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Institutionalized Visits of German-born Jews and their offspring to their Native Hometowns in the 2000's

The research will investigate the dynamic of the Jewish and German cultural memory and cultural identity as manifested in encounters, which have been held in recent years between German-born Jews, their offspring and Germans.

The research will focus on visits by German-born Jews (and their offspring) to the cities in which they were born. These visits are part of a German initiative. Each year, various German municipalities (e.g., Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Nuernberg, Leipzig and Halberstadt) invite Jews who were born in these cities (and who currently reside in Israel, North America, South America, South Africa and Europe) to visit them. This program has been running in West Germany since the 1960s. The meetings are organized from start to finish by the German municipalities from the point of view of funding, transport, hospitality, and activities. The itinerary includes visits to the seat of the municipality, cultural activities, and meetings between the Jewish visitors and Germans and Jews who presently live in the city.

Through using interpretive ethnographic research methods, the research will investigate different life stories – of the Jews and Germans of different generations – and the narratives emerging from them, regarding these encounters. These life stories and narratives represent, mediate, and construct cultural memory, time, space and identity, both Jewish and German.