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This article examines identity talk in several peace movement organizations from 1982 to 1991. Identity talk directs attention to how identity discourse concretizes activists' perceptions of social movement dramas, demonstrates personal identity, reconstructs individuals' biographies, imputes group identities, and aligns personal and collective identities. Six types of identity talk are identified and illustrated: associational declarations, disillusionment anecdotes, atrocity tales, personal is political reports, guide narratives, and war stories. These stories revolve around the themes of becoming aware, active, committed, and weary. Suggestions are offered for possible future research.

IDENTITY TALK IN THE
PEACE AND JUSTICE MOVEMENT

SCOTT A. HUNT
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SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, having fallen into disfavor over the past two decades, is currently enjoying a resurgence in social movement research (Snow and Oliver Forthcoming). Indeed, Gamson (1992) contends that "many of the major questions animating contemporary work on social movements are intrinsically social psychological" (p. 54). Ironically, identity has been a central concept in both the demise and subsequent resurrection of social psychology. In the 1970s and 1980s, many scholars who had participated in a variety of movements rejected social psychological traditions that suggested that activists and movements display deviant or spoiled personal and collective identities and instead embraced approaches that stressed resource mobilization, rational choice, and political processes. Currently, New Social Movement (NSM) theorists have been

partly responsible for reintegrating a focus on social psychology as they attempt to account for the emphasis on "identity politics" that seems to be a key component of contemporary collective action (Cohen 1985; Melucci 1988, 1989, 1992; Pizzorno 1978). Because, as Gamson (1992) has put it, "the resurgent social psychology has jettisoned the old baggage of irrationality and social pathology" (p. 54), its reformulation promises innovative analyses of identity construction within movement contexts.[1]

The purpose of this article is to move forward along those lines by offering an interactionist analysis of how activists construct and align personal and collective identities (see Snow et al. 1986). The conceptual framework advanced here extends our earlier dramaturgy of social movements (Benford and Hunt 1992). From this view, identities are interactionally constituted; that is, they are constructed, reinforced, and transformed by the interactions between and among movement participants and outsiders (see also Hunt 1992). Personal and collective identities are products of impression management work (Goffman 1959; Holstein and Miller 1990; Miller and Holstein 1989; Snow and Anderson 1987). The attribution of identities is pivotal to the development of a dramatis personae in a social movement drama (Ferree and Miller 1985; Zurcher and Snow 1981). Our main goal is to examine activists' talk to understand, at least in part, how identities are constructed and aligned in social movement organizations (SMOs).[2]

Our perspective is grounded in data derived from two separate, multimethod, ethnographic investigations of the U.S. peace movement from 1982 to 1991 (Benford 1984, 1987; Hunt 1991). The study conducted by the senior author is based on data collected from 1989 through 1991 on a statewide peace movement organization, Nebraskans for Peace (NFP), and its local chapters. The study conducted by the junior author is based on data gathered from 1982 through 1986 on 18 nuclear disarmament organizations, 12 of which were based in Austin, Texas; the other 6 were national peace movement organizations. Both studies involved extensive, overt participant observation methods, in-depth interviews, and document analyses. Drawing on these data and on social psychology, collective

behavior, and movement literatures, we define and elaborate some of the relationships between personal and collective identity construction within SMOs. Before detailing our perspective on the construction and manipulation of personal and collective identities, we provide a brief critical review of current treatments of identity in social movement theorizing and research. This review provides a backdrop for understanding our interactionist analysis of identity talk.

IDENTITY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT RESEARCH

Identity concepts have a long history that transcends academic disciplines, spans myriad substantive domains, and encompasses numerous theoretical orientations (Berger 1966; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Gecas 1982; Weigert 1983). This generalization also holds for recent applications of identity concepts in movement analyses (Snow and Oliver Forthcoming). Hunt (1992) has suggested that there are three tendencies in movement scholars' conceptualizations of identity: Personal and collective identities are defined as products of social, psychological, and biological structures; as manifestations of macro social change; or as interactional accomplishments. Seeking to extend a constructionist understanding of personal and collective identity, we limit our attention here to interactionist analyses.[3]

In movement research, symbolic interactionists have focused on the link between personal and collective identities, albeit implicitly for the most part. For example, Blumer (1939) has implied that movement identities involve fostering esprit de corps, defining ingroup/outgroup relationships, providing occasions for informal interaction, organizing formal ceremonies or rituals, maintaining morale, and articulating a shared ideology. Drawing on mass society and symbolic interactionist theories, Klapp (1969) has argued that widespread estrangement and symbolic poverty have generated movements that reflect collective searches for meaningful identities. Turner and Killian's (1987) emergent norm perspective has suggested that activists'

understandings of personal and collective identities arise from their joint actions and interpretations, not from objective structures imbued with inherent meanings. Work by Melucci (1988, 1989, 1992), Taylor and Whittier (1992a, 1992b), and Hunt (1992) has extended this interactionist perspective.

Although constructionist analyses of identity are an advancement over more objectivist arguments, they too have blind spots. One general shortcoming that these constructionist perspectives share is that they have assumed that the alignment of personal and collective identities is rather straightforward and unproblematic. Another shortcoming is that constructionist investigations have treated identity as if it were only a scientific concept rather than a construct used by activists themselves. Constructionists have viewed identities as products of social interaction but have failed to identify how those products shape subsequent collective action.

IDENTITY TALK

Snow and Machalek (1983, 1984) and Snow and Anderson (1987, 1993) have suggested a useful approach for studying how identity is used as a practical concept by social actors (see Sandstrom 1990). Their analyses of both religious conversion and homelessness conceptualize identity in terms of impression management work. These scholars have argued that identity work is an interactional accomplishment that is socially constructed, interpreted, and communicated via words, deeds, and images, irrespective of its objective composition. From their view, identity work centers on a "universe of discourse," broadly conceived as verbal utterances, gestures, acts, dress, and appearances, that communicate an identification with a particular worldview (Mead 1934).

A constructionist research strategy derived from this view emphasizes individuals' identity talk. In examining individuals' verbal and written accounts, researchers seek to understand how definitions of situations, motives, identities, and other meanings are constituted socially. Analyses of identity talk pose

a potential data interpretation problem though. Should individuals' accounts be treated as "objective data," providing valid and reliable records of events, attitudes, and motives?

Addressing this question, Snow and Machalek (1984) concluded that "using . . . recounted experiences as the basis of causal explanations is both empirically and theoretically misguided" (p. 175). However, these authors argue that individuals' accounts are appropriate data sources *if* researchers interpret them as topics of analysis instead of objective, factual reports. Following this line of thought, identity talk here is not interpreted as an exact rendering of "facts" that reveals "actual" identities. Rather, identity talk is viewed as a rhetoric that is "constructed in accordance with group-specific guidelines," varies temporally, and is "redefined continuously in light of new experiences" (Snow and Machalek 1984, 175-77). Identity talk is defined as a discourse that reflects actors' perceptions of a social order and is based on interpretations of current situations, themselves, and others.

Our research suggests that in movement contexts personal identity talk by activists revolves around four moments of identity construction: becoming aware, active, committed, and weary. By moments we do not posit a linear model that marks stages in the development of an activist identity where individuals move sequentially from awareness, to activism, to commitment, to weariness. Rather, we identify these four moments as themes in identity talk; that is, in communicating their personal identities as activists, individuals told stories that included accounts about becoming aware, active, committed, and weary. We do not interpret activists' accounts as depictions of "actual" stages of development. Instead, following Snow and his colleagues' conceptualization, we view activists' identity accounts as components of a universe of discourse that is constructed in accordance with group-specific norms and reproduced continuously in light of new definitions of situations. The four moments are story themes, reflecting retrospective reconstructions of the past, that are used to depict activists' present worldviews (Mead 1932).

Tales with "becoming aware" themes focus on how individuals became cognizant of an·injustice. This kind of theme fosters an activist identity by suggesting how individuals engaged in grievance interpretation blame attribution and prognostic framing (see Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982; Snow and Benford 1988, 1992; Snow et al. 1986). In talking about becoming aware, activists describe consciousness raising, where they realize who are villains, victims, heroes, heroines, and allies (see Benford and Hunt 1992; Fantasia 1988; Gamson 1991; Hunt 1992; Klapp 1962; Melucci 1989; Morris 1992; Mueller 1987; Taylor and Whittier 1992a, 1992b). "Becoming active" stories depict individuals' initial recruitment and participation (see Friedman and McAdam 1992; Klandermans 1984; Klandermans and Oegma 1987; Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980). Accounts that stress "becoming committed" provide testimonials of increased involvement and intense identification with a movement of SMO (see Kanter 1968). Finally, "becoming weary" tales highlight some of the perceived hazards that precipitate activists' departures from a movement or SMO.

These identity tales, our data suggest, accomplish several practical objectives. First, these stories concretize activists' perceptions of a social movement drama, complete with imputed identities for villains, victims, antagonists, and allies. Another practical objective is that these tales demonstrate activists' extant perceptions of their own personal identities and, at times, their biographies. Third, these tales impute collective identities to the peace movement as a whole and to specific SMOs. These identity accounts also demonstrate to the speakers and others that their personal identities are aligned with the collective identities imputed to the movement or specific SMOs. Finally, activists' identity talk is one way micromobilization tasks (e.g., recruitment, resource mobilization, commitment) are accomplished (Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982; Snow et al. 1986; Walsh 1981). Our data suggest further that identity talk was expressed in six kinds of accounts: associational declarations, disillusionment anecdotes, atrocity tales, "personal is

political" reports, guide narratives, and war stories. These varied accounts can be found in each moment of identity construction.

ASSOCIATIONAL DECLARATIONS

Several scholars have suggested that collective action involves affirmation and negation, associative and disassociative processes. Blumer (1939), for instance, maintained that a corporate actor is identified by way of in-group/out-group claims (see also Hunt 1992; Taylor and Whittier 1992b). Zald and Ash (1966) have argued that SMOs can be classified in terms of their relative exclusiveness and inclusiveness. We have argued elsewhere that collective action can be understood as the construction of a social movement drama that turns on the identification of protagonists and antagonists (Benford and Hunt 1992). Similarly, Morris (1992) has asserted that sustained movement activity requires the development of an "oppositional consciousness," an awareness of a struggle between oppressors and oppressed. Outside the realm of movement research, Snow and Anderson (1987) have made a comparable point by indicating that the identity talk of homeless individuals includes associational embracing and distancing.

Our research on the peace movement suggests that the identity talk of activists also involves associative and disassociative claims. These accounts communicate aspects of personal identities by conveying that the teller is similar to some individuals and groups and different from others. They also serve to construct a collective identity for an SMO by implying that the organization is akin to some and unlike other organizations. Further, associational claims demonstrate alignment between personal and collective identities. Such talk by activists represents discursive practices used to demonstrate that individuals' personal identities are consistent with the perceived collective identity of the movement or SMO. Also, when association talk is made on behalf or an SMO, either formally or informally, it facilitates micromobilization by keynoting norms for the alignment of personal and collective identities (see Turner and Killian 1987).

When accounting for their involvement with an SMO, activists would often claim that their personal identities meshed with the organization's collective identity. An NFP leader, whose movement involvement was limited to NFP activities exclusively, provided this response on being asked why he became involved with that particular organization:

> You mean why NFP instead of something else? Well, hmmmmm, I suppose it was because it seemed an intelligent group, caring. It presented a global outlook and local too. These are important to me personally so I felt comfortable.

In addition to positive affiliation accounts, some associational claims aligned personal and collective SMO identities by distancing an activist from other groups:

> I mean I was really unhappy with [another SMO]. That's why I quit being associated with them at the end of high school. It was just getting so constraining. Everybody was wearing the same shoes, same tie-dye T-shirts, you know. You didn't wear any makeup. And if somebody would break those unwritten social rules they'd be immediately, like, you know, made out to be leaving the group, or they'd be made to feel bad. It was ridiculous. That's what I like about NFP. There's not so much emphasis on conformity.

This exemplifies that the demonstration of personal and collective identity alignment at times is discussed in terms of what the individual and group are not. Similar associational declarations by activists were recorded in nearly every SMO we studied. One of the founders of the Austin Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign explained, for example, why he became disenchanted with Texas Mobilization for Survival (TM) and how that disaffection led him to disaffiliate and establish a new group:

> I quit the Mobe because their strategy is based on moral outrage. . . . They're just motivated by their anger at the system. And I mean that's justified. I'm angry, too. But I was drawn to the Freeze and remain here because we are motivated by . . . logic and common sense about how to go about the job. And we're guided by this comprehensive, positive proposal. You know, it's like we have a proposal for what we think would be better rather than just protesting what we think is wrong.

Clearly, his associational declaration suggests that some movement participants feel it is important to affiliate with an SMO that is perceived to have traits that are in alignment with the member's personal identity.

Not all personal associational claims focused on organizational identities, however. Some activists expressed a greater sense of alignment with the peace movement as a whole. This was articulated in an interview with an NFP activist during the 1991 Persian Gulf War:

> In the big picture, what really really counts is making peace and justice. If NFP thrives while we do this, terrific. If not, so be it. I'd rather have peace and justice work without NFP than to have NFP without peace and justice work.

This account suggests that identity talk can rely on a universe of discourse that allows for multiple identity alignment interpretations and expressions.

In addition to individual associational declarations, there are often SMO-sponsored accounts. This kind of identity talk fosters morale, esprit de corps, and solidarity (see Blumer 1939; Fantasia 1988). Typically, a representative of an SMO provides a sketch of the organization's collective identity and indicates what kind of people associate with the group. This is exemplified by the following tale told by a Texas Mobilization for Survival activist to some potential recruits who were attending their first TM meeting:

> The Mobe is dedicated to supporting clean, safe, renewable energy as an alternative to nuclear power, strong opposition to the worldwide arms race which threatens us all, and the transfer of public funds from the military and corporate sectors to the meeting of human needs. We feel we are at a unique crossroads in human history. Before us lie two options: a nuclear Dark Age filled with fear, drastic limitations on our freedom, and the ever-present threat of the destruction of life itself or a life-affirming world community founded on the shared values of an ecologically sane lifestyle.

The foregoing associational declaration provides a vocabulary for the alignment of personal and collective identities that em-

brace "values of an ecologically sane lifestyle" and a rejection of a "nuclear Dark Age." This suggests that SMO-sponsored associational accounts promote micromobilization in two ways. First, they provide a universe of discourse for conscience constituents and sympathetic bystanders to identify with the collectivity and initiate participation. Second, they furnish a vocabulary for members to reaffirm and perhaps intensify their identification with the SMO.

DISILLUSIONMENT ANECDOTES

We found that participants' accounts of entry into movements as well as their tales of exiting were often characterized by disillusionment anecdotes. This type of tale follows a formula of "once I was blind, but now I see." Individuals claim to have held "false" perceptions about extant "reality" until some condition, event, or person dispelled these "illusions," replacing them with a "truth." In these stories, activists portray previous personal identities as "innocent" or "naive" and depict their new ones as "conscious" or "aware." Also, the individuals' "enlightened" personal identities are aligned with the "consciousness" or "awareness" of a corporate actor.

In our studies, some activists referred to a variety of revealing international events that altered their consciousness, including disclosures about the Gulf of Tonkin, the overthrow of Allende in Chile, the assassination of Archbishop Romero in El Salvador, and the violence directed against civil rights activists in the United States. More common, however, were accounts of personal events that were viewed as having triggered a change in consciousness. For example, a 20-year peace movement veteran emphasized an impending induction into the military during the Vietnam War as the main impetus for becoming aware:

> I haven't always had a raised consciousness about peace and justice issues. No. What did it for me was a hot number in the draft. Before then, I was your typical, could-care-less all-American kid. But when it looked like I probably would get drafted, I developed an interest in politics real fast. I didn't immediately reject the idea of going, though. I wasn't a pacifist then, but I

wanted to find out why we were there, what was the history, that sort of thing. . . . I didn't like the answers I kept coming up with. I decided that the war was wrong and that I wasn't going to go. . . . As I went along, I started to think about the broader philosophical questions about war in general and violence, read some things, and became committed to nonviolence.

This account claims that a single dramatic event generated a "becoming aware" moment. Further, this revealing event led to a personal identity transformation from a "typical, could-[not]-care-less all-American kid" to a "pacifist." Note, too, that this description of personal identity refers to alignments with two different collective identities: unaware all-American kids and pacifists with raised consciousness.

One Vietnam veteran who became an activist in numerous peace and justice groups recounted an even more instantaneous and dramatic occurrence of becoming aware:

I had a blinding leap of faith one day. I was reading and reading and reading about the war, and it finally hit me that I was real angry. And I had lost my innocence, my purity because I saw, uh, I saw a war in which my nation lied to me and lied to many people, and affected me deeply because I saw young men that I knew and loved die. And so in 1970 I helped start the first Vietnam Veterans Against the War in Beaumont.

Others we encountered talked about a slow, gradual realization of the "truth" and how becoming aware undermined widely held perceptions about the social world. This anecdote offered by a female member of NFP who claimed to have been a peace activist for nearly 20 years is illustrative:

I used to believe that we [the United States] were the protectors, the champions of democracy [gestured quotation marks]. This is what we're taught to believe. But, all my adult life our foreign policy has been more concerned with power and control and the economic interests of multinationals and not with human needs and democracy. Our rhetoric never meshed with our actions. By the end of the '60s I realized it was just that, rhetoric. . . . It was an exciting time for me personally because I started to become very skeptical of our government and there were those involved in the antiwar movement who were saying the very things I was thinking. I felt like I wasn't wrong and I wasn't alone.

For this activist, the belief that the United States was a "protec-
tor" of democracy lacked "empirical credibility" (Snow and
Benford 1988). She provided "evidence" that U.S. foreign policy
has been driven by economic and political motives. Moreover,
this account defined her personal identity vis-à-vis two collective
identities. At first, her personal identity was aligned with a
depiction of the United States as a "champion" of democracy.
However, she "realized" that this characterization was "inaccu-
rate." Her personal identity is then described as being congruent
with the collective identity articulated by "those involved in the
antiwar movement," those who had also become aware.

ATROCITY TALES

Closely related to the disillusionment stories are "atrocity
tales." These are accounts of negative experiences, abomina-
tions observed, or otherwise inhumane or immoral happenings
the tellers identified as significant to their present orientation
toward movement-related concerns. In dramaturgical terms,
atrocity tales identify victims and villains. Further, these stories
implicitly involve the construction of personal identity by convey-
ing that the teller is the type of person who does not support
such injustices but, rather, is sensitive to the plight of victims and
wishes to do something to end their suffering. When atrocity
tales are told in the context of SMO-sponsored activities, the
stories function to link personal and collective identities and
hence to encourage micromobilization.

Peace movement speakers at public gatherings often told
atrocity tales as a means of evoking anger, disillusionment, a
sense of injustice, and the like among members of their audi-
ences. Nuclear disarmament groups, for instance, rarely missed
an opportunity at public events to recount horrific details of the
suffering of Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb victims
(Benford 1993b). At one gathering we observed at the gates of
the Pantex nuclear weapons facility in 1985, *habaksha* (A-bomb
victims) offered testimonials recounting their gruesome experi-
ences on the day of the bombing. They related atrocity tales of
suffering from not only the enduring and debilitating effects of

radiation but of social stigma, a lifetime of discrimination they endured as a consequence of having been "contaminated." Similarly, Witnesses for Peace toured the United States throughout the 1980s recounting present-day horrors resulting from U.S.-financed wars along the Honduran/Nicaraguan border, death squads in El Salvador, and indigenous exterminations and expulsions in Guatemala.

Although atrocity tales can be told regarding any moment in a movement actor's identity career, we found that they are frequently recounted in the context of a participant's early identity transformation experiences, of becoming politically aware of some peace and justice issue. Peace activist conversations, especially when they turned to biographical reconstructions, were peppered with a variety of atrocity tales. For instance, one Austin peace activist, the son of an Army colonel, dreamed as a teenager of graduating from West Point, joining the Green Berets, and fighting in Vietnam. But as he would later recount in a newspaper interview, his father's behavior led him to reconsider those plans:

> I was watching the evening news with my father and some of his Army friends when a report from Israel came on. My father was cheering the Israeli troops and arguing the strategy of attack as if the Israelis were his favorite football team. The news story ended with the casualty figures from that day superimposed on a scene of burning bodies. Israeli losses were 56 whereas the Arabs lost 430. My father and his friends let out a victory yell that I can still hear. I never will forget the sight of men cheering while watching burning bodies. (Butts 1983, 12)

As with associational declarations and disillusionment anecdotes, atrocity tales imply disidentification and identification, disassociative and associative processes. These accounts typically suggest that the social construction of new identities involves self-mortification, the rejection of a past identity. But as we have also seen, identity talk entails linking the new personal identity to a corporate identity. It is our contention that all the stories identified herein can accomplish such linkages. The next type of identity talk we wish to elaborate and illustrate—"personal

is political" reports—seems particularly well suited to articulating personal and collective identity links.

"PERSONAL IS POLITICAL" REPORTS

As Taylor and Whittier (1992a, 1992b) have observed, the perception that everyday life is political is fundamental to lesbian feminism. From this view, every facet of life is affected by external political conditions and can become the basis of a political statement. Emerging from lesbian feminism, the "personal is political" philosophy spread to other movements, including the U.S. peace movement. In the peace movement, dress, familial relations, diet, choice of long distance telephone service, children's games, and myriad other mundane aspects of everyday life were considered part of an individual's political discourse. One NFP activist pointed out that even the brand of microcassette tape recorder used by an ethnographer to conduct interviews is a political statement:

> NFPer: I noticed you have a GE recorder.
> SAH: Yeah. It was a gift, I . . .
> NFPer: You know that GE is a very big weapons manufacturer . . .
> SAH: Yeah. I know. I was given . . .
> NFPer: They help produce a lot of nuclear weapons.
> SAH: Yeah. Right. My mother gave . . .
> NFPer: I think I might have a little Amnesty International sticker that might cover that [small GE trademark] up for you.

This encounter illustrates that consumption of particular types and brands of products are considered personal identity statements. The activist being interviewed attempted to assist the researcher by bringing his personal identity statements into line with a peace movement identity. This case suggests that "political correctness" amounts to what is perceived to be a harmonious alignment between personal and collective identities. That is, to be "pc" is to present a personal identity that is seen as being consistent with understandings of the movement's and SMOs' collective identities.

Whereas the foregoing exemplifies a veteran activist guiding a novice toward "politically correct" consumption practices, assisting the neophyte to become aware, data from our studies are filled with activists' reconstructions of personal everyday events that were imputed to have far-reaching political significance in terms of peace and justice. For instance, an NFP woman, self-identified as "comfortable, middle class," talked about becoming a parent:

> I'd say that I started to form my views on peace and justice when I had my first son. I had been a housewife. I felt I had to worry about managing the household and didn't find time to worry about war or racism or sexism. I wasn't happy about Vietnam, I thought racism was bad, and I even had a little feminist consciousness, even though I'd develop a deeper understanding of that later. But these weren't things I thought about for any length of time. That changed after I had [son]. I started to think about the war. I thought I wouldn't want my son to die in that war or any war. Then I thought most mothers must feel the same. That's what really started me to thinking about peace issues.

Here, again, a significant, single event was imputed to have altered consciousness. A personal life occurrence was claimed to be the force that inspired a "becoming aware" experience. Also, personal identity claims were made in relation to the social identities of housewives and mothers. This woman implied that personal identities of peace activist and mother complemented one another and were consistent with the values and beliefs of the peace movement. This "personal is political" report suggests how activists, in a post hoc reconstructive fashion, use narratives to demonstrate alignment between their extramovement personal identities and collective movement identities.

Activists also use "personal is political" reports to communicate other kinds of identity alignments besides personal and collective affiliations. To illustrate, on the eve of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, a group of peace activists gathered in the basement of a Unitarian church solely to provide emotional and psychological support for each other. During the vigil, participants were encouraged to share their feelings about the impending war. An

NFP man, who was a church leader and proprietor of an alternative day care, reported,

> Today I put my children down for a nap. . . . It was peaceful. The sun was shining in through my window. [After each sentence he paused for breath; he had tears in his eyes, he struggled to remain in control, to prevent his voice from breaking.] I was laying in the sun. It was quiet [big sigh]. As I laid there, I thought how my government's military was in a place very far away [long pause, head down, looking at his folded hands]. I thought that my home is in no danger of being bombed. My children are in no danger. And I thought maybe some mother or father in Baghdad or somewhere outside of Baghdad was laying their children down to sleep. What were their thoughts? Could they feel as secure? My government's military is making them live in fear. [By this time, he was staring toward the ceiling with tears on his cheeks.] Their homes could be bombed. Their children, themselves, and their loved ones could be killed. I share their fear and anxiety. I felt angry. . . . In the spirit of trying to understand others, I offer this prayer to Allah [in Arabic with an English translation at the end].

This narrative communicated how a mundane everyday activity— putting children down for a nap on a sunny January afternoon— helped this activist to become aware of the human suffering caused by war. Stories such as this one not only communicate individual empathy and implicitly attribute a compassionate character to the sponsoring SMO, but they also align personal, collective, antagonist, and victim identities. The teller imputed and then claimed to share the trepidation of those innocents who might be killed, thereby suggesting that his personal identity was aligned with the war's potential victims. Furthermore, this story implied that the SMO to which the man belonged was firmly on the side of innocent victims of war and opposed to the U.S. military. This story essentially aligned the teller's personal, the SMO's collective, and victims' identities and opposed them to an antagonist identity, the U.S. military.

GUIDE NARRATIVES

In addition to stories that focus on ingroup/outgroup relations, disillusionment experiences, atrocities, politicization of the per-

sonal, there are accounts that illustrate how participants be-
came aware, active, and committed with the guidance of others.
These tales take a variety of forms. Overall, though, they explain
how a significant individual acted as a mentor for the activist.
One variety emphasized guidance offered from movement stars
via books and formal lectures. An NFP woman, who character-
ized herself as a "liberal turned peace activist," related this "star
as a guide" story:

> A turning point for me was hearing Helen Caldicott speak when
> she came here. I have always been liberal politically and was
> active. I had worked as a volunteer for [liberal Democratic
> candidate]. I had never connected with disarmament issues
> partly because I was mystified by all the technical jargon and I
> wasn't sure anything could be done about nuclear weapons and
> the arms race. I thought the experts probably knew best. Then
> Helen Caldicott came. I went out of curiosity. Some friends of
> mine said that she was good. Listening to her I understood why
> we couldn't leave [arms control] up to the experts. She also
> showed me that something could be done and convinced me
> that I could do it.

This story suggests that enhanced awareness and activism
were induced by Caldicott's guidance. Moreover, this account
points to an identity transformation that resulted in an alignment
with the collective identity of the FREEZE movement. Others
suggested that books written by movement personalities had
similar results.

Besides movement stars, personal acquaintances, friends,
and relatives were depicted as guides to becoming aware and
becoming active. Sometimes, these relationships were sought
out, as in the cases of conscientious objectors who contacted
religious counselors. However, activists' stories often sug-
gested that guides emerged from preexisting networks, as
illustrated by the following guide narrative offered by a church
leader and parent:

> My cousin changed my thinking on peace issues quite a bit. She
> had been involved with the FREEZE for awhile. Whenever we
> got together, she would eventually tell me about her views of this
> problem or that. She wasn't obnoxious about it. It wasn't like she
> was trying to recruit me or anything. I'd ask what was she up to

and she told me about her peace work, that's all. After a while, I started to absorb some of the facts she was giving me. Her view made sense to me. I started to read some of the things she would talk about. Eventually I was convinced that something had to be done [about nuclear arms], but I wasn't sure what yet.

In accounts like this, awareness was facilitated by a guide already connected to the peace movement or a particular SMO (see Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980).

In other stories, the guide was neither a celebrity nor a friend but, rather, an acquaintance from a chance encounter. An Austin Nuclear Freeze activist who later ran for Congress on a peace platform, for instance, recounted how the seeds of her movement career were sewn by one such brief encounter:

The thing that triggered it for me, I was in London and I met a Quaker woman from New York who was pretty old, like about 75. And she said nuclear war really is a possibility. And that was the summer that those accidents had happened, those computer chip accidents. So then on the plane on the way home I read about Presidential Directive 59, and then I thought about it for a whole year. And then I finally got it together to go out and do something.

These tales claimed that a single individual served as a connection to a collectivity or to subsequent activism. Occasionally, this connection to a guide went beyond becoming aware or active. In the NFP study, a well-respected staff person, Philip Henderson (pseudonym), was the topic of several stories that credited him for the teller's commitment to that SMO:

Philip Henderson has had more of an impact on my life than anybody or anything. . . . He is just a fascinating individual. . . . Philip is just incredible. I don't think that he works at relating to a person. He can truly relate to anyone at any level any place any time anywhere. He has the ability to pull people together to resolve conflicts. He can bring any group to consensus. . . . Philip's knowledge on issues is just incredible. . . . I was involved in the low-level radioactive waste issue before Philip and much more involved and longer. And halfway through he knew stuff I still don't know. Technical stuff. . . . Philip really puts the effort into everything to understand it clearly. Incredible. He gets along with everybody. And he works hard. . . . For me, Philip

is the personification of NFP. . . . When he goes, well, people
won't quit [NFP regional chapter], but I bet many won't be as
involved as they have been.

Such stories tend to focus more on the charisma of an individual
than on ideology or issues. These guide narratives recount how
activists became aware, active, and committed. Further, they
imply that the activists' personal identities are, in part, aligned
with a collective identity via their relationships with charismatic
leaders. These guide narratives are related to micromobilization
concerns in that they recount individuals' motives for sustaining
or enhancing participation, thereby objectifying those rationales
and making them accessible for other potential or current ad-
herents (see Benford 1993b).

WAR STORIES

The final kind of identity talk is the war story. War stories differ
from atrocity tales in that the former focus on the accomplish-
ments of heroes and heroines faced with hostile opposition or
conditions whereas the latter concentrate on the "evil" deeds of
villains and the "heinous" results of violence and injustice.
Although not exclusively so, war stories are primarily about
becoming committed (see Kanter 1968). War stories typically
recount extraordinary personal sacrifices, bizarre events, and
monumental occasions. When told widely and with great rapid-
ity, war stories are bases for the construction of local heroes,
heroines, and sacredlike histories (Hunt 1991). War stories are
instrumental in micromobilization processes in that they provide
activists with verbal demonstrations of how a "model" peace-
maker becomes committed.

Some war stories explain how the teller made unusual sacri-
fices for the cause or encountered extreme danger. This kind of
war story often suggests that those experiences led to en-
hanced awareness and greater commitment. A former member
of Ground Zero, a Northwest-based antinuclear group, re-
counted an extreme sacrifice, a high-risk war story about civil
disobedience. The teller described how his group faced a life-
threatening situation while trying to prevent a Trident subma-

rine from entering a harbor in Puget Sound by blocking the submarine's path with a small boat:

> A scene I witnessed in the Lizard of Woz [a boat] was that of Dawn and Dave Miller [pseudonyms] saying repeatedly to a Coast Guard officer, holding a pistol to Dave's back, that they loved him. I joined them in that, and we said together the Lord's Prayer while kneeling by the officer. Did we love our Coast Guard brother deeply enough? Not enough to disarm him—perhaps enough to prevent a shooting. The pistol in Dave's back was cocked and the finger on its trigger shaking. Had the trigger been pulled, I believe Dawn would even then have loved the Coast Guard officer.

This story was used to illustrate the extent to which "model" activists commit themselves to attaining a nuclear-free world through Gandhian-styled nonviolent resistance. The narrator claimed implicitly that Dawn represented a paragon for other like-minded activists because she would have loved the Coast Guard officer even if he had killed her husband.

Other tellers of war stories focused on "lessons" learned from their activities. One activist who had burned his draft card during the Vietnam War told of the long-lasting consequences of his act:

> That was very formative, I guess, in who I was in the whole process. I burned the card in '69. Then going through those value clarifications or actually shaping them in my early 20s. Sorting through those kind of personal decisions still pretty much influence my global values. The things that I sorted out then have carried through the consequences to give a pretty good picture of why what I did then and what I do now. . . . In the long haul, it was good. It felt good. It was affirming. I was glad to get out of jail and all that. But the basic experience of taking the time and making those decisions for myself and following through the consequences and being able to handle the social and institutional pressures, basically, I came out of it feeling pretty positive about myself. I developed self confidence. And the values still seem to be true after I went through that experience.

This particular war story suggests that enduring values, beliefs, a sense of commitment, and high self-esteem emerged from his experience. Stories of this sort assist micromobilization by

providing other adherents with models of commitment and images of intrinsic rewards that accompany daring feats. Several activists who were familiar with this individual's draft resistance story asserted that this experience gave him the "credentials" for being a central leader. Further, war stories reinforce the notion that "commune" experiences, the fusing of personal and collective identities, can have positive influences upon an individual (Kanter 1968).

Not all war stories focused on spectacular occurrences, though. Some of these accounts directed attention toward the valor of mundane activism. Among themselves, participants admitted that the overwhelming majority of movement activities tended to be flat dull. Exciting and notable events were rare. Most of the things that movement actors did were remarkably forgettable, even for those involved. However, activists often told war stories about the boring and tedious aspects of their endeavors. For example, one NFPer with a reputation for organizing and accomplishing routine organizational chores reflected on her experiences phoning members and asking them to donate money:

> For several days each year at this time, a group of us call the membership and beg for money. Calling people I know is not so bad, but I don't like calling people I don't know very well. It's just uncomfortable. Some people say they're the opposite. They like calling people they don't know and hate calling people they know. . . . Another thing is that calling isn't a hot time. You know, it's pretty dull stuff. You know [pretending to talk into a phone]— "Hello, this is Joe Smith calling for NFP. How are you doing this evening? Good, glad to hear it. Did you know that NFP has been real busy this year and we don't have enough money to be that busy? If you could see your way clear, we are asking for a donation of $25 this evening." You get the picture. Routine. Dull. Repetitive. But I have to hand it to us. We get the job done— boredom, loathing, and all. And people give. And we certainly can use the money.

This account exemplifies mundane war stories that recount how activists, faced with the routines of organizing, persevere to achieve some valued end. A general motif is that the interests of individuals are sacrificed for the good of the collectivity.

A subcategory of war stories are narratives that deal with becoming weary or burning out. In these tales, the potential hazards of activism are central. Burnout stories can be characterized as accounts of heroes and heroines struggling against impossible odds and finally tiring from the strain but not forsaking the cause. One longtime NFP leader reported,

> I'm burned out and frustrated. I took this job with a consensus of a bunch of people to organize progressive people in the state, and that consensus is less and less there.

As this account suggests, burnout tales are told to express certain emotive conditions (e.g., frustration, strain, and lethargy). Also, this particular example implies that burnout stories often contain disillusionment elements—"I took this job with a consensus, and now I find that it really is not there."

Burnout tales often emphasized activists' need for a rest while affirming their commitment to the movement, as illustrated by the story of a former female NFP activist who decided to drop out:

> I've lost energy. I'm not energized like I was. The meetings, the sacrifices I've made, no evidence of progress, all that—it adds up. It wears on you until you're burned out. I just need a break. I need to get in touch with myself. I'll still be involved but not like I am now. I still believe what we're doing is important and that we do make progress, painfully slow progress. I'll probably get involved again later on, I don't know, but for now I need a change.

Here the teller claimed that the rigors of activism led to a loss of energy and fatigue, without distancing his personal identity from the group's collective identity.

Additionally, in SMO-sponsored contexts, war stories are particularly useful for accomplishing micromobilization goals. At a gathering of 21 people who were preparing to do civil disobedience for the first time, a Texas Mobilization for Survival activist related her story:

> And in the summer of '80, we, through a myriad of strange circumstances, got arrested for holding a press conference in front of the Texas Utilities' corporate headquarters in downtown Dallas. And it was not a civil disobedience, it was an unexpected

arrest. And it was myself and another man. And I found myself in the downtown city jail of Dallas. And the 7 hours I spent in the jail were probably some of the most enlightening and most educational moments of my life by seeing what our American system does to people who are poor and of color. I was the only Anglo woman in the cell with Blacks and a few Chicanas.

In this war story, the teller implied a broader drama that casts "our American system" as an antagonist and "people who are poor and of color" as innocent victims. Further, the teller aligned herself with the identified victims: "I was the only Anglo woman in the cell with Blacks and a few Chicanas." This war story also served as a guide narrative. The teller prepared the 21 civil disobedience initiates to search for enlightenment in their arrests. The veteran activist readied the novices for a "becoming aware" experience.

CONCLUSION

This article has furnished a general scheme for understanding how activists perceive and use identity constructs in their everyday interactions. By concentrating on identity stories, we have suggested that personal and collective identities are important components of activists' universes of discourse. Further, the analysis provided here indicates that identity alignment is a key theme of activists' talk and has crucial implications for understanding micromobilization processes.

Our focus on how identity talk influences micromoblization represents a significant departure from extant interpretations of movement actors and activities. A longstanding concern in movement research has been to "reveal" what kinds of individuals or personalities join movements (see Snow and Oliver Forthcoming). Objectivist explanations have claimed that micromobilization occurs because preexisting social, psychological, or biological structures create individuals predisposed to collective behavior. In short, identity has been seen as a static precondition for micromobilization. Advancing beyond objectivist perspectives, constructionists have pointed out that identi-

ties, both personal and collective, are *products* of social inter-action. Extant constructionist approaches, however, have failed to examine identities as sets of meanings that *produce* or foster collective actions.

The framework presented here views personal and collective identities that shape and are shaped by collective actions. Our emphasis on identity talk suggests that recruitment, commit-ment, and other forms of micromobilization activities produce sets of meanings that are used in personal and collective identity construction. These identity constructions then condition future micromobilization efforts. We have also emphasized that move-ment identity constructions are (re)produced and transformed via talk. Our approach extends extant constructionist perspec-tives in that it highlights more completely the dialectical relation-ship between identity and micromobilization. Our work here, however, is but a first step to understanding identity talk in SMOs. Our analysis suggests several avenues for possible future research.

For instance, although this article's focus has been on outlin-ing the kinds of identity talk in the U.S. peace movement, it has not considered the diversity of discourse within peace and justice SMOs. Benford (1993a) has documented that interpre-tations of extant conditions and other ideational concerns are often the grounds for inter- and intraorganizational disputes. Also, Hunt (1992) has shown that movements and SMOs con-sist of multiple articulations of collective identities. This line of research suggests that future inquiry into identity talk could examine the variation of particular stories within an SMO. As this relates to identity alignment, future analyses could investi-gate the various attachments that are made within an SMO. Research could focus on, for instance, how talk that aligns personal identity with a broad movement collective identity varies from discourses that stress SMO or SMO subgroup attachments. Given that some SMOs develop factions and splinter groups, identity talk research might be able to shed light on such dynamics.

Another interesting line of research concerns variations of identity talk across time. Scholars have argued that identities

are socially situated. That is, identities are temporally and context specific. Moreover, identities are reflections of worldviews and interpretations of extant conditions. Future research could examine how personal and collective identity talk varies from one period to the next, looking at changes in perceived conditions and the emergence of new worldviews. For example, what are the similarities and differences between identity talk from the U.S. Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, and post-Cold War periods? In terms of movement transformation, researchers could examine how identity talk is used to accomplish that. Taylor (1989) has advanced this kind of analysis by arguing that identity is a catalyst in the construction of movement abeyance structures.

Future research could also examine variations of identity talk between different movements and SMOs. Our data suggest that there are remarkable similarities across peace and justice SMOs in the United States. Indeed, our research indicates that the identity talk of SMOs based in Texas during the early 1980s was akin to the discourse employed by NFPers in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Perhaps further investigation with a wider array of data that encompass a greater number of peace SMOs from those two periods would reveal significant dissimilarities.

A related question concerns the variation between SMOs in different movements. Does the identity talk in, say, pro-life and pro-choice SMOs differ? Does the identity talk in religious and political reform SMOs differ? These kinds of questions have been suggested by Morris (1992). He has contended that movements revolving around ascribed status issues (e.g., Black civil rights and feminist movements) have fundamentally different approaches to identity politics, and presumably identity talk, than do movements emphasizing matters such as peace and justice, taxation, and spiritual enlightenment (see Gerlach and Hine 1970). This raises the question of saliency, an important factor that we left virtually unmentioned in our analysis for the sake of brevity (see Feldman 1979; McCall and Simmons 1978; Stryker 1968). Presumably, identity talk does not hold the same significance for all individuals or collectivities. What are the

correlates that make identity talk a relatively central or peripheral concern? We believe that this is a fascinating empirical question that requires further investigation.

Future empirical work could also look at factors that precipitate changes in individuals' identity talk. Throughout our analysis we have asserted that SMO-sponsored activities have an impact on individuals' perceptions of and talk about identities. Although we believe that our data support such a conclusion, rather modest field experiments could provide more conclusive evidence. For example, one design could look at activists' identity talk before and after a keynote speech, taking into account differences in the longevity of activism and other intervening factors. Similarly, research could be conducted to see how major events influence individuals' identity talk. For instance, it would be interesting to compare peace activists' identity talk before and after such events as the Gulf War, the murder of Archbishop Romero, or the killing of Kent State students.

In addition to these possibilities, the concepts of villain and victim suggest another kind of identity work that deserves further scrutiny. Movement activists talk about a variety of social types (Klapp 1962). In other words, they construct identities for villains, victims, heroes, heroines, saints, free riders, and others. How does identity talk about these social types relate to personal and collective identity alignments? We have touched on these concerns briefly, but further work is needed. Indeed, each identifiable social type warrants its own empirical investigation.

Finally, the most pressing issue raised by this article concerns how identity work relates to other kinds of collective action. Movement scholars who are interested in an organizational level of analysis have examined recruitment, participation, strategies, tactics, commitment, and many other activities that constitute the ongoing accomplishment of collective action. However, there has been no attention given to how identity talk influences recruitment, participation, strategy development, and so on. We believe our analysis has taken the first step in this direction, concentrating on identity alignment and micromobilization processes. More research is needed, though, to

demonstrate the analytical utility of the concept of identity talk. It has been our intention to encourage further development along these lines.

NOTES

1. Although mass psychology has been discounted generally, the work of Moscovici (1985; Graumann and Moscovici 1986) suggests a continued interest in "crowd mind," "mass psychology," and collective behavior.

2. By referring to the organizational level of analysis, we do not embrace the reified notion of organizations put forward by resource mobilization theorists (Benford 1993b). Rather, our understanding of "organization" is more akin to the interactionist concept of "social world" (Strauss 1978). Compare "social world" with Buechler's (1990) "social movement communities."

3. See Hunt (1992) for a more thoroughgoing review and critique.

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