

# From Longing to Be-longing: The re-emergence of Jewish communities in Morocco through virtual spaces

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## ABSTRACT

Since the Jews left Morocco, there has been a growing lack of knowledge and amnesia about how Jewish life in Morocco used to be. The numbers speak for themselves - in 1947, there were more than 270,000 Jews living in Morocco; today, there are only around 1,500 Jews remaining. After leaving their homeland, they dispersed around the world, with families separated, and communities losing their core structure and communal spaces. The fading of Jewish life from Morocco threatens part of its cultural diversity and its unique example as a Muslim-Jewish coexistence. This challenge is the motivation behind "The Moroccan Jewish Story in 360," a digital project that combines documenting communities on Facebook and virtual tours of Jewish heritage sites in Morocco. Through a digital collective memory recalling model, the communities of Casablanca, Marrakech, Fes, Essaouira, Rabat, Meknes, and others work together to preserve the essence of Jewish communal life in Morocco and bring it back to their present lives. Digital communities emerge as means to reconstruct disappearing communities and transform a personal sense of longing into a cross-border collective action that can preserve diversity and multiculturalism in our region and beyond.