

October 7, One Year Later: Resilience and Coping Among Jews in Germany Amid Rising Antisemitism and Collective Trauma

Preliminary Report



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Executive Summary

The October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel marked a significant turning point for Jewish communities worldwide, including in Germany. This study explored the experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies of Jewish individuals in Germany in the aftermath of these events. Our research aimed to provide a preliminary but thorough understanding of how Jews in Germany, with or without Israeli migration background, navigated the complex emotional landscape of collective trauma and rising antisemitism.

The primary objectives of this study were to: (1) Examine the immediate and ongoing impacts of the October 7 events on Jewish individuals in Germany; (2) Investigate changes in experiences of antisemitism and perceptions of societal responses; (3) Identify coping strategies and resilience mechanisms employed by Jewish individuals; (4) Explore the influence of these events on Jewish identity and community engagement; (5) and assess concerns and hopes for the future of Jewish life in Germany.

We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 18 Jewish individuals living in Germany, including both Israeli and non-Israeli backgrounds. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 68 years old and represented diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and levels of religious observance. Interviews were conducted in German, English, or Hebrew, according to participant preference.

Our analytical approach employed qualitative network analysis, utilizing network centrality measures such as weighted degree, PageRank, and clustering. This innovative method allowed us to identify both prominent themes and unique experiences, providing a comprehensive view of the data's structure and interconnections.

Key findings:

Profound Emotional Disruption and Trauma: The October 7 attacks precipitated a significant disruption in the lives of many interviewees. Participants reported intense and prolonged emotions, including shock, fear, anger, and sadness. Some experienced symptoms reminiscent of post-traumatic stress, such as intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and hypervigilance. This emotional distress was often exacerbated by obsessive news consumption and personal connections to Israel.

Changes in Social Relationships: A concerning trend of social withdrawal emerged, with many participants distancing themselves from non-Jewish acquaintances due to perceived lack of support or understanding. This erosion of social bonds, particularly for those with Israeli backgrounds, reflects ongoing challenges in integrating Jewish and German identities. The loss of these support networks may increase vulnerability to the psychological impacts of antisemitism and collective trauma.

Nevertheless, many participants reported a strengthening of their Jewish identity in response to the attacks and subsequent rise in antisemitism, aligning with the rejection-identification model. Accordingly, we observed a notable increase in community engagement and activism among Jewish individuals in Germany following the October 7 attacks. Many participants reported strengthening ties within Jewish and Israeli communities, often as a response to perceived lack of understanding from broader German society. This heightened community involvement manifested in various forms, including increased participation in Jewish cultural events, religious observances, and community support networks.

Concurrently, we observed among some participants significant involvement in activism, with participants engaging in public demonstrations, social media campaigns, and educational initiatives to combat antisemitism and raise awareness about Jewish issues. This surge in identification, community involvement, and activism appeared to serve dual purposes: as a coping mechanism in the face of collective trauma and as a means of asserting Jewish identity in an increasingly challenging environment.

Pervasive Sense of Insecurity and Vigilance: Participants reported a heightened sense of insecurity and increased caution in expressing their Jewish identity in public. Many felt unsafe, particularly in areas with large Muslim or Arab populations, leading to behavioral changes such as concealing Jewish identity markers or avoiding speaking Hebrew in public. This climate of fear raises concerns about the long-term viability of Jewish life in Germany and its impact on future generations.

Practical Implications

Our findings suggest several key recommendations to address challenges faced by the Jewish community in Germany. We propose implementing targeted mental health support services to address trauma and anxiety, while also developing programs that strengthen both in-group networks and connections with broader German society. To enhance security, we recommend strengthening legal protections against antisemitism and improving education about Jewish history and contemporary issues. Supporting the safe expression of Jewish identity in public spaces and fostering interfaith understanding through community events could promote social cohesion. Lastly, we suggest developing long-term strategies to address the integration of Jewish and German identities, aiming to create a more inclusive society. These measures collectively seek to improve the environment for Jewish life in Germany while fostering greater societal understanding and cohesion.

While our study focused on the German context, many of these implications likely resonate with Jewish communities in other countries facing similar challenges, highlighting the potential for international collaboration in addressing these complex issues.

1. Introduction

The terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023 (hereafter referred to as Oct 7), perpetrated by Hamas against Israel, marked a significant and traumatic event with substantial implications for Jewish communities worldwide, including in Germany. The attacks resulted in approximately 1,200 fatalities and 250 abductions, with 101 individuals still held hostage a year later (El-Hai, 2024). This incident ranks among the deadliest single-day attacks in Israel's history, with repercussions extending far beyond Israel's borders.

The immediate aftermath of the attacks saw a surge in psychological distress among Jews, both in Israel (Groweiss et al., 2024; Levi-Belz et al., 2024) and the diaspora (e.g., in Australia: Bankier-Karp & Graham, 2024; in Canada: Reingold & Reznik, 2024). Many experienced heightened anxiety, fear, and grief. However, resilience has been a key theme in the Jewish response. Community support systems, including mental health services and communal gatherings, have played a crucial role in helping individuals process their trauma. Jewish organizations have mobilized to provide counseling and support, emphasizing the importance of mental health in times of crisis (Boyd, 2024). Social cohesion within Jewish communities has been strengthened as a result of the attacks. Many Jews have turned to their communities for support, finding solace in shared experiences and collective mourning. Synagogues and community centers have become hubs for solidarity, offering spaces for prayer, reflection, and mutual support. In parallel, efforts to combat antisemitism have intensified, with Jewish organizations advocating for stronger legal protections and greater public awareness.

In Germany, the months after Oct 7 were characterized by a complex societal response. On one hand, there were numerous solidarity demonstrations and strong support from the political establishment for Israel and the Jewish people during this difficult time. Due to Germany's historical responsibility for the Holocaust, German politicians have declared that protecting Israel is a core element of Germany's national interest, or *Staatsräson* (Marwecki, 2024). This unwavering commitment to Israel's security, along with the recognition of the close association between Jewish identity and the State of Israel, is reflected in legislation passed by the Bundestag to require applicants for German citizenship to declare Israel's right to exist (Fink, 2024). Additionally, it is manifested through the establishment of state and federal commissioners dedicated to promoting Jewish life and combating antisemitism. On the other hand, the country witnessed a notable increase in antisemitic incidents against Jewish and Israeli individuals and institutes, particularly against the backdrop of the ongoing war against Hamas in Gaza. The Research and Information Centers on Antisemitism (RIAS) reported 4,782 antisemitic incidents in 2023, representing an 83% increase from the previous year. Notably, 2,787 of these incidents occurred after Oct 7, with 52% categorized as Israel-related antisemitism (Fischer & Wetzels, 2024).

This surge has created an environment of heightened fear and insecurity for many Jews, particularly due to the conflation of Jewish identity with Israeli politics. Recent studies have illuminated the challenges faced by Jews. A recent survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights., 2024) of nearly 8,000 Jewish individuals from 13 European countries revealed that 96% reported encountering antisemitism in their daily lives. In Germany, 37% of Jews experienced harassment, and 4% faced physical attacks due to their identity. Over half of the respondents expressed concern for their personal safety (53%) and that of their families (60%).

Despite the evident impact of these events on the Jewish community, there remains a significant gap in research that centers Jewish voices and experiences. Historically, antisemitism research has often prioritized the perspectives of non-affected individuals or perpetrators (Kahane, 2020), neglecting Jewish viewpoints (Chernivsky et al., 2020). While recent years have seen some efforts to include Jewish voices in research (Bernstein & Diddens, 2021; Zick et al., 2017), these studies remain exceptions rather than the norm.

Research Objectives and Approach

This study aimed to address this research gap by placing Jewish voices at the center of inquiry. Through semi-structured interviews with Jewish individuals living in Germany, the study sought to explore the following main themes:

1. The **experiences and emotional reaction** of Jewish individuals in Germany to the Oct 7 events and the period subsequent to them.
2. The psychological, social, and behavioral impacts of these events on Jewish individuals' **daily lives and relationships**, as perceived and reported by them.
3. Changes in **experiences of antisemitism** in Germany since Oct 7, and perceptions of societal and media responses.
4. **Coping strategies** and resilience mechanisms employed by Jewish individuals in effort to adjust and maintain psychosocial health and functioning.
5. The influence of these events on **Jewish identity, community engagement, and social and political activism**.
6. Concerns and hopes for the **future of Jewish life in Germany** in light of these events.
7. Potential for **personal and collective growth** or transformative experiences emerging from this crisis.

This qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of personal experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies, and provided rich, contextual data that can illuminate the complex realities faced by the Jewish community in

Germany. By focusing on these aspects, this research aimed to provide a nuanced and authentic understanding of the lived experiences of Jews in Germany in the wake of Oct 7. This approach seeks to move beyond the pattern of "talking about Jews and not with Jews" (Chernivsky et al., 2020, p. 19) () that has characterized much previous research and media coverage.

We believe, and hope, that the findings of this study will inform intervention and policy development, community support strategies, and public education efforts aimed at combating antisemitism, increase resilience and adaptive coping among Jews and other affected communities, and facilitate ongoing efforts to foster a more inclusive and accepting society in which Jews feel belong and supported. By providing insights into the lived experiences of Jews in Germany, this research seeks to contribute to broader efforts to address antisemitism and promote social cohesion in an increasingly diverse social landscape.

2. Theoretical Framework

Before presenting our methodology and results, we wish to present in a concise manner the theoretical underpinnings that guide our understanding of how Jewish individuals in Germany experience and cope with the aftermath of Oct 7, 2023 attacks. We draw on several interconnected theories and concepts: collective trauma, intergenerational transmission of trauma, social identity theory, coping strategies, and post-traumatic growth. These frameworks provide a lens through which we can interpret the experiences, reactions, and potential for resilience among Jewish individuals in Germany following this traumatic event.

2.1. Contemporary diasporic Jewish and Israeli Identities

The relationship between Jewish identity and attachment to Israel is complex and multifaceted, reflecting diverse opinions and experiences among Jews in Germany and the broader diaspora. For many, their Jewish identity is inextricably linked to Israel, drawing on historical and emotional attachments to the Jewish state as a symbol of safety and national pride. Programs like Birthright and ongoing ties to Jewish communities often reinforce this connection, making Israel a central element in the construction of Jewish identity.

However, this strong identification is not universal. In recent years, especially against the backdrop of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, some Jews have distanced themselves from Israel and Zionism. For these individuals, critical views of Israel's policies, particularly regarding its role in the conflict with the Palestinians, have led to a more ambivalent or even oppositional stance. Some adopt post-colonial or radical leftist ideologies that challenge traditional Zionist narratives and, in extreme cases, question Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

This diversity of views highlights how Jewish identity today is shaped by a range of factors, including religious affiliation, political ideology, and personal experiences. Understanding these varied responses is key to grasping the evolving nature of Jewish and Israeli identification in the context of the attacks and the period that followed.

Pertaining to German identity, the intersection of German and Jewish identity has historically been fraught with complexity, largely due to Germany's role in the Holocaust and its legacy of Jewish persecution. For Jewish individuals living in Germany today, negotiating these identities often involves navigating between feelings of historical trauma, contemporary antisemitism, and personal connections to both Jewish and German cultures. This hybrid identity is marked by a deep ambivalence, with many Jews in Germany feeling disconnected from a full embrace of German identity while simultaneously living in and contributing to German society (Dryjanska & Zlotnick, 2019; Hochman & Heilbrunn, 2018).

2.2. Collective Trauma and Its Impact on Jewish Communities

The concept of collective trauma offers a crucial framework for understanding the widespread impact of the October 7 attacks on the Jewish community in Germany. Hirschberger (2018) defines collective trauma as a "*psychological reaction to a traumatic event that affects an entire society*," extending beyond those directly affected to include group members spatially and temporally removed from the original event. This perspective helps explain why Jews in Germany, despite their geographical distance from Israel, may experience profound emotional and psychological effects from the attacks.

Janoff-Bulman's (1992) theory of shattered assumptions provides insight into how such events can profoundly impact individuals' worldviews. According to this theory, people generally hold three fundamental assumptions about the world: it is benevolent, predictable, and meaningful. The Oct 7 attacks may have challenged these assumptions for many Jews in Germany, particularly in relation to Israel's perceived security.

As Marina Chernivsky, a prominent antisemitism expert, described, the massacre represented a "deep incision" that has divided life in the Jewish and Israeli community into "a before and after," emphasizing that the attack "testifies to a contempt for Jewish life" (cited in: von Schrenk, 2024). This sentiment underscores how the attacks may have shattered the sense of security and predictability that many Jews associated with Israel.

The theory of cultural trauma (Alexander, 2004; Eyerman, 2019) further elucidates how Oct 7 might be integrated into the collective memory of the Jewish community. This integration process can influence group identity and cohesion, potentially reinforcing existing narratives of threat and resilience. As Eyerman (Eyerman, 2019) argues, cultural trauma is not static but a dynamic process, continuously shaped by current experiences and interpretations.

Indeed, empirical research has recently emerged and demonstrated the profound impact Oct 7 had on the mental health and well-being of Israeli Jews. The attack left the nation in shock, and the sheer brutality inflicted psychological scars on the entire population. A nationwide prospective study of Israeli Jews and Arabs found that the prevalence of probable PTSD almost doubled from 16.2% to 29.8% just weeks after the attack. The rates of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and depression also surged, rising from 24.9% to 42.7% for GAD and from 31.3% to 44.8% for depression (Levi-Belz et al., 2024). The direct exposure to the attack, such as living in the communities surrounding Gaza or having loved ones affected by the violence, significantly increased the likelihood of developing PTSD and depression. Those directly exposed were three times more likely to develop probable PTSD and twice as likely to experience depression (Groweiss et al., 2024). These findings align with previous studies on the mental health impact of terror attacks, highlighting the wide-ranging effects of trauma beyond those directly exposed.

However, Oct 7 not only marked a violent escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but also sent shockwaves throughout the global Jewish community. Studies conducted in Australia (Bankier-Karp & Graham, 2024) and Canada (Reingold & Reznik, 2024) reveal that Jews in these countries experienced heightened levels of anxiety and stress following the October 7 events. A study of Australian Jews found that 44% reported feeling "nervous, anxious, or on edge" daily, with similar proportions unable to control their worrying Canadian Jews, especially young adults and students, also sought community support and shared information to navigate the emotional and social consequences of the attacks. These findings highlight the interconnectedness between events in Israel and the emotional state of Jewish diaspora communities worldwide. Accordingly, despite living far from the immediate conflict, Jews in Germany, much like their counterparts in other diaspora communities, may have experienced significant emotional distress and concern for their own safety. This response is tied closely to their identification with Israel, where many have family members or personal connections, and a broader sense of Jewish solidarity.

2.3. Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma and Resilience

The Holocaust, as a cornerstone of modern Jewish collective memory, provides an important lens through which many Jews interpret the events of Oct 7. It serves as a critical framework for understanding Jewish identity, often amplifying existential threats while simultaneously strengthening collective cohesion. The memory of the Holocaust provides a context through which many Jews interpret current events, evoking transgenerational fears of insecurity, victimization, and antisemitism.

The concept of intergenerational transmission of trauma is particularly relevant when examining the Jewish experience in Germany. Kidron and colleagues (2019) have recently demonstrated how descendants of Holocaust survivors inherit both the emotional burden and the resilience needed to navigate their identities in the face of historical trauma (Kidron et al., 2019). This transmission process may influence how German Jews interpret and respond to current events like the October 7 attacks, potentially amplifying feelings of vulnerability while also activating inherited coping mechanisms.

Kellermann (2013) notes that many Jewish family histories are shaped by traumatic experiences, often passed on transgenerationally. Research on second and third-generation Jews has shown increased rates of various physical illnesses, partly attributed to this intergenerational transmission of trauma (Scharf, 2007). This historical context may heighten the sensitivity of Jewish individuals to depictions of violence in the media, potentially exacerbating stress reactions to the October 7 events (Neria & Sullivan, 2011).

The long history of traumatization is also relevant when interpreting the events using the theory of cultural trauma (Alexander, 2004; Eyerman, 2019). The Holocaust, in its unprecedented cruelty, represented a collective trauma that, according to the

theory of cultural trauma, was integrated into collective memory and has become a fundamental element of shared Jewish identity (Hirschberger, 2018). Empirical data from the FRA survey supports this, showing that more than 90% of Jews in Europe see remembering the Holocaust as an important part of their Jewish identity, with almost 75% considering it very important (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights., 2024).

2.4. Coping Strategies

Understanding the coping strategies employed by Jewish individuals in Germany is central to our research objectives, although it is limited to understanding general trends, variations, and processes considering the qualitative nature of the analysis and the small sample size. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping distinguishes between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. In the context of the October 7 attacks and their aftermath, Jews in Germany might engage in problem-focused strategies (e.g., seeking information, engaging in activism) or emotion-focused strategies (e.g., seeking social support, avoiding distressing stimuli).

Another key dimension of coping is the distinction between engagement and disengagement strategies. Engagement strategies involve actively confronting the stressor, while disengagement strategies involve avoiding or withdrawing from the source of stress. While engagement strategies often foster a sense of agency and empowerment, disengagement strategies may provide temporary relief from overwhelming emotions, though their long-term effectiveness is debated (Bonanno & Burton, 2013).

2.5. Social Identity and Coping

Social Identity Theory (Boehling, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 2004) provides a valuable framework for understanding how Jewish individuals in Germany may interpret and respond to Oct 7. This theory posits that an individual's sense of self is partly derived from their membership in social groups. In the context of our study, Jewish identity likely plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions, emotional reactions, and coping strategies pertaining to the attacks.

Research has shown that individuals who share social identity characteristics with victims of targeted attacks often experience more intense emotional reactions and stress (Ursano et al., 1999; Wayment, 2004). This phenomenon, known as "vicarious victimization," (Wohl & Van Bavel, 2011) may explain why Jews in Germany, despite their physical distance from the events, might experience significant distress and anxiety following Oct 7.

The role of media in shaping these responses is significant. Wayment (2004) found that intensive media coverage of tragic events can lead to increased identification and emotional connection with victims. This perceived similarity with victims is

associated with increased disaster-focused stress reactions, including grief, "survivor guilt," and intrusive thoughts about the event.

Social identity becomes particularly salient in situations where it is significant, such as during wars and crises (Bourguignon et al., 2020). In these contexts, social identity becomes the "perceptual and action basis" of individuals (Zick, 2005, p. 410), directly mediating between the environment and the individual. However, it's important to note that collective traumas can also threaten social identity and its associated values. Experienced victimization can lead to a reduction in individuals' identification with a group (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008).

In the context of identity-related coping, two prominent psychological models help explain how individuals respond to experiences of rejection or discrimination based on their group identity: the rejection-identification model and the rejection-disidentification model. These models are particularly relevant to understanding how Jews in Germany might respond to increased antisemitism and perceived threats following the October 7 attacks.

The rejection-identification model, introduced by Branscombe et al. (1999), posits that individuals who face discrimination based on their group identity may respond by strengthening their identification with that group (Brondolo et al., 2009; Brugger, 2021). In this way, their group membership becomes a source of emotional resilience and social support, allowing them to counteract feelings of exclusion by deepening ties with their in-group. This heightened identification helps protect self-esteem and facilitates adaptive coping in hostile environments.

Applied to our study, this model suggests that some Jewish individuals in Germany might respond to increased antisemitism or perceived threats by strengthening their Jewish identity. This could manifest in various ways, such as increased participation in Jewish community activities, more open expression of Jewish identity, or stronger emotional connections to Israel and the global Jewish community.

In contrast, the rejection-disidentification model suggests that some individuals may cope by distancing themselves from their group identity when they experience rejection or discrimination (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2018). In this model, disidentification from the group may reduce the emotional burden of belonging to a stigmatized or marginalized group. However, this form of coping can lead to social isolation and may ultimately hinder the development of resilience in the face of adversity.

In the context of our research, this model might explain why some Jewish individuals in Germany choose to conceal their Jewish identity or distance themselves from Jewish community activities in response to perceived threats or increased antisemitism following Oct 7.

The interplay between these two models highlights the complex and sometimes contradictory ways individuals might respond to group-based threats or

discrimination. Some Jews in Germany might respond to the aftermath of Oct 7 by strengthening their Jewish identity and connections, while others might choose to distance themselves from their Jewish identity as a protective measure.

Friedlander and colleagues (Friedlander et al., 2010) found that more Jewish-identified participants experienced more acculturative stress but potentially had more tools to cope with discrimination. This finding aligns with the rejection-identification model and suggests that strong Jewish identification might provide both challenges and resources for coping with antisemitism and discrimination.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial for our research objectives, as it provides a framework for interpreting diverse responses to Oct 7 within the Jewish community in Germany. It also highlights the potential variability in coping strategies and the complex relationship between Jewish identity, experiences of antisemitism, and psychological well-being.

2.6. Activism as a Coping Mechanism

Recent research has explored how activism and advocacy can serve as coping mechanisms for individuals facing collective trauma, racism, prejudice, and discrimination (Delker et al., 2020; Erfan, 2017). This body of work provides valuable insights into how Jews in Germany might cope with the trauma of the October 7 attacks and subsequent experiences of antisemitism through various forms of activism.

Institutional antiracism advocacy and online coping have been shown to moderate psychological distress caused by experiences of racism, although higher levels of these activities do not necessarily provide complete protection against distress (Keum & Volpe, 2023). In the context of our study, this suggests that Jewish individuals engaging in online advocacy against antisemitism might experience some mitigation of distress, but such engagement should not be viewed as a panacea.

Developing critical consciousness, which involves witnessing, processing, and acting against discrimination, has been identified as a way to resist and prevent racial trauma (Erfan, 2017; Mosley et al., 2021). This model could be applicable to Jewish individuals in Germany as they process and respond to Oct 7 and subsequent antisemitic incidents.

Engagement in activism, including social media and political actions, has been shown to help combat racism (Jun et al., 2021). For Jews in Germany, this might involve using social media platforms to share information about antisemitism, participating in political demonstrations, or engaging in public education efforts about Jewish experiences and concerns.

However, it's important to note that the impact of political activism on mental health can be complex. While it can mitigate the negative effects of discrimination on stress and depressive symptoms for some groups, for others, higher political activism may

exacerbate stress and anxiety related to microaggressions (Hope et al., 2018). This underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of how different forms of activism might affect Jewish individuals in Germany.

Online social support seeking and anti-racism advocacy can have both benefits and costs. Balanced engagement in these activities is associated with better well-being among racial/ethnic minority adults (Keum & Li, 2022). This suggests that for Jews in Germany, finding a balance between online activism, community engagement, and personal well-being may be crucial in effectively coping with Oct 7 and ongoing experiences of antisemitism.

Collaborative advocacy models involving mental health providers and community activists have been proposed to address trauma from discriminatory policies (Cadenas et al., 2024). Such models, emphasizing democratic leadership and the voices of affected communities, could be adapted to support Jewish communities in Germany in their efforts to combat antisemitism and process collective trauma.

In conclusion, while activism and advocacy can play crucial roles in coping with collective trauma and discrimination, their effectiveness varies based on context and level of engagement. For Jews in Germany, a balanced approach to activism, combined with institutional support and community-based efforts, may provide valuable psychological and social support. However, it's essential to recognize the potential complexities and limitations of activism as a coping mechanism, and to consider it as part of a broader strategy for resilience and healing.

2.7. Intergroup Tensions

In the wake of Oct 7, tensions between Jewish communities and some Arab and Muslim populations in Germany have become more pronounced (Beyer et al., 2024). These tensions manifest in increased fears of antisemitic incidents and changes in behavior among Jewish residents, such as concealing their Jewish identity in public spaces.

For example, in immigrant neighborhoods like Neukölln in Berlin, instances of attacks on Hebrew-speaking individuals and public celebrations of the violence in Israel have been reported (ZDF, 2024), causing Jewish residents to feel increasingly unsafe. Many Jewish residents have reported changing their behaviors—removing mezuzahs from doorframes, avoiding speaking Hebrew in public, and even withholding personal details from service providers for fear of being identified as Jewish (Boyd, 2024; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights., 2024).

Understanding these intergroup dynamics is crucial for contextualizing the experiences of Jewish individuals in Germany and their perceptions of safety and belonging in the period following the attacks.

2.8. Summary of Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework provides a multifaceted lens through which we can examine the experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies of Jewish individuals in Germany following the attacks. By integrating concepts of collective trauma, intergenerational transmission of trauma, social identity, coping strategies, intergroup dynamics, and post-traumatic growth, we aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of how this event has impacted the Jewish community in Germany and how they navigate its aftermath.

The framework highlights the complex interplay between historical trauma, contemporary events, social identity, and individual coping mechanisms. It underscores the importance of considering both the challenges faced by the Jewish community in Germany and the potential for resilience and growth in the face of adversity.

This approach aligns with our research objectives, allowing us to explore the immediate and ongoing impacts of the October 7 events, changes in experiences of antisemitism, coping strategies and resilience mechanisms, influences on Jewish identity and community engagement, and potential for personal and collective growth. By applying this theoretical framework to our qualitative data, we aim to provide a nuanced and authentic understanding of the lived experiences of Jews in Germany in the wake of Oct 7, contributing to broader efforts to address antisemitism and promote social cohesion in an increasingly diverse social landscape.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies of Jews living in Germany following the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel. Given the exploratory nature of our research questions, which are not based on explicit hypotheses, we chose to conduct semi-structured qualitative interviews as our data collection method. This approach allows us to capture the experiences of participants without constraining them to pre-established theories, as is sometimes criticized in quantitative methodologies (Röbken & Wetzel, 2017). Moreover, given the unique and specific circumstances of this study, there is limited existing knowledge, making it difficult to formulate meaningful hypotheses. A qualitative approach allows for an initial, in-depth exploration of the phenomenon. Moreover, the qualitative approach enables a deep understanding of the meaning and significance of the attack, which might not be achievable through quantification alone.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, this study aims to fill a crucial gap in antisemitism research, which has often neglected Jewish perspectives (Chernivsky et al., 2020). Instead of viewing Jews as objects of study, our approach recognizes them as subjects in the social space (Kahane, 2020). The focus on contemporary perspectives of Jews in Germany aims to highlight the necessity of considering Jewish perspectives and to provide a snapshot of the current Jewish lived reality in Germany. By centering Jewish voices, we aim to create an understanding of the lived realities of Jewish people that is based on active listening rather than assumptions and external attributions. In the long term, this approach can contribute to developing awareness in the non-Jewish majority society for the needs and concerns of the Jewish community. It provides Jewish people the opportunity to articulate their experiences, perceptions, interpretations, and the personal consequences of this collective traumatization themselves.

Importantly, the study does not aim to provide a generalizing or collective representation of experiences. The focus of this work is on the individual, who should not be viewed as an isolated unit in the context of such a politically and socially significant conflict. As Muldoon and Lowe (2012) note in their research on social identity, groups, and post-traumatic stress, trauma is not caused by individual weakness, but by belonging to a traumatic social context.

3.2. Participants

The prerequisite for inclusion in the sample was that the individuals are Jewish and have been living in Germany for at least two years. The ability to speak German was not a prerequisite for participation, as the research team offered and conducted interviews in German, English, and Hebrew. We aimed to obtain a balance between

Jews living in Germany who immigrated from Israel, and those without strong Israeli background, in order to understand the unique experience of both Israelis and non-Israelis, which may differ across the examined domains. This diverse sample was intentionally selected to allow for a nuanced exploration of transnational identities and varied perspectives within the Jewish community.

We interviewed 18 German Jews who volunteered for the interviews, with an average age of approximately 40 years ($M = 39.9$, $SD = 14$), ranging from 23 to 68 years old. Figures 1-4 and Table 1 present some demographic information on the participants in summary and in details. The sample size is higher than the common threshold for achieving saturations in qualitative research (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Throughout the remainder of this paper, including in the main text, tables, and figures, participants are referred to by first-name pseudonyms to maintain their anonymity while preserving the personal nature of their accounts. Participants reported a range of educational backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses, with responses indicating a mix of comfortable and struggling financial situations, though no one reported extreme financial hardship. The participants resided across various federal states in Germany, with a significant number living in larger urban areas, reflecting diverse geographical representation.

In terms of religious and cultural identity, all participants identified as Jewish, with a range of religious practices and affiliations, from secular to more observant traditions. Every participant reported having family or friends in Israel, and most indicated visiting Israel frequently, with 14 participants having visited the country many times. This strong connection to Israel underscored the participants' personal investment in the events of Oct 7 and the subsequent conflict.

When discussing their personal experiences with Oct 7, participants expressed varying degrees of familiarity with individuals directly affected by the events. Some interviewees mentioned the loss of friends or relatives. For instance, one participant recounted, "*Friends lost family members. Friends lost their home.*" Another stated that "*two people I knew from my high school died during the Nova party. Not very close friends, but I knew them.*" These accounts illustrate the tangible and deeply personal impact the conflict had on many of the participants, underscoring the gravity of their experiences and the widespread reach of the violence (see Table 1).

It is important to mention that our sample might not be representative of the entire German Jewish population. While a considerable percentage of Jews living in Germany today are immigrants from the former Soviet Union (Dietz, 2003), only one interviewee in our sample belongs to this sub-population.

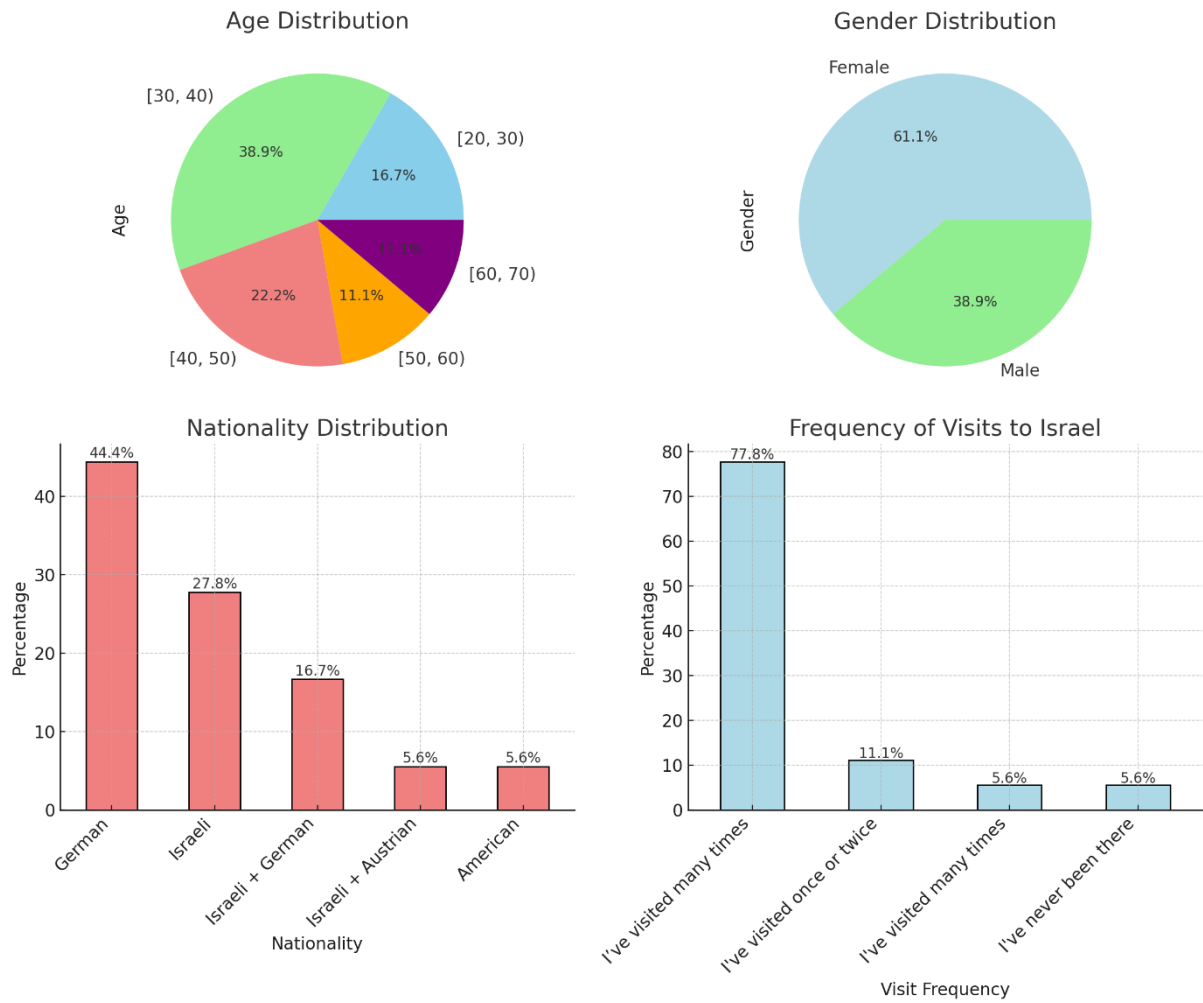


Figure 1. Participant Demographics: Age, Gender, Nationality, and Israel Visit Frequency

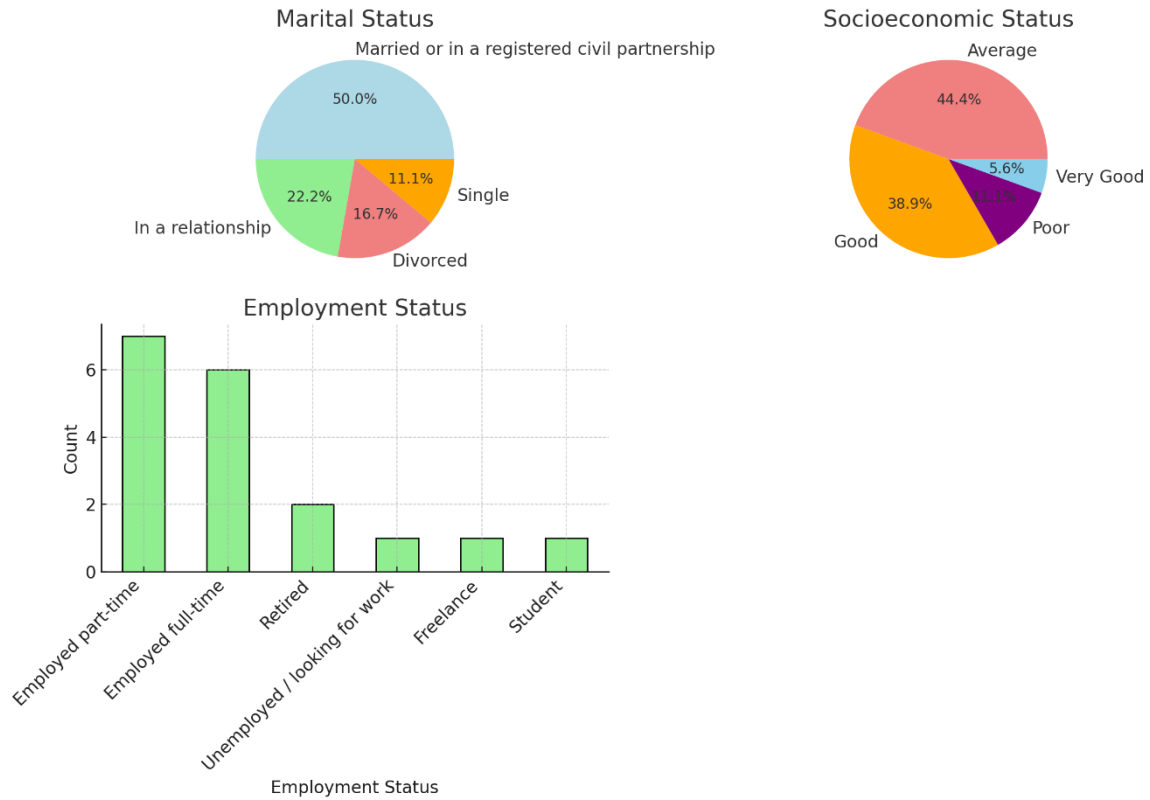


Figure 2. Participant Demographics: Marital, Socioeconomic, and Employment Status

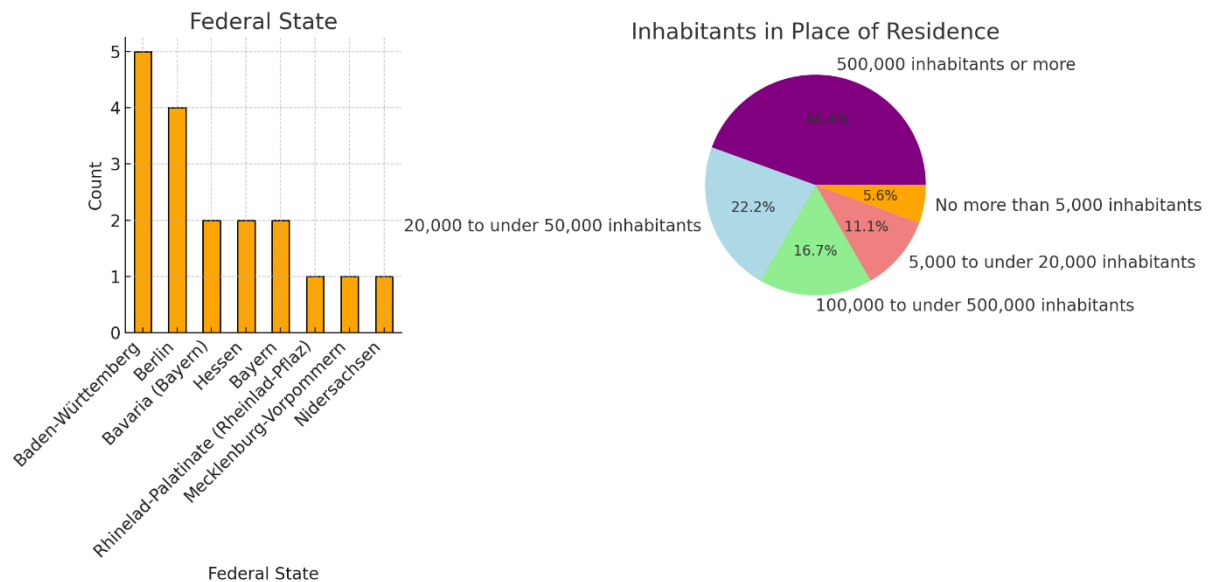


Figure 3. Participant Distribution by Federal State and Residential Area Population Size

Jewish Religious Affiliation

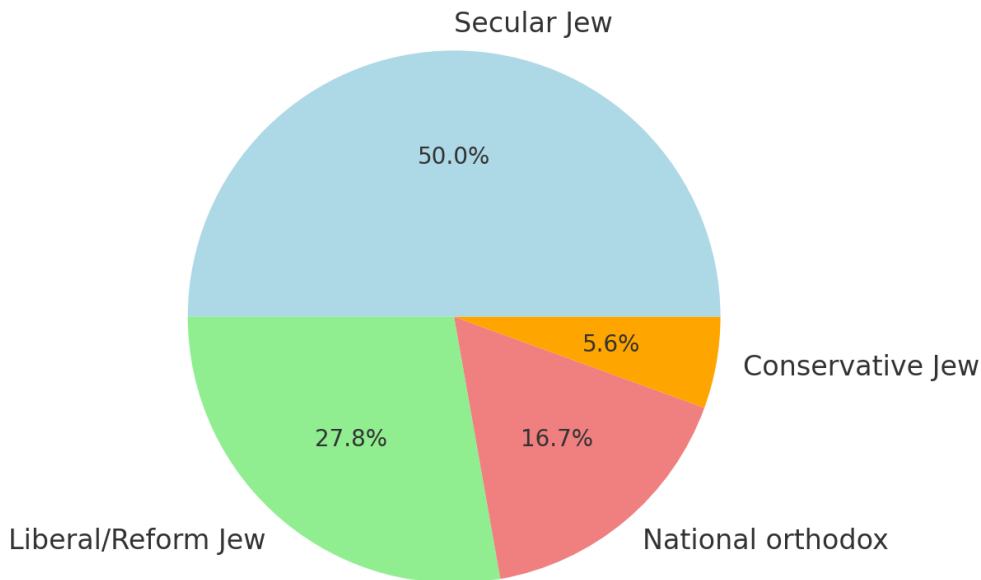


Figure 4. Participant Demographics: Jewish Religious Affiliation

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Year in Germany	Affected by Oct. 7 attacks
Eitan	24	Male	Israeli	3	Two individuals from the interviewee's high school died during the Nova music festival attack.
Ido	41	Male	German	11	The interviewee was affected but did not specify the extent.
Ruth	46	Female	Israeli + Austrian	19	The interviewee knows individuals who had to relocate due to the conflict.
Talia	39	Female	Israeli	8	The interviewee's friends experienced the loss of family members and their homes.
Maya	43	Female	Israeli + German	16.5	The interviewee was not directly affected by the events.
Noam	30	Male	Israeli	2.5	The brother and girlfriend of the interviewee's cousin were killed during the October 7 attacks.
Uriel	43	Male	German	12	The interviewee was impacted by rocket attacks in Ashkelon.
Ben	30	Male	Israeli + German	6.5	The interviewee knows multiple people who were killed or kidnapped, including

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Year in Germany	Affected by Oct. 7 attacks
					acquaintances, a former classmate, and the brother of a friend.
Shani	55	Female	German	23	The interviewee was not affected by the events.
Rivka	57	Female	Israeli	5	The interviewee knows acquaintances and relatives who lost children, with one child murdered and another abducted. Friends of their children survived the Nova Festival, and nephews enlisted in the reserves.
Jessica	30	Female	American	5	A relative of the interviewee's friend was killed during the attacks.
Hans	68	Male	German	64	Two of the interviewee's cousins were killed in the conflict.
Sophia	30	Female	German	30	The interviewee knows individuals who were abducted or murdered during the conflict.
Laura	39	Female	German	30	The interviewee notes that everyone has been impacted by rocket fire, mourning, and concern for conscripted soldiers and hostages.
Miriam	66	Female	Israeli	4	The interviewee reported evacuation and severe disruptions to daily life.
Avi	23	Male	Israeli + German	17	The interviewee's relatives in Eilat faced threats from Houthi attacks, and those in Ein Hashofet were threatened by Hezbollah.
Anna	31	Female	German	7	The interviewee was not affected by the events.
Lena	24	Female	German	24	The interviewee's friends in Israel lost loved ones during the Nova music festival attack.

Table 1. Participant Demographics and Personal Experiences Related to Oct 7

3.3. Procedure

The entire research process, from the development of the interview guide to the conducting of interviews and subsequent analysis, was carried out by the research team at the Department of Developmental Psychology, Institute for Psychology at Osnabrück University. To guide the semi-structured interviews, an interview guide was created based on discussions within the research team. The guide focused on key areas including experiences and feelings in the immediate aftermath of the attack, assessments of the current socio-political situation in Germany, subjective experiences of antisemitism in various life domains and everyday settings, and coping strategies for dealing with antisemitism. This format allowed for open-ended

questions and follow-up inquiries, enabling a deep exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives.

Prior to the interviews, participants completed a questionnaire capturing demographic data and personal life situations, including education level, place of residence, and family situation. The semi-structured interviews were conducted online via the web conference program Big Blue Button, a secured system at the university. Most interviews lasted between 60 to 90 minutes, though some extended to two hours or more, allowing for in-depth discussions. The interviews were recorded using the program's integrated recording function, with participants' consent. As compensation for their time and participation in the study, each participant received €25.

Throughout the research process, from interview guide development to data analysis, the team maintained a reflexive stance, continuously discussing and reflecting on how their own backgrounds and perspectives might influence the research process and interpretation of results. This approach helped to enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the study, ensuring that the findings accurately represented the experiences and perspectives of the Jewish individuals who participated in the research.

Interview Protocol

A comprehensive interview guide was developed to address the research questions systematically while allowing for flexibility and emergence of unexpected themes (see Appendix A). The guide was structured into four main parts:

1. **Personal Experience of the Events:** This section explored participants' immediate reactions, emotional responses, and ongoing impacts of the attack and subsequent war.
2. **Experiences in Germany:** Questions in this part focused on participants' observations of societal reactions, experiences of antisemitism, media perceptions, and changes in social relationships.
3. **Coping Strategies:** This section examined various coping mechanisms, including community engagement, identity expression, social support, and activism.
4. **Resilience, Prosperity, and Post-Traumatic Growth:** The final part explored personal insights, changes in self-perception and life outlook, and perspectives on community growth and future concerns.

3.4. Data Analysis

Following the interviews, the research team manually validated and corrected the audio recordings before transcribing them into written form using the Transcripator program. The subsequent analysis was conducted on these transcribed interviews in their original language (German, English, or Hebrew).

To address common criticisms of qualitative research regarding transparency and reproducibility (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Pokorny et al., 2018), we adopted qualitative network analysis as our primary analytical method. This approach, rooted in Graph Theory, allows for the visualization of connections within interview themes and codes, focusing on prominent relationships in the summary of main results. Network Analysis serves as an organizing and visualizing method, enabling explicit demonstration and interpretation of the relationship network between themes through a transparent procedure (Pokorny et al., 2018). This method offers advantages in visualization and reproducibility compared to other qualitative evaluation methods, while maintaining flexibility to adapt to various study objectives.

The analysis process began with coding the transcribed interviews based on a Global Theme list created by the research team. This thematic structure encompassed seven major domains: (A) Background and Identity, (B) Experiences and Reactions to October 7 Events, (C) Antisemitism and Societal Responses in Germany, (D) Coping Strategies and Resilience, (E) Jewish Identity Expression and vigilance Amid Rising Antisemitism in Germany, (F) Personal Growth and Community Development, and (G) Future Perspectives and Concerns. For each global theme, we conducted inductive coding both manually and using Large Language Models such as ChatGPT and Claude, subsequently comparing versions for agreement.

In the second step, we summarized the codes into a network of nodes (representing themes) and transferred them into an edge list, representing the relationships between the codes. Each interview underwent manual coding by one researcher, followed by a comparison with AI-generated coding. This dual human-AI coding approach aimed to ensure comprehensive and accurate code and edge list creation, with AI serving as an additional control instance in the research process.

After visualizing the network, we evaluated the codes through network centrality measures, including weighted degree, PageRank, and modularity. The average weighted degree indicates a node's relative importance and connectedness within the network (Opsahl et al., 2010). PageRank measures a node's centrality by showing its level of connections in the network. Modularity, ranging from 1-10, measures edge density within a group (cluster) of nodes, with high values indicating high edge density, allowing for data-driven clustering of codes based on network proximity.

The interpretation of analysis results aimed to summarize key findings and interpret them in relation to the research questions, study objectives, current state of research, and theoretical concepts, following Attride-Stirling's (2001) recommendations for thematic network analysis.

This resource offers a comprehensive overview of our analytical process and allows for a deeper understanding of the relationships between various themes and concepts identified in the study. Additionally, for the sake of simplicity and focus in this paper, we have included only the most pertinent results.

4. Results

The Results section is organized by global themes and reviews main findings pertaining to prominent codes with example quotes and a brief summary for each section.

4.0. Heatmap for Data Visualization

To visualize the qualitative data from our interviews, we employed a heatmap approach. This method allows for a comprehensive overview of the themes and patterns across all participants.

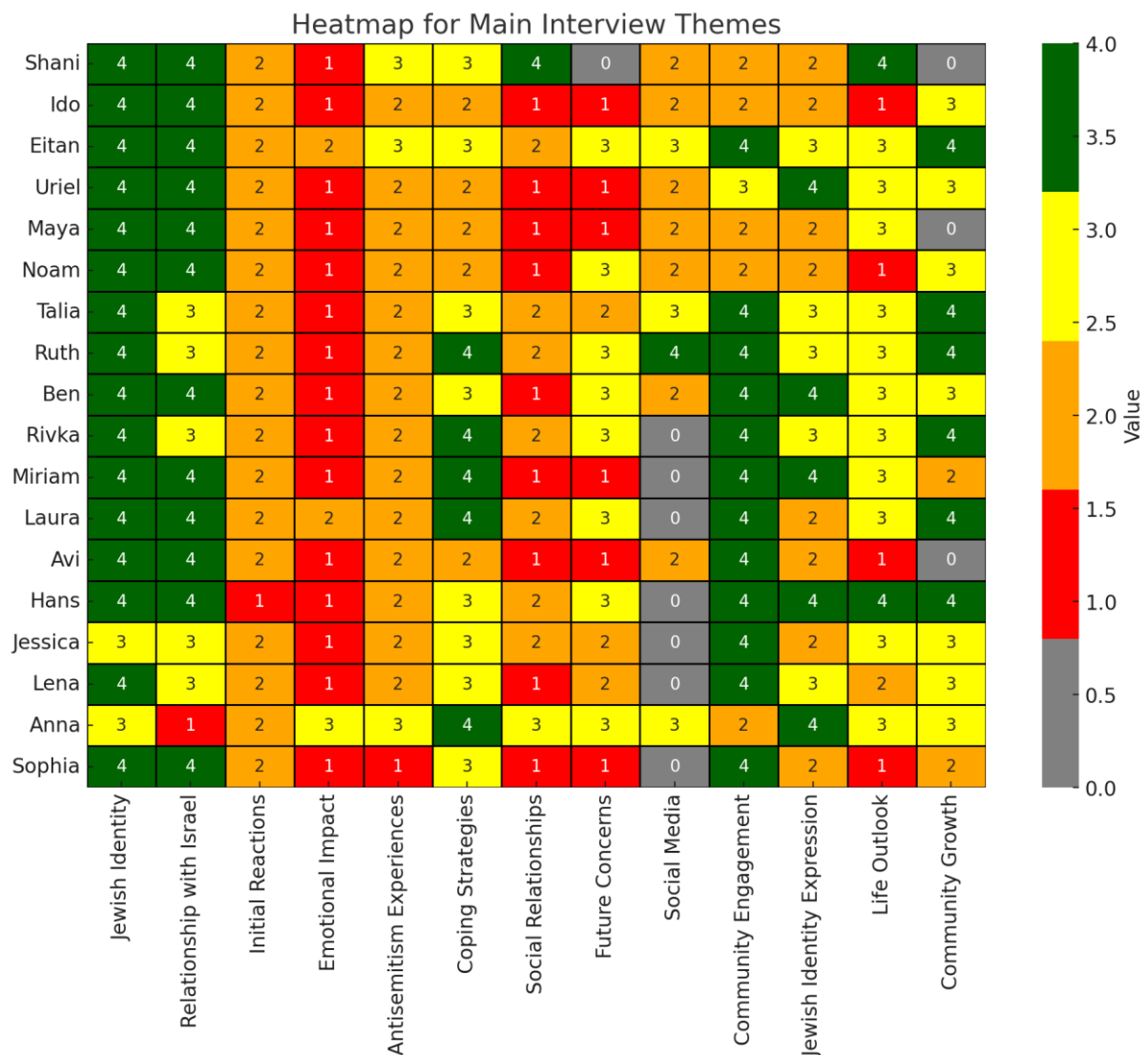


Figure 5. Heatmap of Participant Experiences and Perceptions Across Main Themes

Note: Color coding represents the valence of experiences or perceptions (4 = dark green, very positive; 3 = yellow, moderately positive; 2 = orange, neutral; 1 = red, negative; 0 = gray, not applicable/not mentioned).

Figure 5 presents a color-coded heat map that summarizes the experiences and perceptions of all interviewees across prominent themes. A textual summary of those experiences and perceptions is available in Appendix B. The heatmap was color-coded with a custom scheme where dark green represented the most positive values (4), yellow represented moderately positive values (3), orange represented neutral values (2), red represented negative values (1), and gray represented not applicable or not mentioned (0).

The resulting heatmap provides a visual representation of the experiences and attitudes of our interviewees across various themes related to Jewish identity and the impact of Oct 7. Key observations include:

1. Jewish Identity: Most interviewees (15 out of 18) reported very strong Jewish identity (dark green), with only three reporting moderately strong identity (yellow).
2. Relationship with Israel: The majority (13 out of 18) reported very strong connections to Israel (dark green), with some variation among the rest.
3. Emotional Impact: The emotional impact was largely negative (mostly red), indicating the traumatic nature of the events.
4. Antisemitism Experiences: Experiences varied, with most reporting neutral to negative experiences (orange to red), suggesting a concerning level of antisemitism encounters.
5. Coping Strategies: There was considerable variation in coping strategies, ranging from very positive (dark green) to negative (red), indicating diverse approaches to dealing with the aftermath of Oct 7.
6. Social Relationships: This category showed the most variation, with some reporting positive changes and others reporting negative impacts, highlighting the complex social dynamics following the events.
7. Community Engagement: Most interviewees reported high levels of Jewish community engagement, suggesting a strengthening of community ties in response to the events.
8. Jewish Identity Expression: Responses varied widely, from very comfortable (dark green) to uncomfortable (red), reflecting the complex dynamics of expressing Jewish identity in the current climate.

4.1. Background and Identity

4.1.1. Jewish Identity

Jewish identity emerged as a central theme across interviews, with participants expressing strong connections to their Jewish heritage, although the way this identity was articulated varied between Israeli and non-Israeli Jews living in Germany. Both groups highlighted the complexity of maintaining their Jewish identity in a diasporic context, especially following the traumatic events of Oct 7, which appeared to intensify their sense of identity.

For the non-Israeli Jews, Jewish identity was deeply rooted in both personal history and community engagement. Miriam (66) and Laura (39), both born in Germany, as well as Hans (68, lived most of his life in Germany) articulated strong Jewish identifications, with Miriam stating: *"As a Jew, I stand in the middle of Judaism. So I have a very firm and intense relationship with it, and I live every facet of it, and I do it gladly."* Hans similarly emphasized the primacy of his Jewish identity over national identity, describing himself as *"a Jew in Germany" rather than a "German Jew."*

Some participants adopted a more flexible approach to their Jewish identity, balancing tradition with modernity. Jessica, who immigrated from America five years ago and whose friend's relative was killed on Oct 7, exemplifies this approach. Her reflection, *"I still very much identify as Jewish, but in a way where I can sort of shape it more,"* mirrors what sociologist Steven M. Cohen (2017) describes as the experience of *moderately affiliated Jews*, who adapt Jewish traditions to fit contemporary life. Similarly, Lena, a 24-year-old woman born in Germany whose friends in Israel lost companions in the Nova festival massacre, exhibited this adaptable stance.

This more individualistic approach contrasts with those who expressed a more traditional, yet non-religious, identification. Anna, a 31-year-old woman who moved to Germany from the USA seven years ago, stated that her connection to Judaism was primarily cultural: *"Yes, definitely a cultural connection... we weren't raised particularly religiously."* Avi, a 23-year-old man who moved to Germany at age six and whose relatives in Israel are affected by the war, shared a similar perspective emphasizing cultural Judaism, where identity is maintained through practices and heritage rather than religious observance.

In conclusion, while both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews living in Germany express strong connections to their Jewish identity, their experiences reflect different emphases. For Israelis, the focus tends to be on the cultural and national aspects of Jewish identity, particularly in the context of their immigration experience and the recent political crisis. For non-Israelis, Jewish identity appears to be more rooted in cultural and communal practices, with a balance between maintaining tradition and adapting it to modern life. Both groups, however, share a deepening sense of identity in response to the challenges they face as Jews living in Germany.

4.1.2. Relationship with Israel

Across both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews in Germany, the relationship with Israel emerged as a deeply emotional theme, shaped by personal history, family ties, and evolving political perspectives.

For the non-Israeli Jews, the connection to Israel often reflected a sense of deep emotional attachment despite their distance from the country. Miriam and Hans articulated some of the strongest ties, with Miriam stating: "*Israel is my homeland, even though I wasn't born there.*" Laura and Jessica maintained emotional connections to the country but were also candid about their criticisms of its policies, particularly regarding the treatment of Palestinians. Laura's reflection, "*The more I've learned, the more I've realized that Palestinians are not treated as equal citizens,*" illustrates the ambivalence felt by some Jews who balance their attachment to Israel with critical engagement. Anna, on the other hand, adopted a more overtly critical stance, stating: "*Israel causes massive problems, especially within the Jewish community itself,*" which resonates with Dov Waxman's concept of "critical engagement" (Waxman, 2016).

For some, like Lena, the relationship was marked by a sense of ambivalence on political background: "*I have a very good relationship with Israel, but it's also a bit ambivalent somehow.*" This emotional complexity, shared by several interviewees, highlights the often-contradictory nature of diaspora-homeland relations, where strong emotional bonds coexist with a critical awareness of the political realities in Israel. Avi's unique position, as a dual citizen planning to emigrate to Israel, demonstrates how the possibility of returning to the homeland plays a central role in her identity.

For the Israeli Jews, their relationship with Israel was similarly characterized by strong emotional ties but often accompanied by a more immediate sense of responsibility or personal stakes in the country's fate. Shani and Talia (39, immigrated from Israel to Germany 8 years ago) for example, described Israel as "home," despite living abroad. Talia's statement, "*I love Israel very much, I'm very hurt and pained by what's happening in the country,*" encapsulates the deep emotional connection that many Israeli Jews maintain while living outside their homeland. T

Still, like the non-Israelis, some Israeli interviewees expressed criticism of Israel's current political and social situation. Eitan, a 24-year old male student who has been living in Germany for three years and who knew two of the victims of the Nova festival massacre, characterized his relationship with Israel as "*complicated,*" acknowledging the importance of Israel for Jewish safety while critiquing its policies. Rivka, who immigrated to Germany from Israel 5 years ago, while expressing love for Israel, stated her reluctance to return due to the "*terrible social situation*" and political climate, highlighting the complexity of engaging with the homeland during times of crisis.

In summary, while both groups, Israeli and non-Israeli Jews, share an emotional connection to Israel, their relationships with the country diverge in significant ways. For Israelis, the attachment is often framed through the lens of immediate personal and familial stakes. For non-Israelis, the connection is more diverse, ranging from deeply emotional ties to critical engagement, with some viewing Israel primarily as a cultural or security reference point. These variations reflect the broader complexity of diaspora-homeland relations, shaped by both individual experiences and the evolving political context in Israel.

4.1.3. (Dis)Identification with Germany

The interviews revealed a recurring theme of ambivalence toward German identity. While many interviewees have lived in Germany for years or even generations, a full identification with "being German" remains elusive.

Prior to the October 7 attacks, participants exhibited an ambivalent relationship with German identity. Many interviewees had integrated into German society to varying extents, yet their Jewish or Israeli identity remained dominant. For instance, Shani, who had lived in Germany for several years and improved her language skills through teaching Judaism, nonetheless felt a persistent disconnection from German identity. She explicitly stated that despite her German passport, she identified herself as Israeli: *"I have a German passport... but if they asked me what I am, I say Israeli"*. Similarly, Hans noted the limits of his identification with German nationality: *"I have a German passport, but I don't feel German. I feel like a Frankfurter."* His identification with his city, rather than the nation, may reflect a localized identity that allows him to live in Germany without fully embracing a German national identity.

Among the Israeli immigrants interviewed, this disconnection from German identity was even more pronounced. Many Israeli interviewees expressed strong identification with their Israeli roots while viewing their time in Germany as temporary or transitional, even if they had been living there for years or had gained citizenship. For example, Uriel (43), who immigrated from Israel 13 years ago, clearly articulated this distinction: *"I define myself, even now that I've received citizenship, as an Israeli living in Germany"*. Uriel's decision to refer to Israel as "home" and his mention of plans to return highlights the transnational nature of his identity. His case reflects the hybrid identity of Israeli immigrants in Germany, where they maintain emotional and cultural ties to Israel while navigating their lives in a foreign country.

Rivka, who also grew up bilingual in German and Hebrew, represents the complexities of cultural navigation. While her bilingualism suggests a deep familiarity with both cultures, her primary identification with Jewish and Israeli culture appears to dominate. For her, Germany represents a place of residence rather than a core element of identity. This highlights the disparity between cultural fluency and personal belonging in the case of Jewish-Israeli immigrants.

In sum, the German-Jewish identity among both non-Israeli and Israeli Jews living in Germany is marked by ambivalence, disconnection, and complexity. While many have legal ties to Germany, the historical trauma of the Holocaust, contemporary antisemitism, and ongoing connections to Jewish and Israeli identity complicate their relationship with the idea of being "German."

Highlights: Background and Identity

- **Jewish Identity**
 - Strong connections to Jewish heritage across most participants
- **Relationship with Israel**
 - Non-Israeli Jews: Emotional attachment with varying degrees of critical engagement
 - Israeli Jews: Strong ties with heightened sense of responsibility post-October 7
- **(Dis)Identification with Germany**
 - Ambivalence toward German identity among both groups
 - Legal citizenship often not equating to cultural or emotional integration

4.2. Experience and Reactions to Oct 7

The initial reactions to the attacks were overwhelmingly characterized by shock, disbelief, and a struggle to comprehend the unprecedented scale of violence. Both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews living in Germany described profound emotional reactions, though the intensity of these responses and the nature of their concerns varied, influenced by their personal connections to Israel and prior experiences of conflict.

Interviewees described a range of intense emotions, including shock, fear, anger, sadness, and a pervasive sense of insecurity. These emotions significantly disrupted their daily lives and mental well-being, reflecting established psychological theories on trauma and crisis response (Herman, 1992; Van der Kolk, 2015).

For the Israeli Jews, the emotional impact was particularly acute due to their direct ties to family and friends in Israel. Talia captured the disruption to daily life, stating: "*I was impatient with the children. I didn't sleep, of course. The phone was on all the time.*" The dissonance between the safety of their lives in Germany and the crisis in Israel was a common theme. Rivka articulated this well: "*With all that from my window there's only nature and cows... but this dissonance I had a real physical fear of leaving the house.*" Her description may align with the concept of "survivor's guilt," where individuals safe from harm experience guilt and heightened anxiety during crises affecting their ingroup, even without experiencing direct trauma (Juni, 2016).

Among non-Israeli Jews, the shock and disbelief were largely rooted in their personal ties to Israel, as well as their emotional investment in the country's security. Miriam, for example, expressed a deep personal connection to the events, noting: *"I was shocked when I heard and saw it. But I was personally affected in that I was about to go to Israel because, among other things, I still do military service, reserve duty."* This demonstrates the way personal commitments to Israel can intensify the psychological impact of distant crises. Miriam described her emotional state as a mix of shock, anger, and persistent fear: *"I was shocked when I heard and saw it... Interestingly, when they are shot down and it happens above you, of course you are afraid, even though you know the danger is actually over."* This sense of fear despite being physically safe mirrors the trauma responses seen in diaspora communities during distant crises (Hirschberger, 2018; Van der Kolk, 2015).

For non-Israeli interviewees like Laura, the emotional toll was compounded by their leadership roles within the Jewish community. Laura, who had to balance her personal reaction with her responsibilities as a community leader, stated: *"I was immediately in this double mode... personally affected, [and also] what responsibility do I now have for the community?"* This dual responsibility, shared by leaders like Laura, intensified the emotional burden, as they were forced to navigate both personal and communal concerns in the midst of a crisis. Jessica and Lena similarly experienced shock and disbelief, with Jessica noting a gradual realization of the event's unprecedented nature: *"It took a few hours for me to realize how unprecedented it was."*

In contrast, the Israeli Jews in Germany described even more immediate emotional responses, often driven by their direct ties to loved ones in Israel. Shani's reaction typifies this sense of urgency: *"My partner woke me up, 'Get up, call Israel, there's a war.' First thing I jumped out of bed, first thing SMS to my son who was then in the country."* Similarly, Ido and Ben became aware of the attack through real-time alerts. Ben, a 30-year-old divorced man who arrived in Germany seven years ago and knew "many friends and family murdered on Oct 7," shared: *"So when there were alarms all over the country, then it also rang for me, which was... 5:30 in the morning here."*

For some interviewees, there was initial underestimation followed by a growing realization of the event's unprecedented nature as the the scale and magnitude of the attack gradually became known. Avi noted: *"At first... I didn't really absorb the scale of it... I was just like, oh, it was another conflict."* Similarly, Maya (Israeli) expressed difficulty grasping the enormity of the attack, stating: *"I couldn't really grasp it in its entirety at first."*

For some Israelis, the emotional intensity of the Oct 7 events was amplified by past experiences of conflict. Rivka, reflecting on her personal history, noted: *"As an Israeli and as someone who has already experienced wars... I already understood the magnitude of the catastrophe unfortunately."* The combination of past trauma and

present crisis often creates a heightened emotional response, where prior experiences serve as a lens through which new threats are understood.

Across both groups, many interviewees reported obsessive news consumption, which often led to emotional exhaustion. Maya noted, *"I was connected like an infusion, one computer with Israeli TV and news and the other with other things, and I didn't function."* This behavior, echoed by several others, aligns with research on media consumption during crises and its psychological toll, leading to heightened anxiety and stress (Holman et al., 2014). Jessica similarly recounted: *"I was very lonely and obsessed with the news... it was a really bad time."* This highlights how isolation can exacerbate emotional responses to traumatic events, especially when combined with constant exposure to distressing news (Charuvastra & Cloitre, 2008).

Intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and other symptoms of secondary traumatic stress were reported by several interviewees, particularly those with close ties to Israel. Uriel shared, *"The hostages come to me in dreams."* For Sophia, the emotional toll was equally intense: *"It was just an endless nightmare... it's still an endless nightmare."*

For some, the emotional impact of the Oct 7 events extended beyond personal distress, leading to feelings of disillusionment and frustration with political and social circumstances for some participants. Ruth, a 46-year-old woman born in Israel who immigrated to Germany 19 years ago and whose family in Israel was displaced after the attack, expressed disappointment with the Israeli government: *"You reach a point of saturation... you're disappointed with what's happening in the government."* This sentiment reflects a growing weariness with the political situation in Israel among some long-term emigrants. Similarly, Anna voiced frustration with the premature debates that arose in the wake of the attacks: *"There were almost immediately debates... everyone wanted to have an opinion whether they were informed or not."* Her comment highlights the tension between the need for immediate responses and the desire for informed, measured discussions in the wake of such traumatic events.

In summary, all participants experienced shock, disbelief, and emotional overwhelm in response to the attacks, and faced profound emotional and cognitive challenges in processing the magnitude of the crisis, which may also reflect the complex psychological impact of distant trauma on diaspora communities. As feelings of shock, fear, anger, and disillusionment dominated their emotional landscape, the need for sustained emotional support and mental health resources should be amplified.

4.2.1 Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma and Resilience

Some interviewees expressed their experiences regarding Oct 7 in ways that underscored the long shadow of historical trauma on contemporary Jewish life. For some, the events of Oct 7 stirred up deeper generational memories and fears rooted in the Holocaust and past persecutions. Hans connected his experiences as part of the post-war generation directly to the ongoing impact of antisemitism: *"I was born in*

1955, so we're all antisemitism back and forth." He recognized both the persistence of antisemitism and its adaptation over time, highlighting that the threats Jews face today, from both the left and Arab antisemitism, are seen as continuations of historical patterns.

For Laura, her connection to historical trauma was filtered through her family's active engagement in rebuilding Jewish life post-Holocaust. "*My grandfather...built up the Jewish community,*" she noted, illustrating how her family's experience of resilience has been passed down through generations. Similarly, Talia focused on the transmission of resilience by emphasizing her commitment to maintaining Jewish traditions with her children. This suggests that, in the face of contemporary antisemitism and the fear stirred by Oct 7, there is an intensification of cultural practices as a way to fortify Jewish identity

Rivka described how her family's history of fleeing Russia due to antisemitic repression directly influenced her strong sense of Jewish identity: "My grandparents wanted to leave Russia BECAUSE they couldn't properly live out their Jewishness there." Her account reveals how the past struggles of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe continue to shape contemporary identity formation and resilience. This narrative, rooted in the intergenerational transmission of trauma, highlights how historical persecution continues to shape present-day experiences of Jewish life in Germany.

Across the interviews, both Israelis and non-Israelis made implicit or explicit connections between the events of Oct 7 and the Holocaust, underscoring the emotional weight of these events for Jewish people in Germany. Ido linked his understanding of current events to his grandparents' history, reflecting on how the trauma of the Holocaust shapes his present-day perspective. He expressed the view that ongoing threats to Jewish life, whether from antisemitism or geopolitical instability, resonate deeply because of his family's history with persecution.

Similarly, Lena suggested that events like Oct 7 reinforce historical fears, saying, "*What happened is terrible, but it's not the first time things like this happen in Israel.*" This sentiment reflects a historical continuity in which modern events are framed through the lens of past trauma, particularly the Holocaust.

Laura and Anna reflected on the complex relationship between Jews and Germans, especially regarding remembrance culture. For Laura, while there are gestures of support from German society, she also feels that real change is needed to prevent Jewish life from stagnating in the future: "*If society doesn't change significantly, Judaism in Germany will no longer exist in the coming centuries.*" Her concern about Jewish continuity mirrors a fear that the perpetrator-victim dynamic still casts a shadow over Jewish life in Germany, hindering deeper integration and security.

Anna, on the other hand, expressed frustration with how Holocaust remembrance in Germany sometimes focuses more on the past than on supporting contemporary Jewish communities. This reveals a tension in German society's handling of historical

responsibility—while Holocaust remembrance is significant, it does not necessarily translate into the protection and thriving of today's Jewish communities.

Highlights: Experience and Reactions to the October 7 Events

- **Initial Reactions**

- Overwhelming shock, disbelief, and struggle to comprehend the scale of violence
- Varied intensity of responses based on personal connections to Israel

- **Emotional and Psychosocial Impact**

- Range of intense emotions: shock, fear, anger, sadness, and pervasive sense of insecurity
- Acute distress due to direct ties to family and friends in Israel
- Disruption of daily life and mental well-being for many participants
- Community leaders faced additional burden of balancing personal and communal concerns
- Obsessive news consumption leading to emotional exhaustion
- Intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and symptoms of secondary traumatic stress
- Dissonance between safety in Germany and crisis in Israel, especially for Israeli immigrants

- **Intergenerational Trauma and Resilience**

- Oct 7 events stirred up generational memories and fears rooted in the Holocaust
- Past experiences of conflict amplified emotional intensity for some Israeli participants
- Historical persecution continues to shape present-day experiences of Jewish life in Germany
- Reinforcement of Jewish identity and cultural practices as a response to perceived threats

4.3. Antisemitism and Societal Responses in Germany

4.3.1. Perceived Reactions in Close Social Circles

The perceived reactions of the German social environment to the Oct 7 events were a central theme in both Israeli and non-Israeli Jewish interviews. These reactions ranged from initial empathy to a decline in support, a perceived lack of understanding, and instances of antisemitism.

Both Israeli and non-Israeli interviewees reported initial expressions of empathy and support from their German social circles following the Oct 7 events. In the period subsequent to the attacks, friends, colleagues, and neighbors expressed concern, often asking about the well-being of their Jewish or Israeli acquaintances.

For example, Laura shared that her German peers initially reached out: *“In the beginning, maybe they asked me ‘how are you and I heard, and I’m really in shock’, and I was like thank you.”* Similarly, Jessica described a supportive workplace environment: *“I’m lucky, I have an employer who is so very pro-Israeli. I work in the public authority. We then had the Israeli flag hanging in front of the door directly the week after. We had a very clear statement from the highest superior.”*

For some Israeli interviewees, the immediate reactions in some social and work environments were similarly supportive. Talia recalled: *“In the beginning, really, everyone hugged us so much, and in the kindergarten, the teacher asked me how my family was doing.”* Ido was surprised by the level of support at his workplace: *“Work surprised me, I don’t work in an international company ... 90% are for Israel.”* It is evident that the initial outpouring of support provided some comfort and helped interviewees navigate the immediate days/weeks after the attacks.

However, some interviewees observed a gradual decline in support as the crisis wore on. For example, Laura expressed disappointment in the fading interest of her peers: *“At first maybe they asked me how are you ... then suddenly it feels like they don’t really want to keep in touch since it happened.”* Talia noted: *“Now I can say that I couldn’t anymore. My environment, which are Israel lovers and many of my friends visited Israel with me, are tired of hearing about it.”* This sense of fatigue may reflect the limits of empathy and engagement in times of ongoing conflict, especially among those who are not directly impacted.

The responses from German workplaces varied significantly. Some interviewees reported strong support from their colleagues and employers, while others experienced indifference or even hostility. Jessica found her workplace to be exceptionally supportive, with her employer openly displaying solidarity with Israel. However, Sophia encountered a more indifferent attitude at work: *“There was a discussion about Gaza, civilian deaths, and in the end, the decision was to not say*

anything at all." Conversely, Rivka felt supported at work: *"At work I think it's more strengthening because I really got more, more hugs and more feeling of belonging."*

One of the most prominent frustrations shared by both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews was the perceived lack of deep understanding from the broader German society. Many interviewees expressed feelings of isolation, as their German peers seemed unable to grasp the gravity and emotional toll of the events. Sophia described a profound sense of disconnect: *"No real understanding of what's happening to us right now, how existential the whole thing feels for us."* Similarly, Lena struggled with the stark contrast between her emotional state and the indifference she felt from her peers: *"One of the difficulties is that for Germans, life is normal, and I'm going to work and I need to work with people for whom nothing happened."* Uriel felt ignored by his environment: *"The environment is not supportive, Germans ignore. Don't ask how you are?"* This lack of understanding deepened the sense of alienation felt by Israeli Jews, highlighting the cultural and experiential gap between them and the German majority.

Despite the challenges, some interviewees also experienced unexpected support from individuals or local communities, often reshaping social relationships in positive ways. Additionally, some noted generational differences in attitudes toward Jews and Israel. Laura was pleasantly surprised by the empathy shown by distant acquaintances: *"There were people ... who weren't really close to me and not Israelis or Jews, but did come and showed support."* Similarly, Hans reflected on the generational differences, noting that older Germans had grown up with more favorable views of Israel: *"Because who is in the municipality today are people from another generation, these are people who grew up on the news reports of the Six-Day War."* Ido described the support of a local church: *"The church next to us ... since the massacre until today, displays Israeli flags every week in the city center."*

4.3.2. Experiences of Antisemitism

Most participants were able to tell us about their personal direct or indirect experiences with antisemitism. Experiences of antisemitism varied in intensity and domain, but were marked by a clear uptick following the attacks. Miriam noted that antisemitism has been a long-standing issue for her, and she viewed the recent rise in incidents as part of an ongoing pattern: *"That's one of the reasons I left Germany many, many years ago, because I didn't want to tolerate it anymore."* Her experience highlights the persistent and systemic nature of antisemitism, including victim-blaming by law enforcement, which she encountered when she was told: *"What are you so stupid for, and out yourself as a Jew and an Israeli?"*

Several interviewees, including Laura, observed that Oct 7 did not create antisemitism but made it more visible. She remarked: *"It's just become more visible. It was there all the time."* Avi also experienced an increase in antisemitism in public spaces: *"There were a lot of protests in the city center and stickers in the train and stuff like that."* Sophia reported experiencing antisemitism daily, particularly in

connection to Israel: She also noted that media coverage often exacerbated these feelings, which she perceived as biased against Israel: *"I read many articles, many reports as antisemitic."* Lena highlighted that antisemitism in Germany has been a continuous issue: *"I can't see any difference in antisemitism... it's always been there."*

For the Israeli Jews interviewed, the rise in antisemitism since Oct 7 was often intertwined with their identity as both Jews and Israelis. Ido and Ben described witnessing overtly hostile behaviors, such as pro-Hamas demonstrations in their local areas. Ido recalled an incident where he encountered hostility for displaying an Israeli flag: *"It was clear that the guy next to me didn't like that I opened an Israeli flag... I heard them talking in Arabic, and I understood some of the things they were saying."*

Miriam refused to stay silent when confronted with antisemitic attitudes: *"And everyone knows, when that's the topic, I don't let it go anyway, or I'm not quiet. But actually, my blood pressure goes up."* This indicates an ongoing struggle to confront antisemitism, even in seemingly progressive or liberal circles. Noam, a 30-year-old who immigrated to Germany with his wife nearly three years before the interview and whose relatives were injured in the October 7 attack, recounted experiencing antisemitism while carrying an Israeli flag on the train.

In some, both groups experienced heightened antisemitism after Oct 7, but their experiences diverged in some respects. Non-Israeli Jews were more likely to report subtle forms of antisemitism, such as prejudices in everyday interactions or biased media representations, with many citing concerns about Israel-related antisemitism. Israeli Jews, on the other hand, frequently encountered more overt hostility, especially in the form of pro-Palestinian or pro-Hamas demonstrations, which directly targeted their Israeli identity.

4.3.3. Changes in Social Relationships Post-Oct 7

Across interviews, a common theme emerged of reevaluating friendships, strengthening in-group ties within the Jewish and Israeli community, and in some cases, distancing from non-Jewish acquaintances due to perceived lack of support or political disagreements.

For some interviewees, the period after Oct 7 triggered a selective pruning of social relationships. They expressed disappointment with friends who did not offer the expected solidarity, leading to a reassessment of their social circles. Miriam, for example, described a significant reduction in her friendships: *"My circle of friends in Germany has decreased very, very much because I've sorted out everyone who didn't call me in the first 14 days, three weeks after the attack."*

For others, the events led to the complete dissolution of relationships. Lena reported cutting off contact with a close friend over political disagreements, stating: *"With a*

very good friend, I've completely broken off contact." Ido noted that many of his non-Jewish friends distanced themselves or even removed him from social networks due to his outspoken views on Israel, leaving him feeling lonely and disconnected: "Out of all the connections I made in 10 years in Germany, I'm in touch with maybe two who are foreigners... all the rest are either Jews or Israelis".

Indeed, also among other Israeli interviewees, there was a trend of strengthening of Jewish and Israeli ties and a distancing from non-Jewish acquaintances, often due to political disagreements. Several interviewees. Ben noted, "There's really a circle of friends that I pretty much lost here in Germany", primarily referring to acquaintances in the queer/LGBT community who distanced themselves from him following the attack.

Consequently, relationships with other Israelis and Jews became more central. Noam, for instance, described having a large Jewish social circle but a much smaller non-Jewish one, reflecting a pull towards in-group relationships during times of perceived threat. Laura noted the disappointment in friendships where solidarity was lacking, stating: "The disappointment about friendships, acquaintances, where one would have expected solidarity and instead came none or even a yes, but..." At the same time, Laura found solace and strength within her Jewish community, where community life became central, particularly in the synagogue context.

Some interviewees, such as Avi, reported withdrawing from public life, reflecting a protective strategy in response to the perceived lack of understanding from the broader society. She noted: "I've largely withdrawn from public life more or less," underscoring how safety concerns and feelings of alienation influence social behavior. Other interviewees, like Jessica, became more engaged in public, as she responded to the events by becoming more politically active, joining groups that aligned with her views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Jessica remarked, "I joined some groups that are like Jewish and critical of the situation in Israel".

Interestingly, not all social relationships were negatively affected. Some interviewees, like Ruth, reported that their work relationships became stronger after Oct 7, thanks to the support they received from colleagues: "At work I think it's more strengthening because I really got more hug and more feeling of belonging."

In sum, across both Israeli and non-Israeli interviewees, the Oct 7 events catalyzed a significant reevaluation of social relationships, often resulting in a narrowing of social networks and a focus on strengthening ties within the Jewish community.

The changes in social relationships reported by both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews in Germany after Oct 7 highlight the profound impact of the events in Israel on personal networks of Jews in Germany. The selective pruning of friendships, a move towards in-group solidarity, and the distancing from unsupportive non-Jewish acquaintances were common strategies for coping with the emotional toll of the crisis, or necessary measures to maintain social support during troubling times. The

findings suggest a gap between expectations and reality when it comes to support from German society. Surprisingly, this gap was found also pertaining to traditionally marginalized communities such as the queer community, where Ben experienced exclusion due to prominent anti-Israeli and pro-Palestinian views of many of its members.

The perceived failure of some Germans to maintain sustained support or even understand the gravity of the situation contributed to a deepening sense of alienation. While these changes can offer emotional protection and strengthen community bonds, they may also lead to increased social polarization, limiting opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding and in time can have negative effects on Jewish-German relations.

Highlights: Antisemitism and Societal Responses in Germany

- **Reactions in Close Social Circles**
 - For some, Initial expressions of empathy and support from German peers; Gradual decline in support and interest as the crisis continued
 - Varied responses in workplaces, ranging from strong support to indifference
 - Perceived lack of deep understanding and empathy from broader German society
 - Unexpected support from some individuals and local communities
- **Experiences of Antisemitism**
 - Increase in antisemitic incidents following the attack
 - Non-Israeli Jews: More likely to report subtle forms of antisemitism
 - Israeli Jews: Often encountered more overt hostility, especially related to their Israeli identity
 - Antisemitism experienced in public spaces, media, and daily interactions
- **Changes in Social Relationships**
 - Reevaluation and selective pruning of friendships
 - Strengthening of in-group ties within Jewish and Israeli communities
 - Distancing from non-Jewish acquaintances due to lack of support or political disagreements
 - Withdrawal from public life as a protective strategy
 - For some, strengthening of work relationships due to colleague support
- **Potential Impact on Jewish-German Relations**
 - Deepening sense of alienation for some Jewish individuals
 - Potential for increased social polarization and limited cross-cultural dialogue

4.4. Coping and Resilience

In the context of the October 7 attacks and the rise of antisemitism, coping strategies, whether through activism, community involvement, or identity affirmation, can play a pivotal role in helping Jewish individuals and communities navigate the complex emotional landscape of collective trauma and discrimination. The following section explores the diverse coping mechanisms employed by both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews living in Germany, highlighting their shared reliance on social support and identity affirmation, while also illustrating the individualized nature of their coping responses.

For non-Israeli Jews, the coping strategies were diverse, reflecting a range of emotional responses. Miriam, for example, highlighted the role of humor in managing the situation: "*Jewish humor helps a lot.*" Humor as a coping strategy is well-documented, particularly in Jewish contexts, where humor often serves as a means of maintaining resilience during periods of hardship (Ostrower, 2015). Many non-Israeli participants also emphasized their involvement in Jewish community life as a key form of coping. Avoidance was another common strategy, especially when it came to managing the overwhelming influx of information about the conflict. Avi, for instance, noted her decision to stop consuming news: "*I felt like I can't do it right now.*" Social support and connections with like-minded individuals also played a central role. Sophia explained that it helps her to "*talk about it with people who feel the same way I do*", underscoring the importance of emotional support networks during times of collective trauma. Some non-Israeli participants turned to activism as a coping mechanism. Jessica became more politically active, joining Jewish groups that align with her views: "*I became more politically active on this topic.*" Anna also highlighted activism as a key coping strategy, describing her participation in pro-Palestinian demonstrations as a way to process emotions and express her stance: "*I've been to quite a few Palestine demos.*"

Israeli Jews living in Germany faced similar challenges and applied similar coping behaviors, while often feeling emotionally torn between the security of their life in Germany and the ongoing crisis in Israel. This duality was reflected in the coping strategies they employed. Ido and Ben, for example, reported extensive information-seeking behaviors, such as staying updated on news from both Israeli and international media sources. Ben noted: "*I need to update in the Telegrams of Hamas.*" Others, such as Maya, adopted avoidance strategies, cutting back on news consumption to protect their mental health. Maya explained: "*I can't handle it, so I stopped consuming news.*" Social support played a vital role for Israeli Jews, much like their non-Israeli counterparts. Similarly, Rivka described her reliance on other Israelis and Jewish friends for emotional support: "*It helps to talk... to share with someone who has empathy.*" Activism also emerged as an important coping strategy among Israeli participants. Ido became involved in organizing demonstrations and political action in Berlin, contributing to efforts supporting

hostages' families: *"I helped in Berlin with some of the protests."* Additionally, Shani described how her sense of Jewish and Israeli identity was strengthened in response to the crisis, saying she wore visible symbols of her identity as a form of defiance: *"I'm going all the time now with my Star of David."* This type of identity affirmation is consistent with the rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999; Brondolo et al., 2009).

One interesting finding is that while both groups shared a reliance on community support, Israeli Jews placed more emphasis on maintaining connections with other Israelis, while non-Israeli Jews often turned to their broader Jewish communities.

We offer below a more in-depth analysis of three coping strategies that were emphasized in the interview and in which we were particularly interested due to their prominent role in recent literature on coping with collective trauma and prejudice: Identity, activism, and vigilance.

4.4.1. Activism and Advocacy as Coping

In the aftermath of the attacks, many Jews in Germany engaged in various forms of activism and advocacy, including organizing demonstrations, participating in political groups, engaging in social media activism, and educating others. Their motivations stemmed from a deep sense of responsibility, a desire to counter feelings of helplessness, and the need to affirm their Jewish or Israeli identity as well as their political ideology and orientation.

Both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews reported participating in pro-Israel demonstrations or other forms of public protest. For instance, Miriam, a non-Israeli Jew, shared her involvement in demonstrations, while Ido took on a leadership role in organizing protests: *"I also organize demonstrations, participated in organizing for example the Shulchan Aruch that we did here of the Jewish community."* Similarly, a community leader, balanced personal distress with community responsibilities: *"I wrote the press release for the umbrella organization... I organized, I made decisions."*

The use of digital platforms as a space for activism was common, though the extent to which individuals engaged varied. Some, like Jessica, a non-Israeli Jew, posted about political issues, such as advocating for a ceasefire, while Israeli interviewees like Ben maintained consistent pro-Israel content on social media. However, others, like Maya, reported reducing their social media presence due to emotional exhaustion.

For some, activism took the form of educational outreach. Lena became involved in Meet a Jew, an initiative aimed at fostering dialogue about Judaism in schools and other settings. Similarly, Rivka, an Israeli interviewee, described efforts to create educational programs about Jewish identity in cooperation with Christian communities and other initiatives involving German-Jewish exchange and cooperation.

The motivations behind these activist efforts were varied, but they all seemed to center around key themes such as a sense of responsibility, a desire for action and agency, and the need for identity affirmation. Many interviewees expressed a sense of duty to their communities or to broader Jewish and Israeli causes. Laura, as a community leader, felt responsible for organizing responses to the crisis, while Ben, an Israeli interviewee, shared: *"I feel like if I don't speak up, then I feel like I'm not doing anything."* This sense of moral obligation is a common motivator for activism, particularly in response to collective trauma (Chayinska & McGarty, 2021; Milo Haglili, 2020). Jessica, a non-Israeli Jew, described how activism helped her regain a sense of control: *"I feel like I'm doing something... that has been a really good coping strategy."* Similarly, Ido, an Israeli interviewee, noted how activism helped him manage feelings of helplessness.

For some, activism served as a way to affirm their Jewish or Israeli identity. Shani, an Israeli interviewee, noted: *"I'm going all the time now with my Star of David..."* This use of activism as a form of identity performance in response to external threats reflects findings that strong group identification can buffer the negative effects of discrimination (Branscombe et al., 1999). For Jews like Anna, participating in both pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian demonstrations allowed her to express a more nuanced Jewish identity: *"It's important that... we get rid of this assumption that all Jews feel the same about the situation in Israel."*

Despite the positive aspects of activism, interviewees also reported significant challenges. These included safety concerns, emotional exhaustion, and frustration with the perceived limited impact of their efforts. Some Israeli participants, like Ido, faced physical risks while engaging in public activism, highlighting the potential dangers of participating in politically charged demonstrations. Some interviewees reported feeling emotionally exhausted due to their activism. Maya reduced her social media activism because she *"didn't have the strength anymore."* Others, like Uriel, expressed frustration with the limited tangible impact of their activism: *"That's actually more for our own small satisfaction than for achieving anything."*

4.4.2. Jewish Identification as Coping

The events of Oct 7 and the ensuing rise in antisemitism may have led to significant shifts in Jewish and Israeli identities among both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews living in Germany. These identity shifts reflected a range of responses, from intensification of cultural and national identity, to increasing religiosity, or to more complex processes of negotiation regarding the visibility and expression of Jewishness and Israeliness

For non-Israeli Jews in Germany, we found that the experience of rising antisemitism and the trauma of the Oct 7 events acted as catalysts for deepening or reshaping their Jewish identities. Many interviewees reported a stronger identification with their Jewish heritage, often expressed through renewed engagement with Jewish traditions and community life. Miriam, for instance, noted that her Jewish identity, already deeply rooted, became even more central following the attacks. Similarly,

Lena remarked that her Jewish identity remained steadfast but took on renewed significance in the wake of the trauma, linking her sense of Jewishness not just to religious or cultural practice but to a historical continuum of resilience: *"Because I actually believe that if I wasn't so identified with Judaism, then many things wouldn't affect me so much. So many statements that are made wouldn't hit me so much."*

Participants also faced complex negotiations regarding Israeli identity. For some, such as Anna, the trauma reinforced her desire to separate Jewish identity from Israeli politics: *"My Judaism has nothing to do with Israel."* Jessica described a shift in her political engagement as part of her evolving Jewish identity, stating: *"I also became more politically active on this topic since October 7."* For some, this political awakening reflected a response to the events, maybe against the mainstream in the Jewish community, leading to a more vocal and outward-facing form of Jewish identification.

For Israeli Jews in Germany, the October 7 events catalyzed significant shifts in both Jewish and Israeli identities, often in ways that reflected the dual role of these identities as sources of both resilience and vulnerability. Ido exemplified the strengthening of Zionist identity that many Israeli interviewees described. Before the attacks, Ido felt ambivalent about his Zionist identity, but the trauma of Oct 7 clarified his sense of national belonging: *"Before October 7 it was a bit complicated for me to define myself as a Zionist, and today it's not complicated."* In addition to heightened Zionism, many Israeli interviewees reported a stronger engagement with Jewish traditions. Talia mentioned becoming more persistent in practicing Jewish rituals with her children: *"I really think that I'm even more persistent now with my children in all the matter of lighting candles and preparing challah."*

Both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews in Germany reported that their Jewish and Israeli identities served as coping mechanisms during this time of collective trauma. These identities not only helped them to process the events but also provided access to social support networks that were crucial for resilience.

Hans, a non-Israeli Jew, spoke of the importance of community connections in coping: *"My circle of friends and acquaintances helps there."* This communal aspect of identity aligns with the stress-buffering hypothesis of social identity (S. Cohen & Wills, 1985), which suggests that strong group identification offers psychological resources for managing stress. Similarly, Israeli interviewees like Ben emphasized the role of in-group solidarity in their coping strategies, with many turning to their Jewish and Israeli friends for support.

However, the dual role of identity, as both a source of resilience and a target of threat, was evident across the interviews. While these identities provided emotional and psychological support, they also made individuals more vulnerable to antisemitism and external hostility. This was particularly evident in the way participants negotiated the visibility of their Jewish identity, with many adopting

strategies of either defiant openness or cautious concealment depending on the perceived risks.

Highlights: Coping and Resilience

- **General Coping Strategies**

- Diverse range of coping: humor, community involvement, avoidance, social support, and activism
- Information-seeking behaviors versus news avoidance for managing stress
- Connections with other Israelis and the broader Jewish communities

- **Activism and Advocacy**

- Engagement in various forms: organizing demonstrations, political group participation, social media activism, and educational outreach
- Motivations: sense of responsibility, countering helplessness, identity affirmation
- Digital platforms used for activism, with varying levels of engagement
- Challenges: safety concerns, emotional exhaustion, and frustration with perceived limited impact

- **Jewish Identification as Coping**

- Intensification of cultural and national identity for many participants
- Deepening of Jewish identity, often through renewed engagement with traditions and community life
- For some, strengthening of Zionist or Israeli national identity
- Negotiation of identity visibility in response to perceived risks

4.5 Jewish Identity Expression

As antisemitism continues to rise across Europe, many Jews in Germany are increasingly cautious about expressing their Jewish identity in public. Indeed, a prominent theme throughout the interviews was the visibility of Jewish identity. The events of Oct 7 and the ensuing rise in antisemitism may be likely to have changed the ways in which both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews in Germany expressed their Jewish identity. Across the interviews, participants reported varying levels of comfort and strategies for managing their identity, which often depended on the specific social and political environments they encountered. This section explores these themes, focusing on how individuals navigated vigilance, defiant identity expression, and selective concealment in response to the shifting societal context.

For non-Israeli Jews, the post-attack period brought heightened vigilance in expressing their Jewish identity, as the increase in antisemitism led many to reconsider how openly they displayed their Jewishness. This vigilance was not uniform, with participants expressing a range of strategies from defiant openness to strategic concealment. Miriam maintained a strong and open stance in expressing her Jewish identity, framing it as an act of resistance: *"I always deal openly with my Judaism anyway. So everyone knows who I am."* Similarly, Hans shared this defiant openness, stating that hiding his identity would be against his principles: *"I've never hidden in my life, and I won't hide either."*

However, others, like Laura and Avi, reported feeling less comfortable expressing their Jewish identity in public, particularly in environments where they or their children did not feel safe. Laura mentioned that her children no longer felt comfortable living their Jewish identity openly in school: *"At least my older child doesn't feel safe anymore to live his Jewish identity openly in school."* Similarly, Avi reported adopting a more cautious approach: *"I pay even more attention than before not to be recognizable as a Jew in public."* This heightened vigilance aligns with identity concealment strategies (Pachankis, 2007), where individuals choose to downplay or hide their identity in response to perceived risks and stigmatization.

For some participants, such as Lena, comfort in expressing Jewish identity was situational, depending on the context and the people she was surrounded by. While she felt uncomfortable in some settings, she retained a sense of pride in her Jewish identity: *"I have a kind of defiant pride somehow."*

For Israelis living in Germany, the expression of Jewish identity was similarly shaped by both defiant resistance and cautious adaptation. Many Israeli interviewees reported an intensified sense of Jewish pride in the wake of the attacks, while others exercised more caution in their public displays of identity. Shani exemplified this defiant approach, emphasizing her decision to display Jewish symbols more openly than before: *"I'm going all the time now with my Star of David."* Shani's increased openness

can be seen as a counter-response to rising antisemitism, aiming to assert her presence and Jewish identity in the face of hostility.

In contrast, some Israelis, like Maya, adopted a more cautious approach, deliberately minimizing the visibility of their Jewishness in public: *"I didn't dare to speak Hebrew, didn't text in Hebrew, didn't open it [Hebrew book] on public transportation.. really got into paranoia and looking around me."*

For several interviewees, such as Talia and Ruth, the comfort in expressing Jewish identity was situational, similar to their non-Israeli counterparts. They reported feeling more comfortable being open about their identity in trusted environments but more cautious in unfamiliar or potentially hostile public spaces.

4.5.1. Perceptions and Fears of Muslim and Arab Immigrants

A recurring theme in the interviews, often approached with caution, was the heightened sense of unease among Jewish participants in areas with significant Muslim or Arab populations. This discomfort stemmed from perceptions of higher antisemitic sentiment and anti-Israeli activities within these communities. The post-Oct 7 events intensified feelings of apprehension and vigilance among both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews in Germany, particularly in relation to these demographic groups.

Lena expressed discomfort and fear, particularly around Muslim individuals: *"I don't feel comfortable especially when I know that Muslim people are present."* However, she immediately became aware of the potential for overgeneralization: *"Am I taring people with the same brush now?"* Lena's self-reflection shows an effort to balance her caution with a desire to avoid unfairly generalizing her negative experiences to all Muslims. Similarly, Sophia expressed concerns about the growing presence of Arab and Muslim communities in Germany, which she perceived as a demographic threat: *"I have this feeling... they're taking over the world, so to speak."* In Sophia's case, the increased visibility of Muslim communities led to heightened anxiety about the future of Jewish life in Germany.

At the same time, some interviewees like Anna expressed nuanced views. While Anna noted that her experiences of antisemitism came predominantly from non-Muslim individuals, she expressed a sense of shared minority status with Muslims, suggesting a potential for solidarity: *"Those who aren't Christian, they know what it's like... to be a religious minority."* This highlights the potential for alliances between minority groups based on shared experiences of marginalization, even amidst fear and tension.

For interviewed Israeli Jews living in Germany, the October 7 attacks and rising antisemitism intensified feelings of vigilance and discomfort around Muslim and Arab communities. Maya described a strong sense of fear, especially when interacting with Muslim patients in her professional life: *"I have a bit of a problem with Muslim patients... I really started to fear again."* Maya's internal conflict reveals her

awareness of potential prejudice, yet her personal fear remained a significant driver of behavior. Rivka, similar to Sophia, expressed concerns about the long-term demographic impact of Muslim communities in Germany, linking this to potential changes in Jewish life: *"The hatred towards foreigners rises and then also the local Muslims who are with us."*

Israeli interviewees also reported experiences of antisemitism originating from Arab and Muslim communities. For example, Noam shared a story where he felt threatened during a demonstration by two men speaking Arabic. Despite these negative experiences, many Israeli interviewees, like Rivka, also expressed ambivalence and a desire for reconciliation: *"There are groups... of women who try to sit and talk together in order to lower hate."* Rivka's optimism highlights the possibility of building bridges through dialogue and shared experiences, even amidst ongoing intergroup tensions.

In sum, across both Israeli and non-Israeli Jewish interviewees, the perceptions of Arab and Muslim communities were characterized by a mix of fear, vigilance, and ambivalence. Many participants expressed concerns about antisemitism originating from these groups, often tied to personal experiences of hostility or media images. These fears, while understandable in the context of rising antisemitism, also led to heightened vigilance and social distance. However, there was also evidence of self-reflection and ambivalence.

Highlights: Jewish Identity Expression and Vigilance Amid Rising Antisemitism

- **Jewish Identity Expression**
 - Varied responses post-Oct 7, ranging from defiant openness to strategic concealment
 - Israeli Jews often reported intensified pride, while non-Israeli Jews showed more varied responses
- **Heightened Vigilance**
 - Increased caution in expressing Jewish identity, especially in public spaces
 - Situational adaptation based on perceived safety and social context
- **Perceptions of Muslim and Arab Communities**
 - Heightened unease in areas with significant Muslim or Arab populations
 - Concerns about antisemitism balanced with self-reflection on potential overgeneralization

4.6. Personal and Collective Growth

The period after the attacks served as a critical juncture for many Jewish individuals living in Germany, evoking reflections on life's fragility, personal values, and identity. Participants shared narratives pointing to significant personal growth, characterized by increased self-awareness and a heightened appreciation for life, aligning with concepts of post-traumatic growth and resilience following collective trauma.

Several interviewees reported a profound realization about life's fragility, leading to a reprioritization of experiences and relationships. Eitan expressed this shift, stating, *"Let's do more for ourselves. You never know what will be like, it can [end] so quickly."* Sophia described an intensified appreciation for life: *"It's [life] valuable... but how valuable it is and that we need to take good care of it."* Lena's response was particularly visceral: *"I like celebrated that I'm alive, celebrated that I wasn't murdered."*

This newfound appreciation manifested in various ways. Hans rediscovered past hobbies, noting, *"I've started cooking again. My wife is very excited... I really enjoy cooking."*

As detailed above, the traumatic events played a critical role in fortifying Jewish identity among interviewees. Ruth described how her children's pride in their Jewish identity became more pronounced: *"And they're starting to be proud of it too... I brought them necklaces with the Star of David because they wanted."* Laura emphasized the strengthening of Jewish community ties, noting increased willingness to express Jewish identity openly.

Miriam reported a deepening of her Jewish identity and a defiant sense of pride: *"Somehow this feeling of 'Hey, everyone thinks we're hostile, but I'm proud to be Jewish.'" This aligns with theories of resilience, where individuals strengthen their sense of self in the face of perceived threats.*

The desire for action, particularly in self-defense and activism, emerged as a theme. Ido articulated a newfound commitment to empowering women through self-defense training: *"What happened on October 7 really strengthened my feeling that I want to... give women more of a sense of empowerment."* Jessica engaged in social media activism, despite facing backlash: *"I posted on social media that there should be a ceasefire... I got two people calling me, one person called me antisemitic."*

On a collective level, interviews revealed strengthened community ties and greater engagement in Jewish activities. Laura emphasized increased community solidarity centered around synagogue activities. Sophia noted the formation of new community networks: *"I do have the feeling that connections are being made, that groups are being formed, that contacts are being made that are certainly valuable."*

Israeli interviewees observed a strengthening of Jewish traditions and new initiatives for education and interfaith dialogue. Talia and Ruth reported an increased emphasis on Jewish traditions in family settings. Uriel discussed a career shift toward Jewish community work, illustrating how trauma catalyzed new professional and communal engagements.

The personal and collective growth observed among both non-Israeli and Israeli Jews living in Germany reflects a complex picture of resilience and adaptation. While many reported new insights, strengthened identities, and increased community involvement, these developments coexisted with ongoing distress and challenges. This suggests that post-traumatic growth is not a linear or universal experience but one that unfolds alongside hardship, where growth and distress are intertwined. The emphasis on community solidarity, increased political engagement, and cultural preservation highlights the adaptive responses that can emerge in the face of collective trauma.

Highlights: Avenues for Personal and Collective Growth

- **Heightened Appreciation of Life**
 - Reprioritization of experiences and relationships
- **Strengthened Jewish Identity**
 - Increased pride in Jewish heritage
- **Increased Activism**
 - Engagement in social media activism and community empowerment
- **Enhanced Community Ties**
 - Formation of new community networks

4.7. Future Concerns and Opportunities for Jewish Life in Germany

In the wake of the Oct 7 events, Jewish individuals in Germany expressed a variety of concerns and hopes about the future of Jewish life in the country. These concerns are shaped by rising antisemitism, demographic uncertainties, and conflict-related tensions. Despite the challenges, some interviewees also noted potential opportunities for growth and renewal within Jewish life in Germany.

The future of Jewish life in Germany was a prominent theme for non-Israeli Jews, many of whom shared concerns about safety, the sustainability of Jewish communities, and the preservation of Jewish identity in a potentially hostile

environment. Miriam expressed concerns about the stagnation of Jewish life in Germany: "*Jewish life in Germany is stagnating.*" This perception aligns with common fears about the long-term viability of Jewish communities in diaspora settings, particularly in the face of increasing antisemitism and challenges to community cohesion (Goldschmidt, 2024).

Similarly, Laura voiced uncertainty about the future, emphasizing that the sustainability of Jewish life in Germany depends on societal change: "*If society doesn't change significantly, Judaism in Germany will probably no longer exist in the coming centuries.*" This reflects the notion that the integration and future of Jewish communities are tightly linked to the broader societal attitudes and the ability of the majority population to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for minorities. Avi echoed this pessimism, viewing the future as a continuation of past historical traumas and present challenges for the Jewish community, which are seen as interconnected: "*The future is difficult, just like the present and the past.*" Anna was critical of Germany's approach to Holocaust remembrance, arguing that it focuses too much on the past at the expense of supporting the living Jewish community.

Israeli Jews living in Germany also expressed a wide range of concerns about the future, focusing on antisemitism, raising Jewish children, and the viability of Jewish communities. Shani and Ido were particularly skeptical about the future, with Shani stating, "*If this continues, people will hide even more and be less visible.*" This reflects a fear that growing antisemitism will push Jews into greater invisibility, reducing public expressions of Jewish identity and leading to a withdrawal from communal life. Maya expressed concerns about the impact of antisemitism on Jewish children, noting that some parents advise their children not to speak Hebrew in public: "*Parents tried to explain to their children that now they don't speak Hebrew outside.*" This reflects a broader anxiety about the intergenerational transmission of Jewish identity in a potentially hostile environment, where external threats can lead to continuous identity suppression connecting the Jewish past with the present. Some Israeli interviewees also expressed concerns about the long-term security of Jewish communities in Germany, with several, like Rivka, discussing contingency planning for potential emigration: "*I'm not looking, but God forbid something happens, I'll know where to go.*"

Despite these concerns, there were also notes of hope and resilience. Hans, while acknowledging the risks of dissolution, expressed a sense of pride and historical resilience: "*I hope that Judaism remains strong. We've been around for 5500 years for a reason.*" His statement highlights the long-standing resilience of Jewish communities in the face of adversity, a sentiment echoed by others who expressed a cautious optimism for the future.

On the other hand, some Israelis saw opportunities for positive change in Germany's handling of antisemitism. Rivka expressed hope that Germany would learn and grow from recent challenges: "*I do have hope that Germany will grow from this and learn.*"

In Sum, across both non-Israeli and Israeli Jewish interviewees, several key themes emerged regarding concerns about the future of Jewish life in Germany:

1. **Safety and Security:** There is widespread concern about the physical safety of Jews in Germany, with many noting a rise in antisemitic incidents, particularly in public spaces and schools. This sense of insecurity has led some to consider emigration as a potential solution.
2. **Community Viability:** Many interviewees expressed fears about the long-term sustainability of Jewish communities in Germany.
3. **Identity Preservation:** The preservation of Jewish identity for future generations was a major concern, particularly in light of the intergenerational impact of antisemitism.
4. **Potential for Change:** Despite these concerns, there was a sense of cautious optimism among some interviewees. They expressed hope that Germany could learn from recent events and make changes that would foster a more inclusive society where Jewish life could thrive.
5. **Contingency Planning and Emigration:** The consideration of emigration was common, with many discussing plans to leave if conditions worsened.

Highlights: Future Concerns and Opportunities for Jewish Life in Germany

- **Community Sustainability Concerns**
 - Worries about long-term viability of Jewish communities
 - Concerns about societal changes necessary for Jewish life to thrive
- **Safety and Antisemitism**
 - Fears of increasing antisemitism and its impact on public Jewish life
- **Identity Preservation**
 - Challenges in maintaining and transmitting Jewish identity to future generations
- **Resilience and Cautious Optimism**
 - Recognition of historical Jewish resilience in face of adversity
 - Hope for positive changes in Germany's approach to antisemitism
- **Future Planning**
 - Consideration of emigration as a potential response to worsening conditions

5. Summary

This study stands as a crucial endeavor to amplify the often-overlooked voices of Jewish individuals in Germany, offering them a platform to articulate their experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies in the wake of the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel. Through in-depth interviews with a diverse group of Jews living in Germany, including both Israeli and non-Israeli backgrounds, we sought to challenge the prevalent narrative of "talking about Jews" without their direct input. By centering Jewish voices, we gained valuable insights into the complex interplay of identity, trauma, resilience, and community dynamics in the face of rising antisemitism and collective trauma.

Our approach recognizes the heterogeneity within the German-Jewish experience, acknowledging that there is no single, monolithic Jewish perspective. Through the stories our participants shared and the meanings they themselves ascribed to their experiences, we aimed to understand the profound and multifaceted impact of the events on Jewish life in Germany. This methodology not only provides a more authentic representation of Jewish experiences but also contributes to a broader understanding of how tragic events in one's metaphorical or real home country can impact diaspora communities.

This study revealed several key findings. First, the Oct 7 attacks precipitated a profound disruption in the lives of many Jews in Germany, thrusting them (at least metaphorically) into what Turner (1979) describes as a "liminal" state - a period of transition characterized by ambiguity and disorientation. This liminality manifested in significant alterations to daily routines and emotional states, persisting for weeks or even months after the event. Participants experienced a constellation of intense and prolonged emotions in response to the attacks, including acute shock, pervasive fear, deep-seated anger, and profound sadness. For some, these emotions were accompanied by symptoms reminiscent of post-traumatic stress, such as intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and hypervigilance, which may be indicative of vicarious traumatization or collective trauma responses (Hirschberger, 2018).

These findings, although not reflecting the experience of all interviewees, paint a troubling picture of emotional distress and deteriorating well-being. The intensity of these emotional responses was often magnified by personal connections to Israel and prior experiences of conflict. The phenomenon of obsessive news consumption reported by many participants, while understandable, likely exacerbated their emotional distress. These findings strongly support Hirschberger's (2018) theory of collective trauma, which posits that traumatic events can significantly impact group members who are spatially and temporally removed from the original incident. The experiences reported by our participants demonstrate how the events in Israel

reverberated through the Jewish community in Germany, profoundly affecting individuals even in the absence of direct personal connections to the attacks.

A second significant finding of was the deterioration of social relationships between Jewish individuals, particularly those with Israeli backgrounds, and their non-Jewish German acquaintances. While some participants reported supportive and embracing social environments, many others expressed disappointment with the reaction of their social circles. This disappointment often led to a process of social withdrawal, where interviewees either distanced themselves from or felt pushed away by friends who, in their view, failed to demonstrate adequate understanding or support in the days/weeks after Oct 7.

The erosion of these social bonds was frequently attributed to a perceived lack of empathy or understanding from non-Jewish peers. This phenomenon was particularly pronounced among participants with Israeli backgrounds, who also expressed a sense of disconnection from German identity despite long-term residency in the country. Notably, these negative interpersonal experiences stand in stark contrast to the heartwarming public demonstrations of solidarity with Israel and the Jewish community observed across Germany in the weeks and months following the attacks. This ambivalence reflects the ongoing challenges of integrating Jewish and German identities, especially in the context of historical trauma, aligning with previous research on the complexities of Jewish-German identity (Hochman & Heilbrunn, 2018; Dryjanska & Zlotnick, 2019). The erosion of trust in German society and institutions, as evidenced by the disappointment many participants expressed in their non-Jewish peers and the broader societal response, is particularly troubling. It suggests a potential regression in the hard-won progress towards Jewish integration and acceptance in post-war Germany.

The erosion of these support networks may leave Jewish individuals more vulnerable to the psychological impacts of antisemitism and collective trauma. As Brondolo et al. (2009) argue, social support plays a critical role in protecting individuals from the detrimental effects of stressors. However, complete social isolation was often mitigated by the strengthening of ties within Jewish and Israeli communities. This in-group solidarity appears to serve as a protective mechanism during times of crisis, offering a source of support and understanding when broader social connections falter.

The third potentially alarming finding refers to the pervasive sense of insecurity and heightened vigilance among Jews in Germany post-Oct 7. The rise in antisemitism led to increased caution in expressing Jewish identity in public, with some adopting strategies of defiant openness while others chose selective concealment. Accordingly, many participants reported feeling unsafe in public spaces, particularly in areas with large Muslim or Arab populations. This led to changes in behavior, such as concealing Jewish identity markers or avoiding speaking Hebrew in public. In the narrative of many interviewees with diverse background, the current climate of

antisemitism may have long-lasting effects not only on their own lives in Germany, but also on the next generation's relationship with their Jewish identity and sense of belonging in German society. In line with those findings, participants expressed worries about the long-term viability of Jewish life in Germany, citing concerns about safety, community sustainability, and the preservation of Jewish identity for future generations. These concerns underscore the need for continued efforts to combat antisemitism and support Jewish communities in Germany.

Despite those negative experiences and emotional burden, results pertaining to coping strategies utilized by interviewees were somewhat encouraging. Interviewees employed various coping mechanisms, including humor, community involvement, activism, and selective avoidance of news. The choice of coping strategies often reflected individual differences and the specific challenges faced by Israeli versus non-Israeli Jews. The diverse range of coping strategies employed by participants suggests that the effectiveness of different approaches may vary based on individual circumstances and the specific nature of the stressor.

The findings also demonstrate the adaptive role of Jewish identification and advocacy for the Jewish people (regardless of political ideology). Both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews reported a strengthening of their Jewish identity in response to the attacks and subsequent rise in antisemitism. This intensification of identity aligns with the rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999), which posits that individuals may respond to discrimination by increasing their identification with the targeted group. The nature of connections to Israel varied widely among our participants, reflecting the diversity of views within the Jewish community in Germany. While most Israeli and non-Israeli Jews in our sample often expressed a more immediate sense of responsibility towards Israel, it's important to note that this sentiment was not universal among participants or in the Jewish community overall, and critical perspectives are also present.

Several limitations of our study should be acknowledged. Our sample of 18 participants, while diverse, may not fully represent the experiences of all Jews in Germany, particularly underrepresenting the experiences of Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants. The timing of data collection, within six to seven months of the Oct 7 attacks, allowed us to capture timely reactions and coping strategies but may not fully reflect long-term adaptations. Additionally, self-selection bias and the qualitative nature of the study limit the generalizability of our findings.

Implications and Recommendations

For Jewish communities and organizations, our findings highlight the need for programs that strengthen in-group support networks while also fostering opportunities for positive exchange and cooperation with the general societies and other minorities. This dual approach can help build resilience within the community while also promoting broader social cohesion. Organizations should consider offering diverse platforms for the expression of Jewish identity, accommodating both those

who prefer open expression and those who feel more comfortable with discretion. This could include both public cultural events and more private, community-centered activities. Additionally, providing resources and training on effective coping strategies, particularly those that have shown to be effective in managing collective trauma, could significantly benefit community members.

Mental health services should be adapted to address the unique needs of the Jewish community in Germany. In this context, the activity of OFEK, counseling and intervention center that operates as part of the Competence Center for Prevention and Empowerment under the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWST - Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland), should be continued and enhanced. Developing specialized training for mental health professionals on the challenges faced by Jews in Germany, including the impacts of collective trauma and identity-based discrimination, is also essential. Culturally sensitive counseling services that consider the diverse backgrounds and experiences within the Jewish community should be made more widely available. This may involve collaborations between mental health institutions and Jewish community organizations to ensure that services are both accessible and appropriate.

Policymakers play a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by the Jewish community in Germany. Strengthening legal protections against antisemitism and ensuring their effective enforcement is needed. This may involve reviewing and updating existing laws, improving reporting mechanisms for antisemitic incidents, and enhancing law enforcement training on hate crimes. Furthermore, developing policies that support the preservation and growth of Jewish cultural life in Germany is essential. Long-term strategies for combating antisemitism should be a priority, including investments in education at all levels of society.

The education sector has a vital role to play in fostering understanding and combating prejudice. Our findings suggest a need for more comprehensive and nuanced education about Jewish history, culture, and contemporary issues in school curricula. This should go beyond the Holocaust to include the rich diversity of Jewish life and the ongoing challenges faced by Jewish communities. Training for educators on recognizing and addressing antisemitism in educational settings is crucial, as is the development of resources that can help teachers navigate sensitive discussions about identity, discrimination, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see also Bernstein & Diddens, 2021).

NGOs and civil society organizations can contribute by developing educational initiatives that increase awareness about contemporary Jewish life and the impacts of antisemitism. Fostering interfaith and intercultural dialogue programs can help build understanding and reduce prejudice. These organizations can also play a crucial role in monitoring antisemitism and advocating for policy changes.

Finally, these results call for a reevaluation of how German society as a whole responds to global events that impact its minority communities. The gap between

the experiences of Jewish individuals and the perceived indifference of the broader society highlights the need for greater empathy, awareness, and active allyship.

In conclusion, this study highlights the complex and multifaceted experiences of Jews in Germany in the wake of the October 7 attacks. By bringing their own voice and shedding light on the challenges faced by this Jewish individuals and communities, we hope to contribute to a better understanding of the Jewish experience in contemporary Germany and how the events of Oct 7 affected it. The findings underscore the need for continued efforts to combat antisemitism, support Jewish communities, and foster greater understanding and dialogue between different groups in society. Through concerted action across multiple domains, it is possible to create an environment where Jewish identity can be expressed freely and where the rich contributions of Jewish culture to German society are fully recognized and celebrated.

6. References

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Part 1: Personal Experience of the Events

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
 - a. How would you describe your relationship with Judaism?
 - b. How would you describe your relationship with Israel?
2. Where were you when you heard about the events on Oct 7? What was your initial reaction? What did you feel?
3. How did you feel in the days that followed?
 - a. Can you try to describe your daily life in the time after the attack and how your thoughts, feelings, and behavior were influenced by it?
 - b. Do you have family members or friends who were affected by the attack?
4. Now, 4/5 months have passed since the attacks:
 - a. Are your family members and friends safe? Do you know anyone who had to leave their home because of the war?
 - b. How do you feel currently?
 - c. What significance does the massacre and the war have for you and your life currently?

Part 2: Experiences in Germany

1. Let's now talk about your experiences here in Germany. What reactions have you observed in your social and professional environment regarding the Hamas attack and the subsequent war?
2. Have you or acquaintances of yours experienced antisemitism since the attacks? For example, anti-Israel statements or behavior that could be considered antisemitic?
 - a. We define antisemitism based on your own understanding of the term; you can mention both negative and positive things regarding Jews, Israel, or Israelis.
 - b. Can you report on a specific incident in which you were affected by antisemitism or observed an antisemitic act or statement?
3. How is your experience within social media? What is your experience of antisemitism within social media?
 - a. How do you perceive the media portrayal of antisemitic incidents and the Israel-Hamas war?
4. Can you say something about how your social life and relationships with people at home, at work, and the like in Germany are currently? Have you noticed changes in your relationships, or the way people interact with you? Has your own way of interacting with other people changed? *Now I want to ask you about your own reactions and behavior towards other people; How did the situation change the way you behave in relationships, in your social or professional life?*
5. Do you have any other thoughts, interesting experiences, or observations regarding your experiences in Germany in connection with the events in Israel?

Part 3: Coping Strategies with a Focus on Social Identity, Social Engagement, and Activism

1. *What kind of things are helping you the most right now? How are you coping with the situation?*

On the topic of Jewish or Israeli identity:

2. Has your relationship with the Jewish community or your Jewish identity (or Israeli identity) been influenced by the events in Israel? Have you noticed changes in the

last few months? How exactly?

- Can you report whether your participation and engagement within the Jewish community have changed?
 - Are you attending more events, or has your participation decreased?
 - What significance does your community have to you during this time?
3. What impact does antisemitism in Germany have on this?
 4. Do you feel comfortable expressing your Jewish identity? In what ways do you express your Jewish identity, and has the way you express it changed?
 5. What about your **identity as a German** or someone who lives in Germany? Have you noticed changes in how you identify yourself or see yourself as German due to the situation?
 6. Do you feel that your social identity (Jewish, Israeli, German, etc.) helps you cope better with what is happening in Israel? Or with what is happening in Germany (antisemitism, anti-Israel demonstrations)?

On the topic of social support:

1. Have you received professional or non-professional help and support in coping with the events (for example, through the Matan/Ofek hotline)?
 - a. Or other kinds of support you received from friends and family?
2. Does support come more from Jewish/Israeli friends/social environment? From the German or another environment?
3. Do you feel sufficiently supported?
4. Do you feel that social support helps you cope better with what is happening in Israel? Or with what is happening in Germany (antisemitism, anti-Israel demonstrations)?

On the topic of engagement and activism:

1. Do you participate in activism, such as activist events, protests, or raising awareness on social media? Can you describe how you try to engage against antisemitism?
2. Describe your activities on social media; has anything about your behavior changed?
 - a. How do you engage with content related to the war or antisemitism?
 - b. Are you more likely to avoid such content, or do you tend to share, like, or post more?
 - c. Does your behavior differ in Israeli, Jewish, or German online communities?
3. Regarding all the things you do, online or in the community or with friends – do you find that what you do helps you cope better with what is happening in Israel? Or with what's happening in Germany (antisemitism, anti-Israel demonstrations)?

Part 4: Resilience, Prosperity, and Post-Traumatic Growth

1. What have you learned during and since October 7 from your personal and/or collective experience? What insights have you gained from the events and your personal experiences?
2. Have you noticed changes in your self-image/self-perception? What exactly?
3. What changes have you noticed in your outlook on life/your attitude towards life?
4. And in what ways could the Jewish community learn from the events and their coping?
5. How do you think the Jewish community could grow through coping with the events? Have you observed any positive changes or developments within the Jewish community yourself?
6. Thinking about how you stand on things now, would you say the events have influenced:
 - a. your appreciation of life
 - b. your relationships with other people

- c. your personal strengths
- d. new opportunities that have opened up for you
- e. spiritual, existential

Future Orientations and Hopes:

- 6. What concerns and worries do you have about the future of Jewish life and the Jewish community in Germany?

Appendix B: Interview Summaries Across Main Themes

Table B1: Summary of Experiences and Perceptions Across Main Themes (Part 1)

Interviewee	Jewish Identity	Relationship with Israel	Initial Reactions to Oct 7 Events	Emotional Impact	Experiences of Antisemitism and Hatred	Coping Strategies	Changes in Social Relationships	Future Concerns for Jewish Life in Germany
SHANI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Jewish identity, intensified by living in Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close emotional connection despite infrequent visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock and disbelief, immediate family contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense emotional distress, nightmares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited personal experiences, but increased awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant news monitoring, later avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensified relationships with German friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly mentioned
Ido	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Jewish identity, central to personal life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong connection, regularly visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock and disbelief, immediate information seeking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear and depression, ongoing worry for family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witnessed pro-Hamas activity, verbal harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting incidents, self-censorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of non-Jewish friends, strengthened Jewish connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pessimistic outlook, concerns about uncontrolled immigration
Eitan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural connection to Judaism rather than religious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular visits maintain connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock and disbelief, felt like a movie scenario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock, anger, and hope for swift military response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited personal experiences, but aware of incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant news monitoring, later reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for Israeli friends for emotional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty about long-term Jewish presence
Uriel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Jewish identification, strengthened by living in Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional connection remains despite giving up citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock and disbelief, immediate family contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock, grief, anger, and disappointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal attack from Arab vendor, online harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting incidents, self-censorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of social circle, preference for Israeli connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pessimism about Israel's future, hope for international intervention
Maya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Jewish identity, more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close connection, but fear of visiting due to security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock and disbelief, immediate information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged shock, zombie-like state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of identification, insensitive comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding discussions, self-censorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited connections with local Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pessimistic outlook, concerns about safety

Interviewee	Jewish Identity	Relationship with Israel	Initial Reactions to Oct 7 Events	Emotional Impact	Experiences of Antisemitism and Hatred	Coping Strategies	Changes in Social Relationships	Future Concerns for Jewish Life in Germany
	prominent in Germany	concerns	seeking					
Noam	• Strong Jewish identity, more pronounced in Germany	• Strong connection, dual citizenship	• Shock and disbelief, immediate information seeking	• Fear and anxiety, concern for family in Israel	• Verbal harassment for using Hebrew in public	• Reducing public use of Hebrew, social withdrawal	• Loss of non-Jewish friends, strengthened Jewish connections	• Uncertainty about long-term plans in Germany
Talia	• Strong Jewish identity, maintains traditions	• Emotional connection, but reluctance to visit due to current situation	• Shock and disbelief, continuing planned activities	• Prolonged vigilance, difficulty functioning	• Insensitivity in healthcare settings, stereotyping	• Seeking community support, limiting media consumption	• Preference for Israeli friends, cultural gap with Germans	• Concerns about children's Jewish identity and safety
Ruth	• Strong Jewish identity, more prominent in Germany	• Emotional attachment, but critical of current situation	• Delayed awareness, shock upon realization	• Feeling of unreality, zombie-like state	• Academic discrimination, exclusion from events	• Self-defense training, proactive communication	• Preference for non-German friends, cultural differences	• Pessimism about current government, hope for positive change
Ben	• Strong Jewish identity, intensified after Oct 7	• Strong connection, considering return	• Shock and disbelief, immediate information seeking	• Shock, fear, and anxiety	• Academic boycott, online harassment	• Selective social media engagement, community involvement	• Loss of friends due to political disagreements	• Concern about academic antisemitism, uncertainty about long-term stay
Rivka	• Strong Jewish identity, more prominent in	• Emotional connection, but critical of current situation	• Shock and disbelief, dual personal and professional response	• Fear and anxiety, persistent thoughts about hostages	• Verbal harassment, exclusion from academic events	• Interfaith dialogue, maintaining moderate stance	• Cultural gap with German friends, strengthened Jewish	• Mixed outlook, hope for positive change in Germany's

Interviewee	Jewish Identity	Relationship with Israel	Initial Reactions to Oct 7 Events	Emotional Impact	Experiences of Antisemitism and Hatred	Coping Strategies	Changes in Social Relationships	Future Concerns for Jewish Life in Germany
	Germany						connections	approach
Miriam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong Jewish identity, central to life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong emotional connection, sees Israel as homeland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock at scale, familiarity with terror 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent fear despite familiarity with attacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased threats against Jewish community leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military service, Jewish humor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of social circle, selective engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skepticism about Jewish community's future in Germany
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Jewish identity, defines personal identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close emotional connection despite infrequent visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate awareness, shift to crisis management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial panic balanced with leadership responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visibility of pre-existing antisemitism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased security measures, community involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reevaluation of friendships based on reactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty about long-term Jewish presence
Avi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Jewish identity, influenced by Israeli heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong connection, planning to emigrate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial underestimation, later realization of severity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear, depression, ongoing worry for family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of antisemitism, especially on social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of news consumption, seeking support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social withdrawal, especially from public life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing threat to Jewish life development, pessimistic outlook
Hans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Jewish identification, sees self as "Jew in Germany" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong relationship, regularly visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelming shock and disbelief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental paralysis due to incomprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long history of experiences with antisemitism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing with Jewish friends, using Jewish humor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited non-Jewish circle, strong Jewish friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about dissolution of Judaism, hope for peaceful coexistence
Jessica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex relationship with Judaism, less religious than childhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated relationship, critical of policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial underestimation, followed by realization of severity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional distress, obsession with news 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about rising antisemitism, especially Israel-related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective engagement in discussions, increased activism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal from some social interactions, joining new groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about safety of Jews in Germany
Lena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambivalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadness, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern

Interviewee	Jewish Identity	Relationship with Israel	Initial Reactions to Oct 7 Events	Emotional Impact	Experiences of Antisemitism and Hatred	Coping Strategies	Changes in Social Relationships	Future Concerns for Jewish Life in Germany
	but not religious Jewish identity	feelings, critical of policies	disbelief at the scale of the attack	isolation, emotional distress	of antisemitism, particularly in school	news, engaging in pleasant activities	friendships due to political disagreements	about rising antisemitism, uncertainty about raising children
Anna	• Cultural connection to Judaism, not particularly religious	• Very critical of Israel and its policies	• Shock and concern for friends and family in Israel	• Shock, concern about consequences	• Critical of perceived misuse of term "antisemitism"	• Political activism as main coping strategy	• More open about Jewish identity, selective in interactions	• Critical of German remembrance culture, focus on living community
Sophia	• Strong Jewish identity, rooted in upbringing	• Strong connection through family ties	• Disbelief followed by shock as extent became clear	• Shock, fear, anger, and sense of powerlessness	• Experiences antisemitism daily, especially Israel-related	• Conversations with like-minded people, distraction	• Loss of trust in non-Jewish people, strengthened Jewish ties	• Decrease in feeling of security, consideration of emigration

Table B2: Summary of Experiences and Perceptions Across Main Themes (Part 2)

Interviewee	Social Media Experiences	Jewish Community Engagement	Comfort in Expressing Jewish Identity	Life Outlook Changes	Community Growth and Development
SHANI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to pro-Palestinian content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited connection with local Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cautious about speaking Hebrew in public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased appreciation of life's fragility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not explicitly mentioned
Ido	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to anti-Israel content through algorithms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited connection with local Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased comfort in wearing Jewish symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift from optimism to pessimism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire for more assertiveness from Jewish community
Eitan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algorithm-based content filtering pro-Israeli views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation in Jewish events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caution in public spaces, but open in safe environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reevaluation of priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened connections within Jewish community
Uriel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced social media activity due to emotional exhaustion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in liberal Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased observance of Jewish traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on present enjoyment rather than future planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire to revive Reform Judaism in Germany
Maya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to pro-Palestinian content, reporting antisemitic posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty connecting with local Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caution in public, selective display of Jewish symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of global atrocities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not explicitly mentioned
Noam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to anti-Israel content, reporting antisemitic posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited connection with local Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caution in public spaces, especially around Muslims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift from optimism to pessimism about coexistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire for more community-building initiatives
Talia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algorithm-based content filtering pro-Israeli views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation in community events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selective display of Jewish customs in safe environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reevaluation of priorities and relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened connections within Jewish community
Ruth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent pro-Israel content on personal social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased involvement in community activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pride in Jewish identity, but cautious in certain contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire to empower women through self-defense training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in developing Jewish identity courses
Ben	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to antisemitic content, reporting incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation in Jewish events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased visibility of Jewish identity as form of resistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of conflict complexities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire for more community-building initiatives
Rivka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not explicitly mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement in interfaith dialogue initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pride in Jewish identity, but cautious in certain contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased emphasis on dialogue and understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in developing educational initiatives

Interviewee	Social Media Experiences	Jewish Community Engagement	Comfort in Expressing Jewish Identity	Life Outlook Changes	Community Growth and Development
Miriam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong involvement in Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride in Jewish identity despite security concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced belief in self-reliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about stagnation in Jewish community development
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement as community leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased comfort in school environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reevaluation of safety and belonging in Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased involvement in educational initiatives
Avi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to antisemitic content on social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in Jewish youth organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased comfort in public spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pessimism about future in Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly mentioned
Hans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong involvement in Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open expression of Jewish identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced commitment to Jewish life in Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on preserving Jewish culture and traditions
Jessica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased involvement in Jewish political groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased comfort wearing Jewish symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reevaluation of relationship with Israel and Judaism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in connecting with like-minded individuals
Dana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional involvement in Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational comfort, discomfort around certain groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of antisemitism's persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on preserving Jewish traditions for children
Anna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective social media consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical of mainstream Jewish community practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More open approach to express Jewish identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on separation of Jewish identity from Israel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on developing progressive Jewish spaces
Sophia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explicitly mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong involvement in Jewish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhibition of public expression of Jewish identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pessimism about future in Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about antisemitism in schools affecting community

**October 7, One Year Later:
Resilience and Coping Among Jews in Germany Amid Rising
Antisemitism
and Collective Trauma**

Preliminary Report

Authors: Maor Shani, Jana Gerber & Marie Herb

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