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On Belonging and Other Dreams. The Ambiguous Positions of the Jews in "Spanish Morocco"

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Abstract

This paper presents an ethnographic study of autobiographical narratives about Jewish life during the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco (1912–1956). Based on eighteen interviews conducted between 2013 and 2016, this work examines the peculiar process Sephardic Jews underwent as a consequence of the Spanish colonial presence in the north of Morocco. Spanish-Moroccan Jews developed their identity affiliations and allegiances under the influence of different institutions: the Spanish colonial agencies, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the Jewish Agency, the Jewish community and the Moroccan authorities. These institutions presented different and often contradictory roles for Moroccan Jews. This work shows the tensions and conflicts experienced by the participants when navigating these different cultural and political spheres. The paper examines the participants' narratives about the ambiguous "re-Hispanicization" of Sephardic Jews during the colonial period. It studies the participants' memories about their identification with Spain and the adoption of Spanish habits and customs during the Protectorate period, which transformed Jewish life and redefined the limits between the different ethno-religious groups. This paper shows the impact of the social, historical and political conditions of the Protectorate on the participants' memories about colonial Morocco.

Keywords Spanish-Moroccan · Identities · Sephardim · Colonialism · Narratives

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And when they asked him at the bar, while he ate his tapa, whether he was with Franco or with the Republic, he answered that he was Jewish and that Jews are not into politics and when they asked him who he was in favor of, he acted the fool and, since Jews were supposed to either be idiots or have a tail,[1] *he was able to make it through the war without getting into trouble (Mois Benarroch).*

Introduction

This paper is an ethnographic exploration of the complex identity bonds Moroccan Jews established throughout the period of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco (1912–1956). It draws from eighteen interviews conducted between 2013 and 2016 with Spanish-Moroccan Jews in Argentina and in Israel. I examine the relation between the sociopolitical conditions in the Protectorate and their impact on identity processes among the Jewish population.

The *ambivalent role* played by Jews within the Spanish colonial project in Morocco (Ojeda-Mata 2017) is studied here through ethnographic material. The paper examines the memories of the participants about their identification with Spain when growing up, their socialization in the French schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, their attitudes towards Zionist activities in Morocco and their conceptions of the Moroccan people. This ethnographic approach examines the politics of identity conveyed by the Spanish colonial project to promote Jewish identification with Spain, the impact of European education, the influence of Zionism on the Jewish communities and the impact of the prohibition of emigration to Israel once Morocco achieved independence. Ultimately, this paper will trace the relations between the structural conditions of the Protectorate and the participants' processes of identity-making.

This article begins with a quotation from a poem by the Spanish-Moroccan Jewish poet Mois Benarroch. The poet reveals how his father, a Tetouani Jew, avoided getting into trouble by refraining from making political statements (Benarroch 2008, p. 38). The scene takes place in a bar in Tetouan, capital of the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco. The reader does not know with whom Bennaroch's father could get into trouble or what his political ideas were. We do know, however, that his father was perceived as a normal Spaniard who would go to the bar and eat *tapas*. Nobody noticed he was a Jew until he declared it as an explanation for his alleged lack of political preferences. Spanish-Moroccan Jewish writer Esther Bendahan defines that inconspicuousness as "a simulation that actually denotes the certainty of not belonging to the world one wants or intends to seduce. Because, at the end of the day, it all comes down to two essential topics: survival and seduction" (Bendahan 2012, my

[1] The idea that Jews had a tail was very common in Spain even as late as the mid-nineteenth century. This is just one more proof, albeit an extravagant one, of the disturbing confusion and ignorance that existed—and, in a way, continues to exist—about Jews in Spain. An illustration of the cultural presence of the outlandish belief that Jews have a tail is the play La Gaviota ("The Seagull") by Fernán Caballero. There is a dialogue discussing a character's possible Jewish origins. One of the characters states that if this person was really Jewish, they would have seen his tail. In this scene, Caballero points out that there were priests who discredited this idea (that Jews had tails), although many believed it. The assumption was that those who discredited such ideas were motivated by a "constitutional spirit" following "liberal tendencies" (see Caro Baroja 1986).

translation). Bendahan is speaking about the "simulation" of being "like" Spaniards without *actually* belonging to that world, since most Jews in Morocco did not have Spanish citizenship.

Both Bendahan and Benarroch, two splendid Spanish-Moroccan Jewish writers, describe a subtle mutual mistrust that existed between Jews, Spaniards and local Muslim Moroccans during and after the Protectorate. The ambivalent relations between these three groups form the background to this paper.

Methodology

I have selected eighteen interviews for the elaboration of this paper, from the total of thirty-three interviews that I collected for the fieldwork of my PhD dissertation. All interviews were conducted in Spanish, the mother tongue of all the participants. Most of them took place at the interviewees' homes in different cities in Israel and in Buenos Aires. The participants were given the instruction to tell their life story with no time limit. The idea was that the interview would resemble a conversation about their life story in which both interviewee and interviewer (myself) would be exposed.[2] The interviews lasted an average of four hours. In most cases, I went back to the interviewee's home for a second interview in which I asked more specific questions that emerged from the previous interview, especially about their relations with non-Jews in Morocco, their experience of immigration, their encounter with their new society, the practices they tried to preserve and the languages of the home, among other topics. The names of the interviewees have been changed for privacy reasons, except for those who have explicitly asked to be quoted by their name. For more information on the participants, see Appendix 1.

Jews as "Semi-Spaniards" in Morocco: The Background of an Ambivalent Identification

In contrast to what happened in French Morocco, not a single anti-Semitic law was issued in the Spanish Protectorate. Richter, the German consul general in Tetouan, tried to pressure the Spanish authorities into adopting anti-Jewish measures. He also tried to incite Muslims against the Jews, but neither of these efforts was successful (Laskier 1994). However, Jews held the most ambiguous of all positions in the Spanish Protectorate.

[2] The interview as a discursive genre close to day-to-day conversation is further developed in Arfuch 1995.

The word "Jew" scarcely appeared in the colonial vocabulary. Jews were "Hebrews" or "Israelites,"[3] and colonial authorities considered them neither "indigenous" nor "locals" (Mateo Dieste 2015). Jews were rather seen as "mediators" between the local population and the Spanish colonial powers (Ojeda 2009), which in turn put them in an ambiguous position that I have termed "semi-Spaniards."

The idea of a shared identity between Sephardi Jews and Spaniards was beginning to be developed already by the nineteenth century, when Spain was attempting to assert its colonial projects vis-à-vis other European powers (Ojeda-Mata 2015). The liberal political movement called *filosefardismo* ("philo-Sephardism") pursued the Hispanicization of Sephardic Jews and aspired to redirect their loyalty towards Spain. Senator Ángel Pulido famously coined the expression "Spaniards without a homeland" to define Sephardi Jews. For Pulido, Sephardim were a special race that resulted from the mix between Jewish and Spanish blood, although he had doubts about their Hispanism (Lisbona 1993: 38–39).

Before delving into the interviewees' narratives, it is worth lingering over an example of the effects of the philo-Sephardic campaign. Manuel Ortega, in his book *The Hebrews of Morocco*, claimed that "we [Spaniards] have to look at the Sephardi just as a Spaniard, as Spanish as he who was born in Spain, because he carries the love for the shared motherland in his heart" (Ortega 1929: 304, my translation). Ortega believed that Spain's mission in Morocco regarding the Jews was to counter French influence in order to gain their sympathy, a condition for their collaboration with the colonial forces:

> The French influence on the Moroccan Hebrews finds its way through schools and commerce. On those two points Spain needs to focus to attract and Hispanicize the Jews. Our natural allies are the language and the traditional sympathy Sephardi Jews feel for our motherland, which is also theirs, as it was their ancestors. (Ortega 1929: 307–308, my translation)

The measures Ortega suggested for Spain were (1) to grant Spanish citizenship to Jews in the territory of "Spanish Morocco"; (2) to create Spanish schools in the territory; (3) to create civil registry offices for "Hebrews", run by Jews as civil servants, likewise granting them a place in all of the official bodies; (4) to promote trade relations between Spain and Moroccan Jews.

Ortega highlights the Jews' importance as necessary mediators between Spain and Morocco, using an argument that falls somewhere between patriotic fanaticism, cynicism and magical thinking:

> May Spaniards not forget that the future of Spain comes down to Morocco, from the days in which a clairvoyant queen bequeathed us, in her admirable testament, the duty not to cease the conquest of Africa. On the other side of the [Gibraltar] Strait, thousands of Spaniards [Sephardic Jews] that same queen cast there, maybe so they would be the seed from which the tree would grow,

[3] The same happened in the French colonial vocabulary, which replaced *juif* with *israèlite*, since *juif* seemed to have negative connotations. The word *israèlite* sounded "nicer" and was thought to facilitate Jewish assimilation to French culture, despite the fact that both Jews and non-Jews kept using the word *juif* and anti-Semites never used the term *israèlite*.

> are waiting for us with open arms and hearts filled with love for Spain, to help the nation in its civilizing conquest […]. (Ortega 1929: 309, my translation)

Here, the need to preserve the image of the Catholic monarchs takes one of its most outlandish forms. Ortega suggests that Sephardic Jews in northern Morocco are kind of "advance scouts" sent by Isabella the Catholic, who, just like an oracle, possessed extraordinary historical foresight in having the Jews settle on a land that was to become a future conquest of Spain.

The first encounter between Spain and Sephardim had taken place during the so-called African War (1859–1860). Fifty years later, with the establishment of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco in 1912, Sephardi Jews became a convenient bridge between Spain and Morocco. Thus, their more recent process of modernization was now deeply impacted by their re-Hispanicization, even though the Alliance Israélite Universelle had already brought the French version of modernity (secularism, egalitarianism and a sense of universalism) to the Jewish communities of Morocco when it established its network of schools there in 1862. The Spanish Protectorate was the setting of a renewed coexistence between Sephardi Jews and Spain almost four hundred years after the Expulsion.

The inclusion of the Jews in the influential spheres of colonial society came about primarily through the patronage networks and commercial alliances that were established between Jews and Spaniards. The latter were in permanentv contact with Jews in the Protectorate, whereas they had very little exchange with Muslim Moroccans beyond the formal contexts of the administration offices, the market and the *cabila*[4] (Mateo-Dieste 2003).

The establishment of the Spanish Protectorate improved Jews' living conditions, enabling social mobility, especially in the case of the bourgeoisie, the industrial and commercial classes. The process of re-Hispanicization of Jews by the nineteenth century also affected their language, Haketia (the Judeo-Spanish language of the north of Morocco). Spanish colonizers viewed this old Spanish as primitive and obsolete compared to the Spanish they themselves spoke, and its conjugations seemed incorrect according to contemporary Spanish standards. Over time, Haketia was thus reduced to a set of words and expressions used at home and within the community, but was considered to be vulgar, improper, incorrect and/or uneducated. People who lived in the *Judería* or Jewish quarter, who did not socialize with Spaniards as frequently and were less educated, used Haketia much more often than those who lived in Spanish neighborhoods. The participants in this research tended to speak about standard Castilian Spanish as "correct Spanish", as opposed to Haketia. Some of them joked about how their parents would change their way of speaking from a more Haketia-like manner to a more "Hispanicized" style, depending on

[4] *Cabila* is a word of Arabic origin that refers to the Arab and Berber tribes of the north of Africa. It denoted a unified and independent political and social unit limited to a certain area. The *cabila* was the basic unit of the political and administrative organization of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco. Each *cabila* was ruled by a *caid* (a governor or judge), although some of them refused to accept the colonial structure and were administered by a Spanish military inspector.

the person to whom they were talking. Elise recalled these changes in her mother's speaking style in the following manner:

> My mother worked at Peru's Ambassador's residence [in Israel]. They were good friends. I remember that my mum always *se ḥazmeaba* [laughs]. I love that word. It comes from "waist", *ḥazam* in Moroccan Arabic. So, she "put on the belt on the waist", which is what you put on last. So, in Haketia, when we say "*wa hazmeate y ven!*" means "get ready, *yallah*, get ready and come already!" So, my mum *se ḥazmeaba* [she got ready] and spoke correct Spanish. But she also did it with a friend of hers, who lived in Holy Land Street in Jerusalem. Her friend spoke correct Spanish. Yes, she spoke very correct Spanish, like you, you know, Spanish from Madrid.

The participant's mother "got ready" and spoke "correct" Spanish when she was with people from a high socioeconomic class and with educated people like her friend. The interviewer's accent, quite recognizable as a Madrid accent, reminded Elise of her mother's friend, with whom her mother saw it as more appropriate to speak in a manner that showed that she, too, was an educated person. In other words, speaking "correct Spanish" was an *act of identification* (Rosa and Blanco 2007) by which the participant's mother, like the rest of Spanish-Moroccan Jews, would assume—and enact—the Spaniards' cultural superiority.

During the Protectorate, Jews lived, to a certain extent, "as if" they were Spaniards. Their remaining commitments and alliances (as Jews and as Moroccans) orbited around this "semi-Spaniard" position, which was the core of the ambiguity that marked their life.

Ambiguity as a Coping Practice Among Spanish-Moroccan Jews

Jewish life in "Spanish Morocco" had very specific characteristics that Esther Bendahan describes in a very moving way:

> There is something I wish to recover from my childhood, from my traditional and religious education. A way of being Jewish, a way of being a person. The respect for the beliefs of others, [expressed in] a certain friendly indifference towards the dietary transgressions, for example, of those who decided to exercise their freedom. There were no clear-cut borders between those who believed and those who did not. There were no external symbols. It was a unity in absolute respect that enabled an approach that was much more complex, much more tolerant and, maybe, much harder. Nevertheless, it is an approach we should recover. This is the part [of my past] that I would love to transmit to my children; besides the love for "tortitas"[5] and "fichuelas",[6] of course. (Bendahan 2012, my translation)

[5] Tortitas are a very popular cracker in Spanish-Moroccan Jewish homes.

[6] Fichuelas consist of a very thin dough that is fried and given the shape of a sort of spiral, spinning the different layers of the dough while frying it.

Bendahan portrays a joyful way of living Judaism marked by a flexible relationship with norms and rules, and an ironic attitude towards life in general and Jewish life in particular. This attitude tends to be recalled by those who carry with them the Spanish-Moroccan Jewish culture and the memories of the way of life left behind after the Jews left Morocco.[7] The *tanjaui*[8] writer Abraham Bengio (2008) evoked this way of life as follows:

> Jews of Tangier were characterized by their smiling Judaism. It was a Judaism without ostentation and outrageous obligations but, rather, it was as naturally evident as the air we breathe. A hundred miles, a thousand light-years away from the dangers that beset most Western Jewish communities: the assimilation of some, which empties the communities of their substance; and the hysterical demagogy of others, a type of pseudo-fundamentalist ghost, always looking for new prohibitions. [In Tangier] We were Jews, proud of our origins and determined to persevere in being who we were. But convinced that the Torah had been given to us to embellish our life, not to embitter our existence. Eating kosher was not just a duty, but an endless source of gastronomic pleasures […] Refraining from work on holidays was normal: The Tangier of the times of the [International] Statute[9] had the world record of holidays. It would have been funny for a Jew to have stubbornly insisted on working on a Saturday or on the day of *Kippur*![10] But walking up the stairs on a holiday, the twelve floors that led to our apartment, with the pretext that the elevator is activated through electricity, which is a form of fire, and that it is forbidden to light fire on that day… That would have been considered an incomprehensible mortification, or as a sports feat. On the other hand, I don't remember twelve-floor buildings in Tangier. [my translation]

Bendahan and Bengio give an account of a religious and communal *ethos* that is both nonchalant and serious, naturally traditional amid a complex dynamic of relations between the different ethno-religious groups that coexisted during the Protectorate: Jews, Spaniards (Christians) and Muslims. The Jews' sense of community and their Judaism appear a natural fact of life, not a part of themselves that was threatened. Like in other colonial contexts where Sephardi Jews have lived, Moroccan Jews were able to be in between different worlds, Jewish and non-Jewish, and the boundaries were clear but also porous. Irony and humor are invoked as ways of relating to the contradictions and vicissitudes of Jewish life in colonial Morocco. The encounter with European ways of living and modes of behavior, the challenges of secularism and the contact with European music, literature, cinema, theater, food,

[7] Here, I am referring to the mass departure from Morocco that started in the 1950s. There had been waves of Moroccan emigration before, but the flow of Jews leaving the country intensified after the establishment of the State of Israel (1948) and Moroccan independence (1956).

[8] *Tanjaui*: nickname given to the Jews from Tangier.

[9] The Tangier Protocol is formally known as the Convention regarding the Organization of the Statute of the Tangier Zone. Through this protocol Tangier became an international zone. The agreement was signed between France, Spain and the United Kingdom.

[10] *Yom Kippur*: the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar.

clothes and customs, happened as a consequence of the arrival of colonialism. My claim is that tolerance to ambiguity was an ethical resource to navigate the tensions and complexities that colonialism and modernization brought with them. In this sense, ambiguity became a coping practice to deal with the challenges of participating in Jewish life while also participating in colonial/European spheres that were far from connected to the rules that regulate Jewish life.

Jews in Morocco, like in other north African and Middle Eastern countries, were in between East and West, as André N. Chouraqui (1968) defined North African Jewry. It is not by chance that different Sephardi authors who write in European languages have elaborated on the ambivalences and contradictions of this liminal position in their literature. For example, the Moroccan writer Ruth Knaffo Setton, in her essay *Living Between Question Marks*, makes the following statement: "It makes sense that I exist between languages, roam between countries, write between genres—poetry, fiction and nonfiction—and that in a sense I'm always writing in translation. Growing up, I heard my parents speak four languages in a single sentence" (Knaffo Setton 2010). Jacqueline Shohet Kahanoff expressed the experience of being an anomaly whose authenticity was doubtful: "We had a vague sense of uneasiness because of the difficulties in our position, or perhaps because of the fundamental deceit within it" (Shohet Kahanoff 2011a, b: 124). The Egyptian writer André Aciman (2000) called himself "a provisional, uncertain Jew". The Algerian author Hélène Cixous described the Franco north-African Jewish experience as one of "belonging constituted of exclusion and nonbelonging" (Cixous 2004, 118). Similar experiences of ambivalent belonging are shared by many other north African and Middle Eastern Jewish intellectuals whose life, thought and work evolved under colonialism and post-colonialism, such as the Algerian Jacques Derrida (1998), the Tunisian Albert Memmi (1992), the Egyptian Lucette Matalon Lagnado (2007) or the Syrian Claudette E. Sutton (2014). These authors echo the experience of modernization of many Sephardi Jews whose lives were marked by unsettled identity bonds and ambivalent affiliations, forming what I have called "a disorder of belonging." In this sense, as I said before, ambiguity was a coping mechanism, an ethical resource to navigate and confront the tensions between the Jewish and the non-Jewish world, the old and the new ways.

Preservation of the Jewish community was a priority, and tolerance to ambiguity was an effective way to guarantee it. Ambiguity involves a renunciation to clearly define oneself in relation to a normative system. Identification through political, social or religious categories often leads to confrontation and division. Therefore, absence of clear-cut definitions, and ambiguity regarding conflicting issues create a more flexible, receptive and inclusive ethos. This is the religious ethos of Sephardim that evolved as an answer to the contradictions of modernization. This ethos would be later called "traditionalism"—English translation of the Hebrew *masortiut*—an attitude characterized by the preservation and transmission of family and communal customs together with an ambivalent and sometimes contradictory observance of Jewish law. Meir Buzaglo says that "the position of traditionalism is an active relationship with life, a relationship in

which there is a renunciation of stringent criticism and of self-definition" (Buzaglo 2008: 52, my translation). Tolerance to contradictions indicates an inclusive ethos that does not demand a clear definition of ourselves or others. It is a model of coexistence derived from the historical experience of being in between worlds that characterized Sephardi modernity.

The attitude required to deal with ambiguity is expressed in a Haketia word: "selquear". This word means *not* to be strict, to tolerate, to relax, to let go, not to give too much importance to something. In the words of Esther Bendahan, "[*selquear*] is to leave behind confrontation, to forgive, not to give importance to an affront. It's to look at the Mediterranean and understand what really matters. It's not cowardice, nor indifference. It's respect" (Bendahan 2016). This respect is the form that non-interference and high tolerance to ambiguity take.

A Protectorate is a geopolitical entity defined by its transitory nature. It lacks the almost metaphysical component that countries, states or nations tend to have when evoked as part of people's identity. Spanish (and French) culture imposed its preeminence over local cultures during the period of the Protectorate, and for some this might have had the appearance of total permanence. But the dynamics between colonizers and colonized were marked by instability. The Spanish colonial project was characterized by numerous paradoxes and ambiguities, and the relations between the different ethno-religious groups were equally paradoxical and ambiguous, mirroring their positions within the Spanish colonial project (see Mateo-Dieste 2003). In a way, none of the ethno-religious groups was at home, strictly speaking. Each of their positions (as Spaniards, Jews and Moroccan Muslims) was unstable and about to disappear. The reasons for this were different for each group: for the Jews, because of their position as "mediators" between Spaniards and Moroccans and, later, due to their suspected allegiance to Israel; for the Spaniards, because of their presence imposed by the colonial project in Morocco; and for the Moroccan Muslims, because their home was "taken over."

Spanish colonialism altered the position of Jews in Morocco completely. As has already been stated, (European) modernity arrived in the Sephardi communities of northern Africa and the Middle East together with colonialism. Jews had different positions in the social sphere, they were present in different domains and participated in a diverse range of social groups.

The participants of this research, Spanish-Moroccan Jews, shared their memories about the different positions from which they encountered all the groups: Spaniards, Muslims and other Jews. Being a Jew in the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco—as in many other colonial contexts—involved occupying positions that were sustained by different and sometimes contradictory discourses and patterns of behavior. This paper analyzes the participants' narratives about these discourses and patterns of behavior according to what I have called "dramaturgic-discursive positions." It studies how they remember having to conduct themselves in specific ways and how they frame their relations with others.

Dramaturgic-Discursive Positions of the Jews in the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco

The cities of the Spanish Protectorate (Tetouan, Larache, El-Ksar el Kebir, Chaouen and, for five years, Tangier[11]) formed the setting for a peculiar coexistence between different religions, origins and ethnicities, which included Jews, Muslims, Catholic Spaniards and European exiles (among them Ashkenazi Jews).

The Protectorate seemed to give Jews an opportunity for social mobility and, to a certain extent, equal opportunities and status. As I have pointed out before, Jewish identification with Spain was part of the politics of identity conducted by the Spanish colonial project in Morocco. By "politics of identity" I mean specific measures that aim to affect the way individuals act and understand themselves, narrowing down and channeling their action on different levels.

I will examine the Jews' positions as "dramaturgic" in the sense that both the language that subjects use and the thoughts they hold are forms of action (Burke 1969). What individuals say and think about themselves and others are purposeful ways of acting in a specific setting through certain means. The model presented in Fig. 1 results from the analysis of the participants' narratives and illustrates the conflicting positions they recalled in the interview.

Jews' positions and functions in the Protectorate were limited and defined by specific instances of power and influence. Each one of these instances had different objectives that were channeled through equally different politics of identity. The analysis is inspired by Michel Foucault's concept of *discursive formation* (Foucault 1972). This concept offers an analytical tool for investigating the politics of identity that defined the positions, roles and functions of Jews in the former Spanish Protectorate in Morocco. Foucault's analysis has three dimensions: (1) Normative domains such as family, social groups, religious communities, the workplace, the neighborhood, and so on. Foucault calls these domains *surfaces of emergence*. (2) Institutions that have the power and legitimacy to define and designate categories, such as the Delegation of Indigenous Affairs, the community leadership, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the Jewish Agency and the Moroccan Government among others. These institutions designated categories such as "Jew," "Hebrew," "Israelite," "Moroccan," "Moor," and so forth. These categories were legitimized and circulated among the population. These institutions are *authorities of limitation*, (3) systems of social classification that located these categories within bigger systems: the Protectorate's "civilizing mission", Spain's definition of a national identity, Morocco's cultural diversity, Israel as the nation of the Jewish people, etc. In Foucault's terms, these systems of social classification are *grids of specification* (Fig. 2).

The positions the interviewees adopted when recalling their everyday interactions with the non-Jewish milieu have been summarized as follows: the Jews as "semi-Spaniards" (identification), as witnesses (non-interference), as neighbors (partial

[11] Tangier was declared an international zone in 1923, although it was under Spanish control between 1940 and 1945. Spanish influence was prevalent, and thus it still makes sense to include those Jews in the category "Spanish-Moroccan."

identification), as foreigners (detachment) or as conspirators (identification with Israel). In their everyday lives, Jews enacted some of these positions and sometimes all of them, depending on where they were (the school, the neighborhood, the café, the community club) or with whom they were interacting (neighbors, business partners, the authorities, their friends). Each of these positions was part of Jewish life in northern Morocco, and they were often in conflict with one another. This conflict was the base of the ambivalent belonging among Moroccan Jews during the Protectorate and after its dissolution (Fig. 3).

Jews as "Semi-Spaniards": From Participants in Spanish Culture to Witnesses

The Spanish colonial project in Morocco involved politics of identity that aimed to create a shared cultural space for Sephardic Jews and Spaniards. The position of the Jews as "semi-Spaniards" was promoted by the Spanish colonial authorities and the philo-Sephardism movement. As mentioned before, this position was the center around which the other positions orbited.

Some Jews went to Spanish schools, and worked and did business with Spaniards. They also shared leisure time at bars, restaurants and social clubs. Personal friendships between Jews and Spaniards were common. The Jews' mother tongue was Spanish, and some enjoyed consular protection and had been naturalized as Spanish citizens. Jews and Spaniards shared a common culture (music, theatre, movies, literature, art, etc.) and lived in the same neighborhoods, such as the "Ensanche" of Tetouan.[12] The domains where an identification between Jews and Spaniards took place are the *surfaces of emergence* of the position of Jews as "semi-Spaniards."

The Spanish-Hebrew associations, the Delegation of Indigenous Affairs, the philo-Sephardism movement (both liberal and reactionary), the schools, the colonial authorities, and the Spanish army were institutions (*authorities of limitation*) that created and legitimized concepts such as the Jews being "natural mediators" between Spaniards and Morocco, or Sephardi Jews belonging to Spain.

These institutions also created the idea that Sephardi Jews were different from the rest of the Jews (i.e. Ashkenazi) by virtue of their being Spanish. Their Iberian origins purified *even* their Jewishness (Álvarez-Chillida 2002). Another concept circulated by these institutions was the Sephardi Jew as a "mix" between Spanish and Jewish (Ojeda-Mata 2017), as well as the idea that Sephardi Jews

[12] The "Ensanche," literally the "Expansion," was a system of urban growth applied to the new cities of Sherifian Morocco. This system had already been used in Spanish towns since the second half of the nineteenth century. These "expansions" were primarily residential areas and initially did not include industrial or working-class neighborhoods. Therefore, the proletarian population was not included in the plan and began to be displaced to the periphery. By the beginning of the twentieth century, with the rapid growth of the Spanish colony, it became necessary to expand the limits of the different cities of northern Morocco. For example, in Tetouan, construction began in Luneta Street, which itself originated in the expansion of the old Jewish quarter in 1889. The Local Services Committee ("Junta de Servicios Locales") had warned against building in "Moorish neighborhoods" in order to avoid altering the structure of the buildings, streets and neighborhoods. This is consistent with the colonial strategy of not rousing the local population's animosity (Bravo-Nieto 2000).

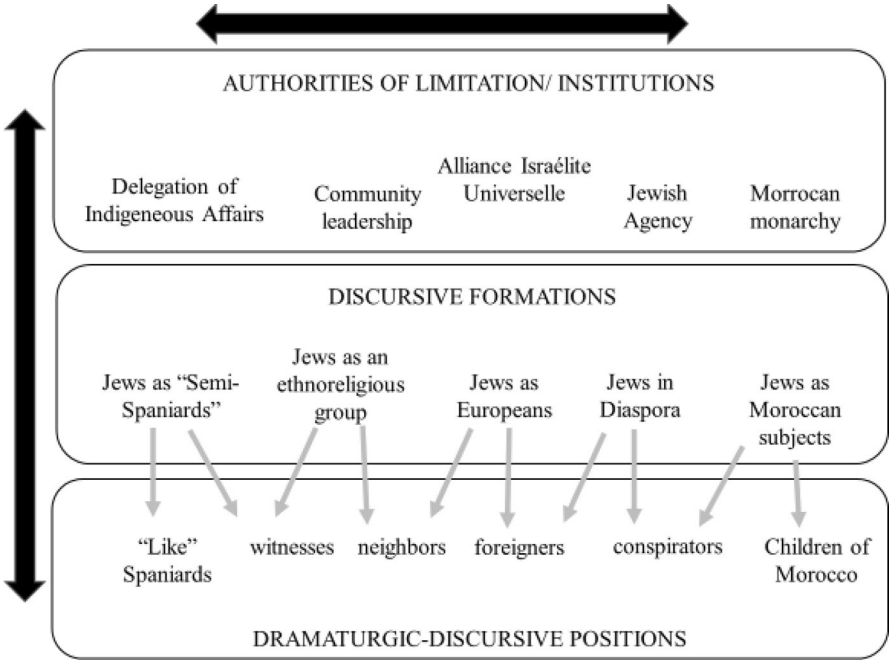

Fig. 1 Graph of the positions of Jews and mediational institutions throughout the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco (Cohen 2017)

Fig. 2 Jewish girl (center) dressed up in the traditional male costume of Madrid, dancing with Spanish girls. Courtesy of Esther Benmamán

Fig. 3 Atlético de Tetuán's crest

were potential commercial contacts, and the "Hebrews" or "Israelites" were mediators between Spain and Morocco.

Esther, who emigrated from Morocco to Israel in the 1950s, states this position rather eloquently:

> We are from Israel, Jews from Israel, but we are Spanish. We have it in the soul. My soul belongs to Spain. I love Spain, I listen to flamenco at home, I dance, I like it. I like knowing the history. When I identify myself, I don't say "I am Moroccan"; I say, "I am Spanish, from Morocco."

Today Esther speaks Spanish with an extensive Haketia vocabulary. She presents herself as essentially Spanish, not as if that Spanish status had been transitory in nature. However, Esther never held Spanish citizenship. She was a Moroccan citizen until she gave that citizenship up to become Israeli. She emphasizes an allegiance with Spain, highlighting her involvement with Spanish culture (flamenco, knowing the history, a belonging of the soul). This would be the "ideal type" of the Jew as a "semi-Spaniard." Alicia, a Moroccan-Argentine interviewee, reflected upon the Spanish-Jewish allegiance in more critical terms:

> We were with the Spaniards. We went to Spanish schools, everything, everything. And they were colonialists! And we imitated them. I mean, there were some Jews who did learn Arabic, who were kind of more into it [….]. But we didn't appreciate it […] quite the opposite, we would say "What's up with him, all day with the Arabs!" I mean, how is it possible that, living there for so long, we never learned the language? Because we weren't interested!

Alicia looked back at the consequences of those politics of identity and felt uncomfortable with the detachment from the Moroccan milieu brought about by colonialism. This detachment was an explicit, clear goal of the Spanish colonial project in Morocco, which needed the Jews as the mediating element.

The system of consular protection, followed by naturalizations, was applied to specific individuals among the Jewish commercial elites who were able to serve Spain's commercial, strategic and political interests (Ojeda-Mata 2006). Thus, not all Jews in the Protectorate received Spanish citizenship, despite the proliferation of identity politics that promoted Jews' identification with Spain as part of their collaboration as mediators. This lack of real belonging to the Spanish nation was one of the elements that contributed to the Jews' ambivalent identification

with Spain. An excerpt from the interview with Yosef and Leah, a Moroccan-Israeli couple who left Tetouan in 1965, illustrates this:

> Leah: I think you were happy in Tetouan.
>
> Yosef: No, I wasn't happy. We were trampled by the Spaniards. Jews didn't have any rights, they were just "tolerated".
>
> Leah: Yes, "tolerated", but they didn't have freedom.
>
> Yosef: For the Spaniards, you are a Jew. In Morocco we were tolerated but didn't have any rights.
>
> Leah: Because we weren't Spanish. Jews weren't Spanish.
>
> Yosef: We were the owners of our homes, but we didn't have a homeland, we didn't have anything. We were tolerated. Outside of your home you were a Jew. Also, Franco killed Jews.
>
> Leah: With the people it was different, there were those with whom we were friends. But we weren't Spanish, why weren't we Spanish?

Leah asks the Spanish interviewer why they did not have Spanish citizenship, as if the interviewer were able to provide privileged information. The question reveals an awareness of Jews' vulnerability in the Protectorate, expressing their problematic position in the context of the National Catholicism[13] present there. Despite the politics of identity that promoted Jewish identification with Spain, Leah and Yosef seem well acquainted with the colonial authorities' anti-Jewish prejudices. In fact, the shared ethno-cultural bond between Jews and Spaniards claimed by philo-Sephardism only played an important role in politics of identity in the strict sense,[14] along with its corresponding rhetoric (the Sephardic love for Spain, the living Spanish spirit among Sephardic Jews, etc.), its ontology (Spanish purity, Sephardic Jews as a "mix" of Spaniards and Jews) and its dramaturgy (the position Jews and Spaniards each played in the colonial setting). It is not surprising, then, that Leah and Yosef feel that identifying with Spain was highly problematic and questionable, insofar as there was no commitment to turn that identification into citizenship for Jews.

The colonial authorities saw Jews as having a "natural" talent for business and languages and also as being more reliable than the "Moors" (Ojeda-Mata 2012). The privileges and mediating role granted to Jews by the colonial powers were a strategy to undermine the governing power of the local Muslim rulers. The rhetoric

[13] National Catholicism was the ideology of Francisco Franco's fascist regime. This system defined Catholicism as the national religion of Spain and gave enormous power to the Church, which had control over all aspects of both public and private life.

[14] As early as 1923, through the Treaty of Lausanne, Primo de Rivera had revoked the *protégé* status of Sephardi Jews and granted them nationality. A Royal Decree was issued in which the word "Sephardi" is not mentioned. Instead, it refers to "individuals that belong to families of Spanish origin." Therefore, the Jews' relation with Spain was redefined through this rhetoric of a shared past. However, this was not a simple process. Suffice it to say that, by the end of the 1920s, the Consul General in Tetouan insisted that nationality be granted only to individuals who had served in the military (Mateo Dieste 2015).

of a shared identity between Sephardim and Spaniards was used both to legitimize Spain's colonial ambitions in Morocco and to push Sephardim towards Spain's colonial goals and interests. As Maite Ojeda-Mata (2012) has pointed out, this pragmatic approach coexisted with the determination to preserve the national and cultural "purity" of the nation-state's core, that is, peninsular Spain. As a matter of fact, although philo-Sephardism was vibrant in the colonies, in Spain the Jewish communities, largely Sephardi, had to live in anonymity (Ojeda-Mata 2015). Being both Spanish and Jewish was only possible outside the Peninsula, outside the national territory, so this hybridity would not threaten Spanish national identity, which was defined as inherently Catholic.

Jewish participation in the Spanish cultural milieu happened through performative acts that enacted the position of Jews as "semi-Spaniards". Examples of these performative acts would be going to Spanish dancing classes, attending Spanish schools, sharing leisure time with Spaniards at the bars, consuming Spanish cinema, literature, theatre, and so on. Eating non-kosher (i.e. forbidden by Jewish law) Spanish food also involved an *act of identification* that crossed the boundaries between the Jewish and non-Jewish world. Being "semi-Spaniard" was often acted out through a highly contextual suspension of the (Jewish) norms. Even though this identification sometimes involved a trespassing of Jewish norms (especially dietary laws), this should not be mistaken with secularism. Rather, we should see these practices as reverberations of Esther Bendahan's concept of "simulation."

These practices cannot be properly grasped without considering the role of Sephardi Jews as mediators for the colonial powers. Jews were perceived as the key to Spain's successful entry into Morocco. The social relations between Spaniards and Jews facilitated this position of Jews as "semi-Spaniards." The participants in this research include three cousins, Nina, Felicidad and Miriam, who often get together to talk about old memories of Morocco. Among different topics, the day the interview was conducted, they spoke about the high value of those social relations between Spaniards and Jews in the Protectorate.

> Nina: People valued it. I mean, a girl that had Spanish girlfriends was thought of very highly.
> Miriam: It was more modern, like, the Spaniards were more modern back then.
> Interviewer: I don't know if "modern" is the word [laughs].
> Nina: Maybe emancipated.
> Felicidad: No, no, civilized, the word is civilized. […] I remember that, in Larache, my family, the Jewish families, were thought of very highly by the Catholics.
> Nina: I also remember that sometimes a Spanish friend of my sister's would come over on Sundays, and the neighbors joked about it and said, "Do you want to mingle with the high society, or what?"

There is a relation between the three terms these women used when looking for the right way to describe that society: "modern," "emancipated," and "civilized." These are key terms present in Spain's colonial discourse and mission concerning the Jews. In this respect, the Jewish collective was expected to enjoy a high degree of social mobility and contribute to the Westernization of Moroccan society taking

place through the colonial presence. When the interviewer took an ironic view and said that "modern" did not seem like the most adequate word to define Franco's Spain, the interviewees laughed, showing that they understood the ambiguity of their descriptions. Miriam continued to define these practices through which Jews became "like the Spaniards" and said: "Until not long ago we used to sing *Granada*."[15] Her sister Felicidad added: "My place is Larache, the Spanish environment, because we lived in a Spanish environment. It's the whole combination: we were three religions that lived together and shared everything, in peace." Her cousin Nina commented: "And on Sundays we would go to the matinée to the *Cine Ideal*." The "Spanish environment" is an expression that marks the boundary between identification and separation. It is as if they were aware that this connection between Spaniards and Jews was accomplished through all these practices (singing *Granada,* going to the matinée like Spaniards used to do, etc.).

However, there were risks to being "semi-Spaniard". There were indeed cases of Jews that married Spaniards, although assimilation was not a widespread phenomenon at all.[16] The "threat" of assimilation was compensated by the influence of another *discursive formation* that defined and limited who the Jews were in Morocco: the position of the Jews as a distinct ethno-religious group. The Jewish community leadership, the Spanish colonial authorities and the Moroccan authorities rejected and prohibited intermarriages between members of the three groups. In other words, the colonial authorities of Morocco regarded Jews as a different ethno-religious group, despite their Iberian origins, and had no interest whatsoever in having marriages between Jews and Spaniards. Eventually marriages between Catholic-Spaniards and Muslims or Jews would happen under the condition of conversion to Catholicism, which involved the promise to raise the future children in the Catholic faith (Mateo-Dieste 2013). The Muslim population did not favor intermarriage either, and conversion to Judaism or Catholicism was strongly censored. The rabbinic authorities and Jewish community leaders also reinforced the position of Jews as members of a distinct ethno-religious group. This system of social classification maintained endogamy as a resource to protect the border zones between the different groups.

The domains where Jews enacted their position as a separate ethno-religious group were the Jewish communities, the synagogues, the rabbinic tribunals, the kosher butcheries, the orphanages, the maternity hospitals, the nursing homes, the cemeteries, the Jewish casinos and the community centers; also, through activities related to Jewish learning, traditions, festivities, eating habits, marriage patterns and family life.

Flora and Simi, two sisters interviewed in Israel, discussed the fear of assimilation in the following terms:

[15] *Granada*: song written in 1932 by Agustín Lara about the city of Granada, Spain.

[16] For a study about cases of intermarriage in the Spanish Protectorate, see Mateo-Dieste 2013.

Flora: Parents were very afraid of assimilation. It was an obsession. Parents interfered a lot in the relationships and that's why they didn't encourage them [friendships between Jews and non-Jews].

Simi: That's why we had the *Casino Israelita*, there were parties and all that, so you would always be within the community and they wouldn't mix. The community was super important, more important even than religion. If someone drove on Shabbat, it was not a big deal, but going out with a Christian… [laughs].

F: Jews liked to enjoy life and getting yourself into religion was not enjoying life.

S: The difference is that, on the one hand, they were very open religiously but, on the other hand, they weren't open at all when it came to mixing and assimilating.

F: No assimilation.

S: That was something sacred. Even though they weren't religious.

The fear of assimilation required the (porous) boundaries of the community to be reinforced. Preserving communal unity was the highest priority, regardless of members' commitment to religious observance. Jews' identification with the Spanish cultural domain required the inclusion of a different position from which to face these possible threats. That is the position of the witness, someone who is present in the setting but watches from afar. It is worth noting that none of the interviewees mentioned cases of intermarriage between Jews and Muslims, nor was this option part of their fears of assimilation.

When interviewees recalled the Spaniards' Catholic practices, they tended to take a step back and mark a deliberate distance. This distance is not necessarily a hostile one. Rather, it is a distance that shows the limits of Jewish identification with Spain in the Spanish Protectorate. Leah, for example, fondly remembers how, as a child in Tetouan, all she wanted was to go out with her mother to see the Spanish girls dressed up for their First Communion. There was something about that world she felt to be nicer, filled with light and freedom:

I saw Spaniards with a certain envy. I never said this, how would I say such a thing. I saw those ladies, so well-dressed on their way to church those days when they would wear these things […][17] and more specially the girls in their First Communion dresses. I would say "I want to be a little bride mum!" This is something I lived in my childhood! You know, I saw that [the girls in their First Communion dresses] and I'd tell myself "Wow, how wonderful." Also, maybe I felt a certain freedom in those people, they were the majority, as if we were less […]. I don't know what it was, but I felt there was something there,

[17] She is speaking about the "mantilla," a type of shawl worn by Spanish women on special occasions, particularly religious ones.

> that we were […] suppressed. I didn't feel put down or anything but theirs was a free world, a pretty world, all that. I don't know, it was a very special thing that I didn't dare to say, so I'd just say "I want to dress up as a little bride," and I wanted to be in the street and see the streets: "It's so beautiful!", "such a beautiful thing!" I'd tell my mum "Let's go out see the little brides."

In Leah's narrative, those Spaniards represent colonial power in Morocco, which could explain why she remembers seeing them as part of a "free world." However, this was the world of the alliance between Franco's regime and the Catholic Church, that is, under no circumstances a "free" world. It was, in any case, a world in which Jews did not participate. Leah's discourse presents an aesthetic fascination with the abundance, freedom and complacency she saw in Spaniards. She evokes the image of herself as a little girl watching the Spanish women coming out of church elegantly dressed and those Spanish girls wearing a "bride's dress." She associates this image with her awareness that she did not belong to the world of those who were truly free, those who were "the majority." Towards that world, she adopts a specific distance: the distance of a witness.

Leah's feeling that Spaniards were part of a free world expresses an awareness that the Jews were in a vulnerable situation. Leah finds it difficult to explain this feeling, and understandably so, as the web of the politics of identity that sustained the position of the Jews in colonial Morocco was anything but simple. The feeling that those girls dressed up for their First Communion lived in a freer world reveals the structural reality that makes this feeling possible in the first place: the ambivalent role of Jews as mediators between the colonial powers and Morocco.

Samuel, a Moroccan-Israeli interviewee, distanced himself from the position of the Jew as semi-Spaniard precisely because of his experiences as a Jew in Tangier throughout the period of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939):

> The war was from 1936 until 1939 and *Falange*[18] after the war in Spain, which was terrible, there were many generals who were against the Jews because they said that Jews were communists or socialists, so Franco and his generals said bad things about the Jews. Those were very difficult years, there was such scarcity, and we were traumatized by the Spaniards, by the *Falange*, those kids that went on the streets carrying those symbols, the arrows […] we were scared, even the kids scared us.

The image of the children marching in the *Falange* parades is reminiscent of the ferociously anti-Semitic discourse of the Jewish-Masonic-Communist conspiracy constantly referred to by the dictator Francisco Franco. Samuel rejects the *politics of identity* that promoted Jewish identification with Spain by distancing himself from both Spain and the idea of himself as "semi-Spaniard." Instead, he adopts the position of a witness who watches things happen and has almost no control over the events.

[18] *Falange* (Phalanx): fascist and national-syndicalist political party that eventually, when merged with the Traditionalists in 1937, became the only legal political party in Spain.

A different enactment of the position of the Jew as "semi-Spaniard" is evident in the case of Sol, a Moroccan-Israeli interviewee. She recalled how she was expected to be friends with the daughters of the Spanish army officers, whom she perceived as very different from her:

> My aunt always insisted that I had Spanish girlfriends. She wanted me to learn horse-riding with the daughters of the officers, which I hated because I couldn't feel comfortable around them. First, they were Spaniards, Francoists, children of the officers. Super snobs, super prudish. Really, prudish girls. I didn't like that. Also, I didn't like horse-riding and all that stuff.

Sol's father had been part of the socialist movement in Ceuta, for which he was sent to prison. After his release, he decided to move to Tetouan. However, part of Sol's family belonged to Ceuta's high bourgeoisie and wanted her to participate in the activities of the elite. Those Spanish girls, in Sol's eyes, represented the National-Catholic ethos. Looking back today, she expresses her discomfort regarding the position of Jews as "semi-Spaniards." She tells me that she always wanted to emigrate to Israel and, when still in Morocco, wanted to remain within the boundaries of the Jewish community to avoid assimilation. By questioning the *discursive formation* of the Jew as "semi-Spaniard," she approaches the position of the witness: someone who watches and has her own judgment about what is happening but does not want to engage.

Leah, Samuel and Sol adopt this position in relation to the presence of Spanish military and Catholicism in Morocco. The military and the Church constituted the core of National Catholicism, which was obviously a threat to the Jews. Jewish identification with Spain was disrupted by the National-Catholic element of the military presence. Accordingly, Leah, Samuel and Sol distance themselves from the Spanish sphere when accounting for their memories of both the Church and the military. These memories represent the social, political and religious limits of their identification with Spain.

Jews as European (French): From Neighbors to Foreigners

The schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) and the Delegation of Indigenous Affairs were the main institutions involved in the position of the Jews as both neighbors and foreigners. Also, as we have seen above, their efforts combined with those of the community leadership to ensure that the Jews would not assimilate, and created the conditions for the transition between the position of the neighbor—someone who might not have much in common with us but nonetheless belongs in the same place with us—to that for the foreigner—someone who does not belong in our world. Finally, as we will see in the next pages, the intervention of the Jewish Agency contributed to the solidification of the position of Jews as foreigners.

The AIU's mission was to turn Jews into Frenchmen as part of their emancipation. The idea that Jews were the Westernizing element in Morocco formed part of

the colonial system of classification facilitating this position. In this regard, Simi, a Moroccan-Israeli interviewee, said:

> Simi: For us the society was like this: us and everyone who was European. It was the Spaniards and us. The rest were Moors. It was called the "Ensanche". So, you had the "Ensanche", the "Judería" [Jewish quarter] and the "Morería" [Muslim quarter]. But only Europeans lived in the "Ensanche", although step by step the Moors started buying houses.
>
> Interviewer: What do you mean by "Europeans"?
>
> Simi: Europeans were the Spaniards and the Jews. Everybody who was not Moorish was European.
>
> Interviewer: I see.

The position of Jews as "not indigenous" had been promoted by the Spanish colonial project. However, it was also part of the politics of identity of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. Jews were thus foreignized in the process of becoming "natural" mediators. At times, they were seen as collaborators with the colonial powers. Thus, the position of the Jew as "European" was a consequence of the colonial project. It is worth noting that the word "Moor" ("moro" in Spanish) was very common in the colonial vocabulary. The use of this word and the derogatory connotations that it still invokes is a way of imitating—more or less consciously—colonialist ways. In other words, this is an *act of identification* that involves an active affiliation with Spain. The colonial politics of identity gave Jews the position of "foreigners" in Morocco, and regarding Moroccan Muslims as "Moors" was a way of enacting that colonial position.

Raphael, a writer and art historian, comes from an old Sephardi family of Tangier, although he grew up in Casablanca, visiting Tangier very often. He spoke Spanish at home, as did his parents and grandparents. Raphael grew up in a privileged family socializing with Morocco's high society. He represents a peculiarly refined case of the position of Jews as European and foreigner that is worth examining.

> Everyone in my family spoke very good French. Since I was a year and half, Casablanca was not a colony anymore, but it was a neo-colony, in the sense that there were tons of French people, stores, cinemas, patisseries, theatres, music. Everything was French. As Jews from a privileged class, we'd go to the *Comedie Française* every month. They would come to Casablanca, with the best actors, just as if we were in Paris. […] Our home had nothing Jewish and nothing Arab. It looked like a home in a good neighborhood of Paris. […] The Moroccan noblemen received us in their homes, the *pasha,* the *caid*. My parents behaved as if they were French, interested in a culture that was totally alien to us. Moroccan Judaism from the Atlas or the desert was alien to pure Sephardi Jews like my family, who have always lived in imperial cities and ports. Jews of Spanish origin were very European in their habits and mannerisms. In Tangier, after generations of foreign pres-

> ence, we had the custom of dressing like the *goyim*[19] and speaking foreign languages. Arabic was not part of our languages.

Sephardi origin had its own elite status in Morocco. *Megorashim*—Hebrew for "expellees"—were those Jews whose ancestors had been expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, in contrast with the *toshavim*—Hebrew for "locals"—whose origin was in Morocco and who spoke Berber languages or Moroccan Arabic and were influenced by the local Moroccan Muslim culture. Raphael presents himself as a "pure Sephardi", which would be the elite Jewish origin. French culture, alien to him as a Sephardi Jew, was the sphere of emergence and development of the family's social, economic and cultural status in Morocco. Raphael's account is illustrative of the detachment, foreignization and elitism involved in the position of the Jews as European in Morocco, a position that was part of the mission of the colonial powers and the AIU schools. The criterion of separation between him and the rest of society was social class, which brought together Muslims, Christians and Jews as long as they shared an elite social status.

Karina, whom I interviewed in Buenos Aires, remembered good relations between Jews, Spaniards and Muslims as being facilitated by the separation between the groups. In her opinion, the boundaries between the groups made good coexistence possible:

> Separation. Total separation. We wouldn't mix. We didn't invite Arabs in our home, except for the next-door neighbor if, for example, it was your daughter's wedding, and you'd say, "come eat some sweets", but there was no mingling, no friendship. We weren't invited by them either. I only remember having been invited once to a classmate's wedding. When Morocco became independent, the Alliance [Israélite Universelle], which was a Jewish school, done for Jews, had to start accepting Arabs in the school. In general, it was influential people, from the government, who wanted a good education and they still didn't have a Muslim one. So, the last years I was in the Alliance there would be some, three or four, Arab classmates. When there was Hebrew class they left. Everything was perfect, but they wouldn't come do homework to my place and I wouldn't go to theirs. There was no mingling. And the same for the Spanish girls. In dance school, I had Spanish classmates, but we wouldn't hang out together. They wouldn't invite me to their place for tea and I wouldn't invite them. Each one had their one life. There was no assimilation, but there was no disdain. Everyone did their own thing.

Karina enacts the ideal type of the position of the neighbor. She mentions the Alliance school, which trained Jewish children in European/French culture. Attending Spanish dance lessons, a common habit among Jewish girls in the Protectorate, was a practice shared with Catholic Spanish girls that contributed to Jewish identification with Spanish culture. The position of the neighbor, which could eventually lean towards the position of the foreigner, is defined by the ethno-religious origin. "There

[19] *Goyim*: Hebrew for non-Jews. It is the word used in biblical Hebrew for non-Israelite nations.

was no mingling," she repeats. This separation, however, is presented as absolutely natural, unrelated to any hostile discrimination.

The above-mentioned cases are instances of the Europeanization of Jews in Morocco. From a historical distance, some of these narratives might seem elitist, discriminatory and self-righteous, although it would be anachronistic to render them as such. Beyond value judgements, these are historical experiences which were mediated by the Spanish and French colonial projects in Morocco. Some of the conditions that made these accounts possible were the separation between the different ethno-religious groups, the blurring of these borders among the elites, the urban planning directed to the inclusion of Jews in Spanish neighborhoods, and the upward mobility facilitated by European education among Jews.

Jews as "Children of Morocco": From Neighbors to Conspirators

Moroccan national discourse after independence considered Jews to be a fundamental element of the Moroccan nation. As the only non-Muslim group, Jews were and still are an essential symbol of a more open and progressive Moroccan civil society. In this sense, Jews are natives of Morocco, "neighbors" for whom there is still a place (Kosansky and Boum 2012). The disagreement and discussion about this topic are particularly intense when it comes to answering the question of why Jews left Morocco (Meyers 1996; Bin-Nun 2014).

The fact that this question continues to be debated shows a rather ambiguous situation that can be interpreted in diverse ways depending on one's historiographical and political alignment. The paternalism of the Moroccan monarchy acted as a system of social classification sustaining the position of Jews as part of Moroccan society. According to these paternalistic categories, citizens were "sons/daughters" and Jews "*protégée* sons/daughters." The Moroccan government was also keen to affirm the idea of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious independent state, where anyone could be Moroccan as well as Jewish. When the interviewees enact this position, they tend to speak about their friendly relations with Moroccan Muslims as if they were neighbors, in a way that denotes both intimacy and a relative separation. The position of Jews was much more unstable and vulnerable than the position of Moroccan Muslims after the Protectorate ended. The relative separation just mentioned is indicative of the awareness that the time to leave had come.

The Moroccan monarchy and government promoted this *discursive formation* of the Jews as neighbors. This position was present in the Moroccan court, in the villages, small towns and cities, and in the jobs to which Jews had access (including governmental positions they obtained). The regulations against Zionist activities and Jews' status as Moroccan citizens were specific measures taken by the Moroccan authorities to promote this position.

The institutions and public entities that defined the idea of "the Jew as a son or subject of Morocco" were the Moroccan monarchy and its government, some sectors

of the *Istiqlal*[20] and the police that monitored the activities promoting Jewish emigration. Academia also played an important role through scholars such as Haim Zafrani, who claimed that the Jews were the first non-Berber people of the area (Schroeter 2008) and therefore belonged in Morocco as much as any other local people.

One of the Moroccan-Israeli interviewees, Felicidad, enacted this position when recalling the day when she and her husband decided it was time to leave Morocco. This was in 1971, fifteen years after the Protectorate had been dissolved. She had a close relationship with people who belonged to the royal family of Morocco. Today, she treasures those memories and recalls them with great nostalgia:

> That sad and fearsome Saturday [10 July 1971], when they wanted to attack the king, she [the king's sister] did not let us leave her house. Her house was the palace. Also, when I left Marrakech, my husband had to go to Spain to finish some business and I went to Marseille with my four children. It was her [the king's sister] who took me to the train station and helped me with the kids. She told me "Whatever happens, you will be with us." […] We were friends, real close friends. […] My father also had an Arab business partner, and there was so much respect between them […]. I remember that when we were going to come to Israel, my husband's business partner told him "Don't leave, stay, I'll adopt you as my son." He came home one day, he never used to come home, but that day he did and said to me "You're his wife, please, tell him to stay, all I have is also his." How could anyone forget things like these?

After independence, Morocco tried to pacify the Jews, who were afraid for their future in the independent state. A political effort was made to present the Jews as fully-fledged Moroccan citizens, intimately bound to the country's history. Felicidad enacts the position of a neighbor when she remembers a close friendship that helped her in her hardest moments. The message she received from both her friend and her husband's business partner could be summarized as, "You belong to this place, don't leave."

In general, the interviewees spoke highly of the Moroccan monarchy, which was and continues to be perceived as the protector of the Jews. However, the relationship with the local Moroccan population is characterized by separation and ambivalence. Nevertheless, Mario, an Argentine interviewee, spoke about those relationships in a way that differed from the general trend:

> I spoke good Arabic. When I finished my studies, I took over my dad's business, with the Arabs, and I was the only Jew. So, I had to learn the language. I was only seventeen. Everything went very well, everybody loved me. Also, I studied with Arabs in the Spanish Academy, with Arabs, Spaniards and Jews. And one of my classmates ended up being in a very high-up position after the Independence. He used to tell me, "Don't leave, now that we're taking over the country, you're an educated boy, we've studied together, just stay, why

[20] *Istiqlal*: party and movement in favor of Morocco's independence. After 1956 they were in the opposition against the king.

> would you leave?" I told him that my family was leaving, and I couldn't stay on my own. He said: "Okay, so what do you need?" I told him I wanted a passport, a visa to leave. He said, "No problem, whenever you want, I'll give you the visa." So that's how we could leave in the best conditions, which a lot of people couldn't. […] We could bring everything, even my mum's sewing machine! […] In contrast with other Jews in Arab countries, we never had a problem with the Arabs in Morocco. We never did. I'm speaking from experience, I don't know what others might have told you.

Mario is the only one of my interviewees who claims to have spoken Arabic. As a matter of fact, not knowing Arabic is sometimes referred to as a marker of social status. This separation between Jews as more Westernized and Muslims as "indigenous" and less developed was, as we have seen before, promoted by the colonial authorities, who benefited from the position of the Jew as "semi-Spaniard."

Mario, in contrast to the rest of the interviewees, continuously speaks about the good relations he had with Moroccan Muslims, the dear friends he left behind. Mario studied in a Spanish school attended by Jews, Muslims and Spaniards. Also, he played in the soccer club *Atlético de Tetuán,* a Spanish soccer club founded in 1922 when Tetouan was under the Spanish Protectorate.

The club's crest had a Star of David on it from 1935 until 1946 and from 1951 until 1952. The rest of the time, the Star of David was substituted by the five-point star of the Moroccan flag. Mario reconstructed his participation in institutions in which the separation between ethno-religious groups was less critical. He enacts the position of the Jew as a son of Morocco by reconstructing the institutions, normative systems and categories that constituted that *discursive formation*.

Jacques, whom I interviewed in Buenos Aires, did not relate to the position of Jews as children of Morocco. He enacts an in-between position that leans towards a hostile foreignization.

> We, Jews in Morocco, lived with a constant fear that underlay all our activities and all the questions that Jews had to navigate in order to survive in that environment. That was before the establishment of the State of Israel. After the establishment of Israel, that hostility that had always been latent, that aggressiveness, which was only manifest here and there—some people had been killed, but there weren't pogroms like in Europe. […] And the fear at home, for example, "be careful at school, don't say [you're Jewish]" or "don't manifest yourself openly because we might have a problem" or "come home soon" for fear that the Moors would do something.

Jacques emigrated with his family from Tangier to Buenos Aires. He recalls the relations with the local Moroccan Muslim population with fear and suspicion, memories that are shared by other interviewees who spoke about lack of trust and vulnerability in their relations with Muslims. These relations had a long and intricate history

that included the living conditions of Jews as *dhimmi*[21] and the targeting of Jews by Muslims for religious and political reasons.

Among my interviewees there are those who emphasize friendly and loyal Muslim-Jewish relations and those who reject that as being a baseless invention. The same tendencies can be found among researchers of Moroccan history who tend to look at the past with a perspective that favors one narrative or the other.

However, there is a general agreement about the impact of Zionist activities on Jewish-Muslim relations after Morocco's independence. The emissaries from the Government of Israel and the World Jewish Congress promoted the idea that Jews outside of Israel are, by definition, in potential danger (see Bin-Nun 2014). The Moroccan authorities prohibited Jewish emigration to Israel. Therefore, preparations for emigration to Israel had to be carried out clandestinely. The Government of Israel took measures to get the Jews out of Morocco and bring them to Israel, while the World Jewish Congress was responsible for guaranteeing the security of Jews in the area (op. cit.). Simultaneously, the Moroccan government gave orders to arrest Jews who were planning on emigrating to Israel. The institutions involved were, among others, the *Misgeret* (the Moroccan branch of the Mossad), the Jewish Agency, the World Jewish Congress and the Moroccan monarchy. The prohibition of Zionist activities oriented towards emigration to Israel turned Jews who participated in them into conspirators, detaching them from the Moroccan milieu. The position of the conspirator was incompatible with any of the other positions and was therefore the least sustainable of all.

David, an interviewee who now lives in Israel, spoke about the Zionist groups active in Tetouan. These groups were fewer than in the South since, he said, "the Jews of Tetouan were more easily scared than the others. They were very scared but there's no doubt that there was a big desire to be in Israel and in Jerusalem." However, he thinks that this longing was part of a tradition—a "custom," he says—more than a political ideology.

Sol, the Israeli interviewee referred to earlier in this article, was an active member of a Zionist organization. This organization was a socialist movement that sent an emissary of Moroccan origin from Israel in order to aid Jewish emigration. The emissary was already socialized in kibbutz ideology and organized clandestine meetings in Morocco. According to Sol, this organization was called "Pi."

> Sol: The Pi was a secret house where all the young Zionists would get together. We went there and they changed our names and gave us Israeli names. I was named Nizan, someone else was named I don't know what. Names that we

[21] Jews in Muslim lands were considered *dhimmi*, "protected," so they were tolerated and not forced to convert to Islam. The *dhimmi* status involved certain restrictions; for example, Jews were obliged to pay special taxes, forbidden to build houses or synagogues higher than mosques, and not permitted to own noble animals like horses, to name but a few. Under the *dhimma* Jews were treated differently by the Muslim administration, both because of the restrictions (where to live, how to dress, which laws applied to them) and the rights (relative autonomy of the rabbinical courts, permission not to convert) that were granted to them. The arrival of colonialism ended the *dhimmi* status, promoting European models of government that persisted into the postcolonial period.

thought were marvelous, those names that we didn't know [she laughs]. It was fun […], they played Israeli songs.
Interviewer: It was fun, but it was also dangerous.
S: It was dangerous, yes. In class you couldn't tell you were going to that place. I didn't even tell a girl that was a very good friend of mine because she got easily scared and I knew she wouldn't want to get into that. So, it was difficult for me to run away and go there. Things you do when you're young. It's exciting and it is dangerous, but it also has the charm of having something secret.
I: How old were you?
S: I must have been fourteen. When you walked in, there was a dark room and there was a man you couldn't see well and there were candles, something that seemed very mysterious.
I: There was also a socialist component in all that?
S: Yes, absolutely. All the songs and everything, socialist. And atheist. All those things.

The change of name, the songs, and the clandestine meetings where youngsters were informed about how to emigrate to Israel, all these were practices of identification with Israel that disassociated Jews from Morocco. The desire to emigrate to Israel and the presence of Israeli organizations that helped Jewish clandestine emigration continued to foreignize Jews, who were aware of the risk they took when participating in these activities, through which they slowly became, in the eyes of the Moroccan authorities, akin to conspirators.

Mois Benarroch recalled that people would not say the word "Israel" for fear of being overheard by someone who would report it to the police:

> We couldn't speak about Israel, we couldn't say the word "Israel". It was funny because Israel was a family name, which you would say. People would say "don't say the word Israel," so we would say "Eretz." You couldn't say it because someone could hear that you were planning on going to Israel and the police could come and investigate. […] My cousin was in shock when he found out we left. I didn't tell him because I didn't know. My mom woke me up in the middle of the night. We had to go."

All the interviewees that emigrated to Israel recalled their clandestine departure in similar terms: it was forbidden to tell anyone, and many of them were informed that they were emigrating when it was time to leave their home. For example, this is Esther's account of that day:

> My dad closed the stores, he left the hat and the raincoat and the cane on the hanger, as if it was a normal day, as if we were not going to leave. We had to leave like thieves, we ran away at night and a ship took us to Ceuta, and from Ceuta we took a ship to Israel.

Nina recalled that Moroccan Muslims told her father that the Istiqlal was investigating all the Jews that had been reported to be planning on emigrating to Israel, and that they knew about Nina's family. The night before their departure, Nina's mother and her brother went to say goodbye to her cousins, who were sitting with us the

day of the interview. They all remembered that day in which Nina's mom went back home after saying goodbye to the family and found out that all the suitcases she had prepared had been unpacked, as if nothing had happened.

> Nina: My mom left the house ready to go. She came back and found everything in its place, as if nothing had happened. My mom said, "What's going on? Why have you put everything back in its place?" and my dad said, "Look, the Istiqlal[22] are registering the homes of Jews and those who are caught preparing to leave for Israel will be sent to jail." Do you guys know who was sent to jail? Rubida's father. And they beat him up. But since the Arabs warned my dad, we put everything back in its place. As if nothing'd happened!
> Miriam: Mimouna night! Come in you all! [we laugh].
> N: So, on Sunday morning my uncle called and said, "You're going to take a cab and go to Tangier." And that's what we did. The cab was empty, and the house was full. Everything's okay.

The reference to Mimouna, a Moroccan festivity that celebrates the end of Passover, is particularly telling. Mimouna is the festivity of unity in which Jewish homes would open to their non-Jewish neighbors, who would bring in the leavened bread that Jews had not been able to eat during the week of Passover. Countless sweets, pastries and delicacies had been prepared in advance for the night of Mimouna, when Jews, Muslims and Christians came together to celebrate the reencounter after the week of Passover.[23] Nina's family simulated that everything was as it was supposed to, that there was nothing suspicious going on. "Mimouna night! Come in you all!" Miriam says jokingly. Planning on emigrating to Israel turned Jews into conspirators, alienating them from the Moroccan people and their national project; hence this position being the least sustainable, since the tension it created needed a relatively fast resolution in time.

In 1958, Morocco joined the Arab League, which involved assuming their official position to Israel at the time: no recognition, no negotiations and no peace (see Meital 2000). In turn, prohibition of emigration to Israel served the purpose of preventing the strengthening of Zionism. The assumption of that agenda also brought the definitive foreignization and alienation of Moroccan Jews, who were under suspicion. Mois Benarroch claims that "Jews, in that period, were already Israeli Jews." During the period of mass emigration to Israel, anti-Zionism turned against Moroccan Jews as a whole, embittering trust relations and destabilizing coexistence.

[22] Istiqlal: Political party for the independence of Morocco. After 1956 they were in the opposition, against the king.

[23] For an explanation of the degradation of Mimouna in contemporary Israel and the consequences of its appropriation by the Israeli establishment, see Levy 2018.

Final Remarks

This paper has analyzed the different roles Jews played during the period of Spanish colonial presence in Morocco. I have studied how the relations between the different groups were handled. This analysis, inspired by the concept of *discursive formation*, has facilitated our understanding of the different agents, domains and categories involved in establishing the limits and functions of each ethno-religious group.

Spanish-Moroccan Jews were the most Spanish of all Sephardim. They were "at the gates" of Spain and had already come into direct contact with Spaniards by the nineteenth century. The reencounter between Spaniards and Sephardi Jews in Morocco was a consequence of the Spanish colonial project. Jews were caught in between different interests and structures. Their identification with Spain was both solid and ambivalent, responding to the relative ambiguity of Spanish politics of identity regarding Jews in the Protectorate.

The model created to study the participants' narratives can be useful when analyzing Jewish life in other colonial contexts in which Jews experienced multiple belongings. The Algerian, Tunisian and Egyptian experience, among others, could be analyzed with this model, with the necessary adjustments. This was the reality of Sephardi Jewry under colonialism, where Jews simultaneously belonged to different communities that had ambivalent relations with one another (see Ohana 2006). The result of this experience of colonization is what Jacqueline Shohet Kahanoff called "Levantinism."

> In the Middle East context, it was the Levantinian who acquired the new culture, at first as something desirable but external to him, then as an integral part of his own being. […] For all his weaknesses and self-doubts, the Levantinian is a potentially successful crossbreed of two or more cultures in our times, capable of applying what he acquired to the transformation and reconstruction of his own society, and able to compete with the Westerner on his own terms. (Shohet Kahanoff 2011b: 198)

The experience described in this paper can undoubtedly be understood as part of Kanahoff's conception of Levantinism. The model presented in this article facilitates the analysis of the complex system in which the fabric of belonging was woven.

Modernization and Westernization arrived in the north of Africa—and in the rest of the Sephardi Jewish communities as well—from the outside, as a consequence of colonial forces settling in their respective countries. Religious evolution occurred from within the communities as a way of adapting to those changes, not as an attempt to participate and integrate into a society of which they were already a part (Stillman 1995). This article has attempted to explain the specific ways in which institutions and other agents had an impact on different spheres of Jewish life in Morocco, while also providing systems of categorization for individuals to use as they moved through those spheres.

The process of Spanish colonization in the north of Morocco involved a complex process of reconquering Sephardi allegiances in order to secure their collaboration with the colonial project. For Jews, the Spanish colonial presence in Morocco involved an economic, social and cultural change. Some Jews served the Spanish authorities as

contacts and mediators for commercial purposes. The process of modernization, then, involved an increasing common ground shared with the Spaniards. The interviewees' experience of modernization in the Spanish Protectorate was part of their experience of colonization/Hispanicization. They established different bonds and allegiances (as Jews, as Spanish, as Moroccan, as cosmopolitan citizens) that coexisted with each other.

The different positions Jews had in the Protectorate reveal different aspects of their lives as well. The processes of modernization Jews went through in the Spanish Protectorate involved the breaching of the normative framework of Jewish traditions that affected all aspects of life: diet, social relations, organization of time, and so on. That normative framework separated Jews and non-Jews, and breaching it meant transgressing that boundary. Ambiguity and humor were powerful tools they harnessed in order to cope with the complexity and contradictions that modernization and colonization had brought.

Appendix 1. Information about the Interviewees[24]

Alicia: born in Melilla and grew up in Tetouan. She arrived in Argentina in 1961 with her husband and children. The interview was conducted in her home in Buenos Aires.

David: born in 1942 in Tetouan, where he grew up and lived until 1963, when he emigrated to Israel with his parents. He is an engineer. The interview was conducted in his home in Ashkelon. He is Flora's husband.

Elise: cultural activist and promoter of Haketia. Born in Tetouan in 1948, she arrived in Israel when she was only two months old. She lived in Jerusalem in a family and an environment in which Haketia was preserved. She moved to the United States as an adult and currently lives in New York. The interview was conducted in her Tel Aviv home.

Esther: office worker. Born and raised in Tangier, arrived in Israel in 1955, at the age of fourteen, where she has lived since then. The interview was conducted at the home of her friend Nina in Tel Aviv.

Felicidad: born and raised in Larache. She and her family then moved to Alcazarquivir. After getting married, she moved to Marrakesh. She arrived in Israel in 1964 with her husband and children. She is Miriam's sister.

Flora: born in 1948 in Tetouan, where she grew up. She emigrated to Israel in 1962, at age fourteen. Never went to university, although has great curiosity for intellectual questions. The interview was conducted in her house in Ashkelon.

Jacques: Born and raised in Tangier. He left Morocco at the age of twenty, in 1956. He has always lived in Buenos Aires, where he worked for a company. The interview was conducted in his home.

[24] All interviewees' names have been changed to protect their anonymity except for those who explicitly requested to be mentioned by their real names.

Karina: Born and raised in Tetouan. Arrived in Argentina in 1965, at age twenty-one. She is a painter and an interior designer. The interview was conducted in her apartment in Buenos Aires.

Leah: born and raised in Tetouan. She and her husband Yosef left Morocco in 1965 for Venezuela. They moved to Israel in 1990 with their children. The interview was conducted in their Jerusalem home.

Mario: born and raised in Tetouan. Emigrated to Argentina in 1957, at age twenty-one. He is a trader. The interview was conducted in a café in Buenos Aires.

Miriam: born and raised in Larache. She and her family then moved to Alcazarquivir. She studied in Casablanca. She arrived in Israel in 1968 at the age of eighteen. She studied Philosophy.

Mois Benarroch: Poet and writer. Born in 1959 in Tetouan, Morocco. Emigrated to Israel at age thirteen. Lives in Jerusalem. The interview was conducted on two different days in his apartment in Jerusalem.

Nina: born in Alcazarquivir. She arrived in Israel when she was seventeen, and lived in the development town on Kiriat Shmona. She lives in Tel Aviv. The interview was conducted in her apartment, where we met with her cousins Felicidad and Miriam and her friend Esther. I spent the whole day with them, recording approximately six hours.

Raphael: born in Paris in the 1950s, he grew up in postcolonial Casablanca. His family had been in Tangier for generations, and he frequently visited the city. He is a writer and art critic. He lives between Paris and Jerusalem. The interview was conducted in his Jerusalem home.

Samuel: born and raised in Tangier. He arrived in Israel in 1972, with his wife, his parents and his five children. In Tangier he had a high-ranking position in a bank and in Israel he worked as a bank clerk. The interview was conducted in his apartment in Jerusalem.

Simi: Flora's sister. Born and raised in Tetouan, where she lived until 1962, when she arrived in Israel at age eighteen. The interview was conducted in Flora's house.

Sol: born in Tetouan in 1948. Her parents were from Ceuta. She grew up between Ceuta and Tetouan. She studied in Madrid and emigrated to Israel in 1973 with her husband and one of her children. The interview was conducted in the house of her friend Flora.

Yosef: Born and raised in Tetouan. He met Leah when he was eighteen years old. He has worked in trade.

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