursive construction, which assists in producing a space where multiple ethnicities proclaim a belonging. As the Mediterranean is a historical and contemporary diaspora transregion of continuous movement and mixing, rather than a bounded and static ethnic space, it would seem intuitive that some of the Moroccan diaspora express multiple feelings of place belongingness with Granada and northern Morocco.

6.3 | Culture, the built environment, and the ambivalence of history

> The truth is that the culture is the same, especially for people from the north of Morocco. I'm from the north of Morocco. The customs are the same as in Andalusia, stuff like the festivals are the same, even the way people laugh is the same. So that's why Moroccans, especially those from the north of Morocco, are very comfortable here. We have so much in common. (Hamza, Male, Morocco, Ksar el Kebir)

> The heritage of Al-Andalus is important for me. I feel like Granada and its history is part of my culture. This city forms part of my culture and identity. Therefore, I don't feel like a stranger here. There is the Muslim heritage and all its symbols and things that are still here, and this definitely gives me a sense of belonging here. (Salma, Female, Morocco, Tetouan)

The previous extracts highlight how historical connections between northern Morocco and southern Spain (especially the city and region of Granada), and the medieval migrations between these areas, produce a contemporary space that multiple ethnicities can culturally identify with. For many of the Moroccan diaspora, cities such as Tetouan in the north of Morocco are marked by the Nasrid culture of Granada, and as a result, the diaspora space of Granada is perceived to contain cultural elements of their symbolic home. Awareness in the diaspora consciousness of the historical migrations of the Nasrids of Granada to areas such as Tetouan after the Reconquista in the 15th and 16th centuries is key to feeling genealogical and diasporic links to Granada and perceiving a collective culture between Granada and the north of Morocco. Culture provides symbolism that can elicit identification with place and it is considered an elemental component in feeling a sense of place belongingness (Antonisch, 2010). Diasporic cultural identities are recognised as multifaceted and hybrid (Hall, 1993), and in large part are formed by contemporary diasporic place-making that often alludes to the symbolic place one's family line has migrated from (Finlay, 2019). However, for the diaspora in Granada, it is not solely through the contemporary place-making that generates a sense of belonging, rather Granada is a diaspora space that contains a culture from a medieval history that is often interpreted as part of "their" culture and this is another important factor that contributes to a homing desire for Granada.

A greatly affective component of the notion of a shared culture is the material landscape of Granada. The architecture and built environment of relatively large swathes of central Granada date back to the Al-Andalus epoch and this was often asserted as impacting on diaspora perceptions and feelings about the city:

> I feel like it's my home. For example, if I go up to the Albayzín with the narrow streets and that, it reminds me of Arab cities. It reminds me of my city. My city in the north of Morocco is the same, you know? It has these little streets and white houses, like here in the Albayzín. Sometimes I get confused in the Albayzín and think it is my house in Morocco. (Ayoub, Male, Morocco, Tetouan)

> You know my home city is very similar to Granada ... this street 'Calle Calderería Vieja' and the other street over there, 'Calle Calderería Nueva', well there are streets in Tangiers that are like a photocopy of these streets, and they are exactly the same. (Anas, Male, Morocco, Tangier)

From these quotes, we can see that the built environment of Granada, especially the architecture in the Albayzín neighbourhood, is perceived as having great similarities to Moroccan cities. Through these perceived architectural similarities, Granada offers a distinctive Western diaspora space that can evoke a sense of belonging to Granada, but also a sense of being at home in Morocco. This demonstrates the symbolic power of architecture and the built environment of place (Lees, 2001). As Leach argues, "architecture ... offers a potential mechanism for inscribing the self into the environment. It may facilitate a form of identification, and help engender a sense of belonging" (2005, p. 308). The architectural heritage of Al-Andalus enables the Moroccan diaspora to identify with the materiality of the diaspora space. It is as if their cultural identity is inscribed into the bricks and mortar of certain areas in the city and this is particularly constitutive for having a sense of belonging to place.

The Alhambra palace and the Albayzín district, both of which have their genesis in the Muslim history of the city, are fundamental components of the heritage and tourist landscape of Granada. The Alhambra palace is perched high on a hill on one side of the Darro Valley; it has a great visible presence within the centre of the city and is the most visited attraction in Granada. Through inscribing meaning to place, heritage landscapes are extremely powerful resources and they play a role in sanctioning who does and who does not "belong" to a place (Yeoh & Kong, 1996). Older heritage, such as that from medieval times, is often used as a way to essentialise belonging and identity to a fixed place. Therefore, the "official" heritage landscape is a powerful homeland component in Granada for the diaspora. Consider the following quote:

> It's a magical city for many people. People like it and I have seen people crying while walking around the city because of how beautiful it is. Granada is attractive to me because my ancestors were here. When I see the Alhambra I think, wow, this really was a Muslim land too. This is very comforting and I like it. I see it like I'm home in Granada because this city forms part of us, part of our culture. Our culture is part of what attracts people to the city. Although everybody complains and says the economy is bad, there is not much work, but many immigrants live here and stay here. It has some magic, which attracts you, and when you have lived in Granada they say you'll never be able to leave. Well, every city has its own myths and different things. (Yassine, Male, Morocco, Tetouan)

For Yassine, monuments such as the Alhambra function as a memory of Muslim civilisations that previously lived in the city, and this is constitutive for feeling a homing desire for Granada. His comments resonate with Benjamin's (1999) notion that the city has a memory, and the memories are communicated to us through the material experience of the city. For Benjamin, the historical memories of the city impose themselves on the consciousness and shape our thoughts and feelings with the city. An overarching feeling that is expressed about the heritage landscape of Granada is a sense of pride that Muslims were responsible for building such significant monuments. However, paradoxically, the heritage landscape can also produce a sense of loss and even shame. A sense of longing and loss of the past are key dimensions of nostalgia (Yeoh & Kong, 1996), and as previously illustrated, nostalgia is a key thread in much of the Moroccan diasporic narratives:

> It saddens me ... yes, yes. You feel pride but this pride also makes you feel sad and shameful. You think fuck, look how beautiful the Alhambra is, look what we had, and what we have lost, and look how we are now. I think about what a history we have lost. (Youssef, Male, Morocco, Nador/Beni Ansar)

The visible memories of the past can result in a sense of having lost control and ownership of the city, which generates feelings of nostalgia, and consequently emotions of loss and longing. This sense of loss sometimes develops into a sense of sadness and embarrassment in personal narratives:

> I often think, look what we were and look what we are now. We were the highest possible and now we are crap. We come here for work, to look for a life like dogs and it saddens me because we made stuff like the Alhambra and now we are living like this, like poor immigrants. (Hicham, Male, Morocco, Al Hociema)

For Hicham, monuments such as the Alhambra demonstrate what 'they' once had and what 'they' have 'lost'. The monuments accentuate the fact that they have lost a past of grandeur, and that their present condition as economic migrants are of a lesser social standard, which engenders feelings of shame and embarrassment. This clearly illustrates how identifying with histories can have ambivalent impacts on one's sense of self (Ashworth et al., 2007), potentially engendering belonging but also shame and non-belonging.

The ambivalent impacts of history were alluded to in other conversations with participants. In particular, how the history of Al-Andalus can be a resource but also play a role in discourses of discrimination, such as everyday racism and Islamophobia (Flesler, 2008; Hastings, 2019). This ambivalence is revealed in a quote from Nizar, who is originally from Casablanca:

> The Muslims were here for 700 years, so you know, they left a mark that can still be seen and felt. This is especially the case in Andalusia. You can really see the Arabness of the people in Andalusia. You know they really act like us, like people from Morocco, certainly a lot more than people from northern Spain. In some ways this makes me feel more part of Granada, but sometimes they call me Moor, as they want to deny their Arabness, and try and seem different to the Moroccans. (Nizar, Male, Morocco, Casablanca)

Nizar, on the one hand, states that the history can make him feel more part of Granada, while on the other, he states there are also people who will label him as a "Moor" and reject the interconnections between Moroccans and Spaniards. This highlights how the association of Moroccans with the history of Al-Andalus can also contribute to racism and othering, with Moroccan migrants negatively seen as the contemporary embodiment of the medieval Moor (Flesler, 2008). Al-Andalus history is, of course, also marked by divisions, violence, discrimination, and the expulsion of different religious groups from the Iberian Peninsula and these aspects of the history can be mobilised to reject the presence and belonging of contemporary Moroccan migrants in Granada and Spain more generally. As such, there is an ambivalence in how Al-Andalus history is interpreted, resulting in moments of belonging and non-belonging for the Moroccan diaspora. Moreover, this feeds into broader uneven relationships of colonial and postcolonial power between Spain and Morocco and how these uneven relationships manifest in claims around history and belonging. Therefore, although the paper has primarily demonstrated how Al-Andalus history can work as a resource, engendering feelings of home and belonging, it is important to acknowledge that history invariably contains many conflicting narratives and can be interpreted and utilised in a variety of ways in the present.

7 | CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have contributed to research on complex geographies of diaspora and dispersal, examining how interpretations of medieval history and its imprints in urban and regional spaces impact on diaspora consciousness, especially senses of home and belonging. Through focusing on the impacts of the Muslim history of Al-Andalus on Moroccan diaspora formations in Granada, Spain, the normative spatial registers of here and there, home and away, belonging and not belonging have been contested throughout the paper. To conclude, I discuss three core contributions of the paper to the concept of diaspora.

First, contributing to scholarship on diaspora transregions and diaspora cities, this paper demonstrates how complex and entangled urban and regional histories and geographies can reconfigure more normative notions of the diaspora condition. Connections with deep histories and its imprint on urban and regional space can reconfigure diaspora consciousness, which is commonly conceptualised as a double consciousness, into a multi-layered and interconnected consciousness of "authentic" identity and belonging. The history engenders feelings of nostalgia, alongside religious, genealogical, and cultural connections to multiple places, which can enable Moroccan migrants to have a consciousness of being part of multiple diasporic exiles. Alongside their lived experience of migration out of Morocco, some identify with the historical dispersal of Nasrid Muslims out of Granada in medieval times. As such, the narratives of many Moroccan migrants infer a belonging to both a "Nasrid" and a northern Moroccan diaspora. When deep history is more tangible on urban and regional landscapes, and more part of a collective consciousness, it can enable diasporas to connect to historical migrations and exile, creating an imagination of multiple movements, homelands, and belongings in the diaspora consciousness.

Second, the paper expands on more conventional conceptualisations of diasporic home and the homeland. Brah (1996) conceptualises home in diaspora as a lived home, where the diaspora have settled, and a nostalgic "homing desire"

for a real or imagined place away from where one lives. However, the nostalgic and symbolic homeland for the Moroccan diaspora is often multiple, not just encapsulating one primary homeland. As illustrated in this paper, many in the diaspora have a homing desire for Granada as well as home in northern Morocco. There is a longing for not one but two homelands, including a homing desire for what is considered the diaspora space. Appropriation of the Muslim history in Granada, and identification with the Al-Andalus refugees in the 1400s and 1500s, creates a multiplicity of homelands in the diaspora consciousness. Like Gilroy's notion of the "Black Atlantic" (1993), the Mediterranean can be considered a "webbed network" of deep historical connections, movements, and mixing, enabling a homing desire to multiple places. History of place, then, can reconfigure understandings of home in the diaspora condition. The past can refute normative notions of a linear homing desire to a singular nation-state, which is often what ideas about diasporic home are predicated on. Through awareness of and connections to historical migrations and dispersals that mark cities, regions, and seas, diasporas can have a sense of multiple "authentic" homelands. This illustrates how home in diaspora is formed through the coalescing of multiple spatial scales and identities, such as urban, regional, and religious, and it is not limited to the spatial parameters of the nation.

Third, diverse and conflicting historical narratives, alongside uneven relationships of power, contribute to an ambivalent urban landscape, with attitudes that are both tolerant and intolerant to the presence of Moroccan migrants. Muslim history for the Moroccan diaspora is equally enabling and disabling, often dependent on localised interpretations and mobilisations of Al-Andalus. With multiple layers of history, which are entangled into uneven colonial and postcolonial relations, diaspora cities can be simultaneously unfamiliar and familiar, foreign and homely, welcoming and unwelcoming. The deep foundations of cities, especially in border areas such as Granada, do not convey a singular ethnic message or ideology. Rather they are hybrid, conveying a multitude of meanings. This can create a diaspora liminal space, which conveys a sense of both home and away, here and there, belonging and not belonging.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Research data are not shared due to confidentiality and ethical restrictions.

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ENDNOTES
[1] The Ummah is the worldwide community of Islam. A Muslim is considered to always belong to the Islamic community of the Ummah, regardless of where one lives in the world.

[2] Granadino is the term used for a native of the city of Granada.

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