

Anti-Zionist and Jew

Can Jews be authentically Jewish in
contemporary France?

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Abstract

This question of this thesis ***Anti-Zionist and Jew: Can Jews be authentically Jewish in contemporary France?*** is to be replied to by the philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre's Existentialist phenomenology. The paper's title refers to Sartre's 1943 book *Antisemitic and Jew*. The change to anti-Zionist is intended to help the reader see how within France, hatred toward the Jew has been and still is seamlessly connected with the state of Israel and its relationship with its neighbour in the Muslim world. This connection has been further heightened and problematized since the 2023 October 7th massacre and the subsequent tragic events in Gaza. This idea is then framed within existentialist philosophy to refocus the reader's attention to look anew at the problematic nature of being Jewish in contemporary France. Despite reference to other thinkers, the core approach of this research is to situate the concepts of *Being-for-itself* and *Being-in-itself*, in a critically exploratory manner; so that we may reexamine relevant lived experiences of modern Jews. The research approach concentrates on examining the complexities of Jewish identity in the current societal landscape using the methodology of netnography. Such a method allows the author to have an unobtrusive access to media mediated options of a range of Jews in France.

To help meet this objective, this research has been structured into cohesive chapters. The research starts with a literature review of former research works in the determined domain. In Chapter 1, the Literature Review explores the thematic meaning and concerns related to the conceptual framework of existentialism, with a determined emphasis on the philosophical approaches led by Sartre. Under the scope of understanding existentialism through the ideological exploration of Sartre, this research investigates the relevance of concepts such as authenticity, bad faith, freedom. Further to this, the chapter explores the distinctions between the states of *Being-for-itself* and the state of *Being-in-itself*. The literature review analyses the core works of Sartre, referring to *Being and Nothingness*,

Existentialism is a Humanism, and *Anti-Semite and Jew*. The specific aim of understanding these texts is to establish a theoretical foundation to meet humanitarian relevance towards the existence of Jews as an independent community.

Chapter 2 focuses on Methodology. This chapter outlines the research methodological approach based on the philosophical demands of the research topic. Employing philosophy added by thematic analyses of data collected through a netnographic approach, this chapter illustrates the pathway of the research and the elements of engagement to gain an integrated understanding of Sartrean texts.

It is in Chapter 3, that this research focuses on the practical reliance for understanding Sartre's phenomenology in the lived experiences of Jews through contemporary incidents published by media sources. Through the scopes of examining Sartre's philosophical ideas for understanding existentialism in contemporary times, this chapter explores the critical positioning of 'Being in Itself' and 'Being for Itself' in the context of humanitarian existence and the relevance of this existence to the authentic way of living experience. As this section contextualises the aspects related to Sartrean philosophy, the investigation leads towards contemporary debates to establish Jewish identity amidst the vividly structured societal stereotypes.

The final Chapter 4 details an application of Sartre's philosophical framework in the context of the lived experiences of the Jews in France accumulated through netnography. The emphasis focuses on the investigation of various contexts with France, which are determined as responsible for important for understanding anti-Semitism through phenomenology and how we can perceive intentionality in the formation of the Jewish identity. This chapter also acknowledges the framework of Sartre for understanding the dynamics of cultural identity. This is the chapter that refers to philosophy to gain an

understanding of the challenges faced by the French Jewish minority community and the ways they assert their identities amidst widespread socio-political dynamics.

Eventually, the conclusion synthesises all the accumulated theoretical and empirical findings and highlights a comprehensive summing up of this research. The conclusion establishes that through Sartre's philosophy, this research attains scopes for understanding the implications of existential authenticity in wider diversified contexts. Further, it also notes the final verdicts on the status of the Jewish community by bridging theoretical analysis along with empirical research. As such, this study appears as a significant contribution to the domain of existentialist studies and to the expansion of contemporary social theory for identifying the provision towards the formation, authenticity, and cultural resilience in the face of cultural conflict and societal pressures.

Introduction

The Jews of France are afraid. What can we do?¹

Jewish students were excluded from portions of the UCLA campus because they refused to denounce their faith.²

The foundational reason for this research is very personal. A week after announcing to a class of students that I was a Jew, two pieces of 'Art work' was pinned to a wall in an Art exhibition. The artist had asked the question of 'who is to blame?' and the two replies were as follows, 'the Jews' and 'we want to see less Timi O'Neill on Campus'. In effect, I was to become invisible or erased from the campus. This act of erasure is not unusual to the Jew. Apart from the obvious attempts of erasure in the countless pogroms, we see such a desire within works of literature. In Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953), the original names of the two main characters were altered from Jewish names.³ For Beckett, this act of erasure was a literary representation that he saw on the streets of Paris under Nazi control.

The work that follows is based on personal experiences that I have attained as a Jew and now a researcher navigating the concern of identity for the French Jewish community. In a culture that is historically prone to scapegoating Jews and by extension the people of Israel, there is a prevalent tendency to personally target Jews in Europe and express hatred instead of succumbing to victimhood.

¹<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/02/antisemitism-jews-france-emmanuel-macron-israel-amas-war>

² BBC news 'Columbia University president resigns after Gaza protests turmoil' 15th August 2024

³Hirsch, O (2020) Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*: a historical play with two Jews as main Characters Brno studies in English, 2020, Vol. 46 iss 1, pp.175-194

René Girard provided an historical perspective of collective violence against groups in his *Texts of persecution* in *The Scapegoat* (1989). In this work he referred to Guillaume de Machaut's *Judgement of the King of Navarre* and he pointed the reader to see how old narratives were used to blame Jews for the Black Death⁴. This 'theory' was used as a justification for the declaration of the mass slaughter of the Jews. Girard made a parallel critique of these texts along with myths underpinned by Oedipus that reveal similar themes to suggest the mythical concealment of persecution narratives. The emphasis on the theoretical advent of the Christian Passion by Girard is open to interpretation from the perspective of an innocent Jewish victim, which demystifies the Western cultural practice of adopting violence. According to Girard (2016), the rejection of Christ of being guilty disrupts the cycle of violence and is the way to transform the scapegoat into the Lamb of God. This eventually gets narrated to be a provision to expose the origins of political idols, superstitions, and false ideologies. Girard recounts such acts of blaming Jews as instances developed by many western cultures.

Although motivated by the works of Girard and other writers such as Hannah Arendt, this thesis nevertheless leans toward the philosophical ideas of Jean-Paul Sartre, and towards the philosophical concepts of authenticity and freedom. What is hopefully new in this venture, is the employment of lived experiences of French Jews as published in media sources across the world, using netnography. This helps illustrate the contemporary importance of Sartre as his ideas intersections of freedom concerning identity crises and the factors of resistance. By considering this aim, this thesis becomes engaged in illuminating and criticising the ways through which the ideas of Sartre lead to the context of Jewish resistance in contemporary society, thereby offering the scope for gaining the

⁴ The Black Death is a devastating bubonic plague pandemic that ravaged Europe and Asia in the mid-14th century, especially in 1347 and 1351, causing 25 to 75 million deaths.

philosophical perspective on navigating the subjects to detect identity amidst the diversified struggle for societal recognitions.

Linking the media-reported cases of hostility and the socio-cultural ways of increasing prejudice against French Jews, this research focuses on the necessity of asserting French Jewish identity before it becomes invisible, 'At first, we will hide the Star of David, will then happen? -will they cut the beard?'⁵ This paper also investigates acts of resistance maintained by the Jewish community for being secluded and victimised as per the prevalent societal incidents, events such as the Anti-Semitic Incidents in France⁶ (Peigne and Feingold, 2018) and Halle, Germany⁷ (BBC, 2020). By evaluating these recent incidents, this thesis aims to develop a critically analysed genuine relation between heritage and the practice of resistance on a wider spectrum.

By drawing upon the seminal work of Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, the research allows for a transhistorical account of the hatred of Jews in France in the 1940s and the experience of Jews in France in 2024. From a phenomenological perspective, we see how their contemporary lived experiences are deeply rooted in the past. As an example, Sartre wrote in *Anti-semite and Jew* about a classmate of his who was convinced that the Jewish students in his class were chosen in favour of him "...Jews "annoy" him because of the thousands of injustices that "jew ridden" social organizations commit in their favour". (Page

⁵("Antisemitism Exploding: 'Every Jew in France faced with the prospect of leaving country' The Medialinefriday 12/20/24).

⁶ In March 2018, an elderly Holocaust survivor, Mireille Knoll, was murdered in her Paris apartment. The attack was motivated by antisemitism, and it sparked widespread outrage and renewed concerns about rising antisemitism in France.

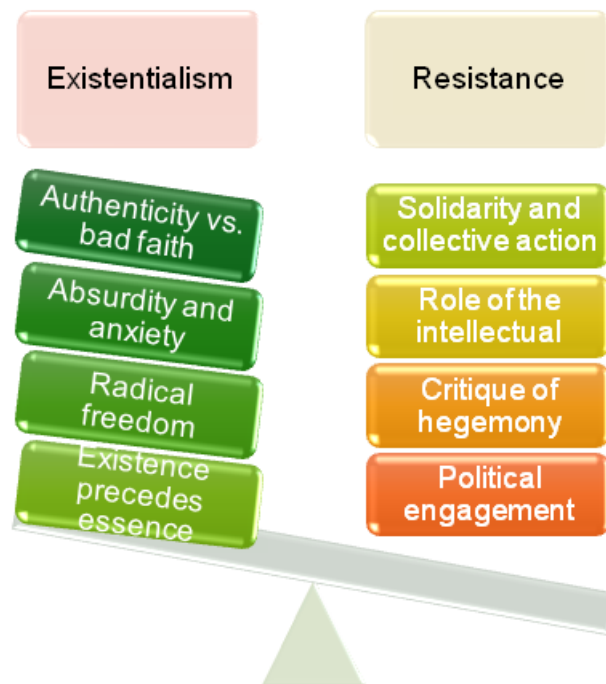
⁷ In October 2019, a gunman attempted to attack a synagogue in Halle, Germany, during Yom Kippur, the holiest day in Judaism. The attack resulted in the deaths of two people outside the synagogue and shocked the local Jewish community.

12), now compare with this headline Sartre's words with an article in the *Times of Israel* on 4th April 2020 'Antisemitic conspiracy theories an odious symptom of France's viral crisis'. Despite being nearly 80 years apart, we see the return to the idea of a Jewish cabal living in secret in France and running its institutions.

Authenticity is a central concept in validating the existentialist perspective of life, and in so doing justify the means of addressing the core concern of modern life among its complexities (Schilpp, 1981; Danto, 1991). This helps contextualise the individualistic standpoint of the Jewish community against the communal prejudice that is liable to intimidate their ways to shape their authentic ethical notions, and sociocultural identities, and the purpose of adding meanings to their multifaceted existence in the contradictory world.

Moreover, while distinguishing between the image attained from existence and the acquisition of a personality from subjective experience (Sartre, 1946), this research follows Sartre's school of thought. Sartre's research implies a robust framework for exploring the themes leading to the contexts of existentialism and resistance among the Jewish community. The theoretical framework to be considered for this initiative can be illustrated as marked in

Figure 1 Investigating Sartre's Philosophy: Existentialism vs Resistance



Source: Adapted from Udokang (2016)

Sartre's notion of existentialism was based on contending that people are thrust into existence without having any kind of inherent meaning or assertion to their definite self, which must be structured through deliberate actions and choices. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre argued that as humans we are free to make choices, and through these choices, we define our existence. This was the basis of radical freedom, whereby he asserted the capacity of individuals to shape their destinies, yet at the same time bear adequate responsibility for facing the consequences of their decisions.

On a critical note, while following the structural approach of Sartre, it is also significant to note that his philosophy is predicated on the belief in the non-existence of God. It is this complicated aspect of Sartre that remains the fundamental thought-provoking question

about human existence (Howells, 1988, 1992). This impacts the thesis as a core self and collective definition of being Jewish is a belief in G_D.

Thus, this study by attempting to integrate Sartrean phenomenology with the lived experiences of Jews in France, is not without problems. However, to avoid too many distractions, the focus will be to examine concretely the lived experiences of French Jews within the latest contexts of anti-Semitism, and how these create Jewish identity formation more in terms of a culture as opposed to the theological analysis. It demonstrates how existentialist perspectives can interpret societal challenges and contribute to discussions on identity, freedom, and ethical responsibility. By contextualising Jewish authenticity within a political philosophy, the research aims to deepen our understanding of existential authenticity and its implications in contemporary France. It highlights the persistent prejudice and discrimination faced by Jews despite their contributions to French society, advocating for greater societal acceptance and understanding.

In conclusion, the thesis argues that contemporary France imposes constraints on Jews, hindering their ability to freely express their authentic identity amidst societal pressures and prejudices. It underscores the complex interplay between Jewish and Arab identities, emphasising the perpetual quest for authenticity amidst societal divisions.

Chapter 1: Literature Review on Existentialism and Authenticity

1.1 Introduction

The core aim of this chapter is to critically investigate and crucially understand the established notions of the thoughts of Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre's existentialist philosophy is subject to critical evaluation in terms of understanding individual freedom and the way to create meaning. As stated in the introduction, this analysis is to gain insight into the perspectives towards the Jews in contemporary France and thereby navigate the concern of their identities amidst anti-Zionism and societal pressures.

1.1.1 Overview of Existentialism

Scholars from Williams (1965) to Zimmerman (1990) referred to the very complexity of the term Existentialism which originated in the late 19th century. These scholars noted that it was Søren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger who offered a philosophical perspective that concentrated on comprehending the human experience (Sontag, 1967). The existentialists like Kierkegaard and Heidegger rejected the title of being an existentialist. In the words of Kierkegaard, "he is a religious man and has no philosophy to call philosophy of existence" (Wahl, 1949, p. 3).

On the other hand, Heidegger believed the problem is *the problem of being* (Sontag, 1967).

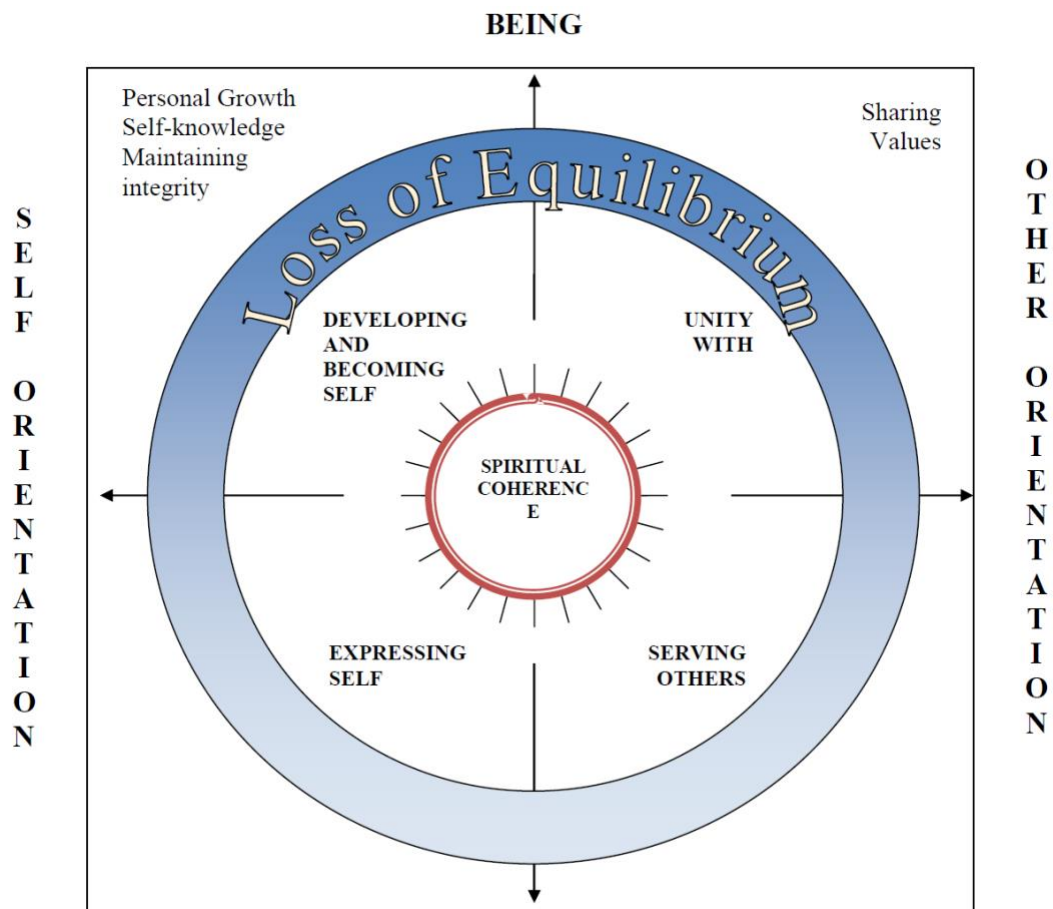
This is a core issue within existentialism, as Sartre states:

The question is only complicated because there are two, kinds of existentialists. There are, on the one hand, the Christians, amongst whom I shall name Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both professed Catholics; and on the other the existential atheists, among whom we must place Heidegger as well as the French existentialists and myself (Sartre, 1946, p. 26))

Depending on which perspective the existentialist chose, their views of the condition of existence and the way to lead an authentic life result in actions aligned with personal

values that shape unique meanings in life (Zaner, 1973). In rejecting essentialism, existentialists posit the importance of forging new modes of principles instead of passively adhering to established ones. In its philosophical DNA, existentialism embraces the idea that 'existence precedes essence', where it values the primacy of individual existence over the practically predetermined definitions, or the determined roles assigned to the person (Zimmerman, 1984).

Theorists such as Abbas et al (2011) and Sinha (2022) turned their attention to the profound solitude between oneself and others. These scholars explored the issue of differences keep us isolated from others and the natural world. For Abbas et al. (2011) even in death, irrespective of others being present, everyone is marked for embarking on their journey alone, which underscores their unique nature and capabilities. On the other hand, Sinha (2022) noted that existentialism asserts the necessity of self-created meaning and contingency is liable to the individual to be confronted by disillusionment and despair. This is a recurring theme within existentialism that posits that humans often experience anxiety in a world, which is perceived as devoid of inherent meaning, or as Camus would suggest, its absurdity. The matter of existence forces the individual to actively make choices to define their own identity. At this point, more comprehensively, the image specified refers to Bakan's research on existentialism on human individual creation and maintenance. Bakan posits a dual aspect to human existence, which is noted to be significant in placing relevance on both the relationship of an individual with others, there remains the need to maintain the balance between action as well as contemplation throughout his self-created life (Abbas et al., 2011).

Figure 2 Human Existence: The Dual Nature

Source: Abbas et al. (2011, p.103)

With the contemporary declarations made by Abbas et al. (2011) and Sinha (2022), this research will emphasise the imperative of actively defining the identity of the Jews in France through the ways of developing personal choices by the people involved in practising discrimination. Further, by then referencing Sartrean mode of realising 'being' it is then possible to show the reader how to link authenticity to the Jew in contemporary France.

1.1.2 Major Themes in Existentialism

What conceptual basis is needed to help the reader in exploring the matter of 'being' for the Jewish in contemporary France? To answer this, the next section discusses the core themes underpinned by this research such as Freedom and responsibility, Anxiety and guilt, Absurdity of existence, The they-self (L'être-pour-autrui), inauthenticity, Individualism and uniqueness, Authenticity in Existentialism.

For Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does' (Sartre, 2023). Being so, when '*freedom and responsibility*' are confronted, the individual is forced to make choices and in so doing create meaning in their life. It is this freedom, which is also subject to consequences, as there is the penalty for having such responsibilities; if you accept the outcomes of one's actions as being a result of your own decisions, then you must take full personal responsibility.

This then leads to a discussion on '*anxiety and guilt*'. For the existentialist one must embrace the existential angst that is present when the awareness of one's freedom, as well as the realisation of the inherent uncertainty of life. It is this anxiety that gets heightened by the responsibility to make authentic choices by an individual. In this context, Friedrich Nietzsche referred to the burden of guilt and the status of consistent internal struggles that accompany the individual all through his life (Nietzsche, 1974).

Further, the theme of *Absurdity of Existence* for the existentialists is a matter of confronting the absurdity or the state of meaninglessness, which is also subject to characterise human existence in a universe without any inherent meaning. As marked by Albert Camus (2005) in *The Myth of Sisyphus* offered a detailed exploration of the way individuals grapple with

the absurdity of life and thereafter get engaged in searching for meaning in a seemingly indifferent world.

On the other hand, while coining the term 'They-Self' and introducing authenticity in the domain of existentialism, Martin Heidegger critiqued the tendency of individuals to conform to societal expectations and norms, which has been detected as the core factor that leads to a state of inauthenticity or the idea of 'bad faith.' Heidegger coined the term 'das Man' (which stands for the 'They-self') and describes the phenomenon in which the respective individuals lose touch with their authentic selves, as they start adopting the values and the determined images imposed by society (Paluch, 1970).

To help the situation that Jews face in contemporary France, we need to consider the themes of individualism and uniqueness, which are elemental aspects of understanding existentialism. As these aspects get celebrated, there is a clear preference for the uniqueness and the essence of individuality in every person's existence. Simone de Beauvoir (2015), argued in her *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, for the importance of recognizing as well as further engaging in respecting each subjective existence of the individual and identifying the periphery of freedom that shapes their destiny and their identity.

The theme of authenticity in existentialism, which is significant concerning this research, is the central theme of existentialism. The concept of authenticity comprises living or existing following the values determined by an individual, and the maintenance of the belief system, and choices rather than getting into any conformation to external expectations. According to Søren Kierkegaard, this is the thematic approach of existentialism that emphasises the need for individuals to make authentic choices to define their existence (Klausen, 2018; Ebelendu and Onwuatiegwu, 2021). However, it is significant to note here

that against Kierkegaard, Sartre identified authenticity as aligning aspect of individual actions with one's true self (Klausen, 2018)

In consideration of all the themes, this research will collectively reflect the matter of authentic existentialism over the subjective experience of individuals, especially in confronting the cultural challenges and societal uncertainties of existence, particularly in the context of 'being' for the Jewish in contemporary France.

1.2 Authenticity in Existentialism

As this research remains focused on the matter of authenticity for understanding the status of 'being' for the Jewish in contemporary France, it is marked to be the intrinsic element of the existentialist concept of individuality. According to Puthenpurackal (1987), existentialism identifies the status of 'being' as a truly authentic entity that entails the realisation of individuality, and vice versa. While referring to Heidegger, who takes *freedom as the opening of philosophy*; Puthenpurakkal (1987, p. 102) notes freedom,

evokes in man the basic question about the primordial relation between Being and Time. Freedom is the condition of possibility for the disclosure of the Being of entities - for the understanding of Being. Primordial freedom is fundamental to philosophy, as it lets man into the extensiveness of Being and into the intensiveness of time as the horizon of understanding of Being. Thus, the basic question of philosophy, according to Heidegger, is grounded in the question of the essence of freedom.

This comprises the practice of taking responsibility for personal experiences as consequences and thereby avoiding 'bad faith' by resisting the prevalent external pressures to adopt false values, followed by actively creating and further getting engaged in living in alignment with one's true self (Roth, 1996). At this point, Malpas and Wrathall (2000) referred to the need for navigating the tension between the instinctual nature of humans and the way of committing traditional choices, or in terms of facticity and the

position for transcendence. In the context of maintaining Jewish identity amid challenges like anti-Zionism⁸, this research refers to existential authenticity as the base for serving the critical framework. Employing examining the perspectives of existentialism on the construct of Jewish identity, this study situates Sartrean ideas within broader philosophical discourse. The purpose is to illuminate the Jewish relevance to contemporary socio-political landscapes, especially in France. In the process of critically interpreting the position of Jews in contemporary France, understanding Sartre's key concepts of authenticity, which are- bad faith, authenticity (in itself), being-for-itself' (or freedom) and 'being-in-itself' (to facticity), get significant.

1.2.1 Sartre's Key Concepts of Authenticity

In the context of the authentically identified Jewish in contemporary France, Sartre's concepts of authenticity and bad faith hold relevance. The concept of 'bad faith' or *mauvaisfoi*, for Sartre, signifies a form of self-deception (Warnock, 1965). It is a status whereby the individuals evade the responsibility of discovering. They rather embrace their genuine selves, and the process comprises a refusal to accept the freedom, which has been inherent in human existence.

In the context of discrimination towards Jews in France, the interpretation of Sartre's 'bad faith' posits that true authenticity involves confronting the existential challenge of freedom. This is the factor that analyses individuals who are engaged in 'bad faith' to avoid this kind of confrontation. In the context of discrimination, the determined perpetrators may use 'bad faith' as an element to justify their actions by evading responsibility and thereby totally not

⁸ Zionism originated in late 19th-century Europe as an ethnic or ethno-cultural nationalist movement seeking to create a Jewish state by colonizing land outside of Europe. It initially focused on establishing a Jewish homeland in Mandatory Palestine, an area historically significant in Jewish tradition, religion, and history, corresponding to the Land of Israel.

confronting the freedom attained inherently. They also lack the act of acknowledging the equality and the position of humanity of others, here the Jews in France.

Further, the other key concept of 'authenticity' for Sartre comprises the condition of being true to oneself. In this process, it is significant to acknowledge both personal freedoms along the responsibility that accompanies them. Based on this concept, Sartre emphasised the importance of genuine self-reflection and the development of ethical decision-making (Shaïda, 1986). These are the aspects, which are responsible for generating respect, not only for one's freedom, but also for the freedom of others under societal interactions.

While undertaking the concern of discrimination towards Jews in France through Sartre's concept of authenticity, this research will delve into the process of recognising the scopes of generating genuine self-reflection added by ethical decision-making for fostering respect in societal interactions of France, especially for the Jews. According to Sartre, authenticity requires individuals to confront the freedom and responsibility inherent in their choices, which comprises the act that refers to their treatment of others. In this research, this thematic approach will be analysed to understand the factors for discrimination against Jews, which could be seen as a failure to authentically engage in ethical decision-making. It will also interpret the denial of the Jewish community of their rightful freedom and equality in France.

The final conceptual keys of Sartre are interrelated and are identified as 'being-for-itself' (freedom) and 'being-in-itself' (facticity). Sartre distinguishes these keys by suggesting that for authentic human relationships in a society, there is the need to acknowledge both aspects of existence (Simont, 1992). From a holistic point of view, these keys are a representation of freedom to choose and to act as per selected choices and decisions.

However, there is also the need to accept the past and physical embodiment for determining the sense of 'being'.

For authentically identifying as Jewish in France today, this research will assess these key concepts and will encourage individuals to confront their identity with honesty and an adequate amount of responsibility. In this process the act of navigating these complexities within the French cultural entity and personal heritage within a framework of existential authenticity, it is important to gain some in-depth realisation of the core works of Sartre.

1.2.2 Analysis of Sartre's Works

In the context of this paper, it is important to note Sartre's relationship with existentialist themes of individual freedom, matter of choice, and the creation of meaning, while at the same time examining the provisions through which the Jews navigate their identities amidst societal pressures and existential dilemmas. His works show a consistency of focus on the exploration of authenticity, existential angst, and the relevant realisation of existential condition, which resonates deeply with the quest for self-definition and more importantly socio-cultural identity among Jews in a complex socio-political landscape like contemporary France.

In *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre expressed the nature of the ego and its relation to authentic existence. For him, the ego is not an inherent aspect of consciousness but a construct formed through reflective consciousness. The ego emerges from the need to unify our actions and states, presenting itself as a "transcendent object." Yet, it attempts to claim a creative power that belongs to consciousness, making it an "irrational synthesis" of activity and passivity. This ego, as a construct rather than an essence, plays a key role in Sartre's understanding of authentic existence. Authenticity, in Sartrean

existentialism, arises when we acknowledge the absolute freedom and spontaneity of consciousness, unburdened by the ego. When consciousness is "purified" of the ego, it reveals its true nature as "nothingness," simultaneously aware of all objects without being confined by any fixed identity.

The ego, by trying to define and restrict consciousness, stands as an obstacle to authentic existence. It imposes a rigid identity, a "me," that limits the inherent freedom of consciousness. Recognizing the ego as a construct allows individuals to break free from its constraints, embracing the radical freedom that makes authentic self-creation and genuine living possible. However, Sartre points out that this freedom also comes with a burden. The realization of absolute freedom brings with it a sense of responsibility and anguish. Sartre observes that consciousness is frightened by its spontaneity, sensing it as something beyond freedom itself. This anguish emerges from the realization that we are solely responsible for our actions and choices, without any pre-existing essence or predetermined direction.

In *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Sartre further explores these themes of freedom and responsibility. He emphasizes that "*existence precedes essence*," meaning humans are not born with a predetermined nature but define themselves through their choices and actions. This foundational freedom means that individuals are responsible for creating meaning in their lives, without recourse to external guides or values. Sartre advocates for a rigorous self-examination and introspection of the consequences of one's actions. The philosophical stance underscores the importance of personal choice and responsibility in shaping ethical frameworks and individual meaning.

While *Existentialism is a Humanism* does not directly address the lived experiences of Jews in France, it offers a powerful framework for understanding individual existence in the face of societal pressures and historical context. Sartre's assertion that existence precedes essence implies that individuals, including French Jews, are not defined by any external,

predefined identity but by their choices and actions. The challenges of navigating personal identity within a complex social environment, such as a predominantly Catholic society, can be understood through Sartre's lens of individual freedom and responsibility. The concept of anguish—recognizing the weight of one's choices—resonates with the way Jewish individuals in France might experience the tension between personal identity and societal expectations, especially in a time of intense anti-Semitism.

Sartre's idea of abandonment is also relevant in this context. He asserts that there is no higher power or preordained value system to guide human beings. In the face of historical events like the Holocaust, this abandonment challenges traditional beliefs about God, morality, and justice. Jewish individuals in such a context are forced to grapple with the absence of absolute certainty, creating meaning and purpose in a world devoid of inherent direction. Sartre's existentialism provides a framework for exploring how Jewish individuals navigate this absence of external guidance, seeking meaning in a world where traditional values are upended.

Additionally, Sartre's concept of "intersubjectivity"—the idea that our identity is shaped by our relationships with others—can be applied to the dynamics between Jewish and non-Jewish communities in France. It highlights how identity is constructed not only by personal choices but also through the way others perceive and interact with us. This is especially significant for understanding the challenges Jews face in reconciling their identity within a broader society, where acceptance and integration may be complicated by social prejudice and exclusion.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre further elaborates on his existentialist philosophy by focusing on human consciousness and its relationship to the world. He critiques traditional philosophical dualisms, emphasizing instead the importance of examining the way

phenomena appear to consciousness. Sartre differentiates between the "phenomenon of being," or how objects appear to us, and the "being" of the phenomenon, which pertains to the intrinsic nature or essence of objects. This distinction is central to Sartre's phenomenology, which prioritizes lived experience over abstract essences.

Sartre's ideas are particularly useful for understanding the authenticity of Jewish individuals in the face of societal pressures. The concept of "bad faith"—the denial of one's freedom and responsibility by adopting a false self—can be applied to the ways Jews may have had to conform to non-Jewish standards to avoid persecution. Sartre argues that the "for-itself," or conscious self, is a constant negation of both it and the world around it. In a state of "bad faith," individuals might deny their true freedom by letting external definitions of identity—imposed by others or by society—dictate who they are. For Jewish individuals, the pressure to conform to societal norms, especially in the context of antisemitism, could lead them to adopt false identities, suppressing their authentic selves to survive or avoid discrimination.

Sartre's framework helps to explore how Jewish authenticity is shaped by the tension between personal identity and societal expectations. As Barnes notes, "bad faith" occurs when individuals pretend to be something they are not, denying their freedom and responsibility. For Jewish individuals, this could manifest in adopting identities imposed by non-Jewish society, rather than defining themselves authentically. In this sense, the ego—shaped by societal expectations—becomes a hindrance to true self-expression. To achieve authenticity, one must confront the ego's limitations and recognize the freedom to define oneself, even in the face of external pressures.

Ultimately, Sartre's existentialist philosophy offers a powerful lens for understanding the complexities of identity and authenticity. His concepts of the ego, freedom, responsibility, anguish, and "bad faith" all provide insight into the lived experiences of individuals, including Jewish communities navigating historical and social challenges. Sartre's existentialism stresses the importance of personal choice and responsibility, urging individuals to define themselves authentically in a world where external forces constantly challenge their autonomy.

Finally, in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Sartre (1943) addressed anti-Semitism⁹ and Jewish identity. Despite not referring directly to anti-Zionism¹⁰, (which is a distinct political stance related to Israel's policies) Sartre does refer to examples where French Jews were attached to discussions around Israel – despite the state of Israel not yet existing. Sartre analyses anti-Semitism through four determined characters, which are marked as the anti-Semite¹¹, the democrat¹², followed by the authentic Jew¹³, and the inauthentic Jew¹⁴. These characters are meant to illustrate their interactions as a hypothetical drama, whereby an anti-Semite constructs a despised Jew who defines his reactionary

⁹Anti-Semitism refers to "hostility and prejudice targeted at Jewish people." BBC. *What's the difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism?* The British Broadcasting Corporation. 29 April 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-36160928>

¹⁰ Anti-Zionism opposes the movement advocating for the establishment of a Jewish state in the Middle East, which historically corresponds to the land of Israel, and consequently opposes support for the modern state of Israel. BBC. *What's the difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism?* The British Broadcasting Corporation. 29 April 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-36160928>

¹¹ Holds irrational hostility towards Jews, viewing them as fundamentally inferior and different.

¹² Opposes anti-Semitism and supports equality, viewing Jews as equal members of society.

¹³ Rejects imposed anti-Semitic identities and lives freely, embracing their Jewish identity authentically.

¹⁴ Internalizes anti-Semitic stereotypes and distances themselves from their Jewish identity to fit in.

nationalism. On the other hand, the democrat championed the means of enlightenment ideals yet denied the Jew's identity while advocating universal rights. Sartre's expedition over authentic and inauthentic Jews, in this book navigates their identities under societal pressures, existing in the present shaped by external perceptions and historical burdens.

1.3 Critical Evaluation in Contemporary Context

As per the contemporary discussions on Jewish identity existentialist ideologies, this research will analyse the lived experiences of Jews in contemporary France through Sartrean perspectives. In this context, Michael Lerner (1994) defines authentic Jewish identity as encompassing spiritual depth, added by social justice, aspects of intellectual exploration, democracy, joyfulness, moral integrity, pluralism, non-sexism, and openness to dissent. This contrasts with narrower views rooted in either strict Jewish secularism or unquestioning adherence to tradition. On the other hand, Alan Dershowitz (1997, p. 17) advocates for a flexible concept of Jewish authenticity, which is inclined to recognise diverse expressions such as Yiddish secularism, political Zionism, and his own secular Judaism as equally valid within Jewish civilisation -

Maybe there is a strand of Judaism that can survive and thrive without exclusive dependence on theology and ritual. After all, the Yiddish secularism that flourished between the beginning of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) and the Second World War was an authentic Jewish culture, which was destroyed by external forces. Political Zionism, which grew largely out of that culture, remains an authentic Jewish civilization of enormous importance to the survival of Judaism. Today's influential American Jewish community is largely secular.

Following this thread, the context of authenticity is liable to get blended by the claims of historical continuity with specific traditions, normative assertions about preferred Jewish lifestyles, and existential reflections on personal values and identity.

Moreover, debates related to Jewish authenticity may challenge established norms. As marked by Kalmanson (2021), and Balogh (2022), there are debates led over the concerns of feminist efforts to create non-sexist or inclusive forms of Judaism. The pursuit of Jewish authenticity can serve individualistic goals, such as personal meaning and self-realisation, or collective objectives, including preserving enduring communal identities against pressures of assimilation or fleeting individualistic trends.

Lilach Lev Ari's study focuses on ethnically diverse Jewish communities in France, Brussels, and Antwerp. By using correlation quantitative methods and semi-structured interviews to explore, social integration patterns among native-born and immigrant Jews, Ari (2022) marked that Jewish continuity within non-Jewish host societies amid concerns about community resilience in the face of antisemitic sentiments. While following this thread, the most important matter was identified by Britt (2020), who researched and found that the contemporary concerns about Jewish identity, added by their efforts for integration, and acculturation in Europe are heightened due to rising anti-Semitism.

To initiate this research the next chapter offers a methodological approach to analyze the ways through which people navigate their identities amidst the challenges of facing ideological conflicts, critically underscoring the enduring significance of existentialist thought in understanding the complexities of existence, especially for Jews in France.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The methodology employed in this study is a combination of materials gleaned through library-based research, and the analysis of data on lived experiences of the ethnic community of Jews in France attained through netnography. Netnography offers a valuable research method for understanding the lived experiences of Jews in Paris through their engagement with media sources.

The author's choice of Netnography is based on its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of online communities: Kozinets (2015) defines netnography as "a specific set of related data collection, analysis, ethical and representational research practices" that focuses on the human experience within online communities. Examining online forums, social media groups, and other platforms where Parisian Jews interact can provide rich insights into their perspectives, beliefs, and practices.

As the reader will see research gathered through media sources captured a wide range of viewpoints and experiences within a community. The analysis of these online discussions, comments, and shared content provided an unfettered understanding of the diversity of thought and lived experiences among Parisian Jews.

Unlike field research in the 'real' world, this method provided a way to gather data unobtrusively. As an observational method, netnography allowed the author to observe online interactions without directly interfering. This can be particularly beneficial when studying sensitive topics, as it allows individuals to express themselves freely without feeling pressured or judged. This unobtrusive approach can be particularly useful when

researching potentially sensitive topics like religious identity and experiences with antisemitism.

More specifically to this paper, allowed the author to research French Jews by using media sources, and to avoid ethical issues of what data could be revealed during the research, It is crucial to approach this research with sensitivity and ethical considerations, ensuring the anonymity and privacy of individuals participating in online communities.

Returning to Kozinets (2010, p. 60), he further defined netnography as a research method that relies on 'participant-observational research based in online fieldwork'.¹⁵ This allows the research to proceed unhindered by the need to travel across France to collect data from what would be no doubt a hesitant community. Equally, this paper's main goal is to explore the philosophical value of Jean-Paul Sartre's concepts of authenticity and the application of these concepts in the context of Jewish identity in contemporary France, the utilisation of philosophical analysis demands more realisations that are intensive and thus, the inclusion of data through netnography. As explained by Tavakoli and Mura (2015) 'netnography' gets recognised as a research approach that involves studying online communities and cultures through participant observation. This method entails immersing oneself in virtual environments to gather data. Researchers use techniques such as observing interactions within online groups and conducting in-depth interviews with participants to understand behaviours, attitudes, and social dynamics in digital settings (Tavakoli and Mura, 2015). Essentially, netnography adapts traditional ethnographic methods to the online world, focusing on understanding the intricacies of online communities and their interactions.

¹⁵Kozinets, Robert V. *Netnography*. Doing ethnographic research online. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2010

2.1.1 Philosophical Analysis

As the paper's focus is the philosophical analysis of Sartre's work, the data gathered using netnography must be critically examined regarding core Sartrean texts. The core objective is to uncover the critically acclaimed key concepts of authenticity as determined by Sartre in terms of establishing existentialism. This process comprises an in-depth review of the seminal Sartre's works, which can be enlisted as *Being and Nothingness*, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, and *Anti-Semite and Jew*. Using these texts as the foundation, this research aims to scrutinise the context of identifying and further interpreting determined themes on the concepts of freedom, authenticity, and bad faith in the most intrinsic connection to the establishment of Jewish identity.

Moreover, the analytical approach of this research will incorporate a comparative perspective of understanding the forms of resistance identified by different scholars. The primary aim is to explore and define Jewish authenticity in France, focusing on how existential concepts of authenticity and freedom are applied. Objectives include using netnographic data to uncover core elements of resilient Jewish identity, analyzing how identity forms under societal pressures, and examining various forms of resistance to understand their impact on maintaining authenticity and identity.

2.1.2 Aim, Objectives and Scope

This research-based study aims to explore and thereby critically determine a philosophical stance on Jewish authenticity through forms of resistance, especially in France. The philosophical advent will remain focused on providing a framework for individuals to understand and thereby embrace their Jewish identity in a way, which can pave the way

to transcend external pressures, and further connect them deeply with their heritage with great acceptance.

While following the aim of this research, the core objectives of this study are structured following relevant justifications. Understanding the way the Jewish identity persists despite anti-Semitism is essential for recognizing the core elements that remain resilient against external pressures and so the first objective of this research is –

- To define Jewish authenticity in the face of anti-Semitism, identifying resilient core identity elements.

As Sartre's concepts help explore the pathway in constructing Jewish identity through personal freedom and external pressures, offering insights into identity formation under societal challenges is significant for this research-

- To analyse identity formation under societal pressures using Sartre's concepts of "Being for itself" and "Being in itself."

These terms are central to understand Sartre's existentialism. As such, the scope of this research will analyse the debates around the contexts of anti-Semitism, which gets considered under the definition of –

Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”¹⁶

¹⁶ IHRA. *The working definition of antisemitism*. International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. 2024

Through this quote, Sartre highlights the way anti-Semitism, expressed through rhetoric and violence, affects the authenticity of Jewish identity in contemporary France. This is marked by imposing external biases and pressures. On a critical note, the impact on Jewish community institutions and practices underscores the resilience required to preserve authenticity despite systemic discrimination. It is at this verge that this research will also initiate critiques of Israel/Zionism¹⁷ and the matter of cultural assimilation on a wider scale.

2.1.3 Engagement with Sartrean Texts

While investigating Jewish authenticity, this study has sought to define the authentic image of being Jewish in the face of external pressures, especially in the context of anti-Semitism masquerading as criticism of Israel/Zionism. Further, Sartre's concept of *Being* under the reflections of "*Being for itself*" and "*Being in itself*," this research will articulate the way individuals construct their identity amidst societal pressures. Given the prevalence of anti-Semitism in France disguised under various guises, this research approach becomes critical as it gets engaged in Sartre's texts for ensuring ensure that individuals can resist external attempts to distort their identity by providing a solid philosophical grounding.

2.1.4 Comparative Perspective with Other Existentialists

With a critical initiative, it is determined that the Jewish community faces challenges through resistance to social discrimination. On this verge, in terms of investigating different forms of resistance, this research considered a comparative analysis of Sartre's

¹⁷ Zionism denotes the late 19th-century political and national movement among European Jews aimed at establishing a Jewish homeland in the Middle East, specifically Israel.

ideological grounds along with the philosophical ideas explored by scholars like Derrida, Foucault, Clausewitz, and Gandhi. The objective here was to understand diverse perspectives on resistance and thereby gain insights into different philosophical perspectives of resistance to enrich the idea of freedom. The research illustrated the way resistance can be manifested from diverse contexts, it can also contextualize the process of enabling individuals, here Jews in France; towards the process of maintaining authenticity and resisting the external pressures most effectively.

It is noteworthy that resistance in the context of Jews being authentically Jewish is indeed directed against anti-Semites and efforts to erase Jewish identity. While inspecting and exploring the multifaceted nature of resistance towards the ideological differences of Jewish authenticity in contemporary France, this research initiates the provision of enriching scholarly discourse thereby empowering the Jewish community to navigate and assert their identities amidst complex societal challenges as detected in France.

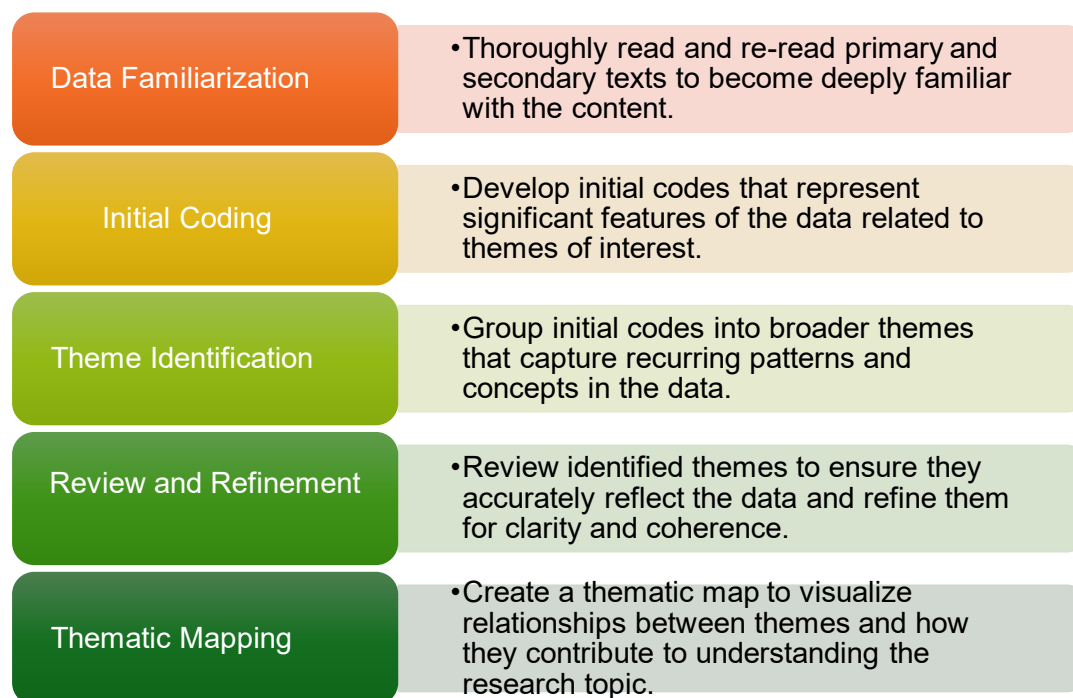
2.1.5 Considering the Lived Experiences

To offer an authentic and reliable context to the concern of identifying the authenticity of Jewish identity in France, this research will remain focused on the lived experiences of Jews in France. The selected period for this speculation has been marked as the duration when anti-Semitism gets heightened by the Israel-Hamas conflict. Based on lived experiences of Jews from media sources from France through netnography, this research will offer declarations of various residents of France in terms of identifying their insights into the experiences of France-based Jews.

2.2 Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis selected for this research will investigate and interpret the texts of Sartre, selected philosophical ideologies and the lived experiences of Jews from media sources of 2024 in France, to identify the recurring themes as well as patterns to justify the context of Jewish authenticity in France. It is the process through which, this study will accommodate the codes and will categorically synchronise them to gain relevant themes to meet the research objectives¹⁸. These themes will be further refined systematically to attain adequate knowledge about existentialist concepts and their manifestation in terms of identifying lived experiences of Jewish authenticity. The steps that will be followed for the thematic analysis in this study are marked in.

Figure 3 Steps of Thematic Analysis for this Research



¹⁸ Byrne, David . A worked example of Braun and Clarke's approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Qual Quant* 56, 2022, 1391–1412.

Source: Adapted from Braun et al. (2018)¹⁹& Byrne (2022)

2.2.1 Data Familiarisation

In this step of data familiarisation (as in Figure 3), the researcher will read and re-read all the accumulated relevant texts and will get deeply familiarised with the content. In the process, the researcher will thoroughly consider all the important contextual contents from Sartre's writings on existentialism and will gain insight into the concept of authenticity related to Jewish identity in contemporary France through their lived experiences. In this step, a deep understanding of the theoretical framework of Sartrean existentialism will be attained for the specific insight into the cultural and social dynamics of Jewish identity and the status of Anti-Zionism in France.

2.2.2 Initial Coding

In this step, the researcher will develop initial codes, which were found frequently in the texts of Sartre and the lived experiences of Jews through media sources from contemporary incidences. As in Figure 3, the idea is to gain those codes, words, or phrases that effectively represent the significant concepts that explain terms like identity, authenticity, freedom and bad faith, in the context of the Jews. This is a development that will follow the step of familiarity with the text and thus, it will be convenient for the researcher to capture significant information about the ideological concepts of Sartre in the selected domains.

¹⁹ Braun, Virginia., Clarke, Victoria., Hayfield, Nikki. and Terry, Gareth. Thematic analysis. In: Liamputtong, P. (ed.) *Handbook of Research Methods in Health and Social Sciences*, Springer. 2018, pp. 843–860.

2.2.3 Theme Identification

Followed by the step Coding, this step will concentrate on grouping the collected codes according to their similarities and appeal to the broader idea of identifying the concepts of identity, authenticity, freedom and bad faith, in the context of the Jews in contemporary France. As the codes get categorically and logically grouped, the researcher will aim to identify relevant themes for meeting the research objectives (see Figure 3). In this process, the texts of the Sartre and the lived experiences of Jews collected from media sources will remain the base for connecting the status of Jewish identity in France and the kind of Anti-Zionism that prevails in the respective scenario.

2.2.4 Review and Refinement

The structured themes identified in the former step will be reviewed and refined critically in this step. The purpose of this step is to ensure that the attained themes are in correlation with ideas and experiences expressed by Sartre and the lived experiences of Jews from contemporary France, cases respectively. It is the accurate amalgamation of the thematic construction that will add justification to this research.

2.2.5 Thematic Mapping

This is a step, where the researcher will create and provide a thematic map, which will be liable to visualise the relationships between variedly attained themes and the way they understand Sartrean authenticity in the context of lived experiences expressed through the Jewish identity in contemporary France. The idea is to illustrate the complex interactions between existential freedom, identity formation, societal pressures, like Anti-Zionism), and the quest for authenticity among Jews.

Eventually, this chapter on research methodology will elaborate on the ways of identifying the philosophical inquiry into Sartrean existentialism, with empirical data collected from lived experiences as published by media houses, to attain a comprehensive understanding of the idea of authentically 'be' and the state of 'being' for the Jews in France.

Chapter 3: Evaluating Jean-Paul Sartre's Phenomenology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates Sartre's phenomenology of establishing socio-political ideology for the existential realisation of being a determined identity. In the process, the concept of authenticity in the exploration of human existence will be assessed within the interplay between consciousness and freedom. Critical speculations will be initiated in terms of understanding the way individuals navigate their existence amidst societal constraints and at the same time establishing the essence of personal freedoms. These are the core themes, which will be examined in this chapter from the perspective of Sartre's phenomenology, to establish the enduring relevance of Sartre's ideology to the current context of Jewish status in France.

The chapter will amalgamate the thematic expeditions led by Sartre while illustrating 'bad faith' in the context of human behaviour and the act of decision-making, added by the tension between sincerity and self-deception. This leads to the realisation of the concepts of 'Being in Itself' and 'Being for Itself' for understanding Sartre's view of human consciousness, whereby individuals confront the responsibility of defining themselves through their actions and choices. Then there will be the comparative analysis of varied forms of resistance within the framework of Sartre's philosophy as against the philosophical perspectives on resistance from scholars like Derrida, Foucault, Clausewitz, and Gandhi. By exploring the diverse philosophical perspectives on resistance this research aims to empower Jews in France to maintain authenticity amid societal pressures and gain insights into Jewish identity in contemporary La Marais as per their lived experiences.

3.1.1 Sartre's Influence on Existentialism

Jean-Paul Sartre delivered a lecture entitled '*Existentialism Is a Humanism*'²⁰ at Club Maintenant, Paris, on October 29, 1945. In this lecture, Sartre forwarded the argument that the fundamental tenet of existentialism is dependent on the notion that "*existence precedes essence*"²¹, employing rejecting "*deterministic excuses*"²². It is hereby that the person asserts to take responsibility for their actions. Sartre defined anguish as a mode of emotion that gets experienced when there is a realisation that the individual is accountable for himself and for all of humanity. This is a form of realisation that empowers and enables the individual to make judicious decisions on their stance towards freedom. In a very comprehensive manner, Sartre distinguished 'will' and 'possibilities of valuation', by stressing that valuation relies on a person's project and the way he perceived as well as experienced in the world.

While referring to the context of 'despair', Sartre referred to it as '*an invitation to people to dwell in quietism of despair*'²³ that comprises optimistic reliance on feasible possibilities. He contends that the act to shape one's ideology is reliable in shaping personal humanity that needs to assert humanitarian actions to get transformative effect on mankind. Sartre further referred to abandonment as a kind of solitude that is realised by atheists, who identify the absence of divine guidance and lay emphasis on the existence of oneself in the universe. These kinds of people for Sartre are solely responsible for determining their essence. In the case of the contingency of human existence, Sartre condemned the notion of a predetermined being and thereby asserted that every person must create their

²⁰Malinge, Yoann "Sartre, *Existentialism is a humanism*". The Literary Encyclopedia. 2021

²¹ Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1946. 5

²² Ibid. 12

²³Ibid. 1

existence and should be strong enough to bear the responsibility of attaining the sense of existence that accompanies it. In the words of Sartre,

Man is all the time outside of himself: it is in projecting and losing himself beyond himself that he makes man to exist; and, on the other hand, it is by pursuing transcendent aims that he can exist. Since man is thus self-surpassing, and can grasp objects only concerning his self-surpassing, he is himself the heart and centre of his transcendence.²⁴

Based on the quote, Sartre established the phenomenology of existentialism as an optimistic as well as liberating philosophy that concentrates on self-initiated actions and establishing self-definitions, which leads to the way of shaping their own identities. Thus, as Sartre's ideology on existentialism gets evaluated in concern of crisis for Jewish identity, it highlighted that existence precedes essence. This specifies that with the lack of inherent value and identity, Jews or any other human being must be engaged in creating their values and adding meanings to their lives by conscious acts. Sartre was completely in favour of active self-construction, whereby individuals, here the Jews; are responsible for imbuing their existence with significant participation in societal actions.

3.2 Sartre's Phenomenological Views

The phenomenological views of Sartre's existential philosophy revolve around the pursuit of identifying authenticity, the act of examining its implications over the very existence of humans and the ways of considering ethical decision-making. For Sartre, authenticity stands against inauthenticity and that draws the line of ethical importance for embracing freedom as well as responsibility for defining personal values and individual choices²⁵. It is at this frontier that Sartre critiques self-deception and refers to societal conformity by

²⁴Ibid. 13

²⁵ Balogh, Lehel. The Evolution of Sartre's Concept of Authenticity: From a Non-Egological Theory of Consciousness to the Unrealised Practical Ethics of the Gift-giving (No-)Self. *Journal of Applied Ethics and Philosophy* Vol. 13

urging the sense of assertion to individual agency and uniqueness. It is beyond his existential psychoanalysis that Sartre resonates with existential discourse and challenges deterministic views by noting the transformative potentiality of freedom and empowering individuals to shape their destinies ethically²⁶.

In consideration of these views, it is critical to investigate Sartre's philosophy as explored in his declaration of "*Being for Itself*" and "*Being in Itself*," as specified in '*Being and Nothingness*'.

Under these influences the core objective of this research is to distinguish human consciousness, here the consciousness of the French population towards the Jews as an active force that generated the capability for shaping reality through intentional choices. As such, this research strives to investigate the complexities of Jewish subjectivity in France along with the pursuit of authenticity amidst existential uncertainties towards their identity authentication.

3.2.1 Characteristics of 'Bad Faith'

The concept of 'bad faith' as underpinned in '*Being and Nothingness*' (1966) by Sartre; defined it as an action that is done to hide the truth from oneself,

"the one to whom the lie is told and the one who lies is the same people, which means that I must know the truth, in my capacity as [the] deceiver, though [the truth] is hidden from me in my capacity as the one deceived...I must know that truth very precisely, to hide it from myself the more carefully – and this not at two different moments of temporality."²⁷

²⁶ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existential psychoanalysis*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery. Edited by Hazel Estella Barnes, 1981.

²⁷ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. United States, Pocket Books, 1966, 88

As specified by Sartre in the quote, it is bad faith that differs from lying, as it comprises a deliberate mode of self-deception. This is a state whereby people obscure uncomfortable truths from themselves to evade their existential burden of freedom. It is a phenomenon that Sartre detected as a broader struggle in urban settings, which gets much evident in terms of the status of Jews at La Marais in contemporary France. As in the case of La Marais, the identity formation and the essence of Jewish authenticity were subject to conflict between personal freedom and the societal expectations of the French population.

In consideration of Sartre's argument that sincerity can lead to fear of falling into bad faith, it is significant to mark that people fail to confront their freedom and decide to evade responsibility, which eventually distort their true selves in alignment with societal pressures. At this point by exploring consciousness, Sartre emphasises on humanitarian act of revealing acknowledgement towards human existence, which can be featured by the tension of innate being as well as the state of being with self-awareness. The context of the emergence of bad faith relies on individual choices, and the state of determinism to avoid the anxiety inherent in authentic existence²⁸. Following Sartre, this must be marked as a way of deceiving themselves into believing their actions as the result of external factors instead of personal agency.

While implementing Sartre's concept of bad faith in this context, this research comprehends that the discriminatory attitudes towards Jews in France are liable to be rooted in the refusal to acknowledge their authentic humanity and culturally diversified identity. Sartre's ideologies hold that instead of opting for 'bad faith', which reflects self-deception and generates false beliefs or the feelings of prejudices that perpetuate

²⁸Ibid.

discrimination; it is important to understand the role of 'bad faith' as an insightful way of detecting existential dynamics that contribute towards discriminatory actions against Jews in France, or any other place for that matter.

3.2.2 'Being in Itself' & 'Being for Itself' for Authenticity

To eradicate the instances of 'bad faith', Sartre offered a comprehensive ground by connecting "*being-in-itself (En-Soi)*" and "*being-for-itself (Pour-Soi)*" for understanding authenticity. According to Sartre's existential philosophy as depicted in *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946), "*being-in-itself*" stands for objects and entities that exist without consciousness or the state of self-awareness, and possess a fixed essence defined by their properties and functions. On the contrary, "*being for itself*" is responsible for featuring human consciousness that remains aware of its existence and is constantly in a state of flux. It is at this point that individual consciousness gets detected by Sartre as the key to adopting the dynamic process of continually striving towards self-definition and self-realisation.

Table 1 Difference between "being-in-itself" and "being-for-itself"

Aspect	Being-in-itself	Being-for-itself
Nature	Massive, full, actual	Dynamic, spontaneous
Consciousness	Lacks self-consciousness	Includes awareness
Characteristics	Self-sufficient, lumpy, contingent	Active, purposive
Determination	Determined by something else (e.g., concept)	Determines itself
Existential Mode	Refers to material entities (ordinary things)	Mode of consciousness
Attributes	Not derived from possibility, not reduced to necessity	Has freedom, actions, power to negate
Source of Change	Static	Source of change and action
Relationship to Man	Same as man in terms of body	Not the same as man in terms of body, but includes man's awareness and actions

Source: Adapted from Sartre, 1946

From it, it is critical to mark here that Sartre's concept of "*being-for-itself*" against "*being-in-itself*", comprises a fundamental tension and unlike inanimate objects, the consciousness in humans strives for perpetual anxiety over its freedom. This striving is rooted in human desire and has been argued by Sartre as the essence of consciousness. It is this essence that stands as the continual reaching towards possibilities that are yet to get actualised. For Sartre, it is this desire that is liable to transcend an individual position of being and reflects a fundamental aspect of human existence, which is identified as the quest for authenticity through the active creation and further act of re-creation of individual identity.

Based on Sartre's reference to authenticity, it is effective to establish that discrimination arises from a lack of genuine self-reflection added by the limited state of having any kind of ethical awareness. It is the result of perpetuating attitudes along with personal actions that are subject to undermining the freedoms of others, especially the Jews in France for this research. Thus, the concept of authenticity by Sartre underscores the relevance of understanding ethical conduct as well as the need for respect in societal interactions, which must offer a critique of discriminatory practices and should relevantly advocate for equality and justice in society.

3.3 Exploration of Consciousness and Freedom

Sartre believed in the essential freedom of individuals and considered humans as free beings. However, Sartre also specified that individuals must remain responsible for all

elements of themselves, including their consciousness and their behavioural actions²⁹. Sartre noted that with total freedom comes total responsibility and under the theoretical advent of existentialism about understanding fundamental issues of human existence, Sartre referred to the questions about the purpose of life, which is the significance of human life. Through existentialism, Sartre established the very essence of freedom, authenticity, facticity, and the principle that '*existence precedes essence*'. This ideological establishment asserts that people exist first and their essence gets defined subsequently through their choices. It is this practice of making choices that highlights the essential role of human freedom and consciousness in terms of shaping their values and identity. As specified by Sartre,

What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards [...] He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. A man simply is. [...] Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism.³⁰

On a more critical note, in his *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre depicts the thematic meaning of consciousness as an inherently directed pathway towards objects. Sartre said that consciousness is external. Irrespective of the respective person, character, thing, or imaginary status, consciousness leads humans to self-awareness and self-consciousness about their being.³¹ Sartre marked consciousness as "*being-for-itself*" that is subject to illuminating the dynamic agency and the state of freedom that is identified as being inherent in human experience. Consciousness for Sartre is an active entity for choosing

²⁹Akinbode, Elijah. Jean-Paul Sartre's Existential Freedom: A Critical Analysis. *International Journal of European Studies*. Vol. 7, No. 1, 2023, pp. 15-18.v

³⁰ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism is a Humanism* (C. Macomber, Trans.). Yale University Press. 2007, 28

³¹ Sartre, 1966.

and shaping reality and identifying individual responsibility for defining the very existence of the individual³².

Following this thread, the context of the authenticity of Jewish identity in France refers to Sartre's *"being-for-others"* as the way to illuminate the profound impact of social interactions in terms of shaping self-awareness and identity. It is the transformative power in redefining reality and constructing personal narratives led by Sartre that appears effective in asserting and maintaining authentic identities, especially for Jews in this research. Based on the dynamic interplay between consciousness and freedom, it can be advocated that there is a need for ethical engagement and the pursuit of authenticity amidst the consistent resistance to individualistic existence in contemporary societal pressure, particularly as faced by Jews in France.

³²Akinbode. 2023

Chapter 4: Thematic Analysis

4.1 Familiarisation and Coding: Data from Netnography

At the outset of this work, the stated aim was to analyse media reports of Jewish lived experiences and to help provide a solid foundation for that, and to ensure that is realised, this chapter will discuss a thematic analysis-based approach. This approach will review the data collected under the methodological structure of a library-based research approach and netnography from 'online fieldwork'. It is through the act of **Familiarisation** with the data collected from the library-based narrative inquiry of the texts by Sartre and the netnography data on the lived experiences of Jews in France from secondary texts; that the relevant **Codes** were collected. The core objective of these codes is to achieve relevant themes through the understanding of the critical subject matter, understand, and embrace Jewish identity and thereby transcend external pressures, and further connect them deeply with their heritage with great acceptance.

The analysis establishes the necessary scope of understanding the societal resistance maintained by France for realising Jewish authenticity. The declarations made through lived experiences of Jews from media sources justified this research with the framework of Thematic Analysis of French societal practices. This approach will evaluate the contemporary significance of recognising Jewish identity, and the spread of anti-Semitism towards the establishment of cultural integration.

4.1.1 Understanding Antisemitism through Sartre's Phenomenology

Anti-Semitism is a representation of societal sentiment that encompasses prejudice, hostility, and violence against Jews.³³ The practice of anti-Semitism is responsible for

³³ Generation Global. *Anti-Semitism, Anti-Zionism and Criticism of Israel*. BRIEFING NOTE. https://generation.global/assets/resources/teachers_anti-semitism-anti-zionism.pdf

manifesting in physical attacks, varied forms of verbal abuse, instances of threats, and harmful stereotypes about Jewish communities³⁴. This practice can also involve conspiracy theories about Jews being disproportionately powerful or insignificantly disloyal³⁵.

The Octopus



Figure 1



Figure 2

The context of understanding antisemitism under the implications of existentialism comprises the realisation of humanitarian ways of depicting responsibility and freedom (Natanson, 1972). This appears to be the pivotal oar for navigating the prevalent contemporary challenges led by an individual and societal sense of prejudice for the Jewish community in France.

³⁴ Daniel Allington and David Hirsh. *The AzAs (Antizionist Antisemitism) Scale: Measuring Antisemitism as Expressed in Relation to Israel and Its Supporters*. JCA 2019

³⁵Ibid.

Sartre's existentialism offers valuable insights into these issues by emphasizing personal freedom and responsibility. It is the philosophical phenomenology of Sartre that insists on generating the importance of resistance against injustice and political engagement, especially to combat prejudice. His ideas on existential angst and the human condition are marked as determined milestones to provide a framework for understanding the activities of prejudice, especially those under the provision of anti-Semitism, and thereby intersect with broader themes of freedom and social responsibility. As justified by this research Sartre's phenomenological approach advocates for solidarity and collective action as means to address and critically overcome discrimination in the larger societal context. This is also the way to underscore the need for individuals to confront and challenge systemic injustices.

4.1.1.1 Identified Codes

From the Familiarisation of Sartre's Phenomenology from **Error! Unknown switch argument.** The identified Codes for understanding the ideological concept of anti-Semitism can be enlisted as below:

Characteristics of 'Bad Faith'

- *Authenticity vs. Bad Faith*
- *Avoidance of Existential Burden*
- *Conflict Between Freedom and Societal Expectations*
- *Perpetuation of Prejudice*
- *Self-Deception*

‘Being in Itself’ & ‘Being for Itself’

- *Continuous Striving for Self-Definition*
- *Discrimination*
- *Dynamic Process of Self-Creation*
- *Fixed Essence vs. Self-Awareness*
- *Lack of Self-Reflection*
- *Respect for Individual Freedom*

Exploration of Consciousness and Freedom

- *Active Role of Consciousness*
- *Consciousness as Directed Pathway*
- *Ethical Engagement and Authenticity*
- *Existence Precedes Essence*
- *Freedom and Responsibility*

4.1.2 Investigating the Lived Experiences of Jews in France

While investigating the count increase in antisemitic acts, the Council of Jewish Institutions in France (CRIF) declared that anti-Semitic acts in France have nearly quadrupled since 2023. CRIF reported that these acts comprise physical violence, followed by threats, and actions of menacing gestures towards the Jewish communities in France. It has been declared that 13% of antisemitic acts are found within the premises of schools, which establishes the grievous impact on educational environments. Worst records are marked in from the Middle East, whereby the Jewish community in France, which is recognised as one of the largest in Europe; are getting affected. There is an increase in threats to social cohesion, caused by attacks on Jewish institutions.

Further lived experiences shared by Jews in France express the pervasive shadow of anti-Semitism that has a deep impact on daily life³⁶. As stated by David, a 20-year-old Jew to France 24 about a troubling encounter with his Jewish friends, who were followed and threatened by an unidentified group,

“They weren’t even wearing anything that could identify them as Jewish!
...There used to be a consensus that you keep your religion at home, but even
if people respect this rule, they are pursued by anti-Semitism today.”

In the same manner, a 36-year-old comic book designer stated about developing a heightened sense of danger in France, especially avoiding Islamic communities and people from the Middle East. A greater state of vigilance over the usage of Hebrew in public spaces is getting marked for discomfort and fear. However, against all these declarations, a 69-year-old Professor of classical music states,

“I have Muslim friends, including one of Moroccan origin, with whom I have an especially strong relationship. She is a doctor, and she saved my mother, and accompanied me hour by hour with her advice, encouragement and messages.”

On the other hand, Caroline, a self-employed of 47 years of age navigates her professional and social circles without noticeable tension about the Middle East conflict. For her discussing the war in the Middle East on social media should be avoided to preserve peace among Muslim friends and acquaintances.

Meanwhile, Joelle Lezmi of 70, a former President of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WIZO); reflects on the increased anti-Semitism and marked the Second Intifada leading

³⁶Ciesnik, Sonya. "France's Jewish Community Faces a Surge in Anti-Semitism." France 24, 2 Nov. 2023, www.france24.com/en/europe/20231102-since-hamas-attack-france-s-jewish-community-faces-a-surge-in-anti-semitism.

to Jewish migration. While delivering an emotional response to the conflict between Jews and Muslims and the future of Israel, she said,

"There used to be 400 Jewish families, now there are only 35," she said.
"The others migrated to other places in France... When I saw Israel penetrated from all directions, I felt like a stateless person. ... I'm not scared about being tortured but I'm scared for Israel to no longer exist."

A report further confirmed that in the last couple of years, Jewish people in the EU have encountered alarmingly high levels of anti-Semitism. Based on 96% of surveyed participants, incidents of online harassment, and troubling trends of antisemitism have been marked to increase by conflicts in the Middle East. The report also stated that the Gaza war further exacerbated the situation, and the public spaces have become rife with antisemitic incidents in the entire Europe, especially getting severe in Austria, Sweden, and Denmark. However, the governments are also marked for boosting security funding and tackling online hate speech, added by the usage of legal tools and strategies to combat anti-Semitism.

These declarations are further established by Canaan for Times of Israel on 5th May 2024. Chauvet stated that the surge in antisemitism in the West shows stark increases in France and the US³⁷. The surge has been marked to double due to the tensions led by the Gaza war. While referring to the status of Jews in France, Canaan refers to lived experiences of antisemitic incidents, with the majority appearing during conflicts involving Hamas. Heightened hostility in France established increased antisemitic sentiment leading to severe effects on Jewish safety and concerns over community stability.

³⁷Canaan, Lidor. "Antisemitism Surging, Report Finds, Prompting Fear for Future of 'Jewish Life' in West." Times of Israel, 5 May 2024, www.timesofisrael.com/in-global-surge-of-antisemitism-france-stands-out-with-near-quadrupling-of-cases/amp/.

Reports of Chauvet for Times of Israel on 6 Jan. 2024, referred to the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023 and identified the increase of antisemitic incidents in France. Chauvet for Times of Israel on 6 Jan. 2024 noted that more than 1,500 cases were recorded between October 7 and mid-November on the instances of anti-Semitism³⁸. As such, the French Jews are seeking to emigrate to Israel, as they are consistently driven by heightened fear and insecurity.

“Usually we see people who are experiencing professional or social difficulty, who have been fired or want to change fields. But this time we had engineers, doctors and lawyers, ...These are no longer people who leave France for financial problems — their lives in France would be more comfortable.”

The report also agreed with the fact that irrespective of governmental awareness, and societal condemnation of antisemitism in France, the actions always resulted with adequate insufficiency.

While referring to the Israel-Hamas conflict, the instances of antisemitic in France prompting significant concern among Jewish communities, gets marked for attaining maximum surge by Taylor for The Guardian on 2nd Dec 2023.³⁹. referring to large-scale demonstrations against anti-Semitism, Taylor marked the lack of attendance from expected political and community leaders, which determines the gap between public outrage and institutional support in France. The French Interior Ministry even recorded desecration, graffiti, social media attacks, and vandalism in France under antisemitism, whereby the younger Muslims are identified with Palestinians with prominence in the

³⁸Chauvet, Romain. *"I'm Afraid Every Day for My Children': As Antisemitism Soars, French Jews Flee to Israel."*Times of Israel, 6 Jan. 2024, www.timesofisrael.com/im-afraid-every-day-for-my-children-as-antisemitism-soars-french-jews-flee-to-israel/amp/.

³⁹ Taylor, Paul. *As antisemitism soars, for many Jews in France nowhere feels safe.* The Guardian. 2 Dec 2023. <https://amp.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/02/antisemitism-jews-france-emmanuel-macron-israel-hamas-war>

spread of hatred. In the words of one of France's most popular radio and television entertainers, pseudo name Arthur (Jacques Essebag), said, "This is France in 2023. I live in Paris, and I have agents protecting me and my family because I'm Jewish. It's crazy, no?"

In a report on extensive brutality, Sands reported through Washington Post on the 30th of June 2024 about the rape of a 12-year-old Jewish girl, in the suburb area of Paris, followed by two 13 years old boys on the charges of aggravated rape. This has brought protesters into the streets, and they have drawn condemnations from top country leaders, who are liable to get connected to the instance of rampant antisemitism⁴⁰. Though French law considers religious insults along with recording/sharing of sexual content as a criminal act, the authorities appeared helpless in identifying any of the criminals.

Even the lived experiences after the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, Couvelaire stated in Le Monde France on 26th October 2023, about Karen removing her mezuzah after her neighbour was burned⁴¹. Even Romain overheard classmates calling for Jewish death. Further, Sarah found "*Death to the Jews*" graffiti at her university, and the head of the Union, French Jewish Students, Samuel was kicked out of an Uber for discussing Jewish community concerns. Couvelaire marked that since the 7th of October attack, 501 anti-Semitic acts were reported, adding to 279 arrests.

⁴⁰ Sands, Leo. *Reported rape of Jewish girl linked to rising antisemitism in France*. Washington Post. June 20, 2024. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/06/20/antisemitism-rape-france-courbevoie/>

⁴¹ Couvelaire, Louise. *Israel-Hamas war: France's Jewish community concerned about upsurge in anti-Semitic acts*. Le Monde France. October 26, 2023. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2023/10/26/israel-hamas-war-france-s-jewish-community-concerned-about-upsurge-in-anti-semitic-acts_6206223_7.html#

Against all odds, it is also significant to note the words of the French President Emmanuel Macron,

“Let us not embark on ideological adventures here out of imitation or projection, ... Let us not add national fractures to international fractures, and let us not tolerate any form of hatred. I appeal to you tonight: let us stay united – united for ourselves, united to jointly carry a message of peace and security for the Middle East.”

4.1.2.1 Identified Codes

From the Familiarisation of Investigating the Lived Experiences of Jews in France from the data collected through netnography from *‘participant-observational research based in online fieldwork’*⁴², the identified Codes for determining the act of anti-Semitism can be enlisted as below:

- Anti-Semitism in schools
- Community and institutional responses
- Digital and physical harassment
- Escalation during conflicts
- Fear and Social Cohesion
- Individual experiences
- Patterns of anti-Semitism
- Response to rising anti-Semitism
- Surge in incidents
- Types of anti-Semitic acts

⁴²Kozinets 60

4.2 Theme Identification and Review

Following the identified codes mentioned above, this research marked that there are three themes, which need to be reviewed for understanding Sartrean analysis exploring the 'being' authentically Jewish in contemporary France. These identified themes are --

- *Being in Itself and Being for Itself by applying Sartrean phenomenological terms to the lived experience of Jews in France*
- *Examining intentionality in Jewish lived experience to direct Jewish consciousness towards their identity.*
- *Epoch as a framework for understanding Jewish identity by reduction through unveiling the essence of Jewish lived experience.*

4.2.1 Being in Itself and Being for Itself

4.2.1.1 Applying Phenomenological Terms to the Lived Experience

Under the interpreted illustrations of Sartre's existential framework, particularly the notions of *being-in-itself* the identified concerns can be fixed by marking the objective essence of objects; while *being-for-itself* pertains to self-aware consciousness and adds subjective experience. These Sartrean concepts can be made applicable to understand the lived experience of Jewish individuals in contemporary France, and by applying "*being-in-itself*", Jewish people should be seen in the way anti-Semitic acts and discrimination manifest as objective realities, especially those led under physical violence, verbal threats, and harassment. It is necessary to agree to these acts as tangible, external conditions that impact the lives of Jews in France. On the other hand, through Sartrean's "*being-for-itself*", the subjective experience of Jews must be navigated through realities, which must encompass the ways the Jews were perceived, reacted to, and resisted the acts of discrimination. The emphasis of French society should be on generating an active role of self-awareness and personal freedom in shaping communal anti-Semitism responses.

4.2.2 Examining Intentionality: Jewish consciousness towards their identity

Sartre's notion of intentionality has been marked as the strongest idea, whereby consciousness gets directed towards the realisation of undertaking a crucial role in being sensitive towards the Jewish experience in France. It is through intentionality, that the French population must involve Jewish individuals directly to their consciousness and establish their identity on humanitarian grounds rather than as per their community. These can lead to resistance towards external threats that the Jews encounter in contemporary France.

Further, facing anti-Semitic aggression by the Jews can imply intentional acts of striving for authenticity and resisting the imposition of negative stereotypes. Such acts can add relevant reactions towards discrimination and can actively safeguard and shape their identity and community under external pressures. Considering Sartre's intentionality, the projection of consciousness and decisions to make righteous choices should be encouraged in contemporary France.

4.2.3 Epoch as a Framework for Understanding Jewish Identity

4.2.3.1 *Reduction: Unveiling the Essence of Jewish Lived Experience*

From the comparative investigation of the other philosophical ideologies in the context of existentialism, this research determines the effectiveness of *Epoché*, which can bracket preconceived notions to gain insights into lived experience. By applying *Epoché* to Jewish identity in France, there will be scope to strip away external prejudices and all kinds of experienced societal biases. This will lead to the revelation of the essence of '*being*' by reducing the diverse entity of being Jewish in contemporary France.

It is this reduction under *Epoché*, that this research unveils the lived experiences of Jews by focusing on their subjective experiences and personal narratives rather than external labels or stereotypes. By doing so, the research process allows a deeper understanding towards the establishment of Jewish authentic identity and generates scales of negotiation among the French population for restricting anti-Semitic hostility.

4.3 Refined Themes

Based on the critical evaluation under Thematic Analysis as marked in **Error! Unknown switch argument.**, this research offers three Refined Themes for addressing the three Research Objectives as mentioned in **Error! Unknown switch argument.**

While defining Jewish authenticity, the refined theme of this research states,

Theme 1: *Jewish authenticity can be preserved by identifying and reinforcing the core elements of identity that remain resilient amidst anti-Semitic threats.*

In terms of analyzing identity formation, the detected theme of this research is,

Theme 2: *Sartre's concepts of "Being-for-itself" and "Being-in-itself" provide crucial insights into how Jewish identity evolves under societal pressures, revealing the interplay between self-awareness and external realities.*

4.4 Critical Evaluation

4.4.1 In-depth Analysis of the Refined Themes

The refined themes noted above reveal strong connections between resilience and the formation of identity under resistance to Jewish identity in France. The identified theme of resilience gets embodied in the ways individuals confirm freedom and navigate societal pressures, here the anti-Semitism. Jews in France are detected to be fighting against external forces, especially in overcoming internalised oppression and confronting "bad faith". It is the tendency to conform to societal expectations instead of embracing authentic identity, which aligns with the view of Sartre who notes that individuals must actively shape their identity, and not be shaped by the societal pressures imposed upon them.

As such, identity formation under pressure is a recurring motif, and in the case of the Jews the act of grappling between societal labels and their authentic self is reflected in Sartre's "Being in Itself" and "Being for Itself." It is here that the Jews confront imposed societal categories- 'Being in Itself', while at the same time striving for personal self-awareness- 'Being for Itself'. This derivation is proven by the online discussions that reveal the struggle between embracing Jewish identity and societal pressures to conform. This is the kind of tension that reflects the idea of freedom and resistance as presented by Sartre.

4.4.2 Interpretation of the Data

The patterns and insights emerging from the data reflect the way the Jewish individuals in France navigate the complexities of identity under the instances of societal and political pressures. The emotional dimensions of existentialism, especially those evolved through Sartre's ideas of anguish, despair, and abandonment, are extensively approved by the online discussions and the reports delivered by the relevant media reports. These reports presented the Jewish articulation of the emotional burden of balancing personal identity with societal rejection. Moreover, there is the presence of a recurring narrative of

resilience, whereby the individuals often describe that their identity has been continuously forged in opposition to external forces, which again echoes Sartre's belief in the necessity of embracing freedom in the face of existential anxiety.

Conclusion: Anti-Zionist and Jewish: Is it Possible for Jews to Be True to Their Jewish Identity in Modern-Day France?

The existential question of how or if Jews can live authentically in France today was the focus of this thesis. This question is not a detached question of philosophy, especially asked within the context of the well documented increase in anti-Zionism and antisemitism since the October 7th attacks. This work demonstrates the complex interplay between personal autonomy, social forces, and the never-ending pursuit of identity by drawing on Jean-Paul Sartre's existential phenomenology. The purpose of the project was to test Sartre's philosophical ideas as well as the viability of accurately documenting the lived experiences of French Jews using data generated through netnographic methods.

As stated in the Introduction, the motivation of this research was based on a very personal and contemporary issue: the tangible fear and erasure experiences that Jews in modern-day France face. Persistent vulnerability and identity suppression were the main issues that the thesis attempted to address. Making a transhistorical connection between Sartre's observations in *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1943) and recent media coverage, we illustrated how historical scapegoating of Jews persists and is frequently interwoven with criticisms of the State of Israel. This continuity highlights the ongoing difficulty in defining Jewish identity, necessitating a re-examination from the perspective of existential authenticity, which became the main contention of this work.

The first stage of this investigation, which was introduced in Chapter 1, the Literature Review, carefully prepared the ground by examining the fundamental ideas of existentialism, with a focus on Sartre's contributions. The theoretical instruments required to analyze the Jewish identity crisis pain point were established in this chapter, which also introduced important concepts like freedom, authenticity, bad faith, and the important

difference between *Being-for-itself* and *Being-in-itself*. The argument was developed that Sartre's philosophy offers a strong framework for understanding how people define their existence through intentional actions and choices, thereby asserting radical freedom, despite its atheistic foundations—a crucial point for a study concerning a community defined by its faith. The pressures that French Jews face, where the need for self-created meaning frequently conflicts with societal expectations, were analyzed in large part thanks to this philosophical foundation.

The hybrid approach used for this study—a blend of thematic analysis of netnographic data and philosophical analysis of Sartrean texts—was described in detail in Chapter 2, Methodology. An unobtrusive yet profound engagement with the pain point of French Jews' lived experiences as reported in media sources was made possible by this methodological innovation. The use of netnography was crucial in documenting a variety of perspectives and experiences, giving a philosophical investigation a modern empirical component. To connect theory to lived reality, the chapter's argument emphasized how crucial it is to examine Sartrean texts alongside empirical data to understand how existential themes of authenticity and freedom are applied in the context of Jewish identity in modern-day France.

Its relevance to the Jewish experience was further enhanced by the subsequent assessment in Chapter 3, which concentrated on Jean-Paul Sartre's phenomenology. By examining *bad faith* as a purposeful self-deception and a way for people to avoid taking responsibility for their freedom, this chapter explored the painful point of discrimination. Perpetrators of discrimination may demonstrate *bad faith* by defending their acts, which would deny Jews' true humanity and equality. For Sartre, on the other hand, *authenticity* entails facing one's freedom and responsibility, which results in sincere introspection and moral judgment. A key theme emerged from the contrast between *Being-in-itself* (fixed,

objective reality) and *Being-for-itself* (dynamic, self-aware consciousness). The thesis contended that anti-Semitic actions take the form of *Being-in-itself*—objective realities of violence and prejudice—while the Jewish response, which includes perception, reaction, and resistance, represents *Being-for-itself*, demonstrating their active self-awareness and individual autonomy in influencing collective reactions. According to Sartre, consciousness is an active entity that continuously chooses and shapes reality, defining a person's very existence, as this chapter reaffirmed.

The study's pain points were directly addressed in the concluding Chapter 4, Thematic Analysis, which combined the theoretical insights with the empirical data. Three main themes surfaced after a thorough process of familiarization, preliminary coding, theme identification, review, and refinement: Examining Intentionality in guiding Jewish consciousness towards their identity; *Being-in-Itself* and *Being-for-Itself* as applied to Jewish lived experience; and Epoché as a Framework for revealing the essence of Jewish lived experience. The *Being-in-itself* of antisemitism in France was vividly depicted by the netnographic data, which was filled with reports of physical violence, threats, and a pervasive sense of fear that led to emigration, as well as quadrupled anti-Semitic acts. At the same time, the stories of perseverance, self-definition, and carrying on with communal life despite the difficulties reflected the *Being-for-itself*—the proactive, deliberate pursuit of authenticity. Sartre's philosophy's emotional elements of suffering, hopelessness, and desolation struck a deep chord with the emotional strain of juggling one's own identity with social rejection. The thesis's central claim was empirically validated by the recurrent story of identity created in defiance of outside forces, which strongly echoed Sartre's conviction in embracing freedom in the face of existential anxiety.

The thesis's main points are emphasized by the sophisticated themes—that Jewish authenticity can be maintained by strengthening strong core identity components and that

Sartre's ideas offer vital insights into how Jewish identity changes in response to social pressures. The results show that Jews in modern-day France are in fact subject to severe restrictions that prevent them from freely expressing who they really are. The intricate relationship between Jewish and French identities, especially within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, highlights the ongoing pain point of their lived experience and necessitates a never-ending search for authenticity.

This study concludes that Sartre's existential phenomenology provides a potent interpretive lens, even though the external realities of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism pose significant obstacles to Jewish existence in France. It emphasizes that authenticity is a dynamic process of ongoing self-creation and resistance to social pressures and self-deception rather than a static state. Being truly Jewish in modern-day France is a constant act of bravery for French Jews, a deliberate acceptance of their *Being-for-itself* in the face of a frequently antagonistic *Being-in-itself*. The same can of course be stated for Muslims in contemporary Europe. This study makes a substantial contribution to existentialist scholarship by proving how Sartre's theories are still relevant today for comprehending social phenomena, especially how cultural identity is formed and maintained in the face of discrimination and conflict. Since the freedom and authenticity of one group are inextricably linked to the freedom and authenticity of all, it promotes a deeper understanding and acceptance of society.

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