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Publication date:
1997

Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal

Citation for published version (APA):

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The Shadow of a Hand

Jewish-Gentile marriages and Jewish suicides in the Netherlands 1936-1943

Wout Ultee
Ruud Luijks

WORC Paper 97.04.001/7
THE SHADOW OF A HAND

Jewish-Gentile marriages and Jewish suicides

in the Netherlands 1936-1943

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Paper prepared for the conference

Inequality in immigrant and multi-ethnic societies

of the Research Committee 28 on Social Stratification in

Tel Aviv (Israel), May 18-20 1997.

We are grateful to professor A.P.J. Abrahamse, drs. J.R. Nobel, and dr. J.M.E. Traag of Statistics Netherlands (CBS) for giving us access to their archives of suicide records. We thank Wil Arts, Hans Blom, Henk Flap, Cor Lammers, and John Goldthorpe for their comments on earlier versions of this paper. Address all correspondence to: Wout Ultee, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Nijmegen, P.O. Box 9104, 6500 HE, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. E-mail: W.Ultee@ma.w.kun.nl. In 1996/1997, Wout Ultee and Ruud Luijkx were Fellow-in-Residence at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS) in Wassenaar, where this contribution was completed. Antoon Hurkmans translated the Dutch original of the present paper into English.
Jewish-Gentile marriages and Jewish suicides in the Netherlands 1936-1943

'Things happened then which the hand even now, ten years on, still holds back from writing down. And yet they should be recorded.'

Abel Herzberg in 1950 about the suicide of Jews in the Netherlands in May 1940.

Early in April 1933, the German government decreed that only Aryans would be allowed to serve as civil servants, and in September 1935, it banned marriages between people of German blood and Jews. By mid-April 1933, it had laid down who did not count as Aryan, and in November 1935 it determined who was to be considered Jewish. After that, it took a host of measures specifically aimed at Jews. According to Hilberg (1961 and 1985: 53), the German rulers issued decrees in the same order in each of the countries they occupied: first, it was defined who was Jewish, then Jewish property would be confiscated, to be followed by the physical herding together of the Jews, and finally their annihilation.

Hilberg's thesis, that the extermination of the European Jews during World War II was the culmination of a process with fixed stages, raises several questions. These concern the number of phases (Botz 1988), their delineation (was the ban on intermarriage the first step in the phase of Jewish quarters and camps?), and the extent to which decrees that mark a particular phase achieved their purpose (Blom 1989). Because Hilberg's thesis has to do with measures taken by the authorities, questions about the people to whom these measures apply may easily be misdirected. People will resign themselves to, or resist, measures that have already been decreed; but they will also anticipate decisions the authorities have yet to take, or they will wait and see.
We explore the extent to which two phenomena were a consequence of expectations for the future. To this end, we study marriage between Jews and Gentiles in the Netherlands before the German occupier banned it in March 1942. Did people marry as long as, and because it was still possible, or did unmarried Gentiles avoid potential problems by associating less with Jews than they used to? We also try to ascertain which Jewish inhabitants of the Netherlands avoided the suffering that awaited them by committing suicide. How many Jews took their own lives in May 1940, when the Netherlands capitulated? Did suicides also increase in 1942 and 1943, when Jews were being deported? And did the Jews who ended their own lives in 1942 and 1943 resemble those who did so in 1940?

These questions not only add to the body of knowledge about the Netherlands in wartime, but are important for at least two other reasons. For one thing, they constitute a variation on a theme in organizational sociology. The Netherlands forms a state, a state is an organization, and when the Netherlands was occupied by Germany, it acquired leaders who wished to organize it differently. According to Lammers (1993: 9), organizing from the top never succeeds completely because, among other factors, organizing from the top always prompts organizing from below. In May 1940, Germany proved its military superiority, and by bombing Rotterdam showed the extent to which it was prepared to use brutal force against the Dutch. Moreover, the Dutch press had reported extensively about the measures Germany had taken against the Jews in its own country. So what did Dutch people do once military resistance had collapsed? What forms of organization from below then did emerge? In the present contribution, we study the extent to which certain people try to forestall certain measures. The repertoire of ‘tactics from below’ is more extensive than Lammers’s (1995: 105) list implies.

Secondly, our questions contribute to theoretical sociology. The question of intermarriage is important for Becker’s (1968) theory about the constraints of the law and people’s choices; the question of suicide may lead to improvements in Durkheim’s theory. Our explanations of intermarriage and suicide call upon expectations for the future. They do so because of general behavioral theories which invoke this factor (Homans 1974), and because of an arresting thought from Herzberg
Writing about suicide among Jews in the Netherlands in May 1940, Herzberg argued that National Socialism should be cursed precisely because no hand can be identified among its adherents and followers which brought about these suicides. The system’s automatism, in his view, was such that the shadow of a hand was enough.

### INTERMARRIAGE BEFORE IT WAS BANNED

The *Statistische Amt* in Frankfurt-on-the-Main pointed out in 1937 that the number of Jewish-Gentile marriages between 1931 and 1936 had gone down from 73 to 6. However, in 1933 the number was 81. That high figure, it was said, was the outcome of the decision of some people to beat the ban forbidding these marriages. But this explanation, it seems to us, fails. The numbers for 1934 and 1935 were 40 and 20, respectively; they do not accord with the hypothesis that the number of Jewish-Gentile marriages increases just before marriages between Jews and Aryans were banned. Besides, some people will not anticipate a ban on future Jewish-Gentile marriages without at the same time expecting measures against people living in existing ones. If these persons had taken precautions, the number of Jewish-Gentile marriages would have decreased before they were outlawed. This hypothesis, taking account of people’s anticipations over a longer period, contradicts the hypothesis which assumes that people only entertain expectations for the immediate future.

There is a memoir about life in the Netherlands under German occupation which corroborates the *while-it-is-still-possible-hypothesis*. Van der Beugel, the 1956-1958 Junior Foreign Affairs Minister, who was born in 1918, married on the 26th of November 1940. As he told the story (Van Genderen Stort 1993: 62), this was one of the last days it was possible to marry: ‘By December the Nuremberg Laws would come into effect in the Netherlands too, meaning that from that moment no mixed marriages would be allowed. A marriage with children gave me protection against a possible deportation.’

De Jong (1969-1991: V/1071) mentions figures (no sources are given) which support the *disadvantages-eventually-arise-hypothesis*. In the second week of March
Table 1 Jewish-Gentile intermarriage in the Netherlands in 1936-1943 (log odds ratios, the lower the log odds ratio, the more intermarriage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1937</th>
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<th>1939</th>
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<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rotterdam</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>∞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hague</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>∞</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rest of the Netherlands</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other municipalities &gt; 100,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>∞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities 50-100,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>∞</td>
<td>∞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities 20-50,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>∞</td>
<td>∞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities 5-20,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipalities &lt; 5,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>∞</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBS, unpublished data

1942, 11 Jewish-Gentile weddings took place in Amsterdam, and 22 in the third week. This rise occasioned an announcement in Het Joodsche Weekblad of March 27, 1942: 'The German authorities concerned have let it be known to us that Jews are forbidden to marry or have extramarital sexual relations with non-Jews.' However, according to De Jong, 74 marriage ceremonies involving Jews took place in the second week of March, and 283 in the third. So he rightly concludes that the number of intermarriages as a percentage of the total number of marriages involving Jews went down from 15 to eight.

Table 1 concerns the extent to which marriages performed in the Netherlands between 1936 and 1943 joined members of a Judaic denomination with people of other faiths. The figures have been broken down according to the size of the municipality in which they took place. This was done to enable a more stringent testing of hypotheses. If a thesis is true, it will be so for a country and for its parts. Besides, we wanted to find out whether people in larger municipalities had anticipated the occupier's measures at an earlier stage than those in smaller

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2 We try to find out here if the findings for Amsterdam in Uitte & Luijkk (1996) also hold for the rest of the Netherlands.
municipalities. And, finally, testing on figures for Dutch municipalities meant doing away with the fiction that people found their other halves in any which part of the Netherlands. Given the number of people who marry somebody from the place they themselves grew up in, the ‘marriage market’ is rather confined to village, town, or city of residence. So we did not, as De Jong did, calculate the number of Jewish-Gentile marriages as a percentage of all marriages involving Jews. If bride and bridegroom commonly grow up in the same municipality, the opportunities there to meet other people will be an important factor when it comes to tying the knot, and so Jewish people in a place with a lower percentage of fellow Jews will be more likely to marry Gentiles. And the municipalities of the Netherlands differed markedly in this respect: Amsterdam counted 9% Judaists, the Hague 2%, Rotterdam 1%, and all other Dutch municipalities taken together 0.5% (Rijksinspectie 1942: 22-23). A proper standard takes account of such differences.

In Table 1, for that reason, we present the extent of Jewish-Gentile marriages in particular municipalities by way of log odds ratios (cf. Ultee & Luijkx 1996). If there are a Jewish-Jewish marriages, b marriages of a Jewish man to a non-Jewish woman, c marriages of a Gentile man to a Jewess, and d Gentile-Gentile marriages, then the odds ratio is \((a/b)/(c/d)\) or, equivalently, \((a*d)/(b*c)\). The lower the log odds ratio, the higher is the extent of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage.

Table 1 shows that the more inhabitants a municipality has, the greater is the chance of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage. This is almost always the case when comparing the log odds ratios for Amsterdam (the largest city in the Netherlands) with those for Rotterdam and the Hague, the second and third largest city, and often also when the remaining municipalities in the Netherlands are broken down according to the number of inhabitants. There is, furthermore, limited evidence in favor of a pre-War trend towards more Jewish-Gentile marriages. The log odds ratios for 1939 are below those of 1936, but when we compare 1937 with 1939, the tendency only appears in the smaller municipalities.

According to the figures for 1939 and 1940, nothing at all changed for the Netherlands as a whole and Amsterdam, whereas the decrease in the log odds ratio for the Hague and the rest of the Netherlands was very small, and the increase for
Rotterdam somewhat larger. The observed decrease in the rest of the Netherlands is due to the smaller municipalities. For 1940, the while-it-is-still-possible-hypothesis does not really work. The data for 1941 show that the chance of Jewish-Gentile marriage declined everywhere. It declined again, of course, in 1942 and 1943. One might ask why there were any marriages between Judaists and people of other faiths in the Netherlands in 1943 at all. Possibly, the latter were of Judaic descent. The disadvantages-eventually-arise-hypothesis wins.

SUICIDE STATISTICS

When somebody in the first half of the 20th Century died in the Netherlands, a physician would issue a death certificate. If the death was not due to natural causes, the Office of Public Prosecution would determine whether it was due to accident, suicide, murder, or manslaughter. In the case of suicide, the prosecuting officer would fill in a card with (sometimes multiple choice) questions about the person and the act. One possible answer under the rubric 'denomination' was 'Judaic'—something different from what the German occupier deemed 'Jewish.' The Dutch central office for statistics, the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), collated these tick-cards into code-cards.3 They then used the latter for their annual figures on suicide. In this paper, we use tables that were drawn up, but not published, by the CBS on suicides according to gender and denomination. Besides, we made some tables ourselves. It so happens that the CBS-archives still contain the tick- and code-cards for suicides in the period 1936-1952, and we appreciate the CBS's permission to re-process them. From the tick-cards, we obtained the tables for Judaists in the period 1936-1943. (Later cards we ignored, because most Jews had been deported by the end of 1943). We used the data on marital status, date of death, gender, nationality, and municipality. The material obtained in this way is explored in what follows. Because of the portent of preliminary questions about the usefulness of these CBS cards on Judaists in wartime, we did not make a thorough analysis of all the data on all of the CBS cards.

3 Sometimes there are code-cards without the supporting tick-cards. However, the number of Judaist suicides on the tick-cards almost completely accord with those in the CBS tables.
When addressing questions about suicides among Jews in wartime Netherlands, the veracity of the CBS cards is a thorny issue. No conclusive answer is possible. The best one might do, is to compare data from different sources. Each source may have something wrong, of course, and sometimes two sources will contain the very same error.

**General Considerations**

After the German invasion, the Dutch civil service continued working as before. Suicide statistics were compiled on the same footing. The CBS cards for 1940-1943 would thus seem to be as useful as those for 1936-1939.

But then the question arises whether the CBS came to underestimate the number of Judaist suicides. After its anti-Jewish measures, the occupier had an interest in concealing suicides among Jews. However, we will see from the cards that Judaist suicide in 1940-1943 was higher than before. It is quite possible that the wartime cards give a much less complete account of the incidence of suicide among Judaists, but the occurrence of a rise is not in question.

On the tick-cards, the words used to describe the motives of Judaists to kill themselves not only include expressions such as `expulsion to Germany' and `fear for transport to Poland,' but also `persecution of Jews,' `had to go to labor-camp,' and `was going to be deported.' And as for descriptions of the location of the suicide, `German section of house of detention,' `Currency Schutzcommando building,' `Joodse Schouwburg' (six times)\(^4\) and `police station, arrested by Sicherheitspolizei' do not indicate a cover up operation either.

But it is true that later tick-cards were less complete. They would tell the month but not the day of the suicide, and its location would be described as `institution' or `hospital.' They were not signed by the prosecuting officer, but were, so a stamp tells us, the transcript of a punch card. These cards, we assume, stem from the compilation

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\(^4\) The `Joodse Schouwburg' was the theater in Amsterdam turned by the German authorities first into the Jewish Theater where Jews performed for Jews, and then into the place where arrested Jews were assembled before being put on the train to transit camp Westerbork.
of deaths after their cause, reported as a professional secret by the doctor issuing a death certificate. This tabulation uses an international classification, which also itemizes suicide. Of all the cards in the first quarter of 1942, 31% was not signed; the figures for the second, third, and last quarter were 20%, 20%, and 18%, respectively. The percentages for the 1943 quarters were 20, 24, 43, and 43. In other words, the percentage of unsigned cards does not increase when, in July 1942, the deportations actually begin.

The CBS cards tell us the denomination to which people belong. That information enables us to determine the number of suicides among Judaists. But it leads to the question of the extent to which these cards allow us to ascertain the number of suicides by people who were of Judaic ancestry according to the German definition, but did not belong to a Judaic denomination themselves. That question can be investigated independently. For several cards contain the information that a non-Judaic person who committed suicide had Judaic parents. Also, children who were not registered as belonging to a denomination but perished together with a Judaist may have been counted as Jewish. We have not yet, however, ascertained all the numbers involved.

To gauge the credibility of the CBS cards, we can, we believe, draw from official notices, local histories and personal memoirs. We now compare Jewish wartime suicides as recorded in these sources with the tick-cards.

**Four Municipalities**

Stamkot (1989: 63-64) tells of an optician from Gorcum who 'through his relatives in Germany had understood what Nazi doctrine meant, particularly for the Jews. In the first German night, he ended his own life and that of his family. The mortal remains of the five people were buried on the Judaic cemetery.' Kenens (1995: 418) went through the daily duty-reports of the Wassenaar constabulary, and came upon twelve suicides. One account mentions two female residents of a house on the

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5 The number of suicides according to the statistics of death causes, is higher than the number of suicides according to the public prosecutor.
Witterburgerweg who committed suicide after the Hausraterfassung had made an inventory of their home in June 1942. Beem (1974: 266) refers to the suicide of six members of one Jewish family in Leeuwarden in July 1942, when the rumor went around that Jewish men were going to be called up for a medical examination, to work in a labor-camp. Derksen (1988: 312-313) says that in the night of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} to the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of October 1942, all but three of the Jews in Meppel were taken from their homes. One couple was given a reprieve because of illness, but then committed suicide when they received the final summons. This man and his wife were buried on September 8, 1943. In all, these local histories refer to 25 suicides. Given these reports, how incomplete is the CBS?

According to the tick-cards, the number of suicides by Judaists from Gorcum, Leeuwarden, Meppel, and Wassenaar in 1940-1943 amounted to 17. When we compared dates of death and features such as gender, age, and profession, we found that 15 of these 17 suicides were accounted for in the local histories. That suggested that, in four Dutch towns combined, the CBS missed 10 of the 25 suicides by Judaic inhabitants. It also counted two suicides which were not recorded in local histories.

On further investigation, however, the completeness of the CBS cards proves to be a great deal more comprehensive. Two of the ‘missing’ suicides were not committed by residents of the four towns concerned, but by Judaists who came from other towns: their place of residence differed from their place of death. In a different case, when recording two suicides, the CBS determined that they did not involve Judaists but people of no denomination who descended from Judaists. Four suicides recorded in local histories turned up, not on CBS tick-cards, but on CBS code-cards. These concerned children who perished together with their parents. It seems to us that the incompleteness of the CBS data is, on the whole, apparent, and merely a consequence of their precision. The accuracy of the CBS cards is greater than the precision to be found in local histories.
Drownings

The two suicides the local histories recorded as by Judaic people but for which we could not find any CBS data, concerned drownings. This leaves us to believe that cases of suicide in which the identity of the victim is more difficult to establish have less chance of ending up on a CBS card. But we did not find much material to support that conjecture. Amsterdam, in 1942 and 1943, recorded many more drownings in the Amstel river and the canals criss-crossing its Jewish quarter than it did in 1940 in all of its waters combined.

Presser (1968: 276) pointed to requests for information about drowned people ‘of Jewish appearance’ in wartime issues of the Algemeen Politieblad. We did not manage to collate these and compare them with the CBS cards. However, there is a remarkable report which contradicts the hypothesis that drownings were unlikely to be recorded by the CBS. Official Notice no. 755 of 1943 concerns the drowned body of a ‘circumcised’ man. We found one CBS card that related the date and the municipality of this report, as well as the water in which the body was found. Under ‘denomination’ was entered ‘probably Jewish.’ Everything else on this card was blank. Apparently the drowned person remained unidentified. Yet the CBS made a tick-card.

Snoek’s (1990: 143) war diary relates a joint suicide. In the town where Snoek lived, two Jewish sisters sold butter, cheese, and eggs. At some time, they went into hiding. Later they were forced to leave this refuge. Looking for a new shelter, they rang at the door of acquaintances during the night. Having been refused, they drowned themselves. Their bodies, tied to each other, were washed ashore in a different municipality. We did not find any mention of this incident in the Algemeen Politieblad, but the two CBS cards devoted to it contain much more information than usual.

The two CBS cards concerned also contain uninvited information. A person filling out a card, was asked for the initials of the person who committed suicide. But the space reserved was usually left open. However, on the cards for the joint suicide

*We might have missed these cards because we did not go through the pile for non-Judaists thoroughly. The people involved had a place of hiding in a locality different from their original abode.*
which Snoek mentioned both first names and surnames are given in full. Reading these cards, one of us got the strong impression that the person who filled them in wanted to make sure that future readers would know how two locally well-known women had come to meet their end during World War II, and the definite idea that this person had been moved by their death as much as Snoek had been when noting it in his diary. Later, it occurred to us that this person could simply have been a civil servant who kept putting in his best efforts even during the occupation. Whatever the case may be, two CBS cards from 1943 about Judaic suicides by drowning were completed in a manner that was more than just accurate.

**Westerbork**

Yet, another hypothesis holds that the CBS badly recorded suicides in institutions which were directly under German control. One such institution was a camp in the Dutch municipality of Westerbork. It was created before World War II as a station for Jewish fugitives from Germany, and later was expanded by the German occupier into the main transit camp for Jews being deported from the Netherlands. Margules, a German-Jewish refugee who spent all of the war in Camp Westerbork, said: ‘We kept hoping, from week to week and from month to month, that the German regime would fall. On the other hand, many people were in despair .... Many people could not cope with the tensions anymore and committed suicide (Lindwer 1990: 145).’ The CBS has thirteen cards for Camp Westerbork. Is that ‘many?’

Hillesum spent a year in and out of Camp Westerbork, among other things helping in Camp Westerbork’s hospital. On August 24, 1943, she tells in a letter of a dying woman who swallowed some poison just before a transport was due (Hillesum 1983: 211). It is the only case of suicide in Camp Westerbork she mentions. We found no card for Camp Westerbork for that day, but did find two cards concerning women who died on September 9 and 13. Did the woman actually die on August 24, or could it have been later?

Mechanicus (1968: 15), a journalist who wrote not so much a diary as a chronicle, notes down on May 23, 1943, the first day of his journal: ‘Paid a visit to the camp doctor v.d.R. ... Told me that he had a case of attempted suicide today: mother
and two children. Intervened in time and tried to shore up the woman's mental state.

Number of suicides high: four a week on average. In the barracks I am in, a man of
about seventy tried to hang himself some six weeks ago. Just these past few days, the
eighty-year old mother of one of my friends committed suicide on arrival at
Westerbork, by taking the poison she had brought with her.' If this account is correct,
the CBS would seem to have missed many suicides. But it is not clear that the number
of four a week excludes suicides that were attempted but had failed. The tick-card on
a female suicide in Westerbork nearest to this date concerns April 18, 1943. And that
is too far back to account for 'these past few days.'

Mechanicus (1968: 155 and 222) reports two more suicides in his journal
ending February 28, 1944. September 13: 'This night, a 65-year old woman
committed suicide in my barracks.' We already referred to a card of that date. On
January 5, Mechanicus writes of an artiste who fled, leaving a suicide-note. The only
card for Westerbork in 1944 concerns a woman who died in January.

It is possible that the CBS counted the suicides that happened in Camp
Westerbork without these showing up as such. The Registry Office for Births and
Deaths in Camp Westerbork would register someone as resident of the town of
Westerbork once that person had been in the camp for six weeks (Lindwer 1990:
249). Suicides of people who had stayed there for less than six weeks may have led to
an unsigned tick-card giving a municipality other than Westerbork and stating
'institution' or 'hospital' as the location place where the suicide had taken place. We
found such a card for a woman who died on August 28, 1943.

Our comparisons call for systematic research into suicides by drowning, using
the Algemeen Politieblad, and into what happened in Camp Westerbork, using its
partially preserved archives. The degree of veracity of CBS tick-cards also becomes
apparent when, as we do below, they are actually made use of. Follow-up research
ought, of course, to include the CBS code-cards as well.

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7 Our translation remains closer to the Dutch original than the translation which appeared in 1968. There
is, for our purposes, a crucial difference between 'dezer dagen' and 'recently.'
JUDAIST SUICIDES IN 1940, 1942, AND 1943

Presser (1968: 14) asserts (without mentioning a source) that a figure of 150 for the number of successful suicides by Jews in May 1940 is not far from the truth. De Jong (1969-1991: III/450-451) says that it is ‘not known’ how many Jews then chose their own deaths. But he does refer to a few weak sources concerning parts of the Netherlands: in an interview with a member of the Jewish Council, the number of Amsterdam Jews who killed themselves was given as 128, and the Mayor of the Hague, De Monchy, wrote in his memoirs that 30 Jews committed suicide in his city. De Jong (1969-1991: VI/45) mentions that in July, August, and September 1942 Amsterdam saw 73 more suicides than in the same months of earlier years.

Warmbrunn (1963: 166, 302) estimates the number of Jewish suicides in the Netherlands in May 1940 to have been 200. He arrived at this number by comparing the number of CBS-recorded suicides in 1940 with the numbers for previous and subsequent years, and then attributing the difference almost wholly to the Jews who committed suicide in May 1940. However, a comparison between 1940 and 1942 assumes that the 1942 deportations had no impact whatsoever on the number of Jewish suicides during that year.

The historians just mentioned overlooked the findings of the sociologist Kruijt (1960: 196-197). After recounting the CBS cards, he arrived at a number of 388 suicides in the Netherlands in May 1940, of which 201 were ‘Jewish.’ He does not give the number of suicides by Judaists for May 1940. Neither does he mention the figures for the whole of 1940 or subsequent years. These annual figures are held in a cabinet at the CBS, and are presented in Table 2.

Years

Table 2 shows that the number of suicides among Judaists in the Netherlands in 1940 was eight times or 700% higher than the average over the period 1936-1939. Among the other inhabitants of the Netherlands, that number was 7% higher. In 1941, the number of Judaist suicides is 30% higher than the average over 1936-1939, while the number for the other residents is 18% lower.
Table 2  Suicides in the Netherlands 1936-1943 according to religious denomination; absolute numbers

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<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judaist</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBS, unpublished data

Judaist suicides for 1942 and 1943 concern a group of people who, between July 1942 and the end of 1943, were for the greater part deported from the Netherlands. For that reason, we calculated, for every month in 1942 and 1943, the ratio of the number of Judaist suicides in a particular month and the number of Judaists inhabitants of the Netherlands at the beginning of that month, and then summed ratios for all the months of one year.8 The number of suicides per 100,000 Judaists in 1936-1939 was 23 a year on average. This number was 195 in 1940, 31 in 1941, 213 in 1942, and 224 in 1943.

Months

In Table 3, we break the absolute numbers of Judaist suicides in the Netherlands in 1936-1943 down according to the month in which they took place, on the basis of our own9 count of the CBS cards concerned. We find 188 Judaist suicides in May 1940, a number that approaches Warmbrunn’s estimate and Kruijt’s count. The number of suicides among Judaists in Amsterdam in May 1940 was 96, in the Hague 29, and in Rotterdam 7 (if counted according to Judaic descent, we find 119 Jewish suicides in Amsterdam). Our figures for May 1940 are 30% higher than those of Presser.

8 If the number of Judaists is constant within a month, our calculating method gives the same result as the usual one, in which year-figures give rise to annual averages. We determine the number of Judaists in the Netherlands on January 1, 1942 to be 126,000 (Rijksinspectie 1942: 23). The monthly figures on deported persons which we have concern people of Judaic descent (Hirschfeld 1991: 162-163). We lowered them by a tenth (Rijksinspectie 1942: 23) to obtain the number of deported Judaists.

9 The numbers in CBS Tables 2 and 7 do not accord completely with those in the others. Our sources were sometimes incomplete, and we were more strict on the issue of membership of a Judaic denomination.
Table 3  Judaist suicides in the Netherlands 1936-1943 according to month, absolute numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1936-39 (average)</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own processing of CBS tick-cards

How many Judaists committed suicide in the various months of 1942 and 1943 when the post would deliver summonses, Jews were rounded up in the streets, and police dragged Jews from their homes? The first summonses were issued to Jews in Amsterdam. They received them on July 5, 1942. Razzias took place on July 14 and August 6 and 9. The first train from Amsterdam to Westerbork departed during the night of July 14-15. The Rotterdam deportations started on July 30, those from the Hague on August 18. There is no complete list of where the transports into Westerbork came from (De Jong 1969-1991: VI/5-34). By early September 1942, the Amsterdam police started to fetch Jews from their houses. That marked the second phase in the deportations. On the national day of collection, the 3rd of October 1942, 12,296 people arrived in Westerbork (De Jong 1969-1991: VI/226, 240). The third phase started in the Spring of 1943, presumably May (De Jong 1969-1991: VI/369, VII/270). Then Jews were deported for whom exceptions had been made on earlier occasions.

If fear of deportation drove people to suicide, there must have been peaks in the number of suicides in July and September 1942 and in May 1943. And, indeed, as
Table 4  Judaist suicides in the Netherlands in July-October 1942 according to week and municipality; absolute numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Amsterdam</th>
<th>The Hague</th>
<th>Rotterdam</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 5-11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 12-18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 19-25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 26-August 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2-8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6-15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 16-22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 23-29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 30-September 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 6-12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13-19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 20-26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 27-October 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 4-10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 11-17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 18-24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 25-31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing information on days:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own processing of CBS tick-cards

Table 3 shows, the first peak of 1942 occurred in July. It was equaled in September, and topped in October. The next peak occurred in April 1943. Going by these figures, we may perhaps say with more accuracy than De Jong when the last phase in the deportations started.
Table 4 shows a tally of the cases concerning Judaist suicides, taken by week and municipality, in the period from July up to and including October 1942. Amsterdam saw most suicides in the week from July 12 to 18, in the Hague there was a peak in the week starting September 27, and in Rotterdam and the rest of the Netherlands in the week of October 4. The one but highest number of suicides for Amsterdam was counted in the week of September 13, and for Rotterdam in the week of August 2, and for the rest of the Netherlands was in the week of August 23. We had expected a higher number for the Hague in the week of August 16.

**FIVE HYPOTHESES DERIVED**

In one sense, asking why suicides among Jews in the Netherlands increased when the country capitulated to Germany and Jews were being deported, amounts to laboring an obvious point. People were terrified. They were already so in the war days of May 1940, when it was rumored that the German occupier had at its disposal a list containing the names of Jews to be immediately arrested.

One can also try and dispose of the question with an appeal to Durkheim’s (1897) theory on suicide. According to one of its hypotheses, suicides decrease in times of war. An external threat causes ties among people to be stronger, and a greater degree of integration leads to fewer suicides. In the Netherlands between 1941 and 1944, the number of suicides among non-Judaists was lower than in previous years. But suicides among Jews increased. For that reason, Ultee, Arts, and Flap (1996: 117) argue that Durkheim’s hypothesis of political integration applied to countries that fought wars on the battlefield, while the war experience of the Netherlands after May 1940 was one of subjugation. The latter meant that Jews were excluded from the life of society, and their exclusion was much more severe than that of other citizens. That change in the political situation, entirely in line with Durkheim’s hypothesis of political integration, led to an increase in suicides among Jews.

This explanation is incomplete, though. Jews killed themselves before the occupier began to take measures against them. They acted out of fear or despair or in
depression. Durkheim’s hypothesis of political integration is to be replaced by the proposition that people who live in the expectation that the authorities will exclude them from society have a greater chance of committing suicide. Furthermore, we wish for an explanation that implies answers to a number of follow-up questions. Which Jews felt the most excluded and had the darkest picture of the future? Did the chance of suicide in May 1940 increase for all Jews equally, or was it greater among certain Jews? And what - the same question - about the time of the deportations?

In what follows, we derive several hypotheses. We assume, primarily, that people would rather choose to take their own lives than face a slow and gruesome death at the hands of others. They will do so because they wish to put an end to their suffering during a constant state of uncertainty. Some, perhaps, will do it to deny murderers the pleasure of killing, others may wish to affirm their conviction that, in this world, people ought to have their fate in their own hands. We were struck by the woman in Josepha Mendels’s 1948 short story Mirjam, who wanted to open the gas tap on the day summonses arrived for her, her husband, and their children, but was gently dissuaded from doing so by her husband who, in more peaceful times, used to say ‘things happen as they are bound to happen (Mendels 1988: 228-236).’ Our prime assumption will explain the changes in the number of suicides among Judaists between 1936 and 1943 if we also assume that, gradually, Jews began to fear the worst.

In deriving our hypotheses, we also use several subsidiary assumptions. For one thing, we take it that the only choice open to Jews was between suicide and being killed by others. We believe this a fitting simplification in view of De Jong’s (1969-1991: VI/252) statement that ‘from the summer of 1942 onward, the Jews should have felt the threat everywhere: threatened in their homes, threatened on their escape routes, threatened in their place of refuge ... and threatened on the streets.’ We also make assumptions about the balance between hope and despair in different groups of Judaists. These assumptions we believe plausible in view of the Hillesum diaries and

10 Riesenburger, who led the burial at Weissensee of Martha Liebermann on March 23, 1943, said (1960: 36): ‘Day in day out, numerous people were delivered to the cemetery who, exhausted in spirit, had chosen their own deaths over the horrendous pain, torture, and mistreatment.’
other memoirs. Testing them—if at all possible—is outside this paper's scope.

The Nationality-Hypothesis Derived

In January 1941, the German occupier decreed the registration of Jews. Of the 126,000 Judaists (as counted on the 1st of October 1941), 106,000 had the Dutch nationality. Of the 13,000 German Judaists, 11,000 had arrived in the Netherlands after January 30, 1933 (Rijksinspectie 1942: 24-25 and 84-85).

We now assume that, because many had lived under National Socialism before, the Jews without a Dutch passport would have felt more excluded from society after the Dutch capitulation than the Dutch Jews, and would have feared for the future more strongly. Besides, we suppose that Dutch Jews would have put greater faith in what was left of the Netherlands after the German invasion than Jews without a Dutch passport. Given the principle that the fear of being killed by others increases the chance of suicide, this means that the incidence of suicide among Judaists in 1940 should be lower among those who had a Dutch passport than among those who did not. As the anti-Jewish measures of the occupier took effect, the fear for the future among Dutch Judaists would increase and start to resemble that of the foreigners. In 1942 and 1943, the chance of suicide among foreign Judaists would exceed that among Dutch Judaists to a lesser extent than in 1940.

The Municipality-Hypothesis Derived

In the second derivation, we assume that, in the beginning, knowledge of what National Socialism had in store, and therefore fear of the worst, were more widespread among Jews in the three big cities than among Jews elsewhere, and that the latter felt more protected. Given our initial assumption that the fear of being killed increases the chance of suicide, we predict proportionately more suicides among Judaists in the big cities in 1940 than among Judaists elsewhere. Because Amsterdam, known at the time as the Jerusalem of the West, had a much larger proportion of Judaists than either the Hague or Rotterdam - a factor which may result in a stronger fear for the future among Amsterdam Jews - we expect a relatively higher number of
suicides in 1940 among Amsterdam Judaists than among those from the Hague or Rotterdam.

During the deportations, too, the fear among Jews in the big cities will have been greater than elsewhere. The razzias and unannounced house calls in this city will have seen to that. However, we assume that rumors about these, and about the camps in the Netherlands and Poland, will have spread. In 1942 and 1943, the chance of suicide among Judaists in the big cities will have surpassed that among Judaists elsewhere to a lesser extent than in 1940.

**The Social-Class-Hypothesis Derived**

Now, we use Hilberg’s thesis. In 1940, Jews in public office feared dismissal and Jews with capital the loss of their assets. These people, more than other Jews, were afraid of being taken hostage and, finally, murdered. However, in 1942, the suspicion rose that deportation to camps in eastern Europe meant slave labor for all, and death for many. In 1942, the occupier also terrified Judaists with lowly jobs. In 1942 and 1943, suicide among working-class Judaists will be relatively more frequent than it was in 1940.

**The Gender-Hypothesis Derived**

If suicides in 1940 were prevalent among those Jews who feared to lose their capital or their office, the chance of suicide among Judaist men will have been greater than among Judaist women, and the rate of increase in suicide between 1936-1939 and 1940, will have been greater among males 1940 than among females. Jewish women, after all, only rarely occupied high positions.

In 1942 and 1943, Jews expected to end up in labor camps. This means that Judaist women’s picture of the future was bleaker than that of their menfolk, and blacker than in 1940. After all, men, before the war, were more accustomed to hard labor than women. In 1942 and 1943, the suicide figure for female Judaists will resemble that for male Judaists more than in 1940.
Table 5  Judaist suicides in the Netherlands 1936-1943 according to the
nationality of the deceased; absolute numbers and ratios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1936-39 (average)</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dutch nationality</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Dutch nationality</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio Dutch/non-Dutch suicides</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own processing of CBS tick-cards

**The Marital-Status-Hypothesis Derived**

Finally, Judaists who were unmarried, divorced, or widowed in 1942 and 1943, will have looked to the future with less sense of security than married Judaists. Married Judaists thought they would be able to rely on each other in the camps, and so were less fearful of the future. Jews without such bonds expected less support. Despair of the future will, between 1940 and 1942, increase the chance of suicide among Judaists of whatever marital status, but more so among the single, divorced, and widowed than among married people.

These\(^{11}\) are the hypotheses we derive here. Now for the findings.

**FINDINGS**

**The Nationality-Hypothesis Tested**

Table 5 breaks down the absolute numbers of Judaist suicides according to nationality. Assuming that, among Judaists inhabitants in the Netherlands, the proportion of those with and without Dutch passports remained constant between 1940 and 1943, the nationality-hypothesis may be tested by the ratio between the numbers of Dutch and non-Dutch Judaist suicides in that period. However, the 1936-

\(^{11}\) Kwiet (1984: 164) argues that in Germany suicide was particularly prevalent among older Jews. We will bypass this hypothesis for now. In recent Dutch figures, at least, a connection between age and suicide is almost wholly absent if marital status is held constant.
Table 6  Judaist suicides in the Netherlands according to municipality of residence of the deceased; absolute numbers and ratios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1936-39 (average)</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hague</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotterdam</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the Netherlands</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio suicides three big cities/rest of the Netherlands</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own processing of CBS tick-cards

1939 CBS cards for suicides among Judaists without a Dutch passport partly concern Jews with an official place of residence in Germany, who took their own lives while staying in a Dutch hotel, such as the Victoria Hotel opposite the main railway station in Amsterdam (records of two such suicides). Did these persons fear being expelled to Germany?

According to the nationality-hypothesis, the ratios for 1942 and 1943 should be higher than for 1940. This is confirmed. On October 1, 1941, 20,000 foreign and 106,000 Dutch Judaists resided in the Netherlands (Rijksinspectie 1942: 24-25). So, there were 430 suicides per 100,000 foreign Judaists and 168 suicides per 100,000 Dutch Judaists in 1940. In that year, the suicide chance among foreign Judaists was greater than among those who were Dutch citizens.

If not having the Dutch nationality increased the chance of suicide among Jews in 1940, then that chance should also be higher among Dutch Jews with German relatives. The suicide of a family in Gorcum, which we referred to, confirms this: it had relatives in Germany. However, the CBS cards do not contain the necessary data to test this part of the hypothesis in detail.

The Municipality-Hypothesis Tested

Table 6 shows the absolute numbers of Judaist suicides for Amsterdam, the Hague,
Rotterdam, and the rest of the Netherlands in the period 1936-1943. The ratios between suicides in the three big cities and those in the rest of the Netherlands show that the increase in Judaist suicides between 1936-1939 and 1940 was larger in the former than in the latter. This corroborates the municipality-hypothesis. That hypothesis also implies a decrease in the overrepresentation of the big cities between 1940 and 1942. Instead, Table 6 shows an increase. But the overrepresentation decreased between 1942 and 1943.

The municipality-hypothesis also compares the suicide chance among Amsterdam Judaists with that among Judaists from the Hague and Rotterdam. According to the Rijksinspectie (1942: 22-23), 73,000 Amsterdammers belonged to a Judaic denomination. The numbers for the Hague and Rotterdam were 12,000 and 7,000, respectively, and 34,000 lived elsewhere. So, Amsterdam saw 205 suicides per 100,000 Judaists in 1940, the Hague 317, Rotterdam 143, and the rest of the Netherlands 71. The high figure for the Hague contradicts the municipality-hypothesis.

The Social-Class-Hypothesis Tested

This disconfirmation of the municipality-hypothesis cannot be undone by invoking the nationality-hypothesis and arguing that this city housed relatively more foreign Jews. The pertinent percentages for Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague were 13, 11, and 12, respectively (Rijksinspectie 1942: 6). On the other hand, we think it plausible that the percentage of highly-placed Judaists in the Hague, the seat of government, was higher than that in Amsterdam.

This brings us to the social-class-hypothesis. Because the ‘profession’ rubric on the CBS cards has not yet been processed, we are unable to test this hypothesis alongside the other ones. However, one cannot help being struck by titles on the 1940 cards such as ‘public official-councilor,’ ‘pharmacist,’ ‘banker,’ ‘surgeon,’ ‘professor,’ ‘engineer,’ ‘lawyer,’ ‘jeweler,’ ‘Member of Parliament,’ ‘eye-surgeon,’ ‘dentist,’ and ‘veterinary surgeon,’ while the occupations registered on cards for 1942 and 1943 mention ‘pharmacist’s assistant,’ ‘diamond cutter,’ ‘former clerk at the PTT,’ ‘herring street-trader,’ ‘housekeeper,’ ‘rest home housekeeper,’ and ‘cattle
Table 7  Judaist suicides in the Netherlands 1936-1943 according to gender of the deceased; absolute numbers and ratios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1936-39 (average)</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio male/female suicides</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBS, unpublished data

dealer.’ That amounts to a measure of support for the social-class-hypothesis.

The Gender-Hypothesis Tested

Table 7 breaks down the absolute numbers of Judaist suicides in 1936-1943 according to gender. Before the War, slightly more Judaist males than females took their own lives; in 1940, that difference became greater. In 1942 and 1943, the number of suicides among female Judaists is 30% higher than among their male co-religionists. These findings confirm the gender-hypothesis.

The Marital-Status-Hypothesis Tested

In times of peace, suicide figures will be lowest among married people, followed, in ascending order, by those for unmarried, widowed, and divorced people. To obtain this result for unmarried people, though, a researcher must restrict the investigation to the adult population: many unmarried people will, after all, be too young to take their own lives. This presents us with a difficulty: since in 1940-1943 a number of Judaist parents killed their children as well as themselves, a number of tick-cards for 1940 concern Judaists of 18 years or younger. Anyway, we need population figures, broken down after gender and marital status combined, for Judaists over a certain age.

For Judaists inhabitants of the Netherlands in 1941, the cross-classifications of gender and marital status, and of gender and age are known (Rijksinspectie 1942: 26-
27 and 50). We proceeded under the pretense that everyone under the age of 18 was single, and that married, divorced, and widowed people were all born before 1923. We lowered the population figures for 1942 and 1943, to take account of deportations of Judaists from the Netherlands. We assumed that deportation did not depend on marital status, gender, denomination, or age. On the basis of these population figures, we converted the absolute numbers of Judaist suicides in the upper half of Table 8 into the numbers per 100,000 in the lower half.

We will ignore the figures in Table 8 for divorced people. The total number of divorced people, as well as the number of pre-war and even wartime suicides amongst them, is too small. The remaining figures for 1936-1939 show the usual picture for the most part. The relative number of suicides among widowed Judaists is the highest, that for married Judaists the lowest. The figure for single Judaist women is somewhat too low.

Table 8 shows that in 1940-1943 suicide among single Judaist men is lower than among married ones. We do not know if this is a repercussion of a poor estimate of the number of unmarried Judaist men over the age of 18, or points to a substantive phenomenon. The suicide figure for single Judaist women, however, is much higher during the war years than for their married counterparts. In what follows, we will also disregard single Judaist men.

Table 8 shows the suicide figure for Judaist single women, married men (women) and widowers (widows) in each year of the war to be higher than in the period 1936-1939. The one exception is Judaist married women in 1941. If we measure increases in the suicide rate by subtracting figures, we see that the increase between 1936-1939 and 1940 was higher among widowers (widows) than among married men (women), and higher among single than among married women. This confirms the marital-status-hypothesis.

12 Numbers are as follows. Judaist men (women) born after 1922: 13,182 (12,781); born in or before 1922 and unmarried: 13,571 (14,741); married: 31,280 (29,589); divorced: 754 (1,299); widowed: 2,364 (6,348).

13 We put the number of Judaist men (women) in 1941 and earlier at 61,154 (64,759), the average number for 1942 at 57,484 (60,873), and for 1943 at 31,800 (33,674). See also note 8 on page 14.
Table 8  Judaist suicides in the Netherlands 1936-1943 according to gender and marital status; absolute numbers and numbers per 100,000 of the respective Judaists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1936-39 (average)</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>absolute numbers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unmarried</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>widowed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unmarried</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>widowed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>numbers per 100,000</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unmarried</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>170</td>
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<tr>
<td>married</td>
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<td>310</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>255</td>
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<tr>
<td>widowed</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unmarried</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>widowed</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own processing of CBS tick-cards

Table 8 also makes clear that, between 1940 and 1942, the suicide figure for married men went down, for married women, it increased, for widowers, it increased more, and for widows even more than that. Comparing the data for 1942 and 1943, we again see a higher increase among widowers than among married men, and a higher increase yet again among widows than among married women. Between 1940 and 1942, the increase among single Judaist women is greater than among married ones; the increases between 1942 and 1943 are more or less the same. This also supports the marital-status-hypothesis.
The Factors Gender and Marital Status Combined

Table 7 showed a higher incidence of suicide among Judaist women than among Judaist men in 1942 and 1943. For the suicide rate among women to be higher than among men, is highly uncommon. Do we find a higher suicide figure for women than for men in all three categories of single, married, and widowed Judaists?

According to Table 8, the figure for Judaist widows in these years exceeds that for Judaist widowers, and that for single female Judaists that for Judaist bachelors. The figure for married Judaist women is higher than the one for married Judaist men in 1943, but lower in 1942.

Knowing that suicide among widowed Judaists is relatively high, how many Judaist widows and widowers are there then in the population? The former number turns out to be three times the latter. So, the higher suicide figure for female Judaists relative to their male co-religionists in 1942 is due not only to the higher suicide figure for widows as compared with that for widowers, but also to the fact that there were far more widows than widowers.

CONCLUSION

In 1776, Adam Smith argued that free markets work like an invisible hand. The individual pursuit of money rewards which they elicit would, in his opinion, lead, as an unintended outcome, to a prosperous commonwealth. According to Heilbroner (1953), free markets are a relatively recent invention. Before the market system took hold, people would make a living in a manner ordained by tradition or organization. People would work, not according to their own desires but as tradition demanded, because their family and community would make them: hands bestowing honors, or showering humiliations. The guiding hand of an organization would see to it that personal interests did not interfere with higher ends.

Against this, Weber (1920) maintains that modern times are characterized by free markets and formal organizations. Lammers argues that even formal authority

14 See note 12 on page 25.
provokes organizing from below. People will not submit to being led, even then. Herzberg suggests that a guiding hand sometimes casts its shadow before it. In this contribution, we viewed the Netherlands under German occupation as an organization with new management. We also assumed that the members of an organization do not just obey, or disregard management’s directives. Subordinates also anticipate decisions yet to be taken by their superiors, or they remain in expectation of them. The harder the hands of the leaders of an organization—so we proposed—the more its members will be inclined to expect worse to come, to extend their horizon of expectation, and to act accordingly.

We did find support for this proposition. Before the German occupier actually banned Jewish-Gentile marriages, their number went down. Before the German occupier took economic measures against Jews, many of them committed suicide. When Jews were being deported, their fear for the future became so much stronger that we find higher suicide figures for 1942 than for 1940, which became higher still in 1943. The shadow cast by the hands that ruled the Netherlands was, indeed, a long one.

In this contribution, we investigated both intermarriage and suicide. To combine questions about two phenomena may be unusual for a contribution full of numbers. However, current hypotheses, such as the one from Hilberg to which we referred earlier, often address questions about several phenomena. But a comparison of Hilberg’s thesis with one put forward by Bogardus, demonstrates that such combined questions require careful prior consideration. Hilberg’s four phases, occurring in fixed order, are identification, expropriation, isolation, and extermination. The ban on intermarriage, in his opinion, marked the beginning of phase three (Hilberg 1961 and 1985: 158-159). Bogardus (1925) put statements to inhabitants of the United States to find out the extent to which they were prepared to accept people of a certain foreign nationality into their country, their place of work, their neighborhood and their family. The distance to the various foreign nationalities differed, but for each nationality acceptance into the country was most widespread and acceptance into the family least common. People agreeing to the latter would always assent to the former. In view of Bogardus’s finding that foreigners are more likely to be accepted into someone’s
country than into someone’s family, it is odd that Hilberg sees the ban on mixed marriage as the beginning of the third phase. Intermarriage is the first thing people will avoid.

Though our report on intermarriage was considerably shorter than the one on suicide, we do consider questions about marrying outside one’s own circle to be of great importance. Questions about intermarriage, just as questions about suicide, probe into the distance or closeness between members of a society, the problem of cohesion which is a major issue for sociology. We agree with Fein (1979: xv-xvi) that questions about the relations between Jews and Gentiles come into their own for times when society as a whole is under threat from outside. So our contribution concerned the Netherlands under German occupation. For that matter, intermarriage has been considered an index of societal cohesion before. For the period between the sixties and the eighties, Kalmijn (1993) found a gradual increase in intermarriage between blacks and whites in the United States, and Botev (1994) an increase in intermarriage in Yugoslavia only among certain ethnic groups.

The theses by Bogardus and Hilberg mainly concern reactions to events that have occurred, not so much actions that forestall events that are expected. This contribution dealt with pre-actions, rather than re-actions. With the distinction between reactions to measures already taken and actions that anticipate decisions yet to be taken, we undid the question of whether suicide is a form of resistance (Kwiet 1984: 137). Resistance is a reaction to measures already decreed, while suicides by Jews under National Socialism are an anticipation of a situation to come. Of course, fear of that situation is prompted by increasingly severe earlier measures.

Our theory on intermarriage shows that Becker’s (1968) theory on the consequences of legal constraints does not go far enough. In 1789, Jeremy Bentham thought that improved detection and heavier penalties will lead to a greater respect for the law; Becker holds that it is not the actual but the perceived detection- and penalty-rates that matter. Sometimes, however, people believe that what is still permitted will in the future be outlawed. That expectation will influence their behavior, too.

In line with Durkheim, we explained several regularities in suicide statistics from one single principle. Given our results, we met with some success. Our
subsidiary assumptions on the size of municipalities, however, must be revised. The
difference between Durkheim’s explanation and ours is in any case not that large.
Durkheim’s prime hypothesis is that the integration of persons in some group lowers
their chances of suicide, ours that the fear of being killed by others does so. That is,
between the ‘relational’ feature ‘integration’ and the feature to be explained, ‘chance
of suicide,’ in Durkheim’s hypothesis, we interposed the ‘dispositional’ feature ‘fear
of being killed.’ One auxiliary assumption in our explanation was that political
exclusion will increase the fear for the future, another that being integrated in a family
will lessen it. However, our other additional assumptions involved physical hardship
and prior knowledge, phenomena which are less durkheimian than demotion of a
state’s citizens and familial support.

As far as the body of knowledge on the Netherlands under German occupation
is concerned, it turned out that the number of suicides among Judaists has been
underestimated. We obtained this result from the tick-cards of the Centraal Bureau
voor de Statistiek, in the full knowledge that these may well underestimate the
number of Judaist suicides. The cards did, however, furnish strong corroboration for
the hypothesis that fear of deportation leads to a higher rate of suicide. The picture
obtained by going from years to months, and from months to weeks was revealing.
The defects of the cards would thus seem rather limited.

There were, however, other problems involved in the use of the CBS cards. For
a researcher will want to study not just absolute numbers of suicides but relative
numbers as well. That requires knowledge of the size of the category for which the
chance of suicide is being ascertained. Sometimes, we lacked that knowledge and had
to estimate how many Judaists of a certain age, marital status, or sex lived in the
Netherlands in a given year. Because of that, we did not carry out many multivariate
analyses. Another problem was the absence of a list stating for each Dutch
municipality when precisely Jews were being deported. That is why we did not apply
event-history techniques.

15 Bourgoin (1994) applies a utility-theory to one statistical regularity, viz. the one that shows a higher
chance of suicide among prisoners than among people in free society.
Was the suicide rate for Jews in the Netherlands under German occupation higher or lower than that for Jews in Nazi Germany? In 1940-1943, the CBS counted 698 suicides among the 126,000 Judaists in the Netherlands; 374 of that number were in Amsterdam (73,000 Judaists). Kwiet (1984: 155) gives 683 Judaist suicides for Frankfurt in 1938-1943. That city had 26,000 Judaist residents in 1933 and 14,000 in 1939. The figure for Frankfurt was established by counting the number of persons buried in the separate section of the Jewish cemetery devoted to suicides. Berlin had 160,000 Judaist residents in 1933 and 78,000 in 1939. According to Riesenburger (1960: 40), 1,338 suicides were buried in Weisssensee, the biggest Jewish cemetery in Berlin, in the period 1940-1943. For 1938-1945, that number is 1,580.

But the question how much lower the suicide figure for Dutch Jews is than for German Jews still remains open. After all, the Dutch data concern suicide among Judaists in the Netherlands: they do not cover suicide by Dutch Judaists in the death camps. There is, in the documents concerning the Auschwitz-trial, a quotation from a witness who, each morning, had to collect the bodies of people who had run into the barbed wire during the night: ‘The numbers would differ. They were very high when transports came from Holland. I recall that, on one occasion, they rose to 30. They were lower with transports from Slovakia, maybe five to ten. The average number will have been eight to twelve a day. Mostly they were new prisoners, but there would also be those who had been in the camp for longer (Langbein 1965: 115-116).’ This particular witness stayed in Auschwitz-Birkenau from April 1942 till October 1944. Further computations will not be attempted here.
REFERENCES


