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Paradoxes and limitations in enacting Jewish-Muslim dialogue in contemporary France: case studies of interreligious and intercultural dialogue initiatives

Adi Saleem Bharat

Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

ABSTRACT

This article examines the extent to which Jewish-Muslim interreligious/cultural dialogue initiatives in France are negatively affected by the dominant paradigm of republican universalism and state secularism in France. It focuses on the relations between, on the one hand, the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA) and the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme (mahJ) and, on the other hand, Beit Haverim and Homosexuels musulmans de France (HM2F) to highlight the key challenges such initiatives face. In addition, this article suggests that the ineffectiveness of some contemporary interreligious initiatives in France results from both the inherent difficulty in navigating the republican universalist framework and the failure of such initiatives to acknowledge, mediate, and challenge the historical and contemporary role of the state in shaping the relations between Jews and Muslims.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article examine dans quelle mesure les initiatives de dialogue interreligieux/interculturel judéo-musulman en France sont négativement impactées par le paradigme dominant de l'universalisme républicain et d'une laïcité d'État. En se focalisant sur les relations entre, d'une part, l'Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA) et le Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme (mahJ) et, d'autre part, Beit Haverim et les Homosexuels musulmans de France (HM2F), cet article met en évidence les principaux défis auxquels ces initiatives doivent faire face. Cet article suggère aussi que l'inefficacité de certaines initiatives interreligieuses en France résulte à la fois de la difficulté inhérente posée par l'universalisme républicain ainsi que du manque de prise en conscience du rôle historique et contemporain de l'État dans les relations judéomusulmanes.

Introduction

'Je ne suis pas juif,' Salim announced to the fourteen or so other individuals in a small meeting room on the premises of the Parisian LGBT Jewish association Beit Haverim.¹ Like Salim and the others in attendance, I was there that evening attending a talk on '[Jewish] orthodoxies and homosexualities' organized by Beit Haverim. Being a relatively small group, the speakers

asked us to introduce ourselves and our interest in the topic. As it turned out, we were quite a motley crew: several Beit Haverim members (including their co-founder from the 1970s), one non-Jewish Frenchman ... and me and Salim. I introduced myself as a researcher with interests in sexuality and religion, explaining that I was there at the invitation of Beit Haverim's current president, who was moderating the evening's talk.² The Beit Haverim members introduced themselves in relation to their interest in the possibility of a progressive and inclusive Orthodox Judaism. Salim, for his part, explained that, while he was not Jewish, he was there because he felt that he could not find similar spaces in Paris for the discussion of homosexuality in Islam.

I was instantly reminded of instances of North African Muslims in early twentieth-century France going to kosher butchers because of a lack of halal butchers in their neighbourhood (Katz 2015, 52). Like those Muslims who turned to kosher butchers due to the long-established understanding of many observant Muslims that kosher meat conforms to Islamic dietary laws, Salim's decision to take part in a discussion on sexuality in (orthodox) Judaism in a queer Jewish space underlines the religious and theological similarities between, on the one hand, Judaism and Islam and, on the other hand, the socio-cultural similarities between Jewishness and Muslimness in France. Indeed, as the evening progressed, the speakers and audience made several comparisons between the Islamic and Jewish traditions on the topic of sexuality. I began to wonder if I was observing Jewish-Muslim dialogue taking place in a space that was not explicitly about nor tailored towards Jewish-Muslim dialogue. Unlike in some other spaces where Jewish-Muslim dialogue is explicitly performed, was I witnessing that evening an implicit Jewish-Muslim dialogue?

There is a danger, of course, in characterizing Salim's participation in Beit Haverim's event as an example of Jewish-Muslim dialogue or even of 'good' Jewish-Muslim relations. It is tempting to see instances of interactions between Jews and Muslims as examples of interreligious/intercultural dialogue or relations. However, such a tendency reduces individuals to one single facet of their identity. Salim is Muslim, but he is not *only* Muslim. Similarly, the Jews at the event were, presumably, Jewish, but they were not *only* Jewish. For one, Salim and the others are also, broadly speaking, LGBT. They are also French, mostly middle-class professionals, and mostly male. While one might see the participation of a Muslim man in a Jewish event as an example of Jewish-Muslim dialogue or relations, it could just as easily be understood in purely pragmatic terms, i.e. Salim, a gay Muslim, cannot locate LGBT-affirming Muslim spaces and so seeks out a prominent LGBT-affirming space that happens to cater to Jews. Yet, it is precisely so tempting to read any form of interaction between individuals who happen to be Jewish and Muslim as examples of Jewish-Muslim relations or Jewish-Muslim dialogue because interreligious dialogue initiatives in contemporary France often take the existence and salience of religious and identity categories for granted. In examining the relations between, on the one hand, the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA) and the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme (mahJ) and, on the other hand, Beit Haverim and Homosexuels musulmans de France (HM2F), this article, argues that initiatives that seek to foster interreligious dialogue, while taking the salience of ethnoreligious identity categories for granted, tend to reinforce the very differences that they seek to mediate.

Background

The IMA is a foundation declared to be of public utility (*reconnue d'utilité publique*) by the French government, while the mahJ, Beit Haverim, and HM2F are all *associations loi 1901*. In addition, the mahJ, while organized as an *association loi 1901*, is public museum categorized as a Musée de France by the Ministry of Culture and entirely funded by the Ministry and the City of Paris ("Qu'est-ce que le mahJ" 2015). Associations are an extremely common and important part of French civil society. In general, it is uncomplicated to start and legally form an association under the 1901 law. As of 2016, there were 1.3 million associations in France ("Les associations en France" 2016). One major reason people form associations is to be eligible to seek public funds from the state and its institutions. Funding can be requested for particular projects and activities or for the general maintenance of the association. Associations that are solely religious in nature, however, are not eligible to receive public funds. These associations, described as *associations culturelles* (religious associations) by the 1905 law on the *séparation des Églises et de l'État*, are exclusively devoted to religious activities and are generally places of worship. However, juridically speaking, they remain associations by the 1901 law, but with certain limitations, such as being ineligible for public funding, being limited to activities defined as purely religious (any activities deemed political are not allowed), having a minimum number of members, and being liable to police surveillance 'dans l'intérêt de l'ordre public' (see article 25 of the 1905 law). This is a crucial point, which implies that religious activity in France is inherently somewhat suspect. This is particularly true regarding Islam in the securitized post-9/11 context. Jonathan Lawrence and Justin Vaisse write that Islam in France is generally 'portrayed as a foreign culture [...], as a religion, often a fundamentalist one, or as a geopolitical force [...]' (2006, ix). Whether Islam is depicted as a particularly 'fundamentalist' religion, a political project of 'submission,' to borrow the title of a Michel Houellebecq novel (2015), or a foreign entity, general attitudes to Islam and Muslims are characterized by a level of suspicion. Indeed, in France, where far-right discourse and Islamophobia have already been mainstreamed (see Wolfreys 2017), 'Islamophobia has also been legalized and thus further normalized through the laws against the hijab (2004) and the burqa (2011) and the recent debates around the state of emergency in the wake of the 2015 attacks' (Mondon and Winter 2017, 2172). In this context, my interviewees' frequent insistence on being secular is likely to be a way to mitigate the state's perception of their ethnoreligious identifications as possibly dangerous to republican stability. While no one stated so explicitly, the frequent, unsolicited insistence on the secular nature of their associations and initiatives reveals a possible fear of being stigmatized, especially if Muslim, as *communautariste*. Generally uncommon in public discourse prior to the 2000s, the term *communautarisme* (or ethnic factionalism) is now widely deployed in French media and politics, particularly to describe racialized minority groups and to situate them outside of the (white) national community. As Fabrice Dhume-Sonzogni writes, 'de même que c'est la pensée raciste qui invente et produit des "races", le discours sur le communautarisme s'invente des communautés pour figurer un outsider' (2016, 52). More specifically, the term cannot be disentangled from Islamophobia. Indeed, the 'body' of the *communautariste* 'chimera,' according to Dhume-Sonzogni, 'serait l'islam, supposé porter en son sein la menace communautaire et, au-delà, "terroriste" [...]' (2016, 139).

Given this context, it is reasonable to believe that some associations that are not officially designated as *culturelles* might be still perceived as such and that such a perception could be experienced negatively. During my interview with the president and co-founder of Shams-France, an association ‘LGBTQI des personnes maghrébines et moyen-orientales vivant en France,’ emphasized the difference between his secular association and the now-defunct HM2F, which he characterized, with a hint of disapproval in his tone, as ‘une association religieuse,’ despite the practical similarities between the two associations. After all, both associations were first and foremost social and cultural associations focused on social action, mutual aid, and cultural activities. Yet, HM2F, despite not being an *association culturelle*, was often perceived as a religious association, leading to its relative exclusion by other actors in the LGBT associational arena (see Zahed 2016, 162–66). The limitations placed on *associations culturelles* explain why each association I discuss in this article explicitly emphasizes its secular nature. Moreover, most of my respondents highlighted several times to me that their associations were completely ‘laïques.’ The pressure to avoid seeming too religious is something that recurred, often implicitly and obliquely, in many of my conversations and interviews with members and leaders of interreligious and intercultural associations.

It has long been established in French political doctrine that the most appropriate way to deal with ethnic and religious difference and discrimination on these counts is through the adoption of a difference-blind assimilationist model of integration in parallel with the separation of church, or religion in general, and state, which forms part of the constitutional principle of *laïcité*. While the principle of secularism initially refers to state neutrality, Jean Baubérot traces how the term came to strictly refer to the neutrality of the individual in the public sphere (2012). In the twenty-first century, this understanding of *laïcité*, much like the term *communautariste*, cannot be meaningfully understood outside of its application to Islam, often positioned as a uniquely problematic religion (hence the interminable debates and legislations on headscarves, burkinis, beards, and other visible markers of difference). Despite France’s pretensions of universalism, there is a wealth of research showing how the universalist model has been applied selectively to minority groups throughout modern and contemporary French history (Wieviorka 1997; Fysh and Wolfreys 2003; Schor 2001; Fredette 2014; Beaman 2017). Aside from the state’s supposed approach of non-differentiation based on racial and religious difference, civil society, in particular through non-profit associations, has played an important role in advocating against racial and religious discrimination by foregrounding particular identities. Joseph Downing notes that these associations ‘represent a significant force within French society’ today, pointing out that there are “over one million such associations currently operating, with over 16 million members (Downing 2016, 457). These associations have mobilized around demands for ‘the recognition for minorities from the French state by acting as interlocutors between the French state and religious groups’ and ‘around notions of race and ethnicity to facilitate recognition from the central state’ (Downing 2016, 457). Downing argues that despite the continued importance of such associations ‘in promoting difference-orientated policies in France,’ their work and durability remain ‘very much contested’ and fragile, due to their varying dependence on the state for ‘funding and access to the public sphere’ (Downing 2016, 465–66).

In the twenty-first century, the French state certainly plays an important role in structuring interreligious dialogue initiatives, especially those involving or targeting

Muslims and Islam. One major way in which state priorities may directly or indirectly impact the way dialogue initiatives are undertaken relates to the state funding available to civil society. Since 2015, the amount of money available for dialogue initiatives between religious communities has been dwarfed by the amount of money funnelled into anti-radicalization programmes. In some instances, this has led some civil society actors ‘to target these funds by demonstrating their ability to “outreach” to Muslim communities or to promote dialogue’ (Everett 2018, 443). In this context, there is a clear potential for the convergence of interreligious dialogue initiatives with state securitization of Islam and Muslims within the framework of an ongoing ‘War on Terror’. The socio-political context of the securitization of Muslims can colour, if not shape, to some extent, the dialogue between individual actors and the social work carried out. The state’s emphasis on de-radicalization, counterterrorism, and security programmes that disproportionately target Muslims also impacts faith-based civil society in more direct ways. As Sami Everett highlights, ‘after the November [2015] attacks, the state encouraged French civil society and particularly the extremely broad and locally well-connected nexus of *associations* to centre their resources on security-conscious measures to “de-radicalise” Muslims’ (Everett 2018, 444). Following these attacks, the state’s priority for civil society clearly and urgently shifted from *vivre ensemble* to security and surveillance.³

In some ways, a central question of this article is to what extent is it possible, in France, for civil society to function ‘short of the state.’ Indeed, on the whole, my analysis in this article suggests that this is not really possible in France. In practical terms, public life in France, more so than in, say, the United Kingdom or the United States, depends in large part on the state. Associations, museums, and theatres in France certainly rely to a larger extent on state funding and support than in other countries. Even more important than this material dependence, however, is the political philosophy behind the structuring of the public sphere in France. Despite being the object of debate and negotiation throughout the nineteenth century, the dominant paradigm of republican universalism, as a set of principles that guarantee the political rights of ‘universal’ citizens and essentially relegate to the private sphere the social, cultural, and ethnic aspects of citizenship, has fundamentally shaped political discourses and laws in modern and contemporary France. In this context, civil society, already more dependent on the state than in other countries, is, in some ways, constrained by the need to emphasize a ‘universal’ discourse of French citizenship. Faith-based or ethnic associations, in particular, are, then, caught in this republican double-bind, whereby they simultaneously reject and foreground particular ethnic or religious identities, perceived as ‘communautariste’ in the logic of republicanism. This paradox often proved to be at the heart of the discussions I had with my interlocutors.

Methodology

The data presented in this article is taken from a larger project on Jewish-Muslim interfaith dialogue initiatives in Paris, Lyon, and Marseille. While I only focus on the IMA, the mahJ, Beit Haverim, and HM2F in this article, it is worth briefly laying out my overall methodology here in order to better frame my discussion of these four specific institutions and groups. I first began recruiting potential participants during the summer of 2019 by contacting 24 associations and groups that explicitly presented themselves or, at least, a part of their activities as relating to, broadly speaking, Jewish-Muslim dialogue. Some of these associations, like Coexister, I had

already heard of. Others, like Parler en Paix, I only discovered through scouring through search engine results and social media searches. Yet others, like Convivencia, were first introduced to me by my initial respondents. Once I had established a relatively long list of associations in France, I proceeded to contact them via email or telephone.

My emails and telephone calls essentially introduced me and described my project, while asking the associations to circulate my email along with an attached information sheet and participant consent form to their members. If the first contact was made over the telephone, I would then ask for an email address to send over the same information in writing. In general, potential participants would then contact me by email (or, in one case, on Twitter) to set up an interview. At first, only a couple of people contacted me. This initial lack of participants led me to ask my initial respondents if they could also put me in touch with other people who might be interested in taking part. This form of snowball sampling (Goodman 1961) allowed me to sufficiently enlarge my sample of participants. However, because snowball sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling, its main limitation relates to representativeness. Since it is a non-random, respondent-driven method of sampling, the sample risks becoming skewed towards one or more characteristics (i.e. ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic background, etc.).

Indeed, all of my respondents are university-educated, middle-income professionals. This is an important factor to retain since it likely inflects their understandings and practices of interreligious dialogue. In any case, the dominance of a well-educated, middle-class within my sample is broadly representative of, more generally, ethnic and faith-based civil society in France (Wenden and Leveau 2001). Indeed, across different types of associations in France, with the exception of sports associations, sustained voluntary participation is more frequent among the most highly educated and those above the age of 45 (Prouteau 2018). In this context, I found snowball sampling to be very useful, not only because it helped me to increase my sample size, but also because it allowed me to locate and gain access to what appeared to be an informal social network of interreligious and intercultural dialogue associations and practitioners.

Over the course of two months in the autumn of 2019, I conducted interviews with 19 individuals representing 12 different associations and institutions, including the IMA, the mahJ, Beit Haverim, and HM2F. In addition to a range of events, I also attended several events organized by these four groups. The interviews were semi-structured and purposefully conversational in nature. While I had a set of general questions, these questions were designed to facilitate a broader conversation about the respondents, their motivations for taking part in interreligious/intercultural dialogue, and the associations they are involved in. The danger in conducting field research on a topic as polarized and polemical as 'Jewish-Muslim relations' is that respondents might end up engaging with the topic solely in terms of what they deem to be a 'Jewish' or a 'Muslim' perspective, rather than speaking more personally as individuals. One way I sought to mitigate this was to treat the interview as a more or less personal conversation between two relatively equal interlocutors. Thus, I systematically began the interviews by introducing myself, which allowed my respondents to ask more questions about me, before easing into the 'actual' interview. In doing so, from my perspective, the interviews never felt like a unidirectional series of questions and answers, but more like a naturally occurring conversation. This allowed my respondents to speak to me from *their* personal perspective, without feeling like they had

to adopt one 'side' or the other of what is increasingly depicted in media and political discourse as a zero-sum binary relation between Jews and Muslims in France.

Each interview was audio recorded with the explicit verbal and written consent of the interviewee. Following the end of the last interview, I listened to each audio recording once. Next, I fully transcribed the audio recordings. I then conducted a thematic analysis of the transcripts. The transcripts were read several times in order to maximize familiarity with the overall sample before being coded line by line. The first level of coding involved identifying salient broad concepts and ideas that recurred in the sample and ascribing descriptive labels to them. The second level of coding involved grouping overlapping labels into themes. Upon identifying recurring patterns, descriptive labels were assigned which were then grouped into themes. Where there was overlap, sub-themes were merged into larger themes. While the ways in which each topic emerged differed from interlocutor to interlocutor, there appeared to be an implicit consensus that, when it came to the question of Jewish-Muslim relations or Jewish-Muslim dialogue, there are a set of inescapable themes: media and power, diverging affiliations (on the topic of Israel and Palestine), and intersecting affiliations (on the topic of historical and/or present shared marginalizations and oppressions).

Within the three themes, the topic of Israel and Palestine, in particular, was often brought up as the inescapable topic that everyone tries to avoid but fails when talking about Jewish-Muslim relations or dialogue. Other topics, such as the Shoah and colonization and Islamophobia and antisemitism, were essentially brought up to promote Jewish-Muslim dialogue and solidarity as a necessity for two minorities with similar histories of persecution and present-day experiences of being othered. In contrast to promoting dialogue and solidarity because of similarly marginalized positions, the Maghreb was sometimes evoked to foreground Jewish-Muslim rapprochement as rooted in the shared North African heritage of many Jews and Muslims in France. Other topics, such as extremism and fundamentalism, proved more difficult to talk about, especially given the context of securitization described earlier.

Le mahJ et l'IMA

The mahJ, located in Paris's Marais district—a centre of Jewish culture since the nineteenth century (and of LGBT life since the 1980s)—was opened in 1988 after more than a decade of planning. Officially an *association loi 1901*, the museum defines its mission as 'retracer l'histoire des communautés juives à travers leurs différentes formes d'expression artistique, leur patrimoine culturel et leurs traditions.' In addition, the museum sees itself as 'une institution, reconnue pour son active politique culturelle et éducative, qui contribue à la diffusion de la connaissance du judaïsme mais aussi, plus largement, au vivre ensemble' ("Projet scientifique et culturel" 2017). While the mahJ is designated a musée de France, the IMA was founded in the 5th arrondissement of Paris in 1980 (but only fully constructed and opened to the public in 1987) by a number of members of the Arab League and France. Officially a foundation 'reconnue d'utilité publique,' the IMA describes its mission as 'établir des liens forts et durables entre les cultures pour ainsi cultiver un véritable dialogue entre le monde arabe, la France et l'Europe' ("Missions"). Since 2004 or 2005, the education departments of the mahJ and the IMA have collaborated together to offer school children and the general public a series of guided tours and workshops around the theme of the shared history of Jews and Muslims. I attended one of these guided tours for the public (by this point, in October 2019, the school visits and

workshops had long been organized under the banner of *Cultures en partage* and the public guided tours began in 2018 under the banner of *Juifs et musulmans, une histoire partagée*) and interviewed three past and present mahJ and IMA employees, Emilie, Sara, and Michel, who were directly involved in this collaborative project.

Speaking to Michel, who left the mahJ in 2017 after over a decade, was very helpful in terms of placing the *Culture en partage* and *Juifs et musulmans, une histoire partagée* initiatives in a broader context. Michel was keen to lay out, in great detail, the history of this initiative between the mahJ and the IMA. This information, which I cross-referenced, was key to understanding the motivations of both institutions in collaborating together on an educational project with a specifically Jewish and Muslim theme. Michel identified Régis Debray's 2002 report to Jack Lang, who was at the time the Minister of National Education, on 'l'enseignement du fait religieux dans l'École laïque' as a primary contextual element explaining the eventual collaboration between the mahJ and the IMA:

Le rapport [...] a abouti à plusieurs initiatives. D'abord, la création de l'Institut Européen des Sciences des Religions pour former les enseignants sur le fait religieux et puis aussi des initiatives dans le champ culturel. Donc, il y a eu, par exemple, une grande exposition à la Bibliothèque nationale [BnF] sur Torah, Bible, Coran, un peu plus tard, en 2005. Il y a eu vraiment, au début des années 2000, un regain d'intérêt pour l'enseignement des faits religieux.

The BnF exposition, which ran from November 2005 to April 2006 and including workshops and guided visits for middle-to-high school students, teachers, and members of the public, sought to highlight the intimate links between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam through a focus on religious texts and images. When I asked Michel if he thought that the initiatives that followed in the wake of Debray's report also had anything to do with the broader socio-political contexts of the early 2000s, he immediately referenced 'la seconde Intifada et les effets entre 2002 et 2005 sur la société française, notamment en milieu scolaire.' When I spoke to Emilie and Sara, both of them also specifically referenced the second Intifada as a key factor for the collaboration between the IMA and the mahJ. Interestingly, the organizers of the BnF exposition saw it necessary to explicitly state that their exposition was not 'commandée par l'actualité.' Michel, however, believed that both the report and the initial initiatives that sprung up between 2002 and 2005 were, at least in part, due to the perception of rising tensions in French society and, in particular, in the public-school system, crystalized by the discourse of a new antisemitism and linked to the outbreak of the second Intifada.

One of these initiatives emerged in 2004 as an exhibition at the Parc de la Villette called *Musulmanes, musulmans*, which, Michel explained, directly led to the 'Cultures en partage' initiative. *Musulmanes, musulmans*, which was an exhibition that drew primarily on photographs and collected Muslim testimonies on their relation to religion, focused on contemporary Muslim communities in five cities: Cairo, Tehran, Istanbul, Paris, and Dakar. The Villette education department got in touch with the mahJ in December 2003 to solicit the development of a 'parcours scolaire' as part of the broader exposition. The mahJ then came up with the concept for a series of workshops for school children on the shared cultures of Jews and Muslims. The mahJ then solicited the participation of the IMA and the programme they came up with would eventually be called *Cultures en partages: Juifs et musulmans/Musulmanes et juifs*." Following the end of the exposition in November 2004, the mahJ and the IMA continued to offer their workshops outside of the Villette

framework, broadening the scope to Abrahamic religions in general. In addition to these workshops, which are still offered by the mahJ and the IMA, the two institutions began in 2018 to offer guided tours (*Juifs et musulmans, une histoire partagée*) of their collections designed for the general public. These tours take place at the mahJ and the IMA and were led by two guides, staff members from each institution.

My visit on 2 October 2019, I was later informed, was just the fourth visit organized by the two institutions (two more have taken place since, in February 2020). The visit began with a look at a large map of the 'monde arabe,' essentially the 22 countries of the Arab League. The IMA guide, Emilie, acknowledged the somewhat artificial construct of the 'Arab world,' but suggested that the 'Arabness' of the Arab world is primarily linguistic, i.e. what makes the Arab world 'Arab' is the predominance of Arabic, despite the variation of dialects. Emilie then invited Sara, the mahJ guide, to talk about 'les Juifs qui se sont installés dans le monde arabe.' Sara began by stating that 'les juifs y vivaient,' thus suggesting that Jews no longer live in the Arab world or that their presence is no longer significant. She also emphasized that Jews lived in the region before Muslims. Sara then explained the quasi-absence of Jews in the Arab world by very briefly referring to colonization and the creation of the state of Israel. Subsequently, Sara discussed contemporary demographics of Israel, pointing out, in particular, that 'Arabs' constitute 20% of the Israeli population, even if, as she euphemistically put it, there is 'très peu de mixité dans des villes ou villages arabes en Israël.' Sara's remark about Arab cities or towns in Israel bears a striking parallel with French banlieues. In both cases, the role of institutional discrimination and segregation over several decades is key. In the French case, banlieusards, often Black and/or Muslim, are constantly accused by media and politicians of *communautarisme* or, more recently, *séparatisme*. While Sara's remark might have been a euphemism for the institutional segregation of Arab citizens of Israel, given the structure of her sentence that avoids identifying why there is 'très peu de mixité,' it is more likely to be the exact equivalent of French accusations of ethnic factionalism or separatism. Sara then proceeded to affirm the European and French nature of the mahJ: 'le mahJ est un musée européen . . . et français. On représente la France.' Pausing momentarily and glancing at Emilie, she then added, 'je ne sais pas si c'est le cas de l'IMA . . .' Taking her cue, Emilie acknowledged that 'l'IMA, c'est un cas spécial,' explaining that the institute was founded by France and the Arab League. She added, however, that 'ça [the IMA] reste un projet français.' Gemma King notes that 'as a joint venture between France and the Arab League with the mission to encourage diplomatic relations between France and the Arabic-speaking world, the Institut du monde arabe is a prime example of a Paris institution which foregrounds questions of cultural difference, yet sidesteps questions of cultural mixity' (2019, 157). Emilie's insistence on the 'Frenchness' of the IMA, as a response to Sara's insistence on the 'Frenchness' of the mahJ, certainly corroborates King's observation.

All of the above took place within the first twenty minutes of the visit and revealed how both institutions conceived of and framed their initiative in response to, or in the context of, broader societal discourses. A document I was later shown described *Juifs et musulmans, une histoire partagée* as seeking to 'montrer la richesse des cultures juives et musulmanes et de leurs échanges mutuels afin de sortir des images stéréotypées de l'affrontement de ces deux cultures, liées aux douloureux conflits politiques contemporains.' In other words, the stated objective of the initiative is to deconstruct stereotypes of Jews and Muslims, by placing them in a longer history that demonstrates the deeply rooted historical and socio-cultural interplay between communities of Jews and Muslims

in the so-called Arab world. The attempt to provide a nuanced definition of the term Arab as it relates to the Arab world, which culminated in Sara's statement that the Arabness of the Arab world is primarily linguistic, appears to be related to the general conflation of the terms Arab and Muslim in France. Given that this Jewish-Muslim initiative is organized by the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du *Judaïsme* and the Institut du Monde *Arabe*, the initial focus on terminology, during the first twenty minutes of the visit, calls attention to the central paradox of the construction of the Arab and the Jew as necessarily separate identities. Perhaps, by ascribing a solely linguistic criterion to Arabness—which would, nevertheless, be a thoroughly incomplete definition—Emilie was suggesting the possible Arabness of Jews or, at least, that Jews are an unavoidable reality in the history and present of any rendering of the so-called Arab world. Perhaps, even, like Edward Said (1974, 4), she was suggesting that there was a 'felt correspondence' between Jews and Arabs. Sara's subsequent discussion of Arabs in Israel—despite her peculiar emphasis on the lack of 'mixité' of Israel's Arab citizens, calling to mind criticisms of French Muslims as being communitarian—certainly fits in with this.

Following this brief discussion of terminology, Emilie and Sara then addressed the proverbial elephants in the room: colonization, Israel, and, interestingly, the status of the mahJ and the IMA. It is undebatable that there were several waves of mass emigration of Jews from Muslim majority North African and Middle Eastern countries from 1948 to the 1970s. The reasons for the successive waves of departure are, however, more complex. When Sara evoked European colonization and the creation of the state of Israel as explanatory factors for this massive departure, she pinpointed two fundamental contextual elements. Yet, for some reason, she chose not to discuss either in any detail. The absent presence of colonial history and the creation of Israel lingered throughout the visit. Her comments about the status of the mahJ ('un musée européen ... et français,' 'on représente la France') and Emilie's insistence that, despite the involvement of the Arab League, the IMA remained 'un projet français,' might help make sense of this.

Their insistence on the Frenchness of their institutions is a way to dispel the idea that the mahJ and the IMA are either communitarian institutions or run by, in the case of the mahJ, Israel or, in the case of the IMA, the Arab League. The mahJ is in no shape or form associated with Israel, but the ease with which discourse about Jews and Judaism slips into discourse about Israel and Zionism means that Jewish people and institutions sometimes feel that they have to ward off any suspicion of dual allegiances—itsself a deeply antisemitic notion—especially to Israel, in order to avoid the politicization of their identities and discourses.⁴ The IMA, however, *is* institutionally linked to—and partly funded by—the Arab League. This institutional link, which, in Emilie's words, renders it 'un cas spécial,' certainly makes the IMA even more susceptible to the perception of being a vessel of foreign states.

The emphasis on the Frenchness of the mahJ and the IMA, as well as the claim that 'on représente la France,' might also explain why the context of colonization was almost entirely absent from the visit. After all, if the mahJ and the IMA are French museums that represent France, it is unsurprising that the important impacts of colonial history on Jews and Muslims would be left unaddressed since it highlights an aspect of French history that is not, to say the least, flattering. In the case of the mahJ, a close inspection of the permanent collections reveals a lack of artefacts permitting the discussion of anything

less than favourable to the image of the French Republic. Vichy, for example, is almost entirely absent from the museum.

The rest of the visit focuses on a variety of images, texts, sculptures, and artwork from antiquity to the late medieval period, with a couple of brief, verbal references to the nineteenth century as a possible turning point. This ‘turning point,’ however is never explored, possibly for the reasons mentioned above. Instead, both Sara and Emilie present and discuss a selection of artefacts in order to suggest, essentially, the theological and cultural similarities between Judaism and Islam and Jews and Muslims. As Michel, who worked at the mahJ for nearly thirteen years and was a key contributor to the project, summarizes the approach succinctly:

C'est une visite qui est quand même beaucoup sur la thématique du dialogue interculturel et qui se place beaucoup sur des questions de pratiques, de rituels, ou de croyances, mais on est peu dans la dimension historique.

Indeed, the visit can be described as a two-way discussion of a random selection of de-historicized objects with the goal of emphasizing the interconnected nature of Islam and Judaism as a way to counter the kind of discourses of oppositional Jewish-Muslim relations that permeates contemporary French society. Yet, simply pointing out that Islam and Judaism are similar will do little to counter the contemporary polarization of Jewish and Muslim identities. Instead, what might be more helpful in terms of de-essentializing Jewish and Muslim identities—which is precisely absent from these guided tours at the mahJ and the IMA—is an understanding of the importance of colonial history in separating and instituting a hierarchy of identities, which directly impacted relations between Jews and Muslims *and* shaped modern and contemporary oppositional discourses. Neither institution is unique in this sense:

Paris museums hesitate to explore France's colonial past and the myriad continuing inter-plays between metropolitan France and its neighbours, former colonies and DROM COMs. [...] In many Paris museums, what is said and shown is important, but what is not said and not shown can reveal even more about what these museums are conveying to the world (King 2019, 159).

Accordingly, the absence of the impact of colonialism in the narrative of Jewish and Muslim history reveals an important message conveyed by these two museums, i.e. the innocence of the French state.

When I put this to both Sara and Emilie, they told me that the visits take place as a function of the objects that the museums have and, as it happens, the objects at the IMA and the mahJ are ‘plutôt d'époque ancienne ou médiévale.’ It is, however, difficult to believe that two institutions that have been working on a public-facing project for more than a decade would be constrained by existing collections and unable to acquire, permanently or temporarily, more recent artefacts that would allow the guided tours to take a more comprehensive approach to the topic of Jewish-Muslim history. It is somewhat convenient to be constrained by existing collections. Certainly, neither Sara nor Emilie is in the position of acquiring objects for their respective institutions—that would be the job of their conservators—but the acquisition of objects or archival material from the nineteenth or twentieth centuries is possible and the repeated discourse of being constrained by existing collections is likely an indicator of the unwillingness at an

institutional level to deal with histories that cast a negative light on the French republic. After all, *on représente la France*.

Queering Jewish-Muslim relations? HM2F and Beit Haverim

In a way, the historical collaborations between LGBT associations Homosexuels Musulmans de France (HM2F) and Beit Haverim also reveal the inherent difficulties in attempting to de-essentialize identities through de-contextualized interreligious or intercultural dialogue. Interestingly, faith-based associations are among the oldest LGBT associations in France. Indeed, a Christian LGBT association, David et Jonathan (founded in 1972) is France's oldest LGBT association. In addition, the founding of Beit Haverim, an LGBT Jewish association, just five years later means that two of France's very first LGBT associations affirm specific (ethno-)religious identities in addition to non-normative/counter-normative sexual and gender identities. Since the founding of Beit Haverim, the two associations have enjoyed close ties with each other. Nearly three decades after the founding of David et Jonathan, in 2010, an LGBT Muslim association would also be founded and all three associations collaborated closely for a brief period (David et Jonathan 2008; Zahed 2012, 2016; Racimor and Beit 2017). All of this is noteworthy in a French political culture that emphasizes the 'universality' of its citizens and aims to maintain the 'neutrality' of the public space.

The Homosexuels Musulmans de France (HM2F) was founded in 2010 by Ludovic-Mohamed Zahed, a gay French-Algerian doctoral student in Paris who had been previously welcomed into David et Jonathan's Abu Nuwas group, a group created within the Christian association for individuals with an interest in Arabic and Middle Eastern languages, histories, and societies. Thereafter, the three associations worked together closely, organizing several joint events in France, and, eventually, culminating in a joint 'pilgrimage' to Israel and Palestine in November 2011. To what extent was their joint trip an embodiment of a queer approach to interreligious/intercultural dialogue? What could be learnt from such a collaboration that might possibly help other practitioners of interreligious/intercultural dialogue to *queer* normative categories of identity and relations?

The early relationship between David et Jonathan, Beit Haverim, and HM2F, which is based on a shared queer positionality, is particularly interesting because the three groups found themselves having to navigate a narrow space between the pressures of normative religious dogmatism and secular, republican dogmatism. Nevertheless, the drastic differences in each group's level of success (for example, David et Jonathan is still thriving, while HM2F has now officially ceased its activities) in navigating these pressures reveals the normative or *doxic* understandings of—and the varying limits placed on public expressions of—queerness, Christianness, Jewishness, and Muslimness in contemporary French society. In the end, studying the evolution of the relationship between the three associations—and, in particular, the relationship between Beit Haverim and HM2F—reveals the challenge of homonationalism (Puar 2007), which is to say the mobilization of LGBT rights towards nationalist ends, and the limits of intersectionality with regards to the possibility of *queering* Jewish-Muslim relations. The oppositional category of Jewish-Muslim relations, which in public discourse is characterized by tension tells us more about how Islamophobia functions in contemporary France than the range of actual interactions between individuals who identify to some extent as Jewish or

Muslim. Indeed, the demonization of Muslims in contemporary France and Europe functions by positioning them (and their presumed religion) as inherently hostile to Jews, homosexuals, women, apostates, and, generally, progressives. An intersectional and queer approach, in this context, might offer an alternative to this reductive framework. Indeed, triangulating Jewishness and Muslimness with queerness could allow us to bypass this Jewish-Muslim conundrum. In other words, queer, not as an identity category, but as an analytical framework or critical approach, as ‘resistance to regimes of the normal,’ might provide an alternative epistemology of Jewish-Muslim relations (Warner 1991, 16). Yet, despite its promise, the relationship between HM2F and Beit Haverim rapidly faltered in the wake of their 2011 trip to Israel and Palestine. For a brief moment, both associations drew upon a more nuanced history of Jewish-Muslim interactions and constructed a space for socio-cultural conviviality based on religious affinities, shared histories, and intersecting oppressions expressed both through Jewishness and Muslimness, as well as queerness. Ultimately, this nascent queer solidarity appeared to be limited by political issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and homonationalism (Puar 2007). What does this episode tell us about what it means to think *queerly* about Jewish-Muslim relations? More importantly, what does their eventual failure reveal about the (im)possibility of going beyond fixed, overdetermined categories of Jews and Muslims and Jewish-Muslim relations?

First, I must clarify what I mean by queer. On the one hand, queer (as a noun) is an identity meta-category of non-normative sexual and gender identities. In this case, queer is more inclusive than, say, LGBT, because it neither privileges nor excludes any particular sexual or gender identity category or sub-category. Furthermore, contemporary uses of queer as an identity meta-category are fluid and flexible, unlike lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. On the other hand, queer (as a verb, adjective, or adverb) is a critique of fixed categories of sexual and gender identities. More broadly, insights from queer theory have been applied beyond the realm of gender and sexuality in order to provide critiques of identity and normativity (Cohen 1997, 2019; Muñoz 1999; Ferguson 2003; Giffney 2004). Indeed, in *The Trouble with Normal* (1999), Michael Warner provides an example of queer theory that is not just a critique of heterosexuality or heteronormativity, but, more fundamentally, of normalized, exclusionary political and economic systems. To think queerly is to think against the norm (or ‘regimes of the normal,’ as Warner puts it). But it is also much more than that. Certainly, all political ideologies, such as republicanism, present themselves as against other norms (for instance, in the case of republicanism, against the norms of monarchical governance, sectarianism, and so on). Is republican ideology, as a way of thinking against, say sectarianism, queer? This line of questioning is ultimately misguided because it mistakes queer for simply opposition to or critique of anything. To think queerly is not to simply present oneself as against a particular ideology, but to, fundamentally, be critical of 1) identity categories themselves and 2) the normalization of oppressions, especially under the veneer of progressivism, of individuals subsumed under such identity categories. In other words, to be queer is to be suspicious of normalization itself and not just norms. Republican ideology is, in our context, the normalization of an assimilationist and supposedly colour-blind doctrine that impedes the practical access to the legal rights that are guaranteed by the Republic, while constructing a hierarchy between the good ‘universal’ citizen and the bad ‘particular’ citizen. To think queerly in this context is to not be fooled by this ideology that normalizes marginalization through a vague language of universalism, much like the obligation to

renounce one's *statut personnel* as a Muslim to effectively access full legal citizenship in French Algeria, while constructing the Muslim as fundamentally unassimilable. And so, when I first heard of the collaboration between HM2F and Beit Haverim, I instantly wondered about the possibility of an embodied queer critique of the discourse of Jewish-Muslim relations in France. As it turns out, this did not come to pass.

In part, HM2F and Beit Haverim's past interreligious work does provide us with unexpected narratives that attempt to engage critically with contemporary French republican, universal ideals and normative understandings of Jews, Muslims, and their relations in order to reconfigure Jewish-Muslim relations beyond polarization. The documentary that was co-produced by HM2F, Beit Haverim, and David et Jonathan after the trip and the reports they published in the wake of the trip demonstrate two patterns (David et Jonathan et al. 2011).⁵ First, there is an abundance of performative I- and We-statements that affirm the hybridity of the identities of most of the participants of this trip. In other words, the participants were never *only* Muslim or *only* Jewish. Secondly, there is a diversity of discourses (for example, French universalist, Maghrebi-Muslim, and Maghrebi/Sephardi-Jewish) that allows the participants precisely to work on and against normative renderings of what it means to be French, Muslim, and Jewish from within these discourses. In one of HM2F's reports of the trip to Israel and Palestine in 2011 described it as 'une démarche LGBT pour la paix et pour la libération de toutes forme d'extrémisme ou d'homonationalisme.' In other words, they affirmed that theirs was an LGBT approach and not an approach led by LGBT individuals. Initially, and because the term queer is still relatively unused in France, I understood this as akin to the model of queer critique I describe above. I thought that this indicated that the organizers saw something inherently queer in their project. They emphasized that they, as Jews and Muslims in France, are doubly discriminated against based on their sexuality and their ethnoreligious affiliation. They also highlighted that this double discrimination is a driving motivation behind the project. The groups involved stated that their two main goals were, first, to see the on-the-ground realities in Israel and Palestine, while showing solidarity to their LGBT Israeli and Palestinian counterparts, while being specifically attuned to the ongoing occupation, and, secondly, to strengthen the ties between all three LGBT religious associations, which is to say to further anchor their on-going interreligious work in what is considered to be the Holy Land.

Throughout the documentary and the reports, some of the participants appeared to anchor their solidarity by emphasizing, in general, their common North African heritage, through references to language, cultural values, music, food, and smells. It might seem like a minor point but smells and tastes are important because they are affective gestures to the shared cultural pasts and presents of Mediterranean Jews and Muslims. By highlighting that 'we'—and the very prominence of an inclusive, declarative 'we' throughout the documentary and reports is of importance—had the same foods and the same smells is a way to insist that, despite the difficulties of the present, Jewish-Muslim relations are not always already doomed. Another way that participants appeared to construct solidarity was through religion. Research on media discourse suggests that religion and religiosity are a key elements in the discursive framing Jewish-Muslim relations in France (Bharat 2020). In media discourse, however, religion—and more precisely religious conflict and misunderstanding—is often cited as the reason why Jewish-Muslim relations

are so troubled. In the reports and documentary, however, religion (and in particular the affinities between religions) is presented as a point of solidarity. Indeed, discussions on the similarities between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity between participants and locals during the trip are particularly foregrounded in a positive manner in the documentary and reports. Furthermore, during the trip, religious participants would pray together, seemingly blending all three Abrahamic practices.

The participants also gestured towards the interconnected marginalizations involving gender, race, religion, and sexuality together. The very verses that are chosen for their combined prayers are interpreted or reinterpreted and presented in a way that both affirms the sexual and gender identities and the religious identities of the participants. The participants, then, drew on broad discourses on gender, sexuality, race, and religion in order to recognize the interconnectedness of discriminations through which a different platform for Jewish-Muslim relations in France can emerge. Beit Haverim's report of the trip concluded that the groups drew on their shared position as LGBTs 'pour montrer que nous pouvons être à l'avant-garde et faire avancer la compréhension de l'autre pour un mieux [sic] vivre ensemble' ("Témoignages de retour du voyage arc-en-ciel" 2011). Implicitly, the associations appeared to be arguing that a true universalism must be intersectional and that this intersectional universalism can be the basis for a different narrative of Jewish-Muslim relations.

When the participants returned to France at the end of November 2011, however, they were immediately faced with a series of challenges that would eventually spell the end of this queer Jewish-Muslim experiment. HM2F suddenly found themselves accused of participating in the pinkwashing of Israel and boycotted by a series of Arab LGBT associations, including Al-Qaws, a grassroots Palestinian LGBT organization, and Imaan, a London-based LGBT support group. Al-Qaws accused HM2F of 'supporting the apartheid state' and deemed the initiative 'a new form of imperialism' (Maikey 2011). HM2F, which had sought to join the informal network of queer Arab and Muslim associations across the world, was now disavowed by a large section of these groups. At the time, HM2F and Beit Haverim insisted that the joint trip was 'apolitical' in nature and, first and foremost, a dialogue 'entre les spiritualités.' In early November 2011, a joint press release announcing the trip stated that 'les trois associations revendiquent une démarche indépendante des partis politiques (en France comme en Israël et en Palestine), des autorités religieuses, de toute subvention publique ou privée, de toute forme d'idéologie' (Beit Haverim, Jonathan, and HM2F 2011).

Clearly, the associations sought to present the trip as apolitical and purely spiritual or cultural. When I asked Zahed why they sought to do this, he told me that they were aware of the potential criticisms that HM2F and Beit Haverim could respectively face as a Muslim group travelling to Israel and as a Jewish group travelling to Palestine. Yet, such a trip could never have been truly apolitical, given the historical and socio-political context of Palestine and Israel. Furthermore, the itinerary of the trip, which included meetings with the French consul in Jerusalem, the French ambassador in Tel-Aviv, and a member of the Knesset—which was followed by a tour of the Knesset—was in clear contradiction with the avowed apolitical designation. Nevertheless, the documentary and the reports repeatedly stress the apolitical and spiritual nature of the trip. Zahed emphasized to me how crucial it was to project an apolitical front: 'On était préparés qu'il fallait gérer les choses

de manière le plus apolitique possible. On s'était dit avant de partir, "pas de politique." La politique, dès qu'on l'introduit, ça complique tout.'

There are several ways to explain the disconnect between a clearly political trip and the repeated insistence of apoliticalness. It could simply be a case of exuberant naivety. Perhaps, caught up in trying to be at the avant-garde of Queer-Jewish-Muslim dialogue, the organizers and participants lost sight of the realities of the terrain into which they had entered. Or perhaps, it may have been that HM2F and Beit Haverim were hyper-aware of the realities and sought to de-contextualize their trip through an affirmation of apoliticalness. Indeed, this might also explain the de-contextualized collaboration between the mahJ and the IMA. When the identity categories of 'Jew' and 'Muslim' are constructed in opposition to each other and overdetermined by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in addition to an entire range of other politicized binaries, de-contextualization and emphasizing one's 'apolitical' nature might be perceived as a way to mitigate the pressures of binary Jewishness and Muslimness. In practice, of course, this was not realistic. No matter the intentions, their initiative, like any other, was always already likely to be overdetermined (and recuperated) by broader political discourses on Israel and Palestine.

Beit Haverim and HM2F did briefly provide an unexpectedly queer narrative of Jewish-Muslim relations in France, from outside of France. They drew attention to the interconnectedness of racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. They affirmed their sexuality and their Jewish and Muslim identities in relation to, on the one hand, normative understandings of Judaism and Islam and Jewish-Muslim relations and, on the other hand, inclusive re-imaginings of these traditions, identities, and relations. Yet, like the mahJ and IMA that neglect the impact of colonialism on Jewish-Muslim relations, Beit Haverim and HM2F neglected the colonial context of Israel and Palestine. On their return to France, and, perhaps, precisely because they sought to de-contextualize their trip, they were faced with accusations of pinkwashing and, in some ways, forced to react to these accusations as French Jews and Muslims, with all the assumptions underpinning these fixed identity categories. Soon after, the relationship between the two groups disintegrated. Ultimately, we are left with both the queer promise of solidarity and the rupture effectuated by the seemingly inevitable irruption of both the constraints of French republicanism and the spectre of Israel and Palestine.

Conclusion

Focusing on the ongoing collaboration between the mahJ and the IMA as well as the past collaboration between the now-defunct HM2F and Beit Haverim, this article suggests that, despite goodwill, traditional forms of apolitical interreligious dialogue might not be best suited to the task of articulating rich, complex, and multiple identities without being caught in the contradictions of republicanism and the legacies of empire. What is often taken for granted in the endeavour of interreligious dialogue is that the principal objective is to—pardon the clichés—bring people together or bridge divides. In other words, interreligious dialogue presumes the existence—and the vital importance—of discrete, homogenous (ethno-)religious identity categories. The objective, then, would be to use dialogue to overcome the apparent differences between these identity categories. Paradoxically, as I have been suggesting throughout this article, interreligious dialogue, when de-contextualized,

appears to reinforce these differences. Jewish and Muslim identity categories in contemporary France are heavily politicized and polarized and thus de-contextualized interreligious dialogue is ill-equipped to navigate this polarization because, by neglecting to take into account the role of the state and its dominant republican ideology in shaping these polarized identities, it constructs religion or race as the problem. On the contrary, it is important to recall that both race and religion are ‘constructed categories that emerged out of early Christian[ity] and, later, European colonial[ism]’ (Egorova 2018, 164).

One might expect better and more sustainable results from groups that explicitly contextualize and historicize their initiatives. Instead of limiting themselves to a set of de-contextualized affirmations of the religious or cultural similarities of Islam and Judaism, such initiatives would actively de-essentialize Jewish and Muslim identities by neither avoiding the role of colonization in propagating constructs of race and religion and, thus, the hardening of Jewish and Muslim identities nor avoiding the present coloniality of Israeli occupation (itself the legacy of European imperialism). In conclusion, by examining how a variety of social actors, from museums to LGBT associations, engage with and navigate the category of Jewish-Muslim relations and interreligious dialogue, we get a glimpse of the power of the discourse of identity and relations and the trap of binary, republican secularist frameworks, *but* also the imperative for individuals and groups to reach beyond and find solidarity beyond polarized images through a politically-conscious approach rooted in social action. Given the broader historical and socio-political contexts, such an approach must confront and grapple with the past and present of colonialism in shaping Jewish-Muslim relations.

Notes

1. All names in this article, except for Ludovic-Mohamed Zahed who is a public figure and consented to using his real name, have been pseudonymized.
2. The president had invited me to attend after I had reached out to him on Facebook to discuss the ties between his association and the now-defunct Homosexuels musulmans de France (HM2F).
3. *Le vivre ensemble* is a neologism increasingly used by French politicians, especially since the beginning of the twenty-first century, to refer to social togetherness or peaceful coexistence between different ethnic, cultural, and religious communities in France. The term is, however, often used synonymously for *intégration* and disproportionately applied to Muslims as the unintegrated minority community, *par excellence*.
4. Sara almost certainly would have had in mind the debates about the place of Israel within Jewish institutions in Europe following Peter Schäfer’s resignation in June 2019 as the director of the Jewish Museum of Berlin over a tweet that was deemed to be in favour of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement that seeks to apply international pressure to Israel to compel it to withdraw from the occupied territories, dismantle the separation wall in the West bank, and to respect the Palestinian right of return. See Magid 2019 for a detailed contextualization of both the resignation and the ensuing debates.
5. While the Beit Haverim reports are still accessible on their website, the now-defunct HM2F’s website is no longer online and, thus, their reports are no longer publicly accessible. Several years ago, however, I downloaded the HM2F reports. Due to a lack of space, I do not discuss these reports in detail here, but rather present the broad themes within them.

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