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Contested urban heritage: Discourses of meaning and ownership of the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba, Spain

ABSTRACT

Córdoba, Spain is currently at the centre of a national, and increasingly international, dispute surrounding its most recognizable symbol: the Mosque-Cathedral. Built for Muslim worship beginning in the eighth century, and consecrated as a Catholic church in the thirteenth century, this temple is protected as a World Heritage Site (WHS) and is widely promoted as a symbol of religious coexistence. Contemporary conflicts, arising as Córdoba began promoting an economic development model based on cultural tourism, revolve around the appropriate restoration, ownership, and cultural meaning of the monument. The local chapter of Catholic Church, in an attempt to cement its claims of ownership, has increasingly minimized the building's Muslim past and used the site for evangelization. Exploring contemporary conflicts surrounding this monument offers a paradigmatic case to examine the political economy and cultural politics of urban heritage and the importance of discourse in shaping political agendas around memory, identity and ownership.

KEYWORDS

Córdoba
Mosque-Cathedral
heritage
discourse analysis
scalar politics
politics of memory
archaeology

INTRODUCTION: WHOSE HERITAGE? SCALAR POLITICS AND OWNERSHIP NARRATIVES

In his study of the 'social production of (social) space', Lefebvre noted that 'Monumentality […] always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message. Monumental buildings mask the power and the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought' (1974: 143). One might add to this prescient analysis that the *narration* of monumentality, in its reductive, interpretive power, is also imbued with power.

It is difficult to overstate the monumentality of the Mosque-Cathedral[1] of Córdoba, located in the Andalusia region of southern Spain. An eighth century mosque with a sixteenth century church constructed within it, it is the oldest continuously occupied building in Spain (Nieto Cumplido 1995) and is generally regarded as the most important Islamic monument of the Western world. It is among Spain's most visited and admired sites, and increasingly so: 2015 set a record for visitor turnout (nearly 1.7 million), as did the year before. However, 'The turmoil of Andalusia's extraordinary past seems to hover just beneath the surface of its pleasant landscapes and […] urban life' (Said 2002). The tumultuous history of the monument and region continue to manifest in contemporary conflicts at the local, regional, national and international scales.

The focus of this article is not to narrate a balanced historical overview of the monument, but to explore the ways that historical discourses have been mobilized along ideological lines to narrate the meaning, value and ownership of this massive and breathtaking temple. Globalization has situated Córdoba and its storied built environment within the circuits of cultural tourism and, rhetorically, as a keystone in shifting geopolitical and religious antagonisms. Since the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, the city has been idealistically presented as a worldwide paradigm of intercultural and interfaith coexistence (Arigita 2013). Indeed, the links between the narration of Córdoba's past – imagined as an antidote to the 'clash of civilizations' between Christianity and Islam in the Western world – alludes to scalar politics and social imaginaries that are unabashedly contemporary. As Swyngedouw (2004: 33) notes, 'spatial scales are never fixed, but are perpetually redefined, contested and restructured in terms of their content, relative importance and interrelations'. We argue that these shifting scalar politics require a fresh look at the power geometries (Massey 1993) of heritage discourses, fluctuating between the local and the planetary. 'Scalar narratives', as defined by González (2006: 840–41), are 'stories about the changes in the spatial patterns of sociopolitical processes that are uttered by actors or groups embedded in specific historic and political contexts' placing limitations on the political horizon, performing a 'discursive fix' that renders fluid and flexible capitalism as 'a relatively static and self-enclosed entity'. Since the conflicts around the Mosque-Cathedral are indivisibly political, economic and religious, we must look from this specific site outward towards, and up to, the planetary scale to understand the terrain(s) of conflict. Furthermore, considering the spatio-temporality of this particular case, the study requires a regressive-progressive view of the socio-spatial production, where understanding the present and future can only be accomplished by reconstructing spatial histories (Lefebvre 1974).

With the politics of scale and of heritage embodied in the Mosque-Cathedral, the ideological nature of archaeology is undeniable, the seemingly innocuous act of naming is deeply conflictual, and public-private and

1. We choose to use the name 'Mosque-Cathedral,' as it is the official name recognized by the local and regional government of Córdoba and we consider it to be the best historical descriptor of the monument.

secular-religious divisions are readily apparent. However, in debates around the meaning of this ancient structure, history is imagined in a timeframe that eludes memory, instead relying on the interpretation of artefacts and ancient documents, emphasizing moments of rupture and disjuncture. Accordingly, the histories and values of the monument consistently rouse debate, calling into question the appropriate management, narration and rightful ownership of the temple. Within this context, contested interpretations of the monument are ultimately mobilized to debate a singular overarching question: to whom does the Mosque-Cathedral belong?

This article will begin by briefly introducing contemporary academic approaches to critical heritage studies, discourse analysis and the role of heritage-oriented tourism in urban political economy. With some notable exceptions (Monteiro 2010; Ruggles 2011; Arigita 2013), conflicts surrounding heritage in Córdoba have received scant attention in anglophone academia.

Córdoba conjures a global cultural imaginary focused on its distinctive history as the capital of the Muslim Kingdom of Al-Andalus (8th–11th centuries), stretching across much of the Iberian peninsula. The 'Córdoba paradigm', according to Arigita (2013), tells the story of a medieval society before the *Reconquista* (Reconquest) of Catholic monarchs from the North of current-day Spain, when Muslims coexisted in with Christians and Jews. The discourse of *convivencia* (coexistence) surrounding the idealized multicultural and interfaith society of Al-Andalus has inspired a number of reconciliatory, interfaith initiatives throughout the world – as we will see later – and is central to the way that Córdoba's tourism-oriented growth coalition (Logan and Molotch 1987) has branded the city.

Contemporary debates surrounding the Mosque-Cathedral emerged in the 1970s, concomitant with the city's initiatives to stimulate cultural tourism through its bid to have the temple recognized as a World Heritage Site (WHS) by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This symbol of the city has found itself in the midst of ideological, political, religious and economic battles, with increasing internationalization of geopolitical conflicts. The appropriate management of the temple and the narration of the building's history have been the subject of local and national debate. Since the 1990s, the local Cabildo Catedralicio (Cathedral Council) of the Catholic Church has increasingly downplayed the building's Muslim past, including changing its name from the 'Mosque-Cathedral' to the 'Cathedral, former Mosque', to simply the 'Cathedral' or 'Holy Church'. Most recently, regional and national debates have revolved around the revelation that the Catholic Church had, in 2006, surreptitiously registered the Mosque-Cathedral in its own name, along with thousands of other buildings and plazas that had been presumed to be public properties. In an era of fiscal austerity, leftist civil society organizations throughout Spain – and gradually some political parties – have characterized these *inmatriculaciones* (property registrations) as a nationwide land grab of epic proportions, with the Mosque-Cathedral (Figures 1 and 2) as the most contentious example.

Through analysing public and specialist discourse surrounding the monument since the 1970s, including debates among the architecture and archaeology communities, news media representation, public speeches and academic publications, we analyse the discursive spheres and scalar terrains of conflict. Along with these documentary sources, this article relies on a variety of public documents and strategies, tourist brochures and legislation within the context of Spain's historic relationship with built heritage. Additionally, we rely on ten

Figure 1: A view of the Puente Romano *(Roman Bridge) and the Mosque-Cathedral from across the bank of the Guadalquivir River. Image Source: Brian Rosa.*

Figure 2: The juxtaposition of Moorish architecture and decorative art with Catholic iconography at the Mosque-Cathedral. Image Source: Brian Rosa.

interviews conducted in early 2015 to probe the motivations, concerns, and attitudes of different local actors, as well as many more informal conversations with former tour guides, Córdoba residents and international visitors.[2]

Since this article presents an analysis of current events and research was completed in 2015, we emphasize that political agendas and alliances shift quickly. 2015 was an intense electoral year in Spain that introduced new power relations within many institutions, and this dynamic continued in 2016 as Spain repeated elections after failing to form a coalition government. It is worth noting that in April 2016, when this research was already under review, the Church returned the name 'Mosque-Cathedral' to brochures and some signage under pressure by activist groups and the newly elected city government. This, in turn, reflects contemporary political dynamism and uncertainty, and ultimately how heritage politics are about imagining society's future as much as its past. In 2017, after a sustained, nationwide citizen campaign, a number of local governments and the national government are coordinating on an effort to take inventory of the *inmatriculaciones*, and the city of Córdoba has begun an investigation into the management of the Mosque-Cathedral.

HERITAGE AS SOCIO-SPATIAL PRACTICE

Heritage is 'intrinsically political and symbolic' (Viejo-Rose 2011: 9), responding and contributing to local, regional and national – and in some cases international – cultural identities through the narration and display of history's traces. Or, as Lowenthal (1985) puts it, 'the past is a foreign country' at service to the desires of the present. As a discourse and practice, heritage (*patrimonio* in Spanish) serves as a powerful tool in the construction of historical memory of a place or nation, offering a sense of perceived continuity, collective inheritance and identity integral to the constitution of an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991). Built heritage – in the form of archaeological sites, historic buildings and districts – is often also targeted to visitors from outside a host culture, particularly tourists. However, heritage cannot be simply equated with history or with monuments. Rather, it should be understood as dynamic social practice with considerable cultural and economic impact in which history, memory and tradition are strategically mobilized to narrate a particular story,

2. Interviewees included diverse stakeholders including officials at the regional government of Andalusia, within the Córdoba city government and Tourism Partnership, a spokesperson of the Cathedral Council, the President of an organization representing the city's Muslim community, and a variety of local civil society activists.

usually by or with the approval of the state, for the aims of historical education, solidifying national identities and, in more recent years, the promotion of cultural tourism.

In critical heritage research, perhaps the most influential work on discourse analysis has been by Smith, who explores

> authorized heritage discourse [which] focuses attention on the aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places, and/or landscapes that current generations must care for, protect, and revere so that they may be passed to nebulous future generations for their education and to forge a sense of common identity based on the past.
>
> (2006: 29)

Smith argues that heritage is a cultural process that should be led by local communities to define, value and manage collective historical resources. Of course, local communities may not agree on the values or meanings of heritage, as we find in the case of Córdoba. As many scholars have noted, heritage claims are often used to promote discourses of nationalism (Trigger 1984), identity (Meskell 2002), and accordingly, belonging and exclusion (Silverman 2011), which may contradict more universal or pluralistic conceptions of shared inheritance.

Contemporary social processes constitute the values and meanings of material artefacts, and beyond the material realm, the designation of heritage has increasingly expanded to the immaterial: local traditions, ceremonies, festivals and culturally specific forms of expression. Understanding the multiple and overlapping discursive and scalar regimes that shape heritage practice – legal discussions of property rights, economic impact assessment, regulatory frameworks – are all of integral importance to unpack the politics and spatial implications of heritage. As Harvey explains, the way we imagine heritage and its relation to history should be reversed: 'Heritage is about the process by which people use the past – a "discursive construction" with material consequences' (2004: 19). In these complex relations of values, meanings, social relationships and practices, performed and practiced at a variety of geographical scales, heritage is constituted from the site-specific and hyper-local to regional, national to international organizations such as the European Union.

The most prestigious mark of heritage to bestowed upon a site, landscape or monument is designation as a WHS by UNESCO. Since the ratification of the World Heritage Convention of 1972, the symbolic value bestowed on a site through WHS designation is highly sought after by public and private institutions seeking to promote cultural tourism. In the WHS framework, heritage is understood as a common resource for all humanity, and while designation often serves to boost tourism and investment in the conservation of monuments, it also places limitations on the use and management of sites: 'world heritage' is idealistically, though vaguely, conceptualized as a 'public concept' (Jover-Báez and Rosa 2017), belonging to humanity as a whole and typically administered by state (i.e. 'public') entities.

Undoubtedly, heritage designation of a place or monument has significant impact on the global circulation of capital, particularly through tourism and related service industries, along with property speculation responding to the valorization of proximate real estate (Di Giovine 2009). Indeed, travel and tourism – along with the interrelated cultural industries – are among the world's largest industries. Cultural tourism has emerged as presenting 'attractions acting

as key cultural experiences, in which meaning is created through consumption' (Richards 1996: 263), and in a period of economic decline, tourism is one of Spain's few growth industries. Aside from heritage attractions, cultural tourism is driven by other, less tangible elements of the cultural economies of lifestyle and leisure including arts and music festivals and the marketing of local handcrafts and cuisine (Duarte Alonso 2015). Urry (2002), in exploring the significance of tourism as a global industry, argued that tourists travel – often to distant lands – to partake in the 'tourist gaze': seeking authenticity and truth by removing themselves from their familiar environments to experience time and space differently. However, in an all-encompassing, highly commodified experience, the distinctiveness and perceived authenticity of cultural landscapes may shape entire districts or cities as symbolic landscapes of consumption (Zukin 1995; Degen 2008; Miles 2015), calling any notions of authenticity into question (Zukin 2010). Reflecting the manufacturing of heritage, new centre-periphery relations, and power imbalances underlying globalized cultural tourism, AlSayyad comments: 'Today one must take the history of political and cultural domination into account if one is to analyse issues related to the invocation of heritage in the built environment' (2001: 5–6).

As much as heritage is commodified, this is not to suggest that the practices associated with historic sites are detached entirely from the 'true' or 'authentic' history of the built environment, or that historical artefacts are unworthy of conservation. Indeed, we wholeheartedly agree that the Mosque-Cathedral is one of the world's most awe-inspiring works of architecture and built heritage and should be recognized as such. Rather, we emphasize that the goal of heritage practices cannot be understood outside of the political, economic and cultural contexts in which they operate, and that treating monuments as commodities is an integral part of post-Fordist economic development processes in an era of inter-city competition and municipal entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1989) seeking footloose capital.

Neither do we seek to downplay the interpretation of historic artefacts, though we argue that this practice is often naively depoliticized. Breglia (2006) suggests that heritage research should take an ethnographic approach that avoids becoming 'mired in questions of archaeological interpretations of the material remnants of the past'. However, we must ask ourselves if looking beyond archaeological interpretations is possible, or even desirable, in coming to terms with the sociocultural impacts of heritage practices, considering that archaeological narratives shape sites and mould public perception.

A. Heritage practices and the politics of memory in Spain

Spain is a country that has long faced difficulties dealing with, and agreeing upon, its past. Though it has the third most WHS in the world, what deserves to be considered heritage has long been a matter of debate, and the presentation of cultural memory is often the subject of contestation along left-right and religious-secular divides. To explain Spain's ambivalent relationship with heritage, here we briefly consider the country's history, and specifically two pivotal moments, to explore contemporary heritage politics.

The first moment dates back to the second half of the nineteenth century and refers to the reinforcement of the Spanish identity during a convulsive moment that included liberal and proletarian revolutions and the twice dissolution and reinstatement of the monarchy. It was during the turn of the century that Spanish self-identity was reconsidered and reshaped by

politicians and intellectuals through selective interpretations of medieval history – more precisely through the political centricity of the Castile region and the primacy of Catholic tradition. Spanish nationalism is largely rooted in a version of national history institutionalized during this time period (Pérez Garzón 2000). Upon establishing academic hegemony, the conservative, aristocratic and Catholic elites imposed their vision through military force and a cultural regime that was used to legitimate the restoration of the social relations of the Bourbon monarchy.

The second historic moment deals with the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1936–75). Viejo-Rose (2011) argues that these nearly 40 years of autocratic rule were marked by concerted attempts to solidify a nationalist ideology and social imaginary, largely through controlling messages regarding the country's past, symbols, myths and unified Catholic identity. As a result, homogeneity was imposed upon distinct regional cultures, subsuming local cultural practices, languages and other forms of expression. Although the country began a gradual Transition to Democracy upon the death of Franco, the legacy of authoritarianism still has significant repercussions for cultural heritage in Spain, in particular in the telling of the story of the *Reconquista* and the unification of a Christian Spain under the monarchs in medieval Iberia, which have been internalized in the ideology of Catholic-nationalism that continues to dominate the political right (Hazarem 2015; García Sanjuán 2016). Through the close relation between the Franco regime and the Catholic Church, the use of heritage as a tool of nationalist-religious ideological indoctrination, and the long-standing divides between the primarily Christian right and the largely secular left, the relationship between history, heritage and memory in Spain remains deeply divisive (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: A statue behind the altar of the church displaying the well-known iconography of Santiago Matamoros *(literally Saint James the Moor Killer) on a horse, crushing Muslim soldiers beneath its hooves in a 9th Century battle. Images of this saint have been removed from other Spanish churches. Image Source: Brian Rosa.*

B. A brief history of Córdoba and the Mosque-Cathedral

It would be impossible to give an in-depth history of either the city of Córdoba nor its Mosque-Cathedral, and there is no shortage of literature for interested readers.[3] However, being as the conflicts surrounding the temple rely on historical narratives to bolster their claims, here we offer a short history of both the city and its 'ornament of the world' (Menocal 2002) as is pertinent to later discussions.

Córdoba is the name of a city (pop. 328,000) and otherwise agricultural province (pop. 800,000). Having been the site of human settlement for over two millenia, Córdoba was first urbanized by the Romans. In the late sixth century the city was conquered by the Visigoths, who ruled until the city was invaded by Muslims from modern-day Syria in the early eighth century. By 756, Córdoba was designated as the capital of the Muslim emirate, and later as its own califate. This is the same time period which marks the beginning of the phased construction of the mosque on the bank of the Guadalquivir River.

By the height of the kingdom of Al-Andalus, around 1000, Córdoba was the most populous city in Europe, and is considered to have been one of the wealthiest, most politically powerful, and most culturally advanced cities in the world, rivalling Baghdad and Istanbul. The califate, which fell in 1031, was conquered and overthrown by rival Muslim factions, leading to the decline of Córdoba as the political, economic and cultural centre of Al-Andalus. In the year 1236 the city was captured by the army of King Ferdinand III of Castile, at which point the mosque was consecrated as a Catholic church.[4] Throughout history there have been many physical interventions in the mosque, starting with the construction of a Gothic nave in 1489 (Nieto Cumplido 1995) and a variety of chapels. The most controversial intervention was the construction of a cruciform Reinassance church in 1523, which required the dismantling of part of the Islamic arcade. This instigated a strong backlash from city officials and the local Church hierarchy, who only acquiesced when Emperor Charles V intervened in favor of the Archbishop and threatened all dissenters with death. Famously, years after approving the intervention of the cathedral, Charles V is often quoted as expressing regret for allowing the cathedral to be built within the mosque, supposedly lamenting in 1526 that 'If I had known what you wished to do, you would not have done it, because what you are carrying out is to be found everywhere, and what you had formerly does not exist anywhere else in the world' (quoted in Ecker 2003). However, as many scholars have argued, it was precisely the insertion of the Catholic Church that preserved the fabric of the monument, with nearly all other mosques from the time period having been destroyed or transformed beyond recognition.

The self-conscious conservation of the Mosque-Cathedral as heritage – as differentiated from its continued transformation through gradual maintenance and modification – began as early as 1815, when the Chapel of Saint Peter was removed, behind which had long been hidden the mosque's mihrab, which was restored (Ruiz Cabrero 2013). Other scholars place the beginning of 'restoration thinking' in Córdoba around 1835 (García Verdugo 1996b). The temple was declared a National Monument in 1882, and by 1886, its modern restoration was underway. Architect Ricardo Velázquez placed emphasis on highlighting the features of the pre-existing mosque through the removal of some later Christian additions. Edwards (2001) argues that this restoration should be seen as the turning point in which conservation began to eclipse 'organic' development in the entire city, based on the idea that the

3. For English language historical overviews, see Nieto Cumplido (1995) and Patronato Provincial de Turismo de Córdoba (2014).

4. There is no document or source that demonstrates the King transfered the ownership of the building to the Church.

Figure 4: Tourists viewing the mihrab*, or Muslim prayer niche, which is fenced off with an iron railing. Image Source: Brian Rosa.*

oldest structures and districts had innate cultural value, much as conservation and preservation practices were being developed by intellectuals in France and Great Britain.

It is no coincidence that the mid- to late nineteenth century also saw the birth of modern tourism. The city of Córdoba, and especially the Mosque-Cathedral, has been an attraction to international visitors since 'grand tours' of that epoch, driven by the romantization of its unique, ancient history and subject to a great deal of visual and literary representation. This begins to explain why the elements of the mosque had been prioritized in the restoration and description of the monument, since they provided a more ancient, Orientalist image of Córdoba that, along with the Alhambra in Granada, distinguishes Andalusia from the rest of Europe. During the first half of the twentieth century, local authorities 'justified and reiterated the interest of preserving the traditional character of the city, for the importance and repercussions facing the emerging national and international tourist movement, led by improvements in communications and transport' (Martín López 1996: 109). Being so, Córdoba's historic core was the first to be listed in the Tesoro Artístico Nacional (National Artistic Treasury) in 1929.

While the earlier years of the dictatorship of Franco served to isolate the country and limit international visitors, the tourist economy never completely subsided. The situation changed from the 1960s, when Spain experienced a 'tourist miracle' (Crumbaugh 2010), with the vast majority of visitors travelling from Northern Europe for vacations to new, densely built tourist destinations along the Mediterranean Sea. From the 1930s to the 1950s, the local administration of Córdoba intervened little in the historic district, but by mid-century, the recovery and revaluation of the area surrounding the Mosque-Cathedral was underway to stimulate tourism. This activity was confined to a relatively small area though, while the vast majority of the city centre continued to fall into decline and increasing ruination.[5]

5. Between 1960 and 1986, the historic district lost more than half of its population as affluent residents moved to more modern habitations in the urban periphery (Martín López 1996).

The strategies leading to the commodification of Córdoba's heritage sped up after the Transition to Democracy and the new territorial division of Spain that opened the gate to recognize 'historical regions' such as Andalusia. Spain's joining the European Union in 1986 further accelerated the process and inserted the city and country firmly into the international tourist circuit, bringing increased funding for heritage preservation and cultural economy policies while overshadowing other alternatives for local economic development.

'CÓRDOBA "SELLS", FUNDAMENTALLY, THE MOSQUE': HERITAGE AND THE *CONVIVENCIA* BRAND

Córdoba brands itself as a destination for cultural tourism, increasingly marketing complementary cultural offerings such as regional gastronomy, nostalgic representations of bullfighting, flamenco music and dance, the Festival of Patios[6] and other offerings. Nevertheless, the anchor of the tourist economy remains the Mosque-Cathedral, which attracts 96 per cent of all visitors to the city. Being so, the city's Tourism Partnership identifies their competitive advantage as: 'tolerance, cultural *convivencia*, accessibility; [and] urban space that generates personal relations' (Consorcio de Turismo de Córdoba 2009: 43), summarized with the claim that 'Córdoba "sells", fundamentally, the Mosque' (Consorcio de Turismo de Córdoba 2009: 31).

We identify the early 1970s as defining the beginning the city's contemporary tourism strategy, linked with the city's ambition to have the Mosque-Cathedral designated as a WHS. By that time there was an intense debate on how to preserve the building and a conference sponsored by the municipal government focused on celebrating monuments representing cultural difference. Seeking the attention of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the organization that bestows WHS status – the conference was promoted with the claim that 'cultural pluralism is [the city's]

Figure 5: A gift shop called La Mezquita (the Mosque) across the street from the Mosque-Cathedral. Image Source: Brian Rosa.

6. The Festival of the Patios has also been listed by UNESCO since 2012 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

originality and this cultural diversity is […] a symbol of overcoming conflicts and rivalries of the past' (cited in García Verdugo 1996a).

The 1980s and 1990s were a period of great transition in the historic core of the city, driven by nascent strategies of memorializing the city's multicultural and interfaith past. Aside from the Mosque-Cathedral, the city began restoring its fourteenth century synagogue, along with erecting a statue of the Jewish philosopher Maimonides, branding this zone the *Judería* (Jewish Quarter). Cultural tourism was greatly boosted by the WHS listing of the 'Great Mosque of Córdoba' in 1984 (UNESCO 2014), later expanded to the district surrounding it. By 1994, after two decades of effort, the city was experiencing a tourism boom, stimulated by the opening of a high-speed railway station in the same year, greatly increasing Córdoba's accessibility to other Spanish cities and international airports. Tellingly, the new railway station is located next to a new plaza signalling the city's branding strategy: the Plaza de Las Tres Culturas (Plaza of Three Cultures).[7]

As previously introduced, Córdoba's history of interfaith coexistence has become romanticized by those seeking religious reconciliation and tolerance: 'The history of Al-Andalus plays a central role as a model and reference point for a counter-narrative designed to welcome Islam and subvert the powerful image of Islam as the historical 'other' for Europe and the West' (Arigita 2013: 21). Increasingly, the name 'Córdoba' has become synonymous with this historical imaginary of *convivencia*. By the early 1990s *convivencia* had become an essential element of the city's brand, included its successful bid to expand the area of its WHS designation to the nearly 200-acre historic core in 1994, and beginning in 2002, in an unsuccessful bid for 2016 European Capital of Culture.

Arigita (2013) identifies what she calls the 'Córdoba paradigm', noting a number organizations worldwide which use Al-Andalus as reference point for religious coexistence. This image has been potent in the United States, where a proposed Islamic community centre and mosque near the former World Trade Center in New York City was originally called the 'Cordoba House' (Elkin 2010) before the project became mired in controversy and maligned as the 'Ground Zero Mosque'. Barack Obama invoked Córdoba as an example of Muslim tolerance in his 2009 speech in Cairo entitled 'New Beginning'. As Waterton and Watson (2012) argue, the driving force behind cultural tourism in Córdoba is the consumption of otherness, referring to the Muslim past and its enduring presence. Appropriating Urry's term 'the tourist gaze' they refer to the 'Moorish gaze', through which 'tourism providers and promoters have also helped realize the potential of a particular Moorish Spain story, especially if it can be linked to marketable notions of "real Spain" in contradistinction to the mass tourism of the costas' (2002: 179). In this sense, it is the imagined authenticity of the 'real Spain', anciently multicultural, that directs this gaze.

However, the model of marketing *convivencia* to cultural tourists has hit a roadblock: there are ever-increasing contradictions between the city and regional governments' approaches to the Mosque-Cathedral and the way the monument has been managed by the local administration of the Catholic Church. When examined closely, there is not even a consensus on where the cathedral starts and ends. To the local and regional authorities that produced the *Illustrated Guide of Córdoba*, the depiction of the monument begins with a rich description of the 'Mosque' before reference to the 'cathedral': the physical space of the sixteenth century church constructed within it. However, the official brochures offered to visitors from 2010 to 2016 were very clear that

7. More recently, the city has changed its tourist and heritage discourse to one of 'four cultures' to incorporate Roman heritage.

8. The Hagia Sophia, a former Christian basilica transformed into an imperial mosque, was desacralized and made into a museum in 1935.

Figure 6: Activist groups have critiqued the Church for utilizing the entire site of the Mosque-Cathedral for evangelization. In this case, a banner for Corpus Christi hangs on the walls of the old Mosque, facing out to the city streets. Image Source: Brian Rosa.

> [t]he *entire grounds* of this outstanding building […] were consecrated as the mother church of the Diocese in the year 1236. Since then, every day with no exception, the Chapter solemnly worships in this fine and magnificent church and the Christian community gathers to listen to the Word of God.
>
> (Excelentisimo Cabildo Catedralicio de Córdoba n.d., emphasis added)

The undeniably evangelical nature of the explanatory materials helps to introduce the polemics of competing discourses surrounding the Mosque-Cathedral, and also explains the creation of the activist group 'Platform for the Mosque-Cathedral: Everyone's Heritage' (here on the 'Platform'). This organization advocates, according to its spokesperson Marta Jiménez, for the monument's 'public, transparent and professional management, respecting its liturgical Catholic use' (personal interview, June 2015). The Platform understands the temple from a multicultural standpoint and *convivencia* in terms of cultural identity.

CONTEMPORARY DEBATES AND CONFLICTS SURROUNDING THE USE AND MEANING OF THE MOSQUE-CATHEDRAL

Towards the end of the Franco regime, debates surrounding the restoration of the Mosque-Cathedral began intensifying, with drastic interventions on the table. From the 1950s, Cordovan architect Rafael Castejón defended the 'purification' or 'pristine remaking' (*repristinar*) of the monument through the removal and relocation of the Christian elements of the building, at which point it would be turned into a desacralized museum in line with the heritage management of the Hagia Sofia in Istanbul.[8] In the early 1970s, Franco was reportedly in support of transporting, piece by piece, the cathedral to another

site in the city (Riobóo Camacho 2008). The proposal was ultimately buried in 1972 because of the controversy it created in the city.

To be clear, plans to relocate the Cathedral elsewhere in the city were not based on locals' indifference to the centuries-old cathedral. Though the temple was, and continues to be, colloquially referred to as the *mezquita* (mosque), it has been and continues to be a site of clear importance to Catholic residents as the 'mother church' of the entire region. Rather, the 'purification' initiative was a calculation intended to appeal to a simplified, 'universal', more easily packaged heritage.

In response to this 1970s debate, local heritage officer and architect Riobóo Camacho argues that 'we cannot simplify history […] To remove these testimonies, these partial or complete memories, is to lose the expression of the authenticity of heritage: the continuous social and cultural evolution of man' (2008: 69–70). While we agree with this point, there is a certain apolitical neutrality and sense of inevitability to Riobóo Camacho's depiction of the temple's uses, management and ownership, by which 'every time period has appropriated the monument, living in it and making it their own, incorporating their new needs […] in a process of sincerity and identity with their time' (2008: 297–98). That even-handed depiction of the Mosque-Cathedral's heritage value is based on the assumption that there is, or ever has been, societal agreement regarding the meaning of the monument. The presupposition that the monument reflects different cultures' values and tastes in different epochs, or that there is ever societal consensus on such matters, implies an imagined consensus masking very real discrepancies about what the monument was, is, and should be.

A. The Church's attempted erasure of the building's Muslim past

As previously mentioned, the Mosque-Cathedral is managed by the Cathedral Council of the local Diocese of the Catholic Church. Visitors, aside from residents of the Province of Córdoba, are required to pay an entrance fee of 10 Euros, which, for an additional fee, includes an audio guide told from the perspective of the Church. Among the many regulations placed upon visitors to the temple, tours led by non-clergy or official tour guides are forbidden, as is Muslim prayer, and the only brochures and interpretive materials made available are produced by the Cathedral Council. In this way, visitors' understanding of the structure are highly controlled, and the Church has taken tourist visits as an opportunity for evangelization. For example, with the publicly subsidized Soul of Córdoba nighttime tour, participants are asked to sit in church pews and listen to liturgical music while scenes of local martyrs carved in mahogany are described as 'the history of salvation'.

The most notable distortions began in 1998 when the name of the monument was changed by the Cathedral Council from the 'Mosque-Cathedral' to the 'Cathedral (former Mosque)' and reached a new level from 2010 to 2016, when it was simply the 'Cathedral' in its signage, tickets, website and brochures. Accordingly, interpretive texts and brochures became increasingly one-sided. To this day, even to churchgoers, the building is most commonly known as the Mezquita, as city officials also confirm (personal interviews, May 2015). As Berg and Kearns (1996) note, the naming of places is highly normative and often political, create symbolic order allowing those in power to impose meanings onto landscapes, therefore manipulating the relations of identity between people(s) and places.

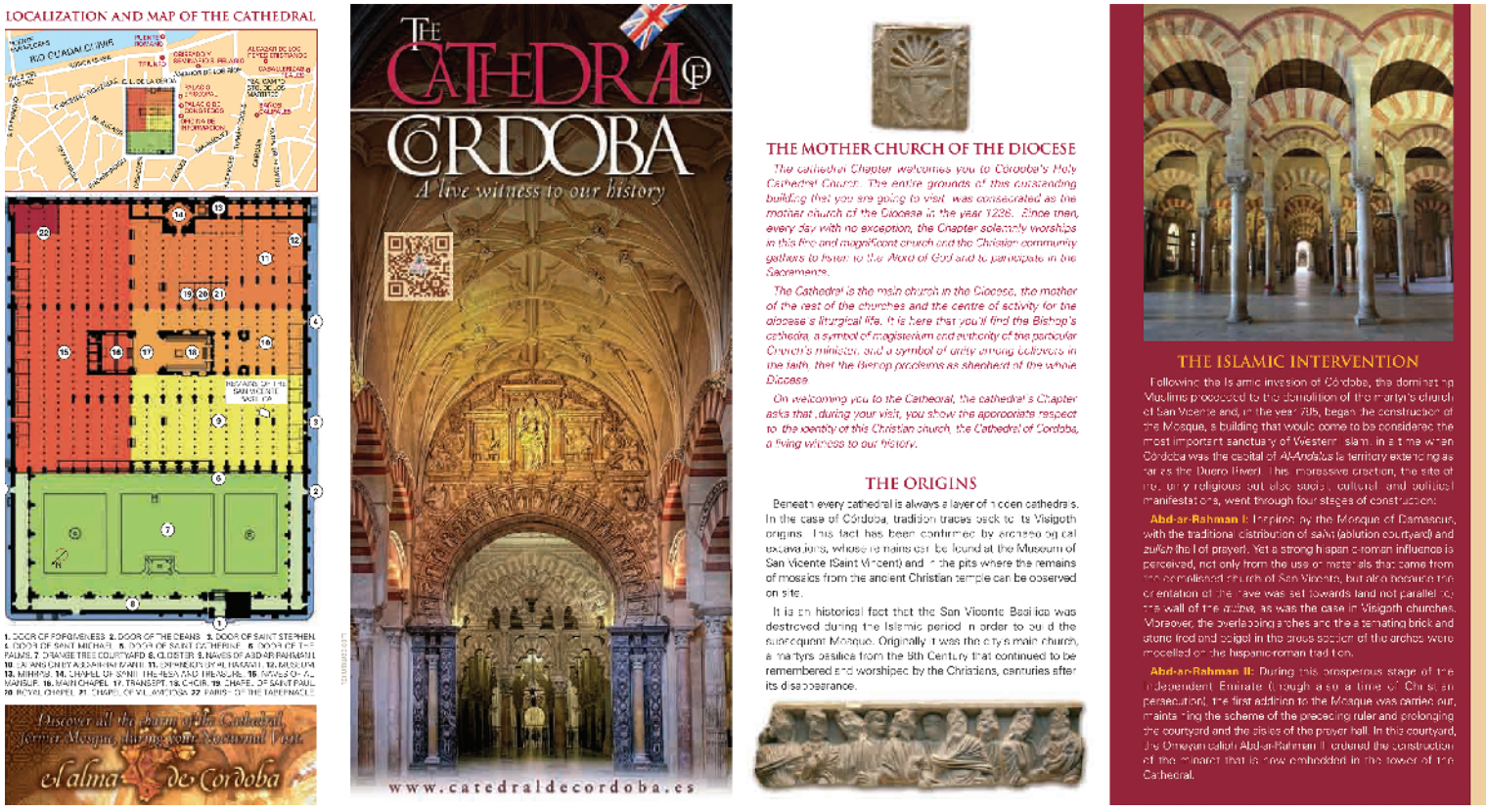

Figure 7: Brochure for 'The Cathedral of Córdoba', in use from 2010 until 2016. Image Source: The Church Council of Córdoba.

Yet, as we have already seen, the Mosque-Cathedral is one of Córdoba's main economic resources. The manager of the public-private Tourism Consortium of Córdoba admits that 'if we didn't have that resource, Córdoba would hardly be positioned where it is positioned today' (personal interview, June 2015). They suggest that, as of 2015, the tourist market has not been affected by the controversy surrounding the Church's removal of the name mosque from the building, diminishing it as a 'local conflict', and in regard to promotion and maintenance, 'everything the [Cathedral Council] does has never harmed us'. However, he acknowledges that 'the moment you name it the Cathedral of Córdoba, we don't have the name to sell to the tourists. You have to sell the Mosque of Córdoba. The whole world knows that it's the Mosque of Córdoba'. Along these lines, as Di Giovine emphasizes, monuments themselves can become the 'main characters' of heritage and tourism discourses. Through their perceived authenticity, achieved through the manipulations of images and experiences, monuments are 'indeed social actors, which mediate between multiple agents to create enduring claims to community' (Di Giovine 2009: 9). That the Church aims to depict the monument as exclusively Catholic was a primary reason why citizens from Córdoba organized the Platform. Among other victories, they have managed to pressure Google Maps through an online petition to restore the label 'Mosque-Cathedral' after it was re-labelled as the 'Cathedral of Córdoba' by request of the Church (Albert 2014), to pressure the Church to revise tourist materials, and to politicize the management of the Mosque-Cathedral. Emphasizing that, according to the UNESCO World Heritage designation, the building in question is simply the 'Great Mosque of Córdoba', the Platform was able to elevate the contested scalar narratives up to the regional and national governments, the European Union and UNESCO.

B. 'Stratigraphies of Forgetting': Archaeology as an ideological tool[9]

To understand the changing representation of the Mosque-Cathedral also requires looking beyond textual and media discourse to exploring material practices of excavation, curation and the coordination of public events in and surrounding the Mosque-Cathedral. In the Church's narration of the building's past, claims to the 'true' Christian nature of the site are rife, even if the historical evidence does not point to such a simple history. In the tourist brochure and website available from 2005 to 2016, the origins of the site were described as such:

> Beneath every cathedral is always a layer of hidden cathedrals. In the case of Córdoba, tradition traces back to its Visigoth origins. This fact has been confirmed by archaeological excavations, whose remains can be found at the Museum of San Vicente.
>
> (Excelentisimo Cabildo Catedralicio de Córdoba n.d.)

Based upon the supposition that the site is primordially Christian, the construction of the Mosque in the eighth century was described in the previous tourist brochure as 'The Islamic Intervention', suggesting that the period of 450 years of the mosque was merely an interlude in an otherwise Christian history. Furthermore, in describing the 'Christian Transformation' of the building, the brochure emphasized that the *Reconquista* of current-day Andalusia by King Ferdinand III was, first and foremost, a victory of Christianity over Islam. In the

9. We borrow this title from Ruggles (2011).

Figure 8: The viewing area of the supposed Visigoth Basilica buried beneath the oldest part of the Mosque. Image Source: Brian Rosa.

Church's supposition that a Visigoth Christian Church predated the construction of the mosque on the site, they refer to the findings of excavations in the 1920s and 1930s. However, according to a recent study by archaeologist Arce-Sainz (2015), previous excavations have not demonstrated that materials excavated are verifiably the remnants of a pre-Islamic church. Arce-Sainz calls this theory an 'historical myth' and an 'historiographical obstinacy', noting that a number of eyewitnesses and other scholars have cast similar doubts.[10] Despite archaeological debate on the origin of the ruins beneath the Mosque-Cathedral, in 2005 the Church created the Museum of Saint Vincent, removing from storage and displaying materials thought to be remnants from the Visigoth basilica. Displaying photographs documenting the 1930s excavations, a floorplan of the church buried beneath the monument, a new museum was created inside the Mosque-Cathedral, one that attests to the *true* Christian nature of the site. The most striking element of this display is to be found near the entrance of the oldest part of the Mosque-Cathedral: a Plexiglas viewing window on the floor, in which visitors can gaze down three metres beneath to view a mosaic floor described as being from a building attached to the Visigoth church. This narration of history and the display of archaeological relics serve as discursive claims for the symbolic ownership of the Mosque-Cathedral by Christians. Of course, this claim completely ignores evidence that, prior to the Visigoths, the site was thought to be a Roman temple.

The restrictive management of the Church over the monument goes beyond the narrative and physical alteration to other, more repressive practices that are related to the local and international Muslim community. After the Transition to Democracy, Mansur Escudero, a psychiatrist, activist and resident of the province of Córdoba, became one of foremost representatives of the newly legalized Spanish Muslim community, as president of the national Islamic Council. Known as a campaigner for the integration of moderate Islam in the West and the promotion of religious tolerance, Escudero

10. While historic texts speak of a Basilica to San Vicente in Córdoba, Arce-Sainz notes also that this is an interpretation due to historiographical texts, not to any particular *data* found from excavations.

Figure 9: Muslim tourists photographing the belfry and former minaret from the Patio de los Naranjos *(Orange Tree Patio). Image Source: Brian Rosa.*

embodied many of the pluralistic values associated with *convivencia*. Whereas the Church radicalized its positions regarding the Mosque-Cathedral, he began in 2004 a high-profile campaign to allow shared Christian and Muslim prayer in it, including writing a letter to Pope John Paul II in 2006.[11] After Córdoba's Bishop ruled out this arrangement, he began performing Muslim prayer at the gates of the monument to 'soften the heart of the Bishop'. In doing so, Escudero defined the limits of the Catholic Church's – and perhaps the city's – willingness to enact modern-day *convivencia.*

Nevertheless, a growing proportion of Muslim tourists have been visiting Córdoba, and this new stream of visitors has also motivated the increased marketing of the city as a tourist destination. Increasingly, Muslim tourists make pilgrimages to the Mosque-Cathedral to connect with a period in which Islam was widely perceived to be a beacon of intellectualism and progress in the western world. Currently, the city is working on a strategy to create a Halal food cluster and promote Ramadan celebrations, in hopes of attracting more Muslim tourists. Despite the denial of local officials, there is a clear contradiction between the local government's economic development strategies and the Church's management of the WHS.

The Church has demonstrated an increasing desire to control the behaviour of visitors to the Mosque-Cathedral in the wake of the arrest of Austrian Muslim tourists who performed prayer at the *qibla* in 2010 as an act of civic disobedience. Muslim community organizations have noted a number of complaints about harsh treatment of Muslim visitors by the Mosque-Cathedral's private security force, such as being warned not to pray and followed closely through the length of their visits (also see Calderwood 2015). In this sense, as Kamel Mekhelef, President of the Muslim Association of Córdoba, confirms:

> [I] don't care about prayer, they can prohibit what they prohibit and it isn't my priority. But the fact that if you enter with friends and family and you don't have the right to explain elements of the building that you know, have studied, and recognize, that's outrageous.
>
> (personal interview, June 2015)

That the Cathedral Council is attempting to use the monument as a space dedicated to long-standing Christian traditions and the evangelization of tourists is perhaps unsurprising. Evangelization of the Christian faith is, after all, one of the institution's primary objectives. However, as the following section will explain, the under-emphasis of the monument's Muslim history is not the primary political controversy in which the Catholic Church is enmeshed, even if this is the most recognized conflict in the international media. In regional and national political debates surrounding the Mosque-Cathedral, the principal one is surrounding the Catholic Church's contentious real estate practices, with the monument as the primary symbol nationwide (see Jover-Báez and Rosa 2017).

'I DON'T RECLAIM, I *PROCLAIM* THE PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF THE MEZQUITA'[12]: THE POLITICAL-ECONOMIC UNDERPINNINGS

In 2010, Antonio Manuel Rodríguez, Professor of Law at the University of Córdoba, after a discussion about shared prayer in the Mosque-Cathedral, became curious about who owned the monument. Searching property

11. Indeed, this action was controversial within the Muslim community itself, with local Muslim groups opposing the proposal.

12. Quoted from Mir Jordano (2015).

registries, he discovered that it had surreptitiously been claimed as property of the Catholic Church in 2006. When he contacted mass media outlets to publicize this issue, they were initially uninterested, so he wrote a letter himself that was published in a local newspaper (Rodríguez 2010). In the following years, the legality of this property registration, along with thousands of other properties revealed to have been registered by the Church, has become a matter of a heated dispute about *inmatriculaciones*, spanning scales from the local to the global.

Based on a legal loophole extended under the conservative presidency of José María Aznar in 1998, without the need to provide documentary evidence of ownership, the Church was able to register a multitude of formerly public properties as their own. In the region of Navarra alone, where more thorough investigations have been conducted, more than 1000 *inmatriculaciones* by the Church have been identified (Reina 2014). In Córdoba, in addition to the Mosque-Cathedral, these include numerous buildings, a number of streets, and two public plazas. In a political-economic atmosphere of painful austerity, the Church's perceived land-grab and its tax-exempt status have elicited the indignation of Spanish leftist – and increasingly centrist – politics. Critics argue that these *inmatriculaciones* account to a massive, nationwide privatization of public spaces and heritage sites, with the Mosque-Cathedral being the most high profile case. Another related issue is the Church's fiscal exemptions, and the fact that the compulsory entrance fees for visitors are processed as donations, and therefore not subject to taxation. With the Mosque-Cathedral being the primary driver of tourism in Córdoba, the ownership of the building is clearly not only a question of legal and historical minutiae, but of huge economic importance. Besides the millions of Euros brought in annually made from tourist entry fees, the Cathedral Council has gone as far as registering in 2012 the terms 'Cathedral of Córdoba' and – contradictorily – 'Mosque of Córdoba' in the National Patents and Brands Office, so that any company seeking to use those terms had to pay the Church (Baquero 2015).

The debate around the conflict has been stimulated primarily by the aforementioned Platform, which was created in late 2013. Among its many concerns regarding the management of the Mosque-Cathedral is that the Cathedral Council is putting the monument's UNESCO WHS status in jeopardy. While initially the Platform was perceived as a fringe group, with party support primarily from the communist United Left, the issue of *inmatriculaciones* has become increasingly central to local and national party politics, becoming a main point in the election campaigns in 2014 and the city, region and the state in 2015. In May of 2014, the Platform presented a petition (then with 370,000 signatures) to the president of the Government of Andalusia calling for lawmakers to demand for the Church to disclose how it uses the proceeds from entrance fees, and to transfer management to a board of governors including state and Church officials as well as independent experts. In return, the regional government sent a letter to the Vatican complaining about the management and increasingly evangelical use of the complex. In the campaign leading up to the May 2015 local and regional elections, four candidates debated the status of the Mosque-Cathedral, though the conservative Popular Party declined to participate (Hedgecoe 2015). Despite the pressure the Platform has put on the Andalusian government and parliament, little progress has been made. The parliament has rejected to discuss the broad *inmatriculaciones* topic (Arias 2016),[13] while the government has agreed with the Church to reinstate the word 'Mosque' to the monument's name

13. This may have been reversed in 2017 (Bastante 2017).

14. Of course, not all Catholics are behind the Cathedral Council's position. One particular organization, Redes Cristianas (Christian Networks), has been actively opposing the Church's management of the monument and the *inmatriculaciones*.

Figure 10: A member of the private security force of the Mosque-Cathedral who, among other tasks, are instructed to look out for overt displays of Muslim prayer. Image Source: Brian Rosa.

(Alba 2016). However, the Platform aims not only to accurately describe the monument's history, but demands the public management of the building that guarantees even-handed preservation of all historic, architectural and cultural elements.

For the Church's part, reaction to debates around *inmatriculaciones* and its perceived abuse of tax-exempt property status have been a carefully orchestrated Leftist campaign, according to the spokesperson of the Cathedral Council, Juan José Jiménez. On a national level, the Church is clearly concerned about its economic arrangement with the government. For example, in May of 2015, *Xtantos*, the Church's newsletter focusing on its 'economic sustainability', a special themed issue focused on the institution's 'fiscal privileges' granted by an agreement with the government during Transition to Democracy in 1979, emphasizing that changes in that arrangement would mean that it would no longer be able to fund charity work, and that the Church pays taxes on all of its properties that are not used specifically for pastoral purposes (Giménez Barriocanal 2015). In the same issue, the church features a profile of the 'Cathedral of Córdoba'. Without reacting directly to criticisms of the Platform and other groups, the newsletter emphasizes that the Mosque-Cathedral has belonged to the Church for centuries, as they claim that its consecration in the thirteenth century bestowed ownership as well.[14]

ANALYSIS: THE USE VALUES, EXCHANGE VALUES AND OWNERSHIP CLAIMS OF SPAIN'S OLDEST BUILDING

In his allegorical novel *1984*, George Orwell introduces a concept of the multidimensional Principle of Power: 'Who controls the past […] controls the future: who controls the present controls the past' ([1949] 1961: 248). This

is echoed by contemporary archaeologists arguing that 'late-modern heritage is not about interpreting the past but controlling the future' (Hutchings and Salle 2015: S15).

The 2010 discovery of the Church's *inmatriculaciones* requires a reconsideration of the timeline tracing the local Cathedral Council's behaviour in the management and narration of the monument. While the obscurantist signage and tourist literature began before the Church registered the property in 2006, there are clear connections between the Church's claim to ownership of the property and its shifting representation of the monument. This can best be understood as an interlinked continuum of ownership claims – one bolstering the other – in which ownership implies not only the monopoly on religious use of the space, but also the right to profit on tax-free entrance fees from ever-increasing tourist visits.

What is clear from the case of the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba is that society projects contemporary social imaginaries onto complicated sites, particularly those that do not lend themselves to simple narratives. As there is open disagreement between public bodies, the Church, and heritage organizations regarding an appropriate historical narrative, there is no one 'authorized heritage discourse' (Smith 2006) to unpack, only competing discourses interwoven with contested ownership claims.

To many local Cordovans, and to conservative Catholics throughout Spain, the monument is a holy space of worship that happens to be located in a building that was once a mosque, but has been consecrated as a sacred Christian space since the thirteenth century. From this perspective, to call the building a 'mosque' is anachronistic and the desire of Muslims to pray there is a threatening affront. This is bolstered by radical Muslim groups ISIS's stated desire to reclaim the kingdom of Al-Andalus in jihadist videos using images of Córdoba (Europa Press 2017) – yet another ownership claim projected onto the Mosque-Cathedral and the city. Allusions to the restoration of a caliphate in Spain have fed speculations on far-right social media that the Platform's end goal is to cede the monument to Islam.

Authors identifying with the Christian right in Spain tend to dismiss historical *convivencia* as a myth and emphasize the 'clash of civilizations' narrative (Sánchez Saus 2016). For their part, the Church denies the accuracy of depicting the Mosque-Cathedral as a symbol of religious pluralism. According to Rev. Manuel Nieto Cumplido, historian and long-time curator of the Mosque-Cathedral, such a representation is 'well intentioned' but drawn from a 'totally wrong' understanding of history (quoted in Minder 2014).

The *convivencia* brand suits a strategy of promoting international tourism, but also espouses values of religious and cultural pluralism. It can be understood, in part, as counteracting the Catholic-nationalist mythologies of the *Reconquista*. Debates about the accuracy of the *convivencia* narrative, like so many debates over heritage, are unmistakeably about the present. Heritage is a process in which history is represented, mobilized, or ignored as justification for present action among diverse stakeholders. Being so, Linhard (2011: 179) argues that 'the Medieval cohabitation of the three cultures that once shared the Iberian peninsula are still involved in wide-ranging conflict in the Mediterranean world can easily turn this convivencia into nostalgia for the future that never was'.

Beyond the ideologies embedded within the *convivencia* debates, it is notable that the centrality of economic profit is consistently understated. While the conflicts around the Mosque-Cathedral also tend to be reductively

situated within a 'clash of civilizations' discourse in English-language media and scholarship (Ruggles 2011; Calderwood 2015), there is also an incredibly important political question which often goes unexamined. How do we grapple with wealth, special privileges, and long-standing political influence of the Catholic Church in a supposedly secular state? The zero-sum clash of faiths narrative, serves to cement ownership claims of the Church, incite fear, and divert attention away from what is largely a political economic question.

It is here that the fundamental question arises: among multiple publics at various scales, does the Mosque-Cathedral belong to the Church, to Córdoba, to tourists, to Muslims, or to all humanity? This has political relevance, not only in regard to legal title, but in terms of whose histories it represents. If heritage is a public good (Jover-Báez and Rosa 2015), who constitutes the public? Based on competing historic claims and the contemporary geopolitical climate, interfaith reconciliation seems less tenable than the *convivencia* discourse suggest (Manning 2015).

Furthermore, many Cordovans have come to resent the obligation to be the worldwide cultural ambassadors of religious coexistence, built upon an historic narrative that may not reflect their lived experience. As Riobóo Camacho (2002: 61–62) points out, the Mosque-Cathedral is not only the symbol of Córdoba to the world and the driver of the city's tourist economy, but it is also deeply tied in with local self-identity and place attachment. The desires of the cultural tourist to experience authenticity and cultural plurality can clash with locals who resent the national and international attention. At the same time, UNESCO WHS is conceptualized as *world* heritage belonging to all humanity.

Among one of the many publics, those who ostensibly represent 'the world' in the consumption of world heritage are international tourists. Often imagined as indifferent to politics and averse to conflict, we must ask whether tourists have political agency in heritage management of the monument. Di Giovine argues in relation to WHS that 'Tourists do have a significant amount of power in shaping the destination and its varying re-presentations. Before they ever "tour", they are influenced by, and influence, the circulation of ideas about the site itself' (2009: 8). This is precisely why the multiscalar contestation of Church narratives and ownership has been a leading strategy by the Platform and other activist groups, seeking increasing coverage by prominent international newspapers and magazines[15] to place external pressure on the Church and state. Whether, and how, such controversies will impact tourists' and investors' attraction the city, this publicity and these conflicts are key elements in democratizing the Mosque-Cathedral.

Clearly there is a neo-liberal logic behind the city's investment in, and management of, the historic built environment to encourage private sector investment in hospitality and leisure. If neo-liberalism is an ideology of privatizing public wealth, then we can refer to the *inmatriculaciones* as the neo-liberalization of heritage. Based on interviews with residents and activists involved in fighting for public ownership of the Mosque-Cathedral, there is an acknowledgement that the city's traditions, landscape, and 'way of life' are being commodified for visitors. Many residents feel alienated from the historic core, which is perceived as being for tourists. However, there is also a strong belief among activists that, as a WHS, the Mosque-Cathedral does not belong exclusively to Córdoba, and that tourist-oriented economic development must result in the local redistribution of the wealth generated.

The spatial histories (Lefebvre 1974) of urban heritage sites may manifest in material artefacts, but the accretive results of the passage of time and

15. Such as *Foreign Policy* (Calderwood 2015), *Der Spiegel* (Brömme 2015), the *New York Times* (Minder 2014) and *The Guardian* (Kassam 2014).

socio-spatial dynamics extend far beyond the local. It is only through the international dissemination of the debates surrounding the Mosque-Cathedral, and the complications that this creates between the Catholic Church and various scales of the Spanish state, that the privatization and evangelization of public heritage can be successfully fought. In this case, the struggle to overcome one-dimensional heritage practices and narratives cannot be understood out of a relationship of economic exploitation, exemplified in the Church's lack of taxation and of financial transparency. To enact 'heritage for all' – to borrow from local activists – would require public and professional management of the Mosque-Cathedral to capture and redistribute the economic benefits of tourism for the local community and ensure a more even-handed treatment of its universal values.

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