

Introduction

Sephardi Jews, Citizenship, and Reparation in Historical Context

Dalia Kandiyoti and Rina Benmayor

“¡Cuánto os hemos echado de menos!” (How we have missed you!) declared Spain’s King Felipe VI at the ceremony in June 2015 celebrating the passage of the new Spanish nationality for descendants of Sephardi Jews (Alberola 2015).¹ Just months earlier, during a press conference heralding Portugal’s amendment to its nationality law (Decreto-Lei no. 30-A/2015) to incorporate Sephardi descendants, Minister of Justice Paula Teixeira da Cruz emphasized, “I would not say that this is a case of historical reparation, because I understand that what was done is impossible to repair. I would say that this [amendment] is about the attribution of a right. . . . We took a long time to deal with this matter. Therefore, I think today is a noteworthy day” (*Lusa e Público* 2015). Between February and June 2015, the two countries that comprise the Iberian Peninsula passed historic nationality laws allowing dual nonresidential citizenship to those whose Jewish ancestors had been victims of expulsion and forced conversion.² The Spanish law is described as a reencounter and reconciliation with the global Sephardi community after more than half a millennium; the Portuguese amendment is called a law of return to the homeland. Without having to renounce their current citizenships or establish residency, the descendants of those Jews who were expelled or forcibly converted to Catholicism during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries could now reclaim a right to nationality through ancestry, based on genealogical proof of lineage, even if they do not identify as Jewish.

Recognition of genocides, ethnic cleansings, expulsions, and land appropriations can have powerful reparative effects. Yet few countries in

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the world have held themselves accountable for past injustices perpetrated against their populations or have offered citizenship as a form of apology, atonement, or repair. Nationality restitution in Europe has applied to twentieth-century citizenship deprivations during World War II. Germany, Austria, and Greece reformed their laws to restore citizenship rights and reparations to Holocaust survivors and descendants of the Nazi genocide. Ghana's right of abode program, positioned as a homecoming for Africans in the diaspora, speaks to a history that stretches back three centuries. Though all three laws in Spain, Portugal, and Ghana concern the recovery of national belonging predating the formation of contemporary nation-states, only Spain and Portugal offer nonresidential dual citizenship with the goal of reconnecting to its roots a people wronged long ago.

The news of these laws, which had been under development for several years, reverberated in Sephardi communities throughout the Jewish world. The *Times of Israel* proclaimed, "Citizenship for Sephardic Jews 'Corrects Historical Wrong'" (Lipschitz 2015), and the *LA Times* declared, "Welcome Home, 500 Years Later: Spain Offers Citizenship to Sephardic Jews" (Chu 2015). Similarly, *The Forward* ran the headline: "Portugal Issues First Passport Under Sephardic 'Law of Return'" (JTA 2015). Despite various historical and political precedents of citizenship dispensations for Sephardi Jews, as we explain below in this introduction, the press and government officials hailed these laws as unique and historic in offering citizenship to set right the wrongs committed more than five centuries ago.

Since the passage of the laws, the positive response from Sephardi communities became evident in the combined number of applicants, at slightly over 300,000, to both Spain and Portugal, based on governmental data.³ The global nature of this response is in part a consequence of the widespread dispersal and movement of Sephardi Jews and the descendants of New Christians over many continents and centuries, resulting from expulsions and Inquisitions. It is difficult to encapsulate the complexity of these migratory movements in a short space, as they formed a dense web of back-and-forth routes, often via Italy, to the Ottoman Empire (Turkey, Greece, and the Balkans) (Benbassa and Rodrigue 2000; Ben-Ur 2009, 1–22; Díaz-Mas 1986, 53–94). The Ottoman Empire received the largest concentration of Sephardi exiles, referred to as Eastern Sephardis, the speakers of Ladino. Others fled Spain to closer regions, resettling primarily in Morocco, where Spanish influence was already established, and where Haketia became a Sephardi vernacular. A great number of Spanish Jews also sought refuge in Portugal, only to face a forced conversion decree in Portugal four years later (1496), trig-

gering more border-crossings to evade Inquisitorial forces. By the eighteenth century many Portuguese converts had migrated to urban centers in Northern Europe, predominantly in Amsterdam, Hamburg, and London, where reconversions to Judaism took place freely. These European cities also became the springboards to the Americas, first to Brazil and later to the Caribbean and elsewhere on the continent, including the East Coast of the United States, forming the Western Sephardi branch of the diaspora. Those who retained their Portuguese roots are referred to in the 2015 law with the historical term *Judeus da nação* (Jews of the nation). Nineteenth- and twentieth-century migrations, driven in large part by the Balkan Wars of 1912 and World Wars I and II, would extend the diaspora farther across the north of Africa, and throughout the United States, the Southern Cone countries of South America, and southern Africa. At different times over these centuries India, China, and Japan would become home to Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin. The vastness and complexity of dispersal and resettlements set the stage for the tens of thousands of citizenship applications received from every continent.

Given the passage of centuries since the original expulsions, persecutions, and forced conversions, what motivated Spain and Portugal to take such actions at this moment? What does it mean, legally, historically, and rhetorically, that Spain seeks to reconnect and reconcile with the Sephardi world, and Portugal offers a right of return? Why were the descendants of Moriscos—Spanish Muslims forcibly converted to Christianity in the sixteenth century and expelled in the seventeenth—not included in the law? In what ways did the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish communities push for these laws? What has motivated descendants to seek these new nationalities, and how have they negotiated the process institutionally, legally, and personally? Why have some eligible individuals chosen not to apply? And what is the meaning of these laws to the Sephardi descendants themselves in terms of identity, belonging, and collective memory? These are the questions that motivated this book.

A key aspect that inspired this undertaking is the novelty of the laws and the unprecedented response to them, which piqued the interest of both the general public and scholars. Our own curiosity led to an extensive oral history project, interviewing some sixty descendants from four continents who applied to one or, in a handful of instances, to both countries (Benmayor and Kandiyoti 2017–22).⁴ As this book was being finalized in early 2022, a number of academic journal articles and book chapters about these provisions appeared (e.g., Aliberti 2018; Benmayor and Kandiyoti 2020; Goldschläger and Orjuela 2021; Kerem 2021; Ojedamata 2018; Schammah Gesser and Pinheiro 2019). *Reparative Citizenship* is, however, the first academic book of articles and essays on the

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topic, bringing together a geographical and disciplinary diversity of perspectives—legal, historical, institutional, cultural, and testimonial—to analyze the significance and impact of the laws.

The sixteen original chapters written for this volume are by an international and multidisciplinary group of twenty-one scholars and writers from Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Venezuela. The authors are legal scholars, political scientists, historians, oral historians, anthropologists, ethnographers, philosophers, literary and cultural studies scholars, filmmakers, and creative writers. One of the volume's unique features is its combination of academic and personal writing, a practice uncommon in scholarly literature. Interspersed among eleven analytical chapters are five testimonial essays; these are reflections penned by Sephardi descendants who applied for or received citizenship and represent the diasporic and ethnic complexities of Sephardi identity. This stylistic mixture affords readers a rigorous and intimate look into the contemporary meanings of these two ancestry-based citizenships. Both the scholarly discussions and the personal narratives shed light on Sephardi identities, the import of ancestral pasts, and ideas and feelings about becoming Spanish or Portuguese nationals. Together, they provide a grounded understanding of the role that remote histories and collective memory play for nations, communities, and individuals in the present. Also notable is the fact that four of the critical chapters are jointly researched and authored, breaking with individualistic modes of scholarship. As coauthors of papers on the citizenship laws and now as coeditors of this volume, we appreciate the added value and pleasure of joint thinking, research, and writing.

Why “Reparative” Citizenship?

Despite the Spanish king's impassioned words of welcome, Spain, unlike Portugal, has never rescinded the Edict of Expulsion, nor has it issued a formal apology for the sufferings of the expulsion and Inquisition. And while the Portuguese minister used the word “reparative,” she was quick to explain that the law does not constitute a reparation, but rather the restoration of a right. In fact, both laws carefully avoid using any form of the term “reparation” (as various chapters in this volume explain). Why then, are we calling these citizenships “reparative”?

Both terms, “reparative” and “citizenship,” have complex multiple meanings and interpretive uses. From a strictly legal standpoint and in accordance with internationally accepted definitions of “reparations” (see Aliberti chap. 3 in this volume), the Spanish and Portuguese nation-

ality laws cannot be called reparative, since material compensation is not the goal, and it is impossible to calculate damages from a distance of five centuries. In addition, holding modern states responsible for historical acts is problematic, since at a time of the expulsions and Inquisitions neither Portugal nor Spain existed as nation-states. Extending reparations for something that happened so long ago would have implications in the present, in particular as regards Spain's Law of Historical Memory and compensations claims for victims of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship. At the same time, as Alfons Aragonese and Davide Aliberti point out in chapters 1 and 3, respectively, in recent decades the concept of reparations has broadened from its compensatory post-war origins, and has acquired new meanings when connected to human rights and social justice movements, such as reparative justice and transitional justice (Carranza 2009; Torpey 2006). As the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) explains, "Reparations initiatives seek to recognize and address the harms suffered by victims of human rights violations. They can be designed in many ways and may include symbolic as well as financial or practical measures" (ICTJ n.d.). In recent years, reparations and reconciliation have become more closely aligned with their underlying symbolic, moral, and ethical dimensions, as evidenced in international laws, declarations of human rights, and post-conflict peace and rights efforts to come to terms with national pasts. The Truth and Reconciliation commissions in Latin America and South Africa (Avruch and Vejarano 2002; Mamdani 2002), and Spain's Law of Historical Memory, as well as reparations movements for Atlantic slavery (Araujo 2017) and colonial land grabs (Lenzerini 2017) are a few salient examples. However, rarely has citizenship been offered as a form of symbolic reparation or reconciliation, and, as we noted earlier, never at such a historical distance. Whether the laws actually achieve repair is a question that hangs in the balance. Many of our contributors, in fact, are unconvinced that they do. The laws, however, constitute, in Aragonese's words, "a strong gesture that has a rights and legal dimension and shows a commitment to the values of democracy and human rights" (chap. 1 in this volume).

In proposing citizenship and these laws as forms of reparation, we are also influenced by the metaphorical value of colloquial speech. "Reparative," "repair," and "reparation" are all terms that have been widely used in vernacular reference to the laws—by the governmental architects, by parliamentarians throughout their debates, by the press in all languages, and by the applicants themselves. Vernacular usage is less constrained in recognizing the laws' underlying impulses, be they restorative (Benmayor and Kandiyoti 2020) or symbolic. Along with the Portuguese

minister of justice cited above, the former Spanish minister of justice, Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón, the main governmental force behind the Spanish law, has publicly referred to the law as a symbolic reparation (see Flesler and Friedman, chap. 9; and McDonald, chap. 12 in this volume).

If the laws trigger an expansion of our understanding of reparation, they also contain within them the potential to destabilize traditional constructs of citizenship. Although they are based on a condition of genealogical, cultural, and territorial origin, the citizenships are not automatically granted but rather are attained through a multistage naturalization process based on rigorous genealogical proof, especially for non-Jewish descendants. Such requirements raise questions as to whether these laws can be considered truly reparative, since multiple conditions are placed on the attainment of citizenship. At the same time, their uniqueness, particularly as regards the lifting of residency and single-state loyalty, suggests a more malleable concept of membership and belonging. Globalization and trans-nationalization processes have led a growing number of countries to recognize the existence of simultaneous allegiances and acknowledge dual and multiple citizenships to be held by its peoples. For instance, states may offer dual citizenship for strategic reasons (Harpaz and Mateos 2019) or in exchange for substantial investments (Joppke 2019). Moreover, scholars now pose citizenship as “an ‘institution’ mediating rights between the subjects of politics and the polity to which these subjects belong” (Isin and Nyers 2014, 1). The European Union as a polity, to cite the most relevant example, challenges traditional nationalist legal frameworks of belonging and their cultural moorings, as the reactions of movements and parties on the political Right decry. At the same time, the blurring of pre-Schengen borders is accompanied by the strengthening of North-South apartheid logics (Cabot 2019) and by expanded policies of immigrant detention (e.g., Klaus 2017).

Despite the growth of detentionary regimes and the hardening of immigration and refugee policies in Europe and the United States, when seen from the perspectives of the diverse peoples who now comprise multicultural nation-states, citizenship is no longer the sole purview of the state to define. Demands for rights by social actors and communities produce new meanings of national belonging that go beyond legal frameworks (Flores and Benmayor 1997; Kabir 2005; Maestri and Hughes 2017). Struggles for educational and citizenship rights by undocumented immigrant minors in the United States, known as Dreamers, who are beneficiaries of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act), for instance, rely on and at the same time destabilize normative citizenship frames (Patler 2018). Citizenship,

in this sense, can be understood as more than just national membership status; it acquires new meanings through the expression of social and cultural practices. Spanish and Portuguese citizenship may represent reconciliatory efforts by the state to reembrace its Sephardi descendants, but the applicants themselves can also expand the meaning of reparative citizenship, as does Colette Capriles, a Venezuelan of Sephardi ancestry born into a Catholic family, by proudly declaring herself the holder of a “Sephardi passport” (chap. 4 in this volume). Interestingly, given the extraterritorial location of most applicants and citizenship recipients, the passport, rather than the national identity card, becomes the documentary representation of their membership in the nation-state.

The negotiation between subjects and states also has a historical dimension, one that is unique in the case of the 2015 Spanish and Portuguese laws. Bearing novel features, these laws also are tied to the ways in which the two states have related to Sephardi Jewry since the nineteenth century, when they abolished their Inquisitions, and the absolute authority of the Catholic Church was challenged. The relationship has been variable and not necessarily consistent, yet the sense of a continuum is expressed in the present by politicians and other state representatives. However, the complications of the reconnection following the extreme ruptures of expulsion, conversion, and the Inquisition are revealed by many of our contributors. Next, we trace this connection between the Iberian Peninsula and the descendants of exiled and converted Sephardi Jews, with a focus on the tangled story of their reintegration through special nationality dispensations.

Routes of Spanish Nationality and the Sephardi Jewish Past

Spain’s 2015 citizenship law draws on a very long and nonlinear history of the reincorporation of Sephardi Jews into the national body and the national imaginary. Scholars have written extensively on the reappearance of Sephardi Jews in liberal political and cultural discourses of the nineteenth century, when Jewish and Muslim cultures were presented as key to Spain’s own culture and their absence a keen loss, though such discourses did not lack ambivalence or self-serving formulations (Friedman 2011; Menny 2010; Rohr 2005, 2011). Colonial conquests and ambitions led to the concretization of some of these ideas: the “discovery of” and “reconnection with” Moroccan Sephardi Jews in the context of Spain’s early twentieth-century colonization of part of the North African country played a particularly important role, though Sephardi Jews elsewhere, especially in the Ottoman Empire, too were of interest (Bolorinos

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Allard 2021; Calderwood 2018; Ojeda-Mata 2018; Rohr 2011). The descendants of the expelled Jews, who retained forms of Spanish such as Ladino and Haketia, and customs that evolved in the centuries after exile, were recruited to serve as so-called middlemen and agents of Spain from the Balkans to North Africa. This effort, undergirded by intellectuals and diplomats, most notably by Senator Ángel Pulido, was in some ways remarkable (see, e.g., Bolorinos Allard, chap. 6 and Naar, chap. 5 in this volume; Rohr 2007). It stood in contrast to the conservative anti-semitic political forces in Spain and the centuries-long ban on Jews and Judaism, along with the ban on Muslims and Islam. Cultural and ethnoracial discourses sought to undo the legacy of the Inquisition, which was originally established to root out “judaizers” and, later, other “heretics.” The newer views were undergirded by the political and economic motivations for the cultivating of Moroccan and Ottoman Jews. In what scholars now refer to as philosephardic discourse, the cultural continuity with Iberia that Sephardi Jews bore in their pastoral and toponymic Peninsular surnames, medieval Spanish tongue, culinary traditions, and religious rituals were lauded and positioned as markers of a timeless love and nostalgia for their Iberian homelands, just as they would be later in the preambles of both of the 2015 laws. Culturally hybridized groups of Ladino-speaking North African and Balkan Jews who had absorbed many aspects of their local cultures were reconstructed as “Spaniards without a homeland,” in an often-cited term coined by Pulido. This projection of affect and above all loyalty onto the inheritors of historical Sepharad (the Hebrew word for Spain) lent them a different image than the virulently antisemitic one (Álvarez Chillida 2002) that had characterized Spanish history and the attitudes of those opposing liberalization. But, for the more liberal thinkers and actors, reimagined Sephardi Jews were key to the historical foundations of a multicultural, tolerant, tri-cultural Spain characterized by *convivencia* (peaceful coexistence), the term made influential by mid-twentieth-century scholar Américo Castro, and not by the “mistakes” of expulsions and persecutions.⁵

It was not only their perceived loyalty and longing that led to the conditional, partial, and periodic legal reincorporation of Sephardi Jews into the national body. This reintegration had begun in the nineteenth century despite the staunchness of national Catholicism that began waning only with the death of Francisco Franco in 1975. Other notions also paved the way to citizenship initiatives, most relevantly, the conception of a shared identity posited as a historical mixture between Jews and Spaniards (Ojeda-Mata 2016), with a racializing bent (Goode 2009). These discourses of Sephardi Jews as belonging to the Spanish *raza* (race) constituted a way of folding them into the Hispanism of the early twentieth

century and of the Franco period, when prominent Spaniard intellectuals claimed *hispanidad* (being Hispanic) as a force that united Spain with its lost possessions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Language was primary to an *hispanidad* branded as spiritual. This made it possible for the Spanish-speaking, but not Spanish-identifying, Ottoman and Moroccan Jews to be incorporated into this neocolonial and postimperial vision, advocated variously by liberal, nationalist, right-wing, conservative, proto-fascist, and fascist ideologues in different periods (Friedman 2011; Ginio 2007; Rohr 2007). Scholars have pointed out that the idea of a spiritual kind of race of Spanish-speaking peoples, seemingly going beyond racial ideas, did not in fact displace biological race or blood logics (Goode 2009; Martín-Márquez 2008, 50; Ojeda-Mata 2016). The perception of Jewish economic power, an antisemitic trope, in areas of interest to Spain played an important role in the rapprochement, signaling the overlap between antisemitism and philosephardism.

What did all this mean for the restitution of Sephardi legal status in Spain? Degrees of integration into the Spanish nation were practiced already in the nineteenth century for a small number of Sephardi Jews belonging to the elites. As early as the 1840s, these included consular protections and later what Ojeda-Mata (2018, 45) described as “fourth-class Spanish citizenship by naturalization” in Morocco.⁶ Remarkably, in the second decade of the twentieth century, the Spanish consul in Salonica, who was influenced by Pulido’s vision of Spanish national restoration through the Sephardi Jews, made “an ambitious outreach” and sought to extend Spanish nationality to the Ottoman Sephardi Jews in insecure status due to the Balkan wars and Greek nationalism (Stein 2016, 29). In 1924 a Royal Decree of the dictatorial regime of Primo de Rivera offered naturalization to Sephardi Jews who were consular protégés of Spain, or were descended from them. The motive was to make Spanish nationals out of those who had been displaced and/or found themselves without nationality following the breakup of the Balkans and Ottoman Empires. Similar to the 2015 Spanish law, the dispensation came with an expiration date: 1930. By then, several thousand had received nationality though, as Isabelle Rohr explains it, many “missed the opportunity” and became stateless because of the nonrecognition of protégés locally and by Spain. Moreover, as minorities, some feared consequences in the nationalist environments of Turkey or Greece, where ideologies of ethnic and religious homogeneity became dominant. Others found the requirements “quite arduous” or impossible to fulfill (Rohr 2007, 27). Notably, the decree included a warning that “the petitioner should assert that he will not settle in Spain” (quoted on 27). The special nationality allowances to Jews also took place during the brief period of the Span-

ish Republic and even under Franco's dictatorship, which incessantly decried a fabricated Judeo-Masonic conspiracy, both during its pro-Nazi war years and afterward (Avni 1982; Baer 2011; Rohr 2007). The regime also denationalized thousands of Jews during World War II (Ojeda-Mata 2018; see also Naar, chap. 5 in this volume).

World War II, when many Sephardi Jews were in desperate need of protection, presented a tragic litmus test of philosephardism. Individual consuls, acting on their own and not under state directives, helped save Jews from the Holocaust by providing Spanish documentation, which protected them in their countries or helped them leave. These papers constituted a *déclassé* form of nationality, which did not allow them refuge or permanent residence in Spain (Rother 2005). Because of the non-settlement stipulation, Spain refused permanent repatriation, including to those who had been naturalized under the 1924 decree and were at great risk. Protection was not automatic even for those held in concentration camps while holding Spanish citizenship (Avni 1982). For example, the hundreds of Salonican Jews who had Spanish papers and were deported from Greece to Bergen-Belsen were at the camp for months while Spain equivocated about claiming their Jewish nationals. Eventually, the Salonicans were sent to Morocco or Palestine with no stay in Spain (Avni 1982). The Spanish government intervened, and these lives were saved, but the Jewish nationals of Spain were not treated like citizens with the right of abode in their own country. Most of those who *were* repatriated were treated as stateless in Spain and sent to third countries as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, in the postwar period and under the new world order, Spain successfully built a narrative about having been a savior of Jews, appropriating the individual work and sacrifices of some consuls as decisions of the state, obfuscating the experiences of the refugees and other facts that scholars, beginning with Haim Avni, later unearthed in detail. In 1948 another Royal Decree offered national-abroad status to Sephardi Jews in Greece and Egypt who were about to lose their position as protégés at the termination of the Ottoman era Capitulations, agreed on in the Montreux Treaty of 1937. By then, the philosephardism of the liberals and Republicans had long given way to the fascist, nationalist antisemitism of Francoism, though it still became an instrument at certain junctures after the dictator's allies lost the war and his regime tried to construct a different image of Spain. Flowery language about a shared past and the 1948 dispensation disguised the partial and conditional nature of the legal and cultural reincorporation of Sephardi Jews and the virulent Judeophobia of the regime.

The period that shaped the 2015 law began after Franco's death in 1975, during the early 1980s transition to democracy, when significant

legal developments allowed the freedom of practice and organization to religions other than Catholicism. Also, during this time, the Civil Code was revised to add Sephardi Jews to the list of those with reduced requirements of residency (from ten to two years) in Spain for acquiring citizenship, along with citizens of Latin American countries, Andorra, Equatorial Guinea, and the Philippines. The special treatment of these groups was due to the way “Spain has traditionally considered nationals of some countries as forming part of a joint cultural community and acknowledges a certain historical debt towards other communities” (quoted in Howard 2009, 108). Citizenship scholar Christian Joppke has observed that Spain and Portugal have a special place among individual European states that have preferential provisions of nationality to those with pre-existing ethnic ties or, in the case of former empires with overseas conquests, to citizens of former territories viewed as a part of their “postcolonial constellations” (2005, 112-13). The “historical and cultural links” with the regions and peoples that their former empires ruled “have taken on cultural and panethnic contours, pointing to a . . . state-transcending community that calls for privileged treatment” in matters of immigration and citizenship (112). However, as always there are limitations. Despite the wide-ranging idea of a historical and cultural community, the expelled Morisco descendants were not acknowledged, and Sephardi Jews were the only group for whom dual citizenship was *not* admissible. This 1982 modification, leading to the special law of 2015, was made during a period in which we still find ourselves: what we might call a neo-philosephardism, or as Aragonese put it, “*filosefardismo 2.0*” (2016, 30). Couched in both longstanding national discourses and contemporary references to collective memory, rights, and genocide, the 2015 dispensation was positioned as the culmination of Spain’s striving to reconcile with Sephardi Jews. Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón, the minister of justice who proposed the bill, explained that Spain, which had a “historical debt” to Sephardi Jews who had “always wanted to be Spaniards,” needed to correct a “historical mistake.” This law, he declared, is the culmination of the reencounter with the Sephardi Jews (Aliberti 2018, 195; *La Vanguardia* 2014; also see Flesler and Friedman, chap. 9 in this volume).

The post-Franco era, anchored in discourses of *convivencia*, promoted Jewish Spain as integral to the national culture through diplomatic and institutional relations with the Jewish world, the creation of a large network of medieval Jewish neighborhoods and museums, and the encouragement of Jewish tourism (Flesler and Pérez Melgosa 2020; Linhard 2016). These developments had their parallels in Portugal as we will see in this introduction, including in terms of creating new

nation-branding (see David and Côrte-Real Pinto, chap. 2 in this volume). Key related events in Spain have included the granting of the Prince of Asturias Concord Award to Sephardi communities in 1990, King Juan Carlos I's historic 1992 speech in a Madrid synagogue welcoming home the Sephardi Jews (paving the way to 2015), the cultural efforts of the Instituto Cervantes to incorporate Ladino/Judeo-Spanish into its programs, the change of name of a town that had been called Castrillo Matajudios (Fort Kill The Jews) to Castrillo Mota de Judios (Fort Hill of Jews), the 2018 announcement by the Real Academia Española of the creation of a Ladino academy, and much more.⁷ The pre-expulsion Jewish past has had a substantial role to play in Spain's long transition to democracy and its efforts to reverse or overcome the intertwined legacies of empire, the Inquisition, and dictatorship. The 2007 Law of Historical Memory, whose provisions include right of return and citizenship for Spanish Civil War political exiles and their descendants, is connected to the inclusion of Sephardi Jews in the newer practices and discourses of recovery, restitution, and rights in Spain. As numerous scholars have shown, the transnational rise of collective memory discourses characterizing the late twentieth century have had multiple dimensions in Spain, where civil war memory practices and narratives (Labanyi 2008) have been imbricated with Holocaust memory *and* the Spanish Jewish past (Baer 2011; Flesler and Pérez Melgosa 2020, 12–16; Linhard 2014). The inclusion of citizenship restoration within a landscape of historical memory, for both the descendants of the civil war exiles and of Sephardi Jews, taking place within less than a decade of one another, is viewed as part and parcel of an ethical relationship to the past and the postdictatorial reconstruction of national image. Spotlighting and augmenting the few Jewish material traces that have survived bans and persecutions and the invitations to Sephardi Jews to return through the offer of nationality have helped shape Spain as a worthy European partner bearing a vision of democracy, rights, and tolerance.

The preamble of the law is a testament to the ways in which this neo-philosephardism combines antediluvian and current discourses. Although there is little evidence for the claim, it asserts that “the children of Sepharad maintained an abundance of nostalgia immune to the transformation of languages and generations” (Law 12/2015). Citing Sephardi Jews' maintenance of language and custom, it adds, “Pulsating through time is a love for a Spain that is at last aware of the historical and emotional load the Sephardim have carried 12/2015” (Law 12/2015).⁸ Coupled with these well-worn projections of nostalgia and loyalty, true only of a few Sephardi elites but key to Spain's rapprochement with Sephardi Jews for more than a century, are references in the preamble

to the Holocaust and its place in Spanish memory.⁹ The text also speaks to the global identity of Sephardi Jews. Such characterizations, along with contemporary notions about collective memory and reconciliation, update philosephardism.

The Reception of the Spanish Law

From the start, the Spanish law was both praised and criticized for its discursive pitch as well as its dispensations. As Flesler and Friedman show in chapter 9 of this volume, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain, also established in the early 1980s, initiated this law, whose major improvements over earlier dispensations were eliminating any residency requirement and allowing dual citizenship. Well received by the state, the proposition was debated and eventually implemented through the time-honored claims about Sephardi Jews. The evocative words of the new king, Felipe VI, addressed to Sephardi Jews in 2015 “How we have missed you,” which we quoted at the outset, also had a positive and even inspiring effect on many potential applicants (e.g., Assouline 2019). Benmayor and Kandiyoti’s extensive oral history project (2017–22), and Benmayor’s chapter 13 on affective citizenship in this volume indicate that many Sephardi Jews were moved by such discourses, both the Spanish and the Portuguese, of home, invitation, and restitution, whether or not they had any prior place for Spain or Portugal in their identities or family narratives. More often than not, the Peninsula itself, though not its diasporic culture, was a remote place of origin of little relevance. However, other Sephardi Jews had more practical motives that made little space for an emotional attachment to the past (Benmayor and Kandiyoti 2020; Kerem 2021) or held rather critical perspectives, like those of some scholars and authors, in which they questioned the countries’ motives (see McDonald, chap. 12 in this volume). For Maite Ojeda-Mata, this law has few advantages over the old and is part of a “long Spanish tradition, one of recognition of Sephardi Jews’ rights in small doses and never in an absolute or universal way” (Ojeda-Mata 2015, 49). The unexplained three-year expiration date (2018, later changed to 2019) and the demanding and costly requirements of eligibility and travel for in-person signings, all of which could add up to thousands of dollars if also handled by lawyers, were roundly critiqued. Perhaps symbolically the least digestible condition was to pass an intermediate-level Spanish language test (in addition to a Spanish culture and history exam). That most Jews of Spanish origin outside of Iberia and Latin America no longer speak Spanish or Judeo-Spanish precisely

because of the extremely long gap between the loss of rights and their restitution, constituted a bitter irony for some, as Rita Ender expresses in chapter 10.

The rigors of the evidence and documentation process in both Spain and Portugal (see Bento and Santos's appendix to chap. 15 in this volume) have been controversial and detailed in much media coverage and some scholarly articles (e.g., Aragonese 2016; Goldschläger and Orjuela 2021; Kerem 2021; McDonald 2021; Schammah Gesser 2019). The requirements to provide extensive genealogical evidence have been challenging for everyone, but particularly for those who have no present connection to historical Sephardi communities and congregations, especially the non-Jewish applicants of Sephardi descent from Christian, Muslim, Dönme, or other backgrounds. Finally, the 2,519 denials of citizenship by the Spanish Ministry of Justice as of 30 June 2022 (out of 45,186 cases reviewed to that date), have been controversial, generating an appellate process that some applicants are pursuing. These and any future rejections will merit investigative attention, as the review process is completed and more information becomes available. Also hanging in the balance is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the application process, preventing or making it exceedingly risky for aspirants to travel to Spain and sign their applications before the notarial deadline, as Ruth Behar's essay, chapter 11 in this volume, attests.

Neo-philosephardism as a discourse deployed in the 2015 citizenship process seems to have a larger, more-global and rights-based vision than in the past, but its reliance on old tropes symbolically excludes many applicants who are eligible, including the non-Jewish descendants. For example, as Kandiyoti points out in chapter 14, the loyalty discourse cannot be applied to most of the converso descendants of the Americas whose families have been Christian without normative Jewish knowledge or practice since the medieval or early Modern era. Yet they, too, can be and have been beneficiaries of the law, since discrimination based on current religion is not allowed, and descent is the *sine qua non* of eligibility.

The linear narrative of cultural continuity bolsters Spain's (and Portugal's, as we will explain shortly) image as having an enduring cultural and identitarian impact on its historical victims. It also legitimizes the laws on these terms without acknowledging the nonconformity of converso, Dönme/Sabbatean, and other such pasts to this neat story. Furthermore, the emphasis on loyalty and cultural preservation reinforces the exclusion of the Morisco descendants expelled en masse at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Dispersed thereafter, mostly to North Africa and elsewhere in the Muslim world, Spanish Muslim descen-

dants are sidelined for having assimilated to their places of exile and lost their Spanishness, as Arigita and Galián explain in chapter 8. As is well known, the primary reason for the Sephardi retention in diaspora of culture and language from the Peninsula was not a unilateral resistance to assimilation or loyalty, but rather the particular conditions of the Ottoman *millet* system that allowed religious communities' autonomy. But this is overlooked and set off against the Morisco exiles' adaptation to the local languages, religions, and cultures. Within the context of these contradictory discourses and practices, the reception of the laws, then, have been strikingly mixed within the Jewish, Muslim, Spanish, Latin American, and other contexts: on the one side, the law's exclusions (of Morisco descendants as well as Western Saharans/Sahrawis), rhetorical framing, and stringent demands have been subject to critique. On the other, there has been positive response and enthusiasm among the diverse actors and observers.

Portugal's Path

As other observers have remarked (e.g., Schammah Gesser 2019), Portugal's relationship with its Jewish past and its road to citizenship for Sephardi Jews is nowhere near as extensive as Spain's. A reencounter with its Jewish history became significant only in the aftermath of António de Oliveira Salazar's dictatorial rule in 1974 and in the process of democratization that followed. A massive de-Judaizing process had taken place with the 1496 forced conversion of the entire Portuguese Jewish community, estimated at a remarkable 20 percent of the population, and heavily consisting of the Spanish exiles of 1492. The effort to rid Portugal of its Jews was almost entirely successful because of Christianization; the flight of persecuted conversos, accused of judaizing, to safer European locations or the Ottoman Empire; and the victimization and murders carried out by the Inquisition and pogroms. However, Portuguese Jewish and converso identity persisted in diaspora as *nação* (the nation). So widespread was the *nação* that in the Americas and Europe of the early modern era, the label "Portuguese" often indicated "Jewish." But in Portugal itself, it would take a long time before there was a positive recognition to replace hateful banishment. The reforms of the Marquis de Pombal, the abolishment of the Inquisition, and the creation of a new constitution in the 1820s were critical to the gradual and very modest repopulation of Jews, mostly Moroccans and some non-Sephardi Eastern Europeans, during the nineteenth century. While Portugal also experienced liberalization, a turn away from the Church, and denunciations of

⁷Reparative Citizenship for Sephardi Descendants

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Judeophobia in that century, there was comparatively less philosephardic pulsion than in Spain (Martins 2006, v.1, v.2).

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the “discovery” of the “*judeus*” of northern Portugal by Samuel Schwarz, a Polish Jew, drew some attention to the Jewish past. Largely endogamous groups practicing secretly a transformed Judaism amalgamated with Catholicism fascinated the Jewish world. Although during the more tolerant years of the Portuguese Republic (1911–26), these crypto-Jews, or *marranos* as they are known in Portugal, garnered sympathy, they had relatively little impact on Portugal’s policies or outlook. Early in the Salazar dictatorship, the persecution of an army officer claiming converso descent, Artur Barros Basto, “the apostle of the Marranos” who founded the Porto community and its still-active synagogue, played a role in the emergence of this history.

Sephardi Jews elsewhere played a role in Portugal’s empire and its desire to carry influence in the Balkans and in Africa. In 1893 Livornese Jews of Portuguese origin in Tunis received from Portugal protégé status, which had been denied to them by the French and the British (Stein 2016, 28). For Portugal, this meant “embracing as protégés a wealthy mercantile population while vying with other European powers to deepen its commercial and cultural toehold in the Mediterranean” (28). In 1913 Portugal took advantage of the Balkan wars and the uncertain future faced by Ottoman Jews, some of whom sought protective naturalization by other empires. Wishing to extend its influence from Europe to Africa, and prompted by the requests of some Sephardi Jews in Salonica, where the Lisbon, Évora, and other synagogues of exiled Portuguese Jews still stood, Portugal recruited a select number of Jews as protégés. One senator combined the state’s colonial future and responsibilities toward the past in a revealing 1913 speech in which he suggested that the proposed law would enable naturalized Jews to be settled in Angola (Franco 2004; Martins 2010; Stein 2016), which Portugal had begun occupying in the sixteenth century and settling in the nineteenth. The Sephardi Jews would be of much use there, owing to their “*dotes de energia no trabalho e espírito de economia*” (talent for energetic work and economical spirit). Furthermore, he asserted, “In addition to the advantage that should result for the province of Angola, the proposed law represents an act of *justice and reparation* for a race that has been so persecuted at all times and whose mass expulsion in December 1496 from the territory of Portugal by Manuel I and after 1532 by D. João III, by the evil action of the Inquisition, the tragic slaughter in the streets and squares of Lisbon in April 1506 . . . constitute the darkest stains in the entire history of the

country.” (Quoted in Franco 2004, 137; emphasis added). As with the Spanish case, this recognition and reparation through nationality went hand in hand with political projects in ways that sought to instrumentalize the Sephardi past in the service of Portugal’s settler colonialism.

In the end, however, the Portuguese approach to the reincorporation of Sephardi Jews was as ambivalent and partial as the Spanish and even more so during World War II, despite Portugal’s reputation as a haven. As a result of Salazar’s compulsion to overturn the Republicans’ limited 1913 provisions, Greek Sephardi Jews were not able to get protection during the war. “Salazar exhibited greater tolerance toward Jews who had no historical relationship to Portugal then [*sic*] he showed those who held ‘provisional [Portuguese] registration’ and, indeed, had once been embraced by Portugal” (Stein 2016, 121). Staying out of the war, Salazar maintained “neutrality,” which meant sympathy for and business with the German regime, albeit without antisemitism serving as a motor of policy. Yet, because of the regime’s claims that the consuls had produced false documents, Greek Jews with Portuguese papers and other Jews of Portuguese background in Holland and elsewhere met their fate at the hands of the Nazis (Milgram 2011). Brave consuls such as Aristides de Sousa Mendes in Bordeaux saved thousands *contra* Salazar, only to be both exploited and punished for it: “While sanctioning him professionally, Salazar ultimately profited from his actions in the postwar period by presenting Portugal as a rescuer of Jewish refugees” (Pimentel and Ninhos 2015, 113). Avraham Milgram has argued that it was not antisemitism but xenophobia and the right-wing fear of liberals and communists that motivated the dictator (Milgram 2011). The extent of Portugal’s helping hand was significant because it affected tens of thousands. At the same time, it was basically limited to the offer of temporary passage to those not of Portuguese background on the way to real refuge in other ports. This changed in 1944, thanks to pressure from the United States and efforts of consuls, this time one in Budapest, who issued papers to about 1,000 Jews, with the proviso, again, of denial of refuge in Portugal. Much more than Spain, then, Portugal vacillated in its reincorporation of Sephardi Jews for the better part of the twentieth century.

But in 2013 the proposal to extend a citizenship possibility to descendants of Sephardi Jews was met with little controversy in the Portuguese Parliament or the society at large. Instead of developing a special law like Spain, the existing naturalization law was amended to include Sephardi Jews. This effort was part and parcel of the post-1974 period, characterized by the efforts to modernize, Europeanize, and democratize Portugal. The mobilization of the Portuguese Jewish past through the

nationality dispensation was connected to efforts to project a tolerant and mixed Portuguese society. An official discourse of a multiracial and tolerant Portuguese Empire that downplayed slavery and racial hierarchy also characterized the Salazar period, even while protracted colonial wars in Africa were taking place. The post-dictatorship models of coexistence differed but also extended from such earlier ideas about the racially hybrid legacy of the Portuguese Empire, as David and Côrte-Real Pinto explain in chapter 2. Along these lines and connecting also to the memory, reconciliation, and reparation discourses of the moment, Portugal extensively recalled the Jewish past. Unlike in Spain, a head of state, President Mário Soares of the Socialist Party, gave an official apology for the Inquisition's persecution of Portuguese Jews in 1988. As in Spain, a Rede de Judiarias, network of Jewish neighborhoods, was established (in 2001) to promote the Jewish past and tourism, as were new museums, monuments, and festivals, along with the resignifications of the few Jewish remnants.

What distinguishes the Portuguese projects from all other such large-scale Jewish heritage efforts in Spain or elsewhere is the prominence of the converso past and crypto-Jewish groups, and their inclusion in Jewish heritage projects, especially in the north of the country. The awareness of this history of forced mass conversions and crypto-Jewish practice experienced a resurgence in the 1920s and 1930s, as we have seen, but especially in the 1970s and 1980s (Leite 2017; Pignatelli 2019). As a result, the notion that most Portuguese must have Jewish ancestry is popular in Portugal today (Leite 2017). Yet, despite this consciousness and the legal eligibility of converso or other non-Jewish descendants of Sephardi Jews for the citizenship opportunity, the Portuguese preamble, too, focuses by and large on unconverted Jews and New Christians who returned to Judaism outside of Portugal, as this passage indicates: “Despite the persecutions and the separation from their ancestral territory, many Sephardic Jews of Portuguese origin and their descendants kept not only the Portuguese language but also the traditional rites of the ancient Jewish religion in Portugal, preserving their family surnames, objects and documents proving their Portuguese origin, together with a strong memorial relationship that leads them to call themselves ‘Portuguese Jews’ or ‘Jews of the Portuguese Nation [*nação*]’” (Decreto-Lei no. 30-A/2015 2015). Unlike in the Spanish preamble, the forced conversions and the de-Judaification of Portugal after 1496 is mentioned. However, it is the fidelity to the Portuguese language and customs on various continents, following the Jews’ exile, that is described, as is the presence of some Jews in Portugal as of the nineteenth century. The fate of the converted non-Jewish descendants is not invoked in the historical overview.

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Many Sephardi Jewish descendants have chosen to seek Portuguese rather than Spanish nationality, because Portugal does not demand knowledge of language or civics tests; nor does it require signing with a notary in the country, which also reduces costs, especially compared to Spanish applications, though costs are still substantial for many who hire lawyers and genealogists.¹⁰ As a result, Portugal had been the target of less overt criticism than Spain. While the Portuguese requirements for eligibility had been much less stringent, some applicants have expressed disappointment in the inconsistencies with regard to the process. For example, the Jewish community organizations have played a decisive role in verifying eligibility, but each of them—the Lisbon (Comunidade Israelita de Lisboa) and the Porto (Comunidade Israelita de Porto)—has had different profiles. On social media and in interviews conducted for the Benmayor and Kandiyoti oral history project (2017–22), applicants voiced their concerns about these communities’ differential treatment. The Porto community was known to entertain only those with normative Jewish identity or with generationally close Jewish family members, although both Jewish and non-Jewish seekers are eligible under the law as descendants (Kerem 2021). Non-normative Jewish descendants, like Dönmes or Sabbateans, have also remarked on the general lack of historical knowledge about their unique history, at least at the outset (Benmayor and Kandiyoti 2017–22). Despite the obstacles, so many applications had been filed (137,087 as of February 2022 [*Diario de Noticias* 2022]), that in 2021 a member of parliament tried unsuccessfully to amend the 2015 law by imposing a prior residency requirement and other restrictions, claiming that the commercialization of Portuguese citizenship was cheapening the national brand and sovereignty (Almeida 2020). The developments in early 2022, regarding Porto’s granting of certifications of Sephardi origin to oligarchs, further complicated the Portuguese picture, leading to the termination of the Porto community as a certification site altogether. In September 2022, the parliament tightened evidentiary requirements, restricting the pool of potential claimants to those who can prove material connections to Portugal (Decreto-Lei 26/2022).

Mobilizing the Past and the Future

This overview of the development of the laws in Spain and Portugal helps us understand something about the special ways in which the past gets mobilized in citizenship regimes. As we have observed in this introduction and elsewhere (e.g., Benmayor and Kandiyoti 2020), Spain and

Portugal's special recognition of Sephardi Jewish descendants as potential nationals has taken place in a period of democratization and Europeanization in the Peninsula (although now these ideals have been put to the test with the upsurge of a far-right wing in Spain). The laws are also related to the contemporary rise in potential new citizens, whom other European states are also "selecting by origin" (Joppke 2005; 2019). According to the state-transcending conception of belonging (25), those considered fellow ethnics are eligible for returning to the nationality of their ancestors. For example, ethnic Hungarians in Serbia, Luso-Hispanics from Latin America, or Bulgarians in Macedonia are subject to preferential treatment in Hungary, Spain, Portugal, and Bulgaria, respectively (e.g., Joppke 2005; Pogonyi 2019). However, unlike in those cases, the selection of Sephardi Jewish descendants is presented as an act of repair and reconciliation on the basis of historical victimization. Also distinctive are the descendants' dispersals from origins that are uncommonly distant in time. Nevertheless, as we have shown above, the laws are predicated on loyalty to roots, demonstrated through linguistic and cultural transmission and/or affiliations with Spain and Portugal. And, as Charles McDonald (2021) has underlined about Spain, a lack of rancor for the victimization is presumed. Such approaches to the past and the present are telling about the conditionality of the intent to repair, which conforms to longstanding ideas about the nation without acknowledging ruptures to belonging. And, they symbolically exclude many potential beneficiaries whose Sephardi roots may be less perceptible.

Yet, never before have the concessions of belonging, whether as protégés or second-class or full citizens, included many non-Jews who are descendants of converts to Christianity and Islam or Sabbateanism. Long inside the Christian Luso-Hispanic or Muslim Turkish worlds, these descendants return to the current Sephardi moment (Kandiyoti 2020), though they were not necessarily the laws' primary targeted individuals. The converso, Dönme, and other non-normative Sephardi descendants exemplify the forked roads, twists, and turns in the path of Iberian-Sephardi "reconciliation" (as Spain refers to it), which are unacknowledged or under-recognized in official discourses. The chapters in this volume by Capriles (chap. 4), Kandiyoti (chap. 14), Özüyener (chap. 7), Flesler and Friedman (chap. 9), and Pignatelli (chap. 15) highlighting the variances and ruptures resulting from centuries long processes of conversions and exiles teach us about the gaps of the historical record and the violence behind them. Reconciliatory and reparative acts, then, may find unexpected historical actors on the stage of citizenship and inconvenient reminders of omissions in collective memories.

The Chapters

The chapters that comprise the four parts of this book divide along two main lines. The first establishes the legal, political, and historical frameworks that shape the development of the laws, including the role of institutions and key players in the current moment as well as in the past, such as during Spain's imperial period, World War II, and the 1992 quinquennial commemorations. The authors offering historical perspectives variously analyze the Ottoman, Moroccan, and Greek contexts as well as the Spanish and the Portuguese, given the import of diasporas to the trajectory of legal dispensations for Sephardi Jews and their differentiation from Muslim Spanish descendants.

A second set of analytical chapters brings the contemporary descendants, the beneficiaries of the laws, into view. Original ethnographic, oral history, media, and cultural research shed light on our understanding of the potential beneficiaries' and applicants' motivations, feelings, and experiences with the process as well the implications of the laws for individual and collective identity, belonging, and memory. Five intercalated personal essays both complement and provide alternative perspectives to the research articles, with their reflective narratives about diasporas and identities in the countries of Curaçao, Venezuela, Turkey, and Cuba, and in the cities of Salonica (Greece) and New York (United States), and their experiential insights into the meanings and processes of acquiring citizenship today.

Alfons Aragonese's chapter 1, "'Reparative Citizenship: Confronting Injustices of the Past or Building Modern Nationalisms?'" examines the concept of historical injustice from a legal perspective that is integrated with historical and cultural dimensions. Shedding historical light on our understanding of citizenship, Aragonese first traces the evolving legal and symbolic meanings of reparations and the link between citizenship, the nation, and loyalty, the latter a key concept in this book. After bringing us to the current "conception of citizenship and the loss of part of its nationalistic content," Aragonese asks whether the new flexibility of citizenship can also serve to repair injustices, particularly of those committed in the distant past. Examining the Spanish and Portuguese reparations legislations comparatively with those of Germany, Austria, and Ghana, he distinguishes between reparations and other measures of citizenship restitution (following denationalization). His conclusions about the significance of the laws concern not their reparative quality but rather the symbolism in establishing a link between identity and justice and between nation and rights.

A specific answer to the often-asked question, “Why did Spain and Portugal offer this citizenship now?” is found in Isabel David and Anouck Côte-Real Pinto’s “Beyond Reparatory Justice: The Portuguese ‘Law of Return’ as Nation Branding” (chap. 2). Centering on the motivators for Portugal, the authors investigate the link between national identity and nation branding, and the role that reparative citizenship plays within this connection. The aim of branding is embedded in Portugal’s contemporary identity as exceptionally tolerant and racially mixed. The authors trace these two intertwined central elements to longstanding ideas, such as Gilberto Freyre’s “Lusotropicalism,” which rebranded the Portuguese past, transforming conquest and slavery into a narrative of encounters and racial mixing. Through interviews with decision-making and community elites, participant observation at cultural events, and documentary research, David and Côte-Real Pinto detail the participation of political and community actors, including the designation of Portuguese Jews as brand ambassadors, in recasting and covering over undesirable aspects of the past. The law for Sephardi descendants is part and parcel of Portugal’s contemporary branding as tolerant, whose success the authors also evaluate.

In “Reparations in Spanish Parliamentary Debates: About the 2015 Nationality Law for Descendants of Sephardi Jews” (chap. 3) Davide Aliberti furthers our understanding of the valences of reparations. He helpfully parses concepts such as reparations, reconciliation, and transitional justice in order to evaluate whether Spain’s is a reparations politics as defined by international rights regimes. In exploring this concept, his essay answers another frequently asked question: What were the political processes that shaped this particular law? Aliberti provides an illuminating response in his detailed analyses of the parliamentary discussions, debates, and detours that paved the legislative path. The research he shares of dramatic and revealing statements by politicians discloses not only the primarily rhetorical use of the reparations concept but also the differences and overlaps among political parties and factions regarding Spain’s relationship to its Jewish past and its restoration.

“Passports are used to move through space, but for me they serve to move through time,” writes Venezuelan academic and author Colette Capriles, apropos of her new Spanish nationality (chap. 4). In her reflective and lyrical personal essay, she traverses both time and space, tracing the paths and detours of her Sephardi ancestors and her mixed Jewish, Christian, German, Venezuelan family. Her narrative is a portal to the world of Spanish and Portuguese Jews in the Americas, whose fortunes and misfortunes propelled them from Iberia to elsewhere in Europe, to the Caribbean, to the island of Curaçao, and finally to the Venezuelan

cities of Coro and Caracas. Capriles shares the paradigmatic history of her Sephardi ancestors, who included a friend of Simon Bolívar's and one Joseph Capriles Teixeira who was born in the Veneto in 1723, educated in Padova, practiced medicine in Tunisia, and ended in Curaçao, but not before first converting to Catholicism, then to Islam, and finally returning to Judaism in the Dutch Caribbean. The past two centuries have been no less circuitous and eventful than in such early modern Sephardi stories of displacement and adaptation. But Curaçaoan rootedness and Venezuelan cosmopolitanism prevailed for Capriles and her family and now will incorporate Spanish nationality, which Capriles sees as an instrument of a possible shared future for her country.

“Spaniards We Were, Spaniards We Are, and Spaniards We Will Be’: Salonica’s Sephardic Jews and the Instrumentalization of the Spanish Past, 1898–1944” (chap. 5) by Devin Naar, centers on philosephardism, one of the key terms of this volume, and demonstrates its impact on the vital Sephardi community of Salonica. The instrumentalization of the Jewish past, Naar shows, works both ways. If Spain sought to further imperial and diplomatic ambitions through representations of Sephardi Jews as “Spaniards without a homeland,” as we have explained above, Sephardi leaders in the key city of Salonica could attempt to manipulate philosephardism to serve the needs of Sephardi Jews at a critical time of wars in Europe. Fascinatingly, when it seemed necessary, they even drew on the experience of Spanish Jewish exile in order to fold Sephardi history into a Greek nationalist one. Yet the unequal nature of the vaunted Spanish-Sephardi relationship, underscored by feverish rhetoric about shared blood and kinship ties, reveals itself particularly during moments of crisis. As Naar makes clear in his exposition of insufficiently known movements of Salonican refugees between their native city and Spain during World War I and the tragic abandonments of World War II, philosephardism proved to be an unreliable narrative, whose costs and disappointments accrued only to Sephardi Jews and never to Spain.

In “Spanish Jews’ and ‘Friendly Muslims’: The Historical Absence of a Citizenship Campaign for Muslims of Iberian Descent,” Elisabeth Bolorinos Allard (chap. 6) asks, “If Spain desired to remedy the past and recover the ideal of *convivencia* associated with medieval al-Andalus, why hasn’t the offer of citizenship been extended to the descendants of the Moriscos?” The answer lies in the historical distinctions made between Spanish Jews, *hispanidad*, and philosephardism on the one side and Muslims, Moriscos, and Africanism (emphasizing a Spain-Islam-North Africa connection) on the other. The nineteenth-century conjuncture of liberalism, nationalism, and Orientalism reinscribed the “Jews of Spain” and “Spanish Islam” in the national imaginary, as essential ele-

ments of a usable past in which *convivencia*, rather than the Inquisition, was positioned as a Spanish characteristic. The colonization of northern Morocco led to the divergent treatment. Although both Sephardis and “the Moors” were situated as “brothers,” Africanism and philosephardism served distinct purposes that largely excluded the Moriscos, who were subjected to civilizational discourses of primitivism and uplift. Bolorinos Allard concludes that the partial and ambivalent incorporation of Sephardi Jews through citizenship did not displace antisemitism, and the exclusion of Morisco descendants from a “return” to Spain did not prevent them from being interpellated as colonized kin.

Uluç Özüyener’s personal essay, “The Story of a Spanish Dönme” (chap. 7) is a rare narrative: it is the first testimony by the first Dönme, or Sabbatean, to receive Spanish citizenship. The author is also one of the very few Sabbateans willing to be open about his identity and share his story. Born in Turkey to a secular Muslim family that hid its Sabbatean roots from his generation, Özüyener discovered the secret Jewish origins and Sabbatean history and practices only gradually. Mindful of the discretion that has been necessary for centuries for safety and integration in Turkey, he tells about Sephardi identity, language, and customs and their transformations within Sabbatean communities. At the center is Salonica, or Selanik as Özüyener refers to it, marking through Turkish orthography its special character and meaning for Dönmes. It is in this storied city that a majority of Sabbateans flourished, and it is the same city that became a lost home due to the 1923 Greek-Turkish population exchange. Özüyener’s prismatic narrative reveals his path toward greater knowledge of and strong identification with respect to his Dönme roots and draws on both his own and the wider Dönme past in Zaragoza, Spain, Portugal, Livorno, Selanik, and Istanbul. As he tells it, embracing Spanish citizenship was a consequence of his self-discovery as a Dönme.

Elena Arigita and Laura Galián provide the tools to understand the roots of the differentiation between Sephardi Jewish and Morisco descendants in the eyes of the Spanish state in the contemporary moment (chap. 8). They analyze the ongoing and changing attitudes and practices toward the Morisco past and present in light of reparations and reconciliation discourses. They show that, just as reparations are incomplete for Sephardi Jewish descendants (argued also by Aliberti and Aragoneses), Spain’s post-dictatorship attempts to reconcile with its own past are also partial because of the lack of a similar acknowledgment of the expulsion and persecution of Moriscos. Through the analysis of official discourses produced in the key moment of the 1992 commemorations and reinvented currently, Arigita and Galián explain how conquest and conflict were resigned in ways that have resulted in the rejection of

reparations for Morisco descendants. The authors reveal the complex ways in which the duty of memory is mobilized and immobilized in the efforts to achieve symbolic repair of Morisco history, and also demonstrate the ways in which Sephardi and Morisco pasts converge and diverge in Spain's present-day memory practices.

Through a set of timely interviews conducted with key governmental and Jewish community architects of the 2015 Spanish law, Daniela Flesler and Michal Friedman present in "Negotiating Historical Redress: The Spanish Law of Nationality for Sephardi Descendants and Spain's Jewish Communities" (chap. 9) a behind-the-scenes account of the law's genesis and development. Based on twelve in-depth investigative conversations and contextual analysis, the authors reveal an inside story that addresses questions such as, why this law and why now? Who were the main negotiators and how did this matter? How and why did it evolve into its final form? The story begins with the Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain and unfolds through a complex web of governmental relationships, connections, and negotiations. Flesler and Friedman's conclusions about the role of the official Jewish community in the creation and implementation of the law draws on some strikingly frank interviews as well as analysis of Spain's vision of Sephardi identity and belonging. The authors lay bare the motivations and limits of negotiating with the state and adapting to its double-edged discourses of rescue, gratitude, indebtedness, and loyalty.

With the stroke of an email, Rita Ender (chap. 10) became Portuguese. A Turkish lawyer who assists clients with their citizenship applications, she and her family were among the first to apply for citizenship, for practical but also existential reasons, given the political regime in Turkey and the difficulties of being a Jewish woman whose name, appearance, and professional profile identify her as non-Turkish. Ender reflects on the challenges of amassing documentary proof of heritage, noting that, in her own case, her ancestral family name of Alburquerque, extant vital records, and the presence of Ladino in her family were sufficient, though in each instance of proof lies a gap of knowledge lost to exile and diasporization. Her documentary film, *Las Ultimas Palavras* (The final words), about the loss of Ladino within her own and younger generations, takes her on her first trip to Portugal at the invitation of the Porto Jewish community. Examining her relationship to this country, not known to her but one that offers her a return, Ender reflects on the meanings of her own belongings, new and old, as she also considers the challenges faced by some of her clients in proving their ancestry: "There is Sephardiness in the story of the people who lack Judaism," she asserts and wonders whether it is "appropriate to make decisions about

belonging on someone else's behalf." Rephrasing José Saramago, she concludes that becoming Portuguese may be "a chance to step outside of ourselves and discover a new part of who we are."

Ruth Behar, Cuban American writer and anthropologist, closes Part 3 with "Sefarad Postponed" (chap. 11), a reflection on her decision to apply for Spanish citizenship and on its ultimate impossibility. Caught between her love for Spain, where she became an anthropologist, her passion for her native Spanish language, pride in her Sephardic heritage, and fear of bureaucracies and state controls, Behar leads us through her feelings of ambivalence about applying and her ultimate decision to proceed, encouraged by her encounter with a Spanish lawyer. Written at the beginning of the global pandemic, Behar is left, and leaves us, with a litany of "maybes," given the difficulty of completing the application process and planning for the future. Citizenship and Sefarad, she says, are indefinitely postponed. In an epilogue, penned a year later, postponement became impossibility. With only two steps left in the application process, Behar's dream about becoming a citizen in a Spain in which she would no longer feel the need to hide her Jewish identity was thwarted by the official intransigence to adjust the procedures and deadlines to the realities of the pandemic. Given this turn of events, Behar questions the ultimate sincerity of Spain's offer of citizenship.

Beginning with chapter 12, the articles and essays shift from legal and historical concerns to considerations of the beneficiaries of the laws. In "*La Nostalgia de Sefarad Tira Mucho, Pero No Tanto: Attachment, Sentiment, and the Ethics of Refusal*," Charles McDonald (chap. 12) offers a counternarrative to the Spanish law as reparation. Derived from ethnographic interviews with Sephardi descendants, McDonald's focus is on those who have chosen not to seek citizenship and who critique the gesture on ethical and practical grounds. Through three in-depth conversations with normative Sephardi Jews, he highlights some of the salient perspectives on refusal: the ethical concern of "confer[ring] unwarranted legitimacy" on the law; the superficiality of the law and the lack of supportive educational resources to combat antisemitism; indifference and lack of practical need; at best a lack of affective attachment to Spain and preference among Jews for US or Israeli citizenship; and discomfort with a law that casts Sephardis as essentially Spanish. McDonald proposes that, in rejecting the law's philosephardic premise of Sephardi nostalgia and attachment to Spain, refusals are expressions of sentiment that warrant consideration alongside state rhetorics of attachment. From the perspective of refusal, the law is better understood as a gift bestowed rather than as a true act of reparation and mutual reconciliation.

In “Affective Citizenship and Iberian Sephardi Descendants,” Rina Benmayor (chap. 13) proposes an alternative understanding of citizenship through the lens of emotion and affective meaning. Affective citizenship, she submits, encompasses the emotions, feelings, and sentiments that come into play in the process of affirming heritage involved in acquiring citizenship. She posits that the invitation to citizenship triggers affective responses, which in turn reshape the intended consequences of the laws. Based on some fourteen original videotaped oral histories with applicants, including her own, she examines how the pursuit of new citizenship kindles feelings about the historical and familial past and unexpected framings of identity and belonging. Close affective readings of the narratives and their verbal and somatic performances reveal a reinforced attachment to heritage and the imagined past, the power of discovering new roots, and the force of historical longing, allowing us to understand how applicants rewrite these invitations to rejoin the nation-state. Close textual readings reveal that more than becoming new Spaniards or Portuguese, acquiring reparative citizenship comes to signify an affective re/turn to and reinforcement of Sephardi belonging.

Dalia Kandiyoti’s “Descendants of Conversos in the Americas: The Ancestral Past, Sephardi Identity, and Citizenship in Spain and Portugal” (chap. 14) is the first study of converso descendants in the Americas who have pursued Spanish or Portuguese nationality. Focusing on the key role of genealogy, she draws on eighteen oral histories with individuals who have identified ancestors who converted to Christianity in Inquisitional times and settled in the Americas. The extensive ancestral information required for eligibility by both laws and the uncovering of hidden and repressed crypto-Jewish ancestors cause narrators to recalibrate their connection not only to Spain or Portugal, but also to the collective settlement stories in their own regions and nations on the continent. Moreover, for many narrators a Sephardi historical consciousness emerges through genealogy, which is discovered or reinforced in the application process. Kandiyoti also traces the implications of the ways some applicants reconfigure Sephardi identity as being based on descent. She shows that descendants of conversos, a set of applicants who figure little in the discursive construction of the laws, narrate ruptures and loss, and sometimes a recent reattachment, rather than a presumed loyalty to and continuity of Iberia and its Jewish afterlives. Ancestral citizenship for those more recently uncovering or rediscovering an ancient belonging has surprising permutations, unanticipated by prevailing conceptions of ethnicity, religion, or nation.

In “Portuguese Citizenship for Brazilian Descendants of Sephardic Jews,” Marina Pignatelli (chap. 15) introduces a netnographic approach

Reparative Citizenship for Sephardi Descendants
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to analyze “how Brazilian applicants engage with virtual groups in on-line spaces to reconstruct the narrative and symbolic meanings of ‘Sephardiness’ in support of their [citizenship] applications.” Scrutinizing social network services, such as topically dedicated public and private Facebook groups and public and private YouTube channels, Pignatelli examines the narrative identities of the applicants, as shared in these online spaces, and the ways in which descendants of New Christians construct and use these virtual communities. Sephardiness, she argues, should be understood as a broad spectrum of genealogical, cultural, and historical affinities in which individuals may self-identify simultaneously as Iberian Sephardi, Brazilian, Christian, or Bnei Anusim (descendants of converts). Through information gleaned from popular online groups, this chapter details the information, concerns, and support that applicants seek and share, as well as their expectations and reactions upon receiving citizenship. Pignatelli concludes that, by reconnecting to Portugal, the Brazilians in her study, who are diverse in age, gender, occupation, and location “are in a process of creating their Sephardiness as a chosen, voluntary identity, planted in symbolic, cultural, historical, and religious grounds” and should be considered “active co-players” in the reimagination and regeneration of Sephardism today.

Appended to Pignatelli’s chapter is a snapshot of the procedures and challenges of certifying Sephardi origins experienced by the Jewish Community of Lisbon (CIL). In this appendix, “Certifying Origins for Sephardic Descendants in Portugal: A Snapshot of the Evaluation Process,” Teresa Santos and Heraldo Bento draw from 2020 government documents and Santos’s first-hand experience as an assistant in the CIL’s evaluation team. Their synopsis describes the diversity of historical, cultural, and testimonial evidence presented by applicants from throughout the Sephardi diaspora, a complexity that required special preparation by evaluators. Including 2020 aggregated data from the Portuguese government, the appendix offers details on applications from Israelis, Brazilians (both Jews and descendants of converts), and Turkish Dönme (converts to Islam).

Closing the volume, historian and filmmaker Victor Silverman writes, “Migration, exile, and diaspora and their complicated relationships with identity and place, with memory and present experience, run through my family’s history.” His essay “The Fez in the Water: Exile and Return” (chap. 16) alternates between family tableaux and personal and political reflections, beginning with Silverman’s grandfather tossing his Turkish fez into the waters of Izmir, and symbolically letting go of his Ottomanness as he embarked on his adventure to embrace the American Dream. Later, we see his mother and aunts, dubbed the “Boreka

Babies,” shelling beans on their stoop in Brighton Beach and making comments in Ladino about the passers-by, an antidote to their own sense of immigrant insecurity. Entwined with such snapshots are Silverman’s considerations of the post-memory of exile, nostalgia, the brutality of state nationalisms, and his political and intellectual beliefs. He is fully aware that, with the citizenship amendment, Portugal is rewriting its history and his familial identity. Acknowledging the emotional power of identity transformations he writes, “My hope for humanity and my distrust of nationalisms don’t blind me to the emotional significance of national citizenship.” The law “promises my family and me that we can be part of something that we (both the Portuguese and the Sephardim) have told ourselves we lost.”

Through interdisciplinary and multifaceted optics, *Reparative Citizenship* makes apparent the expansive conceptual import of the unusual reconciliatory gestures of the Spanish and Portuguese laws. The volume as a whole asks us to view the subject of nationality for Sephardi descendants prismatically, in regard to questions of citizenship, belonging, and the repair of historical injustices in a contemporary world.

Dalia Kandiyoti is professor of English at the City University of New York, College of Staten Island, and the author of *The Converso’s Return: Conversion and Sephardi History in Contemporary Literature and Culture* (Stanford University Press 2020), *Migrant Sites: America, Place, and Diaspora Literatures* (Dartmouth College/University Press of New England 2009), and numerous articles on contemporary Sephardi, Latinx, and migration/diaspora literatures. With Rina Benmayor, she has developed an oral history project of Sephardi descendants applying for Spanish or Portuguese citizenship. The interviews are archived in the University of Washington Sephardic Studies Digital Collection.

Rina Benmayor is Professor Emerita in the School of Humanities and Communication, California State University Monterey Bay, where she taught oral history, literature, and digital storytelling. She is the author of *Romances judeo-españoles de Oriente* (Gredos 1979); and coauthor and coeditor of *Latino Cultural Citizenship* (Beacon Press 1997); *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* (Duke University Press 2001); and *Memory, Subjectivities, and Representation: Approaches to Oral History in Latin America, Portugal, and Spain* (Palgrave 2016; Oral History Association Book Award 2016). With Dalia Kandiyoti, she has conducted extensive oral histories with Sephardi citizenship applicants. These interviews are archived in the University of Washington Sephardic Studies Digital Collection.

Notes

1. In this volume we favor the designation of “Sephardi” to name and describe Jews originating in the Iberian Peninsula, the biblical Sepharad. However, we recognize that “Sephardic” is more commonly used. We have left the choice of descriptor to the individual authors; consequently, readers will find both forms used.
2. The Spanish and Portuguese laws are legally titled laws of nationality. Whereas the Spanish and Portuguese draw a distinction between nationality (legal status) and citizenship (civic practices), English commonly uses the word “citizenship” as an umbrella term to designate all aspects of national membership. In this book we prefer the term “citizenship,” although readers will find both terms used, sometimes interchangeably and other times adhering to a more strictly to legal vocabulary.
3. As of 30 June 2022, the official Spanish government Bulletin (*Boletín Oficial del Estado*) reported that 153,774 applications had been received on the electronic platform of the General Council of Spanish Notaries (CGNE) (“Datos estadísticos básicos de nacionalidad a 30/06/2022”). Of these, 83,484 applications, fewer than half, were formally signed in the presence of a *notario* (special lawyer assigned to this process) in Spain, and subsequently forwarded to the Dirección General de Seguridad Jurídica y Fe Pública (DGSJFP), of the Ministry of Justice, the entity that is charged with making the final decision. Of the 83,484 forwarded applications, 45,186 were reviewed and adjudicated: 42,636 citizenships were granted and 2,519 were denied. 37,710 applications were yet to be reviewed and resolved. Applications from Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela number in the seven digits each, and alone represent some three-quarters of the applications from seventy-six countries that were forwarded to the ministry of justice. As of February 2022, the Portuguese Instituto de Registos Centrais e do Notariado (Institute of Registries and Notary) reported receipt of 137,087 applicants for Sephardi naturalization. It had approved 56,685 citizenships and denied 300, leaving 80,102 to be reviewed and resolved (*Diário de Notícias* 2022). Together with the Spanish data, these numbers indicate a high level of positive response among descendants, numbering close to 300,000 electronically submitted applications, although not all of these would end up being forwarded to the respective ministry of justice.
4. Benmayor and Kandiyoti’s “Spanish and Portuguese Citizenship for Sephardi Jewish Descendants: An Oral History Collection (2017-2022)” is the first and to date the most extensive collection of in-depth interviews with Sephardi descendants on the 2015 citizenship laws. The University of Washington Sephardic Studies Digital Collection is the online repository of the corpus.
5. On philosephardism and Pulido, see Aliberti (2018); Bolorinos Allard (2020, and chap. 6 in this volume); Flesler and Pérez Melgosa (2020); Friedman (2011); Ginio (2007); Goode (2009); Linhard (2014); and Ojeda-Mata (2018). For a critical perspective on Castro, see, e.g., Menny (2010).
6. See Stein (2016, 12) who suggests that the experience of those in the protégé regime exercised by European powers in the Ottoman Empire was in many ways a precursor to the current ones. See also Escudero (2016).
7. For details and analysis of these events, see, e.g., Aliberti (2018); Flesler and Pérez Melgosa (2020); Lisbona (1993); Rozenberg (2006).
8. The translations are ours. For reasons of space, throughout this volume we provide the quotes only in English translation and not in their original languages.

9. According to some scholars, this link often whitewashes Spanish history, including the alliance with Nazism. See Aragonese (2016, 3); and Baer (2011).
10. See Schammah Gesser (2019, 199–201) for a further comparison between the Spanish and Portuguese laws.

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