Identity Work and Collective Action in a Repressive Context: Jewish Resistance on the "Aryan Side" of the Warsaw Ghetto

RACHEL L. EINWOHNER, *Purdue University*

Research on social movements has found that activists often deploy their identity strategically, putting forth certain images of themselves in order to best achieve their goals. However, such work has focused mostly on settings in which activists are relatively free to pursue different identity-based strategies. In contrast, less is known about the strategic use of identity in more repressive contexts, where the expression of certain identities may be curtailed. This paper addresses this issue by examining the "identity work" of Jewish resistance fighters in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, Poland. While their resistance was fueled by a strong sense of collective identity, the heavy costs associated with public displays of Jewishness meant that identity also had to be kept hidden in order for the resistance to occur. Unlike the freely chosen, "harmonic" identity work that has been described by most research, these activists' work was forced and more dissonant, characterized by the simultaneous amplification and suppression of identity and emotion. The analysis points to the need for additional studies of activism in high-risk, repressive settings.

Debates about the meaning and utility of the term "identity politics" notwithstanding, scholars have recognized that identity is central to social movements and political action of all kinds (Bernstein 2005). The well-established research literature on identity and social movements demonstrates that identity processes shape all aspects of the protest experience, from movement emergence to outcomes (for reviews, see Polletta and Jasper 2001; Snow 2001; Stryker, Owens, and White 2000). One line of inquiry within that broad literature focuses on the strategic use of identity. As scholars have shown, protesters often make strategic decisions about how to present themselves to best advantage in the political arena in order to achieve their goals. Indeed, various strategies of "identity deployment" (Bernstein 1997) have been shown to be useful in a number of movement settings, including the gay and lesbian movement (Bernstein 1997; Dugan 2003), the animal rights movement (Einwohner 1999; Groves 1997), and the breast cancer movement (Montini 1996), among others.

This paper addresses the strategic role of identity in social movements with an examination of the collective Jewish resistance in Nazi-occupied Warsaw that culminated in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943.[1] While this case might not be what usually comes to mind when one thinks of "identity politics," there is no question that issues of identity were central to Warsaw Jews' struggle. Like other Jews throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, Warsaw Jews

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1. There were actually two armed uprisings in the Warsaw Ghetto: the first was a four-day battle between Jews and Nazis in January 1943, and the second began on April 19, 1943 and lasted until mid-May, at which point the Ghetto was razed (Gutman 1994; Kurzman 1993). Together, these episodes are referred to as the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. These events are distinct from the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, a city-wide uprising against Nazi occupying forces.

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were persecuted because of their Jewish identity. However, the extreme costs associated with the display of Jewish identity in this setting set this case apart from other studies of activists' identity strategies. Under the Nazi regime, all individuals who were identified as Jewish were at risk for great personal harm, whether they were activists or not. Furthermore, Jewishness was a highly visible identity, marked by a number of physical and behavioral traits. The following analysis therefore asks: Given the fact that their activism took place in a setting in which Jewish identity was both visible and costly, to what extent could Jewish resistance fighters in Warsaw use that identity strategically? Did their "identity work" (Snow and Anderson 1987; Snow and McAdam 2000) differ from that of activists working in other contexts? If so, what can this case teach us about the role of identity in social movements more generally?

Some readers might be surprised or even offended by my use of a case of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust to further scholarly understanding of social movements and collective action. The Holocaust was an episode of such unimaginable horror and suffering that some consider it unique and, therefore, incomparable; indeed, some scholars suggest that comparing the Holocaust to other cases of genocide robs it of its meaning and lends credence to those who deny that the Holocaust happened at all (for more on the debate about the uniqueness of the Holocaust, see Bauer 2001; Gerson 2001; Melson 1992; Rosenbaum 2001). Although my analysis does not explicitly compare the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising with other cases of collective action, I do use it to draw implications for social movement research. Therefore, I also implicitly argue that collective resistance during the Holocaust may be meaningfully compared to collective resistance in other contexts. However, in doing so, I do not intend to diminish in any way the terrible tragedy of the Holocaust or the immense suffering of its victims. By presenting a sociological account of the Holocaust, I follow the lead of other scholars who have performed similar analyses using other research literatures (e.g., Berger 1995, 2002; Berger, Green, and Kreiser 1998; Gallant and Cross 1992; Gross 1994; for more on sociological approaches to the Holocaust, see also Gerson and Wolf, forthcoming).

On the other hand, some readers may accept the notion of social scientific work on the Holocaust in general but might not see the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising as a social movement and, therefore, may take exception to my application of social movement theory and research to this case. I justify my use of this case as a social movement or, more broadly, as a case of "contentious politics" (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001) for several reasons. Although there is no single definition of a social movement, most scholars agree that movements are organized, sustained, collective attempts to further the goals of some group, typically in opposition to some government or authoritative structure (Tarrow 1994; see also Jasper 1997; McAdam 1982). Collective resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto was planned and organized, with clear leadership and an organizational structure (Gutman 1994; Kurzman 1993; Zuckerman 1993). Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto was socially and politically motivated as well; the organizers of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising staged collective resistance not to escape from the confines of the Ghetto, but to preserve the honor of the Jewish people as a whole (Gutman 1982, 1994). Moreover, this case shares many of the attributes of other, recognized, social movements. For instance, like many other cases that have been the subject of social movement research, participants in the resistance movement in the Warsaw Ghetto were active in other political organizations and movements prior to their involvement in the resistance and were recruited through these pre-existing activist networks (Cochavi 1995; Zuckerman 1993). Although these activists did not use tactics traditionally associated with contemporary protest in the West, such as marches and demonstrations, one must remember that the setting in which they worked rendered such tactics useless. Since Jews living under the Nazi regime lacked both citizenship rights and public support, mass marches and similar actions would not have been effective and, indeed, probably would have led to increased repression. The tactics these activists chose (i.e., armed resistance) made sense, given their

situation. Moreover, such tactics have been featured in other cases of collective action that have been studied by movement scholars, including Jeff Goodwin's (1997) analysis of the Huk rebellion and Robert White and Michael Fraser's (2000) study of the Irish Republican movement. For these reasons, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising can be appropriately defined as a social movement and may, therefore, be used to make a scholarly contribution to the field. (For other applications of social movement theory to this case, see also Einwohner 2003.)

My inquiry focuses on the experiences of those Jewish activists in Warsaw whose physical features and language skills allowed them to "pass" as non-Jews. Such individuals were able to move in and out of the walled ghetto in which all Warsaw Jews were interned. They participated in collective resistance efforts by smuggling weapons and other resources into the Ghetto and making contact with members of the Polish underground. These activists shared a strong Jewish identity, yet for obvious reasons, they had to mask that identity in order to carry out their work outside the Ghetto, on the so-called "Aryan side." Not only did circumstances force these individuals into identity displays that they otherwise might not have chosen, but their identity work featured a dissonant set of identities, Jewish and Gentile, both of which were enacted during collective action. Their strategies therefore featured, and were shaped by, identity in ways that were distinct from the other identity-based strategies identified by social movement research. Furthermore, I suggest that such forced, dissonant identity work is particularly likely to be featured in protest in extremely repressive contexts.

Certainly, "passing" on the Aryan side was not an identity strategy used solely by members of the resistance movement; other, non-activist Jews who fled the Ghetto for the relative safety of the Aryan side had to hide their identity as well (Engelking 2001). Thus, while passing may be seen as an act of resistance in general, in the sense that it helped save Jewish lives and therefore worked against the Nazis' genocidal agenda (see Shneidman 2002), the use of this identity strategy did not distinguish participants from non-participants in the resistance movement. Nonetheless, because activists could not carry out their tasks on the Aryan side without also passing as non-Jews, I argue that this identity work was a crucial component of their collective activist experience and is, therefore, worthy of inquiry, in light of theory and of research on identity and social movements.

The goal, therefore, is not to use social movement theory to explain why Jews "chose" to hide their identity on the Aryan side. Instead, examining the experience of Jewish resistance work on the Aryan side illustrates a type of activist identity work that is qualitatively different from what has been previously identified and may be used to draw some broader implications for the study of social movements. More generally, by bringing the case of Jewish resistance fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto to the attention of social movement scholars, I hope to broaden the range of cases and movement settings beyond those typically explored by social movement research.

I begin with a discussion of strategic identity work in social movements. I then draw on both primary and secondary historical sources to examine the identity strategies used by Jewish activists on the Aryan side of the Warsaw Ghetto walls. I conclude by drawing some implications for future research.

Identity and Strategy in Social Movements

Social movement scholars generally agree that protest is undertaken for the purpose of achieving some goal (Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander 1995). Activists, therefore, face any number of strategic choices in the pursuit of their objectives (Jasper 2004). Strategic action in social movements includes various tactical choices, such as the use of either violence or non-violence (Gamson 1990) or tactical innovations in response to the actions of targets (Barkan 1984; McAdam 1983; Morris 1993). Activists may also recruit strategically, that is, by

attempting to attract high-status participants (McAdam 1988) and may choose either to mobilize or to "lay low," depending on the the broader sociopolitical environment and public receptivity to their cause (Meyer 2004; Taylor 1989). In addition, virtually all movement communications, including messages geared toward the general public and internal communiqués, are carefully and strategically composed. For instance, activists use a variety of framing techniques to garner public support (Snow et al. 1986) and to keep members mobilized despite apparent failures (Einwohner 2002; Voss 1998; see Jasper 2004 for more on strategic choices in social movements).

In many situations, protesters also incorporate aspects of their identity into their strategy. Protesters choosing nonviolence, for instance, not only perform nonviolent acts but in so doing, effectively state to onlookers: "We are non-violent people" (Polletta and Jasper 2001). Identity can also be an explicit feature of social movement strategy, as Mary Bernstein (1997) demonstrates. Her study of "identity deployment" in the gay and lesbian movement shows how activists in a number of states used different strategies of self-portrayal in pursuit of their policy goals, either by stressing their similarities to or differences from the heterosexual mainstream. Kimberly B. Dugan's (2003) discussion of activity surrounding an anti-gay ballot initiative in Cincinnati also illustrates activists' strategic use of identity. As she shows, both the gay and lesbian activists who opposed the initiative, and the members of the Christian right who supported it, sought to portray themselves in certain ways in order to persuade the voting public. These studies emphasize the strategic portrayal of identity through the news media and policy statements. Other work shows how activists use additional means and media to present a particular image of themselves to others, including self-framings posted on the Internet (Schroer 2003) and the careful management of emotion in formal settings such as courtrooms and public hearings (Einwohner 1999; Montini 1996; Whittier 2001).

While the works cited above do not adopt an interactionist perspective per se, identity deployment may be thought of as a form of "impression management," Erving Goffman's (1959) term for the performative strategies used by social actors to foster certain images of themselves in the eyes of others. Goffman's influence is seen more explicitly in the work of other movement scholars who have theorized about the role of identity in social movements. Chief among these is David Snow, who, in work with Leon Anderson and with Doug McAdam (Snow and Anderson 1987; Snow and McAdam 2000), outlines the concept of "identity work." This term illustrates the range of activities in which movement actors engage to construct, promote, and maintain their identities, both as individuals and as members of a collective. "Identity work" is, therefore, a broader category than "identity deployment." The former refers to strategic identity displays intended for external audiences and to a variety of other identity oriented tasks, including intragroup discussions about "who we are," which result in the construction of collective identity within a movement (Gamson 1996; Hunt and Benford 1994; Hunt et al. 1994; Lichterman 1999; Reger 2002; Taylor and Whittier 1992; Whittier 1995). The term also includes the work done by individuals to align the personal sense of self with the collective (Snow and McAdam 2000). Finally, "identity work" also refers to the work required to make sense of each person's multiple identities and group memberships (Brekhus 2003; King 2004; for more on identity work in social movements, see also Einwohner, Reger, and Myers unpublished).

Although extant theory and research have uncovered many examples of identity work in social movements, I suggest that this research suffers from two biases. First, studies of the type of identity work described as "identity deployment" or "impression management" assume that activists have the freedom to choose which aspect of self they want to promote. Having such freedom implies, in turn, that protest occurs in the context of relatively safety. In such a situation, it is not terribly costly to reveal (or to hide) one identity or another (for an exception see Taylor and Raeburn 1995, who note explicitly that revealing one's identity as a gay or lesbian activist can be quite costly). However, such assumptions about identity might not hold for protests in extremely hostile or repressive situations, where the costs associated

with identity displays can limit activists' choices about how they want to appear to others. While all protest activity carries with it some cost (McAdam 1986), activists who are members of stigmatized or oppressed groups cannot always afford the costs that may accrue when group membership is revealed or portrayed in a particular light. For instance, mothers and grandmothers protesting the disappearances of their loved ones during the "Dirty War" in Argentina emphasized their maternal identity, which, as a highly valued status in Latin America, afforded them a certain amount of protection from the military regime. However, those activists who were also members of minority religions or who identified as leftist or Communist were much more hesitant to deploy those identities, for fear of reprisal (Arditti 1999; Fisher 1989).

A second bias of current work is that it focuses mostly on what can be called "harmonic" identity work. That is, many types of identity work are described as tasks that are performed in order to organize or align diverse identities into a coherent unit of some kind. The harmonic nature of identity work is most clearly visible in the examples provided by Snow and colleagues (Snow and Anderson 1987; Snow and McAdam 2000), who outline the work involved in the "convergence" between an activist's individual identity and the collective identity of the protest group or the movement as a whole. Other research has approached identity work as something intended to achieve identity "harmony." Many studies of the construction of collective identity in social movements emphasize how activists arrive at a shared definition of "we-ness" (Gamson 1992; Taylor and Whittier 1992). Although multiple collective identities may exist within a single movement (Reger 2002; Whittier 1995), the work involved in identity construction is still seen as something that is done to draw together diverse individuals into a coherent collective. This process also takes place at the individual level. For instance, Debra King (2004) describes the processes by which long-time activists manage their identities as activists and their nonmovement identities (e.g., those based on work or family) in order to sustain their activism over time.

Wayne H. Brekhus's (2003) analysis of identity construction and performance among suburban gay men provides another example. He shows how individuals use different "identity grammars"—which refer to seeing gayness as a verb, noun, or adjective—in order to manage their identities and, thereby, to reconcile two statuses (being gay, and living in the suburbs) not generally perceived as compatible by outsiders. Although his is not a social movement analysis per se, it is intended as an overall theory of identity and can therefore apply to identity in social movements as well (2003:7). According to the foregoing research, then, the activist's task in performing identity work is to align different aspects of her identity or to join others in constructing a coherent collective identity that incorporates diverse constituencies.

Yet, this portrayal may only be accurate in certain settings. In other words, I argue that identity work in social movements is not always, or not solely, harmonic. Specifically, I suggest that protest in extremely repressive contexts can feature other, different kinds of identity work. I base this hypothesis on other research on "high-risk" activism, which shows that activism that carries with it great dangers can operate in different ways than "safer," less risky acts (Loveman 1998; McAdam 1986; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991). It is not unreasonable to expect, therefore, that the demands of high-risk settings might force activists into different types of identity work than those that have been described by current research.

Nazi-occupied Warsaw provides such a setting. In what follows, I examine the identity work performed by Jewish resistance fighters operating on the "Aryan side" of the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto. Despite the highly visible and "marked" nature of Jewish identity in Nazi-occupied Europe, these activists were able to use identity strategically in pursuit of their goals. However, instead of freely choosing some aspect of self to deploy strategically, Jewish resistance fighters were forced by circumstance into passing as Gentiles, thereby hiding, rather than displaying, their identity. Moreover, since their activism heightened their Jewish identity at the same time, their identity work was characterized by dissonance rather than harmony, due to the simultaneous enactment of situationally-contradictory identities.

In addition, my account of these activists' identity strategies highlights the ways in which emotion can be used to display identity strategically. As I explain, in the context of Nazi-occupied Warsaw certain emotions (notably, fear and sadness) were situationally specific indicators of Jewishness and therefore required careful management. This discussion of emotion and identity work borrows heavily from Arlie Hochschild's (1979, 1983) concept of "emotion work." Following Hochschild, I conceptualize emotion not as an automatic, largely passive reaction to an external stimulus but as an active process of recognizing one's reaction to some stimulus, labeling that reaction in terms of emotion, and actively displaying the appropriate response. Therefore, my analysis also shows how emotional management can be used to perform activists' identity work in repressive settings.

Case Selection and Data

Although I focus on Jewish resistance activities in Warsaw, it is important to note that Jewish resistance was not limited to that city; indeed, resistance took place in ghettos, camps, and forests throughout Nazi-occupied Europe (Bauer 1989; Grubsztein 1971; Marrus 1989; Tec 1993). However, I choose the case of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising because it is the best known and best documented instance of collective Jewish resistance during World War II. Thanks to the meticulous record-keeping efforts of Jews interned in the Ghetto and of the Germans who persecuted them, an impressive array of data exist that describe both the Ghetto and the uprising that took place there. This analysis uses both primary and secondary historical sources. The former include twenty published diaries and memoirs written by Ghetto residents, some who survived the Ghetto and others who perished, yet were still able to preserve their diaries, either by hiding them or by entrusting them to those who did survive (see Corni 2002 on the advantages of such data for describing ghetto life). In addition, I draw on two published collections of documents such as letters, diaries, and reports retrieved after the Ghetto's destruction (Grynberg 2002; Kermish 1986). While most of these sources have been edited and translated, I treat them as primary data and use them to examine activist experiences on the Aryan side of the Ghetto walls. Using these sources affords the opportunity to describe the ways in which these activists used their Jewish identity strategically, in the course of their activist work. When analyzing the data I used the concept of identity work as a guide, reading the materials repeatedly and paying particular attention to quotes and other data that made reference to the activists' Jewish identity and to the ways in which that identity was featured in their resistance activities. I also cite a number of secondary sources, primarily to describe relevant events from the Ghetto's establishment in 1940 until its destruction in May 1943.

The Warsaw Ghetto, 1940–1943

Thirteen months after Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939, Nazi officials decreed the establishment of a Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw (Gutman 1982, 1994). Located in the city's traditional Jewish Quarter, the Ghetto encompassed a little over one square mile and was completely enclosed by a ten foot high wall, topped with, in various places, barbed wired and/or broken glass. The Ghetto was to become home not only to Warsaw's Jewish population, which consisted of some 360,000 in August 1939, but also to Jews who were relocated from smaller towns and villages in the region around Warsaw, after Nazi edicts forced them from their homes (Ainsztein 1979; Gutman 1982). The Nazis publicly claimed that the Warsaw Ghetto was established in order to protect Jews from anti-Semitic Poles. However, in claims to the Polish population, the stated reason was to isolate the Jewish community in order to prevent outbreaks of typhus among the rest of the city's inhabitants. In practice, the creation of the Ghetto was an efficient means of concentrating the Jewish population in preparation

for subjecting them to forced labor, confiscation of property, and eventual deportation to the death camps (Gutman 1982; Hilberg 1979). This process of ghettoization took place throughout Nazi-occupied Poland, with major ghettos constructed in fifty-three cities (Gutman 1994:51).

Conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto were difficult from its inception and grew more dire with time. Extreme crowding coupled with a lack of sufficient food and water caused widespread hunger, disease, and death.[2] For example, there were 898 deaths in the Ghetto in January 1941 but 5,560 in August 1941; overall, ten percent of the Ghetto population died during that year (Gutman 1982:64). Despite these grievances, resistance did not emerge at first. While the topic of resistance was debated at a number of community meetings, many segments of the Ghetto population believed that attempts at resistance would only increase the harsh treatment that residents received at the hands of German soldiers. Already, the soldiers beset Ghetto residents with beatings, forced labor, and a variety of humiliations such as being forced to strip in public and engage in sex acts (Ainsztein 1979; Gutman 1982). Perhaps more importantly, the idea of resistance was not widely embraced because many Warsaw Jews maintained the hope that Germany would lose the war (Gutman 1994). In other words, as long as there was some hope that Warsaw Jews would survive the war, collective resistance was seen as unnecessarily risky. Such perceptions changed greatly in the summer of 1942, however, when German soldiers began daily deportations of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to the death camp Treblinka. By the end of September, roughly seventy-five percent of the Ghetto population had either been deported or murdered in the streets (Gutman 1982:213). This unmistakable evidence of the Nazis' genocidal plans ushered in a new mood among Jews in the Ghetto: If everyone was bound to die anyway, it was more honorable to die while fighting than to allow the Nazis to murder Jews unopposed (Gutman 1994). Furthermore, armed resistance against the Nazis would affirm not only the dignity of the Ghetto fighters themselves, but of the Jewish people as a whole (Ainsztein 1979; Cochavi 1995; Gutman 1982, 1994; Kurzman 1993; Lubetkin 1981). The diary of Hirsch Berlinski (quoted in Ainsztein 1979), who became one of the Ghetto fighters, described these views:

> In one way or another, deportation means annihilation. It is therefore better to die with dignity and not like hunted animals. There is no other way out, all that remains to us is to fight . . . By acting in this manner we shall show the world that we stood up to the enemy, that we did not go passively to our slaughter. Let our desperate act be a protest flung into the face of the world, which has reacted so feebly against the crimes committed by the Nazis against hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews. (Pp. 36–37)

While the majority of Ghetto residents who remained after the deportations in the summer of 1942 eventually came to support the idea of resistance, calls for resistance were strongest among a certain segment of the population: young activists from a number of political organizations and youth movements that pre-dated the war (Cochavi 1995; Gutman 1982, 1994). Pre-existing networks among these activists led to the establishment of two organizations dedicated to armed resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto: the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, or ŻOB) and the Jewish Military Union (*Żydowski Zwiazek Wojskowy*, or ŻZW). My analysis focuses on the experiences of ŻOB activists, since a lack of archival records on the ŻZW has limited scholarly knowledge about that organization (Gutman 1982:293). In particular, I examine one distinct group of ŻOB activists: those whose work took them beyond the confines of the Ghetto, to the "Aryan side." The tasks of these organizers and couriers included making contact with the Polish underground and other resistance groups outside the Ghetto in order to obtain weapons, supplies, and documents

2. While historians agree that the Ghetto was crowded, they disagree on the exact size of the population. For instance, Kurzman (1993) writes that the population peaked at 500,000 in the summer of 1941, while Gutman (1982) estimates that the Ghetto reached its maximum size in March 1941 with a population of 445,000.

and deliver those goods safely to the Ghetto. Not surprisingly, such work was extremely dangerous: Not only did these individuals put themselves at risk by transporting contraband material, they risked their lives simply by venturing beyond the Ghetto walls—an act that, by Nazi edict, was punishable by death (Engelking 2001; Gutman 1982). Their activist tasks—which were crucial to the resistance movement as a whole—could not be carried out unless these individuals hid their Jewish identity by passing as non-Jewish Poles. This identity work was, therefore, a strategic means to an end, and an important component of these individuals' activism. In fact, as I demonstrate below, these activists did not want to pass as non-Jews and would have preferred to remain in the Ghetto; the primary goal of their identity work was not personal survival but collective resistance. In what follows, I use the experiences of these individuals to examine activist identity work in the context of extreme repression.

Forced Identity Work: Passing on the Aryan Side

The ŻOB's plans for resistance required a distinct division of labor among activists. Within the Ghetto, small fighting cells were organized, each comprised of activists belonging to a particular youth movement or political organization (Ainsztein 1979; Gutman 1982; Kurzman 1993). Some activists also assumed specific roles; for example, Michal Klepfisz became an explosives expert responsible for constructing homemade bombs (Gutman 1982; Meed 1979). Another crucial task involved generating the funds needed to pay for weapons and supplies. Despite several years of hardship in the Ghetto, some of those who remained after the deportations had managed either to hold on to some valuables or to amass them (e.g., through selling smuggled goods). Some ŻOB activists engaged in aggressive fundraising efforts—in many cases, exacting funds through coercive taxes and "expropriations" from smugglers and others who had profited from the war—in order to purchase guns (Gutman 1982; Meed 1979; Rotem 1994; Zuckerman 1993). Although they were somewhat successful in these efforts, the high cost and low availability of weapons—all of which had to be purchased outside of the Ghetto and smuggled in—meant that the ŻOB was able to obtain relatively few arms (Gutman 1982; Kurzman 1993).

The purchase and transport of weapons was the responsibility of another distinct group of ŻOB activists, individuals who had to be able to sneak out of the Ghetto and move freely on the Aryan side in order to carry out their tasks. In the context of Nazi-occupied Warsaw, however, Jewishness was a highly visible identity. For instance, all Jews over the age of ten were forced to wear white arm bands with a blue Star of David, clearly illustrating their identity (Engelking 2001; Gutman 1982). Jewish men's bodies were also marked by their circumcisions (a practice not shared by most other religious and ethnic groups in Europe at that time), and certain facial features and styles of dress were also stereotypically associated with Jewishness. Finally, because Yiddish was the first language of most Jews in Poland, having poor Polish language skills and/or speaking Polish with a Yiddish accent were clear markers of Jewish identity as well (Engelking 2001; Gutman 1982; Rotem 1994). Activists working on the Aryan side therefore had to have "good looks"—i.e., non-Semitic features—and the ability to speak perfect, unaccented Polish in order to pass successfully as non-Jewish Poles. Indeed, such traits determined which individuals went to the Aryan side. For example, activist Vladka Meed wrote (1979) that she was hand-picked for courier work because a ŻOB leader told her that she "looked like a Gentile" (p. 73). ŻOB courier Adina Szwajger possessed similar characteristics, as noted in her memoirs (1990):

> I didn't want to go, because I wanted to stay with everyone else. [But] Marek [Edelman, a ŻOB leader] explained that I had "good" looks—I had blonde hair and blue eyes—that I had no accent when I spoke Polish, which meant that I could walk around town freely, and that I would be of more use to them there than here. (P. 74)

While having "good" features protected these activists somewhat while on the Aryan side, the risk of being discovered was exacerbated by the presence of blackmailers (also referred to, in various sources, as *shmaltsovniks, szmalcovny* or *szmalcownicy*) among the Polish population. These individuals' familiarity with Polish Jews allowed them to detect traces of accents and other subtle features that could go unnoticed by German soldiers; armed with this information, they harassed and extorted fees from their victims in exchange for not turning them in to the Gestapo (Engelking 2001; Rotem 1994; Zuckerman 1993). The memoirs of Simha ("Kazik") Rotem (1994), a ŻOB activist who worked on both sides of the wall, describe several encounters with blackmailers. On one occasion, he and other activists were caught leaving the Ghetto, an act that revealed their Jewish identity:

> We hadn't gone far when we were joined by a group of blackmailers who had immediately recognized that we were Jews and who tried to extort whatever we had. We didn't have anything valuable and I realized that unless we got rid of them, they would turn us over to the Germans. I glanced around and thought quickly. As I looked, a truck passing by in the street came into my field of vision. At once we ran and climbed on from behind. By the time the blackmailers understood what was going on, we were far away. (P. 45)

Working in a setting in which revealing their identity as Jews meant both betraying their fellow activists and being put to death themselves, ŻOB couriers and organizers working outside of the Ghetto, therefore, had to hide their identity at all costs. They did so by strategically deploying an assumed identity: that of a non-Jewish Pole. As noted above, certain physical characteristics and language skills were put to use during these strategic identity displays. Passing as non-Jewish Poles also required church attendance and/or the demonstration of knowledge of Roman Catholic religious rites and practices (Engelking 2001). Additional strategies for masking Jewish identity included obtaining forged identification papers and assuming Polish, non-Jewish names and nicknames. For instance, Vladka Meed's real name was Feigel Peltel; "Vladka" was a nickname for her assumed name of Wladyslawa Kowalska. Similarly, ŻOB activists Simha Rotem, Arieh Wilner, Yitzhak Zuckerman, and Tovye Shaingut went by Polish nicknames "Kazik," "Jurek," "Antek," and "Tadek," respectively (Meed 1979; Rotem 1994; Zuckerman 1993).

Another performative strategy used by ŻOB activists on the Aryan side illustrated the connection between identity and emotion for Jews in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. Given the constant dangers that they faced, many activists on the Aryan side experienced a great deal of fear. For example, describing her daily work as a courier, Szwajger (1990) wrote,

> From the moment that I hid the scraps of paper in my handbag or tucked them into my clothes the shivering began—a sort of fear or anxiety. It was a cold feeling beneath the skin—an awareness that from that moment on every accidental search in the street might be the end. And the day was just beginning. (P. 81)

In the context in which these activists worked, then, public displays of fear—especially during everyday activities such as walking down the street, which no non-Jewish, "regular" Pole should have feared—also stood in as highly visible indicators of one's Jewishness. As Meed (1979) explained,

> "Your eyes give you away," our Gentile friends would tell us. "Make them look livelier, merrier. You won't attract so much attention then." But our eyes kept constantly watching, searching the shadows ahead, glancing quickly behind, seeing our own misfortune and foreseeing even worse to come. Haunted by fear of betrayal, our eyes betrayed us and this knowledge only increased our fear. (P. 194)

These activists' identity work therefore required explicit emotional management to control the emotions that could reveal their Jewish identity (Hochschild 1983; see also Goodwin and Pfaff 2001). One common strategy for hiding fear (and, therefore, for strategically displaying non-Jewishness) was to act confidently, even brashly (Engelking 2001). This strategy

is illustrated in a passage from Rotem's memoirs (1994) that describes an exchange between him and his landlady on the Aryan side:

> One evening as I returned home, the landlady asked me, "Are you really a Pole? I think you're also a Jew." She looked at me obliquely. I burst out laughing and replied on the spot, "I'm willing to prove it to you, madam." She said, "Please, sir, prove it!" I unbuckled my belt, unbuttoned my fly, and pulled down my pants; when I was down to my underwear, she turned around and walked out. This was the kind of "existential problem" you came across on a normal day; it was not unique at all. (P. 85)

Given the marked nature of Jewish men's bodies, had the landlady gone through with calling Rotem's bluff his true identity as a Jew would have been clear; apparently, his confidence (as evidenced by the burst of laughter, the lack of hesitation, and his willingness to expose his body) was sufficient to establish his identity as a Pole in her eyes. On the other hand, a display of fear—with or without the removal of his clothes—would have enhanced her suspicions of his Jewishness. Thus identity work performed by ŻOB activists on the Aryan side also required that the activists pay attention to what Hochschild (1979, 1983) calls "feeling rules," or rules that "govern how people try or try not to feel in ways 'appropriate to the situation'" (1979:552). Because these rules differed for Jews and Gentiles, following them correctly could help one "perform" as a member of one group or the other.

Like fear, sadness was an emotion that could reveal Jewishness and, therefore, had to be managed carefully during interactions with others. Many accounts note instances in which an activist experienced grief and sadness—typically, when witnessing harm to another Jew—yet could not display that emotion. For example, the diary entry of ŻOB activist Tuvia Borzykowski (1976), who survived both the January and April Uprisings, read on May 17, 1943:

> We came close to the ghetto wall, a long high wall topped with broken glass . . . I could see behind the wall naked chimneys which remained standing after the houses were burned. Thick smoke was still rising in the distance. I felt an overwhelming need to make some kind of gesture which would signify that I was passing a sacred site. However, I could not allow myself such a luxury . . . I had to look like the majority of passersby who were either oblivious to the sight, or wore an expression of malicious satisfaction. (P. 116)

Another activist quoted in Engelking (2001) made a similar remark about her experiences on the Aryan side during the April Uprising:

> It was for me the most painful experience on "the Aryan side." It was quite simply a cataclysm. It was the time of the Easter holiday. There were crowds in the streets going on foot to pay visits to their family or friends . . . I heard passers-by say, "The Yids are frying, they're spoiling our holiday, it's because of them that we have to walk" . . . I walked and wept. I suddenly realized that I might give myself away. I got a grip on myself. (P. 55)

Other diaries and memoirs describe additional strategies for managing fear and sadness as a means of masking Jewish identity. Working in pairs was one such strategy; for example, Szwajger (1990) notes that it was important for her to be with another young woman at all times when in public, for "if one of us went out alone, she might forget herself, and have 'sad eyes,' eyes that betrayed the pain within" (p. 83). Telling jokes in order to force laughter during times of emotional stress was another strategy illustrated in Szwajger's account. Also a witness to the April Uprising from the Aryan side, she wrote,

> We stood in Krasinski square and told each other jokes to make ourselves laugh . . . We stood holding our flowers listening to the explosions, while Swietojerska street burnt and we stood laughing. I saw my own house burning. And I kept laughing. (P. 89)

Hochschild's theory of emotion (1983) suggests that all emotions are managed to some extent. According to her, emotion is first experienced as a "signal" that tells us how we feel

about a situation and cues an appropriate course of action to manage and display that feeling; as she writes, "Feeling is something we *do* by attending to inner sensation in a given way, by defining situations in a given way, by managing in given ways . . . The very act of managing emotion can be seen as part of what the emotion becomes" (p. 27; emphasis in original). As the above quotes suggest, the experiences of ŻOB activists on the Aryan side illustrate a particularly stark example of emotional management, through which activists suppressed their true emotions and forced themselves to publicly display the opposite of what they actually felt. While this suppression of emotion certainly took a lot of work, it is not what Hochschild (1979:560) calls "emotion work," or individuals' efforts to *change* their emotions. Activists on the Aryan side carefully managed their emotional displays in order to maintain their appearance as non-Jews; they did not attempt to change their true feelings. Their work with their own emotions is therefore closer to what Hochschild terms "surface acting," or impression management, than "deep acting," or true emotion work.

Many accounts also refer to explicit ŻOB instructions that activists on the other side of the wall were simply forbidden to cry in public. Privately, however, Jews could unleash their anguish. The memoirs of ŻOB leader Yitzhak Zuckerman (1993), whose Aryan features made him well suited to work outside the Ghetto, describe how a vulnerable moment shared with his Armenian landlady helped each identify the other as "safe":

> One night, I woke up with a hand stroking me. It turns out I had been crying, talking and shouting in Yiddish in my sleep. And here was that "Armenian" woman sitting next to me and weeping . . . I asked myself if the "Armenian" woman really was Armenian, since she cried like a *Yidishe mama* [Jewish mother]. I didn't ask because there was no need to ask. (P. 380; emphasis in original)

"Passing" as non-Jews was therefore a form of strategic identity work; Jewish activists staged "performances" (Goffman 1959) by strategically deploying what was actually a false identity in order to be able to move freely on the Aryan side long enough to carry out the rest of their activist tasks. They did so by following a number of culturally and situationally relevant codes that indicated Jewishness and non-Jewishness. The choice of which identity to deploy (and, consequently, which one to suppress) was not made freely, however. On the contrary, Jewish activists on the Aryan side *had* to present themselves as non-Jews, given the demands of a highly repressive context that made any display of Jewishness too costly.

Dissonant Identity Work: The Simultaneous Amplification and Suppression of Identity

While the situational demands of the Aryan side required that Jewish activists suppress their true identity, the activist experience actually heightened that identity at the same time. Because of the simultaneous amplification and suppression of identity, these activists' identity work may be described as dissonant as well as forced.

Jewish identity was heightened for the activists on the Aryan side in a number of ways. First, all members of the ŻOB consciously drew on themes of honor and identity when framing their resistance. For instance, during the April Uprising they posted flyers throughout the Ghetto saying, "To fight, to die, for the honor of our people!" (Kurzman 1993). The memoirs of ŻOB activist Zivia Lubetkin (1981) corroborate these themes:

> We said to ourselves: "We must see the truth for what it is. The Germans want to annihilate us. It is our duty to organize ourselves for defense, and struggle for our honor and the honor of the Jewish people" . . . We would not go helplessly off to the slaughter. We would no longer die without a struggle. We would wage a battle for ourselves, for the Jews in the Homeland, for the Jews in the Diaspora. (P. 91)

Hence, participation in the resistance can be understood as an expression of collective identity. By resisting, these activists were able to express their membership in a collective that they defined as a strong, proud, and honorable people. In this respect, their resistance was similar to many other instances of collective action which have also been understood as expressions of identity. For example, see Craig Calhoun (1994) on the democracy movement in Tiananmen Square, Rick Fantasia (1988) on the U.S. labor movement, and Kevin Neuhouser (1998) on women's activism in Brazil. Thus, even though activists on the Aryan side could not openly display their Jewish identity, their resistance activity expressed that identity nonetheless.

Because the ŻOB activists understood their resistance as a fight to preserve the honor of the Jewish people, their strong identification with and commitment to the Jewish community is clear. For those activists on the Aryan side, their separation from the rest of the community may have heightened this sense of collective identity even further. Another piece of evidence suggesting that the activist experience intensified their sense of identity as Jews was these activists' oft-expressed desire to be back in the Ghetto. That is, although the individuals working on the Aryan side understood the importance of their work and performed their tasks willingly, many longed to be in the back in the Ghetto with their comrades, "where they belonged." Furthermore, they only intended to stay on the Aryan side long enough to complete their tasks, after which they expected to return to the Ghetto to participate in battle. For instance, Michał Grynberg's (2002) description of Gustawa Wilner's writings about her brother Arieh, a ŻOB activist who worked on the Aryan side, noted that "His sister recalled a conversation after the war with his close friend and comrade-in-arms Maria Jiruska. When Jiruska tried to convince him not to go back to the ghetto, since that would mean certain death, Wilner replied, 'That's where my place is, rather you should wish me an honorable death'" (p. 473). Similarly, Szwajger (1990) wrote:

> All of our feelings were concentrated on what was happening within the ghetto walls. I often went up to the walls with "deliveries"—we would throw things across, or receive things from the other side—and I remember how I dreamt at times that they might let me go back there. (Pp. 84–85)

Activist work on the Aryan side was characterized by simultaneous, yet opposing, identity effects: activists experienced a heightened sense of identity as Jews at the same time that they had to do everything they could to keep that identity hidden.

Not surprisingly, a number of emotions accompanied these activists' strong identification with other Jews. For instance, emotions such as rage and a desire for revenge were prevalent among the activists. These emotions are evident in the following passage from Meed's (1979) memoirs, which describe her reactions to hearing ŻOB leader Abrasha Blum explain the organization's plans for resistance:

> His address was like a wave that both uplifted and engulfed me . . . I listened breathlessly as he spoke. More than once, since the deportation of my mother, my brother and sister, I had had to suppress the impulse to strike out at the Germans; a passion for revenge raged within me. Now, preparations for direct action were underway. That ungratified desire for revenge which each of us harbored was now to be given outlet. The idea of death had become integrated into our outlook; we knew that all the roads led toward it. Our faces now bore expressions of grim determination. (Pp. 72–73)

Here again, these activists' experiences are similar to those of activists working in other settings, as the growing literature on emotions and social movements has demonstrated (see Goodwin et al. 2001; Jasper 1998; Taylor 2000). What is different about this case is the dissonant nature of the resistance fighters' identity work, which was characterized by the simultaneous amplification and suppression of both identity and emotion. In the course of their activism, these individuals felt certain emotions (sadness, fear, anger, rage) that compelled their activism. However, as discussed previously, in order to maintain the identity displays on which their activism depended, they had to display other emotions (e.g., happiness) that were quite the opposite of what they actually felt.

Further examination into the role of emotion in the activist experience on the Aryan side shows that not only was the activists' identity work dissonant, but it appears to have been painful as well. As the quotes in the preceding section suggest, hiding one's identity—and especially in a sociopolitical context that heightened the salience of that identity—was emotionally difficult, leading to feelings of guilt and sadness. Another example from Meed's (1979) memoirs illustrates the emotional costs of hiding her identity from a fellow Jew:

> I looked at his bowed figure, his tattered clothes, his grimy, scratched hands, and the beggar's sack dangling over his shoulders. I yearned to reveal to this sorrowing fellow Jew how deeply I felt with him, but I had to maintain a detached air, without showing the least sign of kinship, posing as a total stranger, lest suspicion be aroused and all of us endangered. (P. 173)

Similarly, Rotem's (1994) memoirs note:

> To pretend all the time, not to identify yourself to anyone—that's not easy to live with. I was often gripped by a strong desire to confess. In general it isn't easy to step into someone's shoes, to project a borrowed image, the image of a Pole. (P. 62)

ŻOB activists on the Aryan side therefore faced a difficult task: They had to publicly downplay and even deny an identity that was strongly felt. Instead of bringing different aspects of self into some coherent whole or achieving some other kind of identity "harmony," their identity work was characterized by dissonance and discomfort.

Discussion: Identity Work, Repression, and the Costs and Risks of Activism

As described in activists' memoirs and other materials, the identity work performed by members of the ŻOB working on the Aryan side of the Warsaw Ghetto was both forced and dissonant. I have argued that their identity work took this form because of the demands of the highly repressive context in which they were working, one that simultaneously increased the salience of their Jewish identity and forced them to hide it.

Admittedly, this analysis is based on an extreme case, one characterized by very high levels of repression. This case was chosen for exactly that reason. As I argued in the beginning of this paper, little is known about identity work in highly repressive contexts. In addition, other specific features of the Warsaw Ghetto make this case especially useful for an analysis of activists' identity work. For instance, the clear demarcation between the Ghetto and the Aryan side provided obvious staging areas for the activists' identity displays (as Jews within the Ghetto, and as non-Jews on the Aryan side). The rules for identity work were also quite clear in that setting; to pass as non-Jews, activists' performances had to feature the proper combination of physical traits and social behaviors (in addition to other displays, such as removing and hiding their identifying armbands). Finally, the genocidal practices of the Nazi regime made the costs for unsuccessful identity performances painfully clear.

Because the extreme costs and risks associated with Jewish resistance on the Aryan side (and especially with activists' identity work) are such an important aspect of this case, they deserve more discussion here. According to Doug McAdam (1986; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991) and Sharon Erickson Nepstad and Christian Smith (1999), activist work on the Aryan side can be considered both "high-risk" and "high-cost." The costs of activism are the sacrifices a person makes in order to carry out the action in question; these include "the expenditures of time, money, and energy that are required of a person engaged in any particular form of activism" (McAdam 1986:67). Risks, in contrast, are the costs that *might* result from activism, or "the anticipated dangers—whether legal, social, physical, financial, and so forth—of

engaging in a particular type of activity" (McAdam 1986:67; see also Shriver 2000). Gregory Wiltfang and Doug McAdam (1991) also argue that while an activist may have a certain expectation of risks, she may be unaware of (or even in denial about) all the risks that may actually stem from her activities. They therefore differentiate further between the subjective and objective risks of activism, and suggest that long-term participation in high-risk movements may "toughen" activists or otherwise help to reduce the perceptions about the risks involved in their activities (see also Hollander 1997, 2001 and Linneman 2003 for more on perceptions of risk).

As this analysis has demonstrated, the costs of activism on the Aryan side were quite high. Resistance work in that setting required a great deal of time and energy, not simply to obtain and transport weapons and other necessary items but also to perform the careful, and painful, identity work needed in order to be able to move freely around the city. These findings, therefore, show that the costs of activism can be emotional and identity-based as well as physical and material. Further, by calling attention to these costs, this analysis also suggests that the term "high-cost" can apply to a broader range of acts than previously thought. Thus, activism that takes little time or money can still be "high-cost" if it requires high expenditures of emotion such as sadness or identity work that involves pain and dissonance. Examples of such acts in less repressive contexts than I have discussed here might include having to boycott one's family business or destroying a beloved antique or family heirloom (e.g., a fur coat) in the course of one's activism.

Clearly, the risks of activism on the Aryan side were high as well, since ŻOB members risked death by leaving the Ghetto. However, these findings also illustrate an aspect of risk that has been inadequately explored by previous work. Although Wiltfang and McAdam (1991) emphasize the potential discrepancies between perceived risks and actual risks, in the case of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, ŻOB activists appear to have had a fairly accurate sense of what they risked with their activities. More importantly, these individuals were quite certain that those risks would eventually be realized. Indeed, as noted above, expectations of death were a large part of what motivated resistance in the first place. The strong likelihood—both actual and perceived—of being killed if identified as Jewish meant that activists on the Aryan side had to use multiple strategies of identity management (based on language and appearance as well as emotion) in order to survive long enough to carry out their activist tasks.[3] This case therefore suggests that the probability associated with risk is also important to the dynamics of collective action and deserves more scholarly attention.

Summary and Conclusions

This paper has used the case of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 to explore activists' strategic identity work in a highly repressive setting. A strong sense of collective identity, coupled with emotional responses to Nazi persecution of European Jews, helped motivate the Ghetto fighters to take action. However, the ŻOB activists working as couriers and organizers on the "Aryan side" of the Ghetto walls also had to suppress that identity and emotion in order to survive the dangerous conditions long enough to do their work. Their identity work was therefore characterized by the simultaneous amplification and suppression of identity and emotion, the combination of which increased the costs of activism, beyond the time and energy needed for these individuals to carry out their tasks. Importantly, this identity work differed from the identity strategies identified by current research. For Jews living in Nazi-

3. The probability of death was, of course, high for all Jews in Warsaw (as well as throughout Nazi-occupied Poland), whether or not they participated in collective resistance. However, my goal in calling attention to the strong likelihood of being killed is not to explain why some people resisted and others did not. Instead, it is to describe the experiences of the activists themselves.

occupied Warsaw, the choice of which aspect of self to deploy was taken away; instead of being freely chosen, their identity work was forced. Furthermore, in order to stage collective action, activists had to downplay their true identity during their activist work. The nature of that work, and the context in which they were working, highlighted that identity at the same time. In addition to their identity work being forced, therefore, their work was also dissonant. Activists had to simultaneously "be and not be" themselves in order to carry out their resistance activities. For them, identity work was not intended to align one's self-concept with a collective identity or to manage diversity in movements, but to maintain dissonant identities.[4]

What, then, can an examination of this extreme case teach us about identity and social movements more generally? First, despite the highly visible nature of Jewish identity in Nazi-occupied Poland and the costs associated with being Jewish, it is notable that members of the ŻOB whose work took them to the Aryan side of the Warsaw Ghetto were able to use their identity strategically in the course of their activism. By illustrating the strategic use of identity in a setting that would seem to preclude it, this analysis demonstrates the robustness of identity work in social movements. At the same time, however, these activists' identity work was quite different than the "free" and "harmonic" work described by current research, differences that can be attributed to the highly repressive setting in which these activists worked. This study also illustrates another important, if basic, point: Identity work reflects and is shaped by the context in which it is performed. Additional examples of forced and dissonant identity work used to facilitate collective resistance in other repressive settings might include light-skinned African American slaves passing as white in order to mobilize resources for slave rebellions or to help ferry others along the Underground Railroad, or women crossdressing as men in order to participate in battle to further some broader political cause (regarding the latter, see Young 1996).

As previously noted, this analysis also has implications for the costs and risks of activism. I suggest that the multiple strategies of identity management used by ŻOB activists on the Aryan side of the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto were not only the result of what these activists risked—specifically, death—but were also a response to the absolute certainty that they would be put to death if identified as Jewish. Because of that certainty, identity management was a necessity. In contrast, if there had been less danger—that is, if there were some way for Jews to live freely as Jews on the Aryan side—identity management might have been something that activists could choose for reasons other than survival (e.g., to gain Polish support for the resistance), which would be closer to the "free" identity work characteristic of most social movement research.

Finally, although I have argued that forced and dissonant identity work is characteristic of activism in highly repressive settings, it is important to remember that activists face repression in a wide variety of contexts. While it is unlikely that these findings would be replicated in a study of activism in a setting with little or no repression, they nonetheless point to the existence of a wider range of types of identity work than has been discussed by research to date. It is therefore worth exploring identity work in less repressive settings to see if any features of the external environment make that work "forced" or "dissonant" to any extent at all. Additional studies of activism in both high-risk and low-risk settings will help document and explain the strategic use of identity in social movements more fully.

4. Though not a social movements analysis, Gallant and Cross (1992) provide another example of identity work performed by Jews during the Holocaust. Focusing on Jews in concentration camps, they use the concept of "challenged identity" to refer to the transformative process through which individuals who had been dehumanized by the disruption and horror of camp life managed to recapture their sense of self and, by forging connections with others, instill in themselves a will to survive. However, because the construction of a "challenged identity" builds on the individual's core, true self, it is distinct from the identity work I have described here and is in fact closer to the "harmonic" identity work characteristic of previous research.

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