The Institutional Work of Oppression and Resistance: Learning from the Holocaust

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Abstract
In recent years there has been an outburst of studies aiming to advance our understanding of how actors do work to create, maintain and disrupt institutions. Drawing on work on the Holocaust, a largely neglected event in organization theory, we explore types of institutional work through which actors first maintain domination and grant acquiescence to oppression and, second, target oppressive systems through acts of resistance. This approach offers an opportunity to study a familiar set of processes and phenomena on fresh terms and to focus on key elements that existing studies on institutional work have neglected.

Keywords
agency, Holocaust, institutions, morality, oppression, resistance, work

> *It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say.*
>
> Primo Levi

Introduction

Reflecting on his experiences in Börgemoor, Wolfgang Langhoffs wrote in 1935, in what probably is the first documented report on German concentration camps:

> We work week after week, five to six hundred men, on a piece of land that could be taken care of in four days with two steam plows. That's called "productive labor." We call it "slave labor, sheer drudgery." … We stand out on the moor for months, often sinking up to our knees in the swamp. … Often, one of us collapses and is taken to a field hospital by two fellow prisoners and a sentry. And then there's this constant pressure to work, driving us on and on, the humiliating insults, the tormenting feeling you're not human any more. Just some animal. An animal that's herded together in flocks, housed in ten long stables, given a number, hounded and beaten as need requires, exposed to the whims of its drovers. (quoted in Sofsky, 1997, p. 167)

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A few years later, on 13 November 1941, an unknown writer concluded a short essay with the following words:

> *And yet we have not forgotten that we are human beings, not degenerate, primitive creatures … we want to go on living and remain free, creative human beings. This will be the test of our lives. If our life will not be extinguished even beneath the thick layer of ashes that now covers it, this will signify the triumph of humanity over inhumanity.* (quoted in Rudavsky, 1987, p. 128)

What should scholars interested in explaining institutional change and stability do with words like these? Are the use of humiliating phenomena such as insults, fear and coercion, deprivation and hunger in efforts to build and maintain oppressive structures relevant to scholarly accounts of institutional work? Interested in how institutional change is possible if actors are fully conditioned by the institutions that they wish to change, can we ignore practices such as the ones recounted by Langhoffs, which aim at reducing or fully shattering human beings' capacity to act, thus transforming their existence into that experienced by animals? Moreover, what about attempts to resist those dehumanizing processes? Concerned about how people's actions and thoughts are constrained by institutions, should we not look at how they respond to different degrees of coercive institutional orders, even if such response is limited to sheer survival efforts or attempts to remind oneself and others that he or she remains human (as stated by the unknown Warsaw writer)?

Two decades ago, DiMaggio suggested that without more explicit attention to interest and agency, 'institutional theorists will be unable to develop predictive and persuasive accounts of the origins, reproduction, and erosion' of institutions (DiMaggio, 1988, p. 11). Since then, students of institutional change and stability have long documented the complex ways in which individual and collective actors influence institutionalized practices, beliefs and technologies (Dacin, Goodstein & Scott, 2002; Fligstein, 1990; Kellogg, 2009). In particular, a considerable stream of research has focused on the work of creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Hardy & Maguire, 2010; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). However, as several scholars have pointed out, research on institutional work and entrepreneurship remains limited in scope and biased both empirically (Dover & Lawrence, 2010; Mair, Martí & Ventresca, 2012; Scott, 2005) and theoretically (Clegg, 2006; Munir, 2011). Insufficient attention to what goes on at the margins and the extremes (Ibarra-Colado, 2006) prevents most accounts from recognizing other types of work that may potentially affect the institutional arrangements and the people who inhabit them. To address this gap, this paper attempts to broadly draw some important insights from the study of extreme cases such as the Holocaust, that might be useful to organizational institutional scholars. What is 'done' and by whom, so that oppression is sustained over time? What can the oppressed population do to resist, escape or transform existing beliefs and practices that lead to their oppression? These are some of the questions and issues we set out to address.

Our exposition will proceed in three steps. The first section argues for the importance of the study of extremes, joining recent calls by organizational scholars for studies on 'unconventional' (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010) and 'extreme' settings (Ibarra-Colado, 2006; Pina e Cunha, Rego & Clegg, 2010). In this section we explain our choice of the Holocaust among the many extreme cases of human oppression, and the sources on which we draw. In the second section we revisit and elaborate on the concept of oppression. We explain in detail how oppressive work aims at dehumanization and illustrate some of the central processes unfolded by the Nazis: the creation and later enactment of categories of the 'sub-human'; the creation of social distance through the use of camouflage language and euphemism, authorization and routinization; and the exercise of violence. Next, we introduce the notion of resistance and explain how it might – in either mundane or

gigantic efforts – contribute to (re)gaining dignity and (re)opening spaces for agency. We conclude by discussing what can we learn from this as well as other cases of human oppression and resistance in terms of institutional work, and suggest some implications that can be derived from this study for future research.

On Margins and the Importance of Extremes: Learning from the Holocaust

In their comprehensive review of research on institutional work, Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) briefly elaborated on the theoretical foundations of the concept, addressing the work of DiMaggio (1988) and Oliver (1991, 1992) and research on the sociology of practice (Bourdieu, 1977; De Certeau, 1984; Giddens, 1984). While these seminal studies emphasize the importance of power in discussions of agency and provide language and tools for studying it, an increasing number of authors argue that most of our efforts to reintroduce power into organizational institutionalism fall short of accomplishing this task (Lawrence, 2008; Rojas, 2010). One of the reasons for that failure is the dominant focus on too narrow a spectrum of cases (Clegg, Courpasson & Phillips,. 2006; Perrow, 1986) and contexts (Dover & Lawrence, 2010; Stinchcombe, 2005).

Stinchcombe argues that 'extreme' cases typically contain more information in them than the average of the cases. For example, he writes that we can learn a lot about religions by closely observing the more extreme religious groups. These are 'generally seen to occupy more of the lives of their members than do mainstream religious groups' (Stinchcombe, 2005, p. 40). Echoing Stinchcombe's point, Clegg and colleagues point out that the importance of studying extremes cannot be underestimated as they serve to 'demonstrate that irruptions to normalcy and taken-for-granted assumptions are not some deviation from normal but regular, albeit unpredictable, occurrences' (Clegg et al., 2006, p. 143). Thus, they contend that total institutions (Goffman, 1961) such as the Holocaust can be seen as privileged settings through which to view 'normal' techniques of power at work. Similarly, Bauman (1989) suggests that the Holocaust should not be bracketed; instead, it should be studied to develop theoretical and analytical tools that cannot be developed in most other settings. While we find recurrent calls for unconventional (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010) and extreme research and settings (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Pettigrew, 1990), it is surprising that events such as the Holocaust and other genocides – events of major organizational significance – have been largely ignored along with other situations of human oppression (Clegg, 2006) due precisely to their supposedly exceptional nature (Stokes & Gabriel, 2010). It is in this spirit that we turn our attention to examine some features of the Nazi Holocaust. As we do so, we are constantly mindful of the deep respect due the memories of the victims.

The focus on an event such as the Holocaust demands our attention to phenomena that – oddly enough – are largely absent from our accounts of organizations such as abuse, propaganda, terror, hegemony and quiescence; as well as the quite puzzling obliviousness to morality in most accounts of institutional work. Lawrence (2008) points out the surprising lack of attention to the use of force to create, transform, or maintain institutions. Likewise, the focus on extreme cases such as the Holocaust calls attention to the limits of the predominant focus on framing and different rhetoric strategies as key in fostering, driving and easing processes of institutional work (Hardy & Maguire, 2010; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Thus, is it possible to refer to instances where 'bones are broken' (Barley, 2008), lives taken, women and children raped, people oppressed and dehumanized without referring to the use of violence and naming the social injustice and immorality they entail? We believe that the answer is no. Hence, if we are to make additional contributions to our

understanding of institutional creation, reproduction and disruption, we need to acknowledge these phenomena.

Before we proceed with the article, we feel two explanatory comments are necessary. First, this is not an empirical study. We draw on multiple studies by philosophers, historians and sociologists such as Arendt (1957, 1965, 1973/1951), Bauman (1989), Browning (1985), Goldhagen (1996), Hilberg (1985) and Sofsky (1997), among others; well-known narrations and memories of survivors (Frankl, 1984/1959; Levi, 2007/1958, 2009/1988), and diaries of victims (Frank, 1947/1989; Hillesum, 1984) as their testimony collectively illustrates facets of institutional work that have been shockingly neglected. Yet, while drawing on those materials, we do not attempt to analyse them, nor do we introduce new data. Instead, we build on prior work on the Holocaust in the firm belief that revisiting an episode of such magnitude can offer new insights into unexamined or unobserved features of institutional work – particularly who 'does the work' and how.

The second comment concerns our choice of the Holocaust as our 'focal case' among the many extreme examples, some more recent, of oppression in human history. Our choice was influenced by the following factors: first, the mass murder of the European Jews and other 'undesirable elements' by the Nazis was systematic, planned and organized. It was 'purposive, intended, and effortful' and hence a clear example of institutional work (Lawrence, Suddaby & Leca, 2009). Second, it is an event with which most organizational scholars are familiar and has been a subject of study for other disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, history and political science. Moreover, because of the efforts of those disciplines and the memories of victims, abundant materials exist on the subject to serve as sources of information and reflection, offering different perspectives and covering diverse aspects of the Holocaust ranging from theoretical analysis to everyday stories (Sofsky, 1997). Third, and perhaps most important, as scholars interested in organizations and their consequences (Hinings & Greenwood, 2002; Stern & Barley, 1996), we have a moral obligation not to forget. As our epigraph suggests, 'It happened, therefore it can happen again.' The importance of this obligation is echoed today by some of the more lucid European intellectuals, such as Habermas, Bauman and Touraine, who caution about the turn that Europe is taking in the midst of the current economic, social, political and moral crises. They remind us of the need to learn from the 'unspeakable,' to make sense of the senseless, so that it will never happen again. In the concentration camps, prisoners were told that all would die, and in the unlikely event that a few survived nobody in the world would believe their stories. Survivors committed themselves to share their experiences, to bear witness. This article is our humble contribution to their efforts.

Enter Oppression

Reading the Holocaust through the prism of institutional theory, we see at its heart the creation and maintenance of an oppressive institutional regime through different forms of work. Oppression names a social injustice that is perpetrated through practices, norms and other types of institutional arrangements upon one or more social groups by others (Cudd, 2006; Moore, 1978). To refer to oppression as a social injustice implies that it is, by definition, a normative concept. In other words, oppression is always *wrong*. And injustice, which has multiple faces, consists of unequal and unjust institutional constraints through which groups of persons are systematically constrained, burdened or reduced by any of several forces. The oppressed are deprived of both autonomy and subjectivity (Haslam, 2006) and stripped of their capacity to act (Arendt, 1957; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Not able to live in a truly human way (Nussbaum, 2000), they are thus dehumanized.

Oppression is not an isolated action, nor is it an exceptional or discrete event. Rather, oppression is sustained, routinized and enacted in the form of practices, rules, devices and discourses. In

other words, oppression is carried out through institutional arrangements that need to be created and maintained, and that might be extremely hard to disrupt. Significant for an institutional work perspective, we argue that oppression needs to be understood as work performed by the oppressors, but also, in some cases, by the unwilling participation of the oppressed. Oppression is perpetrated by certain groups upon others, and as such it requires intentional efforts to build and maintain oppressive institutional arrangements. Below we will focus on the institutional work of oppression whose stated goal is to actualize the presumed right – based on the Aryan racial ideology – to subjugate or eliminate inferior people.[1] To solidify the Nazi belief in Aryan supremacy and the concomitant 'hygienic' need to remove those deemed inferior, it was necessary to carry out a wide array of oppressive work ranging from the initial physical and verbal assaults to the massive killing through debilitation and starvation, mass shootings, death marches and gassing.

The work of oppression: Enacting subhumanity

The level of oppression attained in the Holocaust was only possible through an immense process of dehumanization. In oppressors' minds, the victims were dehumanized by first denying them the human condition through a work of categorization. The persecution of the Jews started with the definition of the category, followed by the creation of devices that signalled those belonging to the category, then gathering and confining the targeted category into ghettos to, finally, transport them to work and death camps. Students of the Holocaust explain the acceleration of the sequential steps taken toward a final solution to the 'problem' of Jews as officers and bureaucrats succeeded in creatively and professionally accomplishing the Nazi project of erasing the Jews from Europe (Goldhagen, 1996).

According to Giorgio Agamben (1998), the object of the Holocaust was the *Homo sacer*, a 'bare life' stripped of all value whose annihilation therefore had no moral significance. Yet, the *Homo sacer* had to be 'created' as a category of beings meant to be exterminated simply because they had lost their right to exist. Nazis attributed to themselves the absolute power to define a rather complex – and often arbitrary – taxonomy of categories into which every individual was pigeonholed. As Hilberg (1985) explains, the process of defining who would be classified as *Homo sacer*, or subhuman, was by no means simple. While the new measures were clearly meant to primarily target Jews, what was less clear was who was to be defined as such. Thus, for the sake of eliminating from official positions all persons who might carry any 'Jewish influence', as early as 1934 the non-Aryan was defined to include anyone with one or more Jewish grandparents (Hilberg, 1985). Later on, in 1935, the decree 'Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor' was written, prohibiting marriages and extramarital intercourse between Jews and citizens of 'German or related blood'. This law addressed only 'Jews' as opposed to 'non-Aryans'.[2] Yet, many difficulties of definition remained. Even more problematic for the regime was the implementation of the new 'categories'. To help sort questionable cases, a whole new profession of 'family researchers' (*Familienforscher*) appeared in the early 1930s. Family researchers were in charge of investigating family records to determine the descendants of a Jew. That work was to be complemented or substituted by a number of experts who would perform anthropometric examinations. Then, based on their 'scientific knowledge', they would issue certificates of 'belonging to the Jewish race'. One such expert was George Montandon, professor of Ethnology at the Anthropology School in Paris, and the head of the French Institut d'étude des Questions juives et Ethno-raciales. When questioned about a man, Leonid Kaganowicz, captured at the Spanish border in March 1943 with his wife, Montandon wrote: 'General facial expression: type antero-asiatic easily interpretable as judeo-antero-asiatic. Gestures and look: something like Jewish, incontestably' (Wieviorka & Laffitte, 2012, p. 212). The couple was deported to Auschwitz in July 1943.

Once the Nazi officials were able to complete their Jewish registries separate from the rosters of 'ordinary' Germans, the fate of the European Jews had been decided and sealed. From that moment on, they were no longer considered human, but just 'The Other'. The process of categorizing was pivotal to Nazi efforts to deny humanity. This process involved practices, regulations and the consequent creation of new social spaces and structures that fully regulated the possession and distribution of goods, privilege, prestige and ultimately life itself.

The Jewish communities were first persecuted on the economic front. The anti-Jewish boycott started officially on 1 April 1933, and from then on became a continuous, purposeful and organized affair with sporadic violent outbursts. Retail shop owners were among the first to be singled out as targets. Gradually, Jewish employees began to be excluded from German and even from Jewish-owned enterprises. Jews were also evicted from corporate boards and managerial positions, from savings banks, insurance companies, and different professional associations. Jewish physicians and attorneys, reclassified as 'caretakers of the ill' and 'consultants', respectively, lost most of their non-Jewish clients or patients and were forbidden to share clinics or offices with non-Jews. Eventually, most Jewish businesses were liquidated or became the object of 'Aryanization' – i.e. mandatory confiscation and appropriation – by state-installed trustees.

But economic persecution was only one aspect of a wide-ranging set of institutional practices conducive to social isolation and exclusion. Movement by Jews across and within cities was gradually curtailed. From March 1942, Jews required police permits to use public transportation, which included streetcars, buses, railways and subways. Their schooling was highly restricted. They were barred from resorts and beaches, and were 'offered' special shopping hours. Telephone use by Jews was curtailed in stages: first their private telephones were confiscated; later they were allowed to use public telephones only to call Aryans; and finally all telephones were marked with signs reading 'use by Jews prohibited' (Cesarini, 1994; Hilberg, 1985). Added to these restrictions were devices to facilitate identification and later concentration. Most notable among these were the 'renaming' – by the assignment of Jewish names[3] – and marking of Jews aged six or older with the star of David. This set the Jews off visually from the rest of the population, facilitated their identification and augmented the likelihood of verbal and physical assaults against them. They felt insecure – many to the point of paralysis – and humiliated. A Jewish woman from Stuttgart expressed it thus:

> *Wearing the yellow star, with which we were branded from 1941 onwards as if we were criminals, was a form of torture. Every day when I went out in the street I had to struggle to maintain my composure.* (Goldhagen, 1996, p. 138)

Likewise, referring to the very moment when they were given such identification devices, an unknown Lodz diarist wrote:

> *You felt in all your senses that by doing so, they had reduced the stature which the designation of 'personhood' affords the individual … and then you wondered whether it was worth while fighting for the designation of 'human' being.* (Rudavsky, 1987, p. 157)

The definition and identification of individuals as members of specific categories, the restrictions on their economic activity and movement, and their marking were to be followed by the concentration of the Jewish communities through the creation of ghettos. Such creation followed – with some minor variations – a three-stage process which comprised selecting the location, restricting movement, and sealing off inhabitants from the outside world. No Jew was permitted to

remain outside the boundaries of the ghetto, which usually was a tightly packed area with no open spaces or parks. The nature and the final objectives of the ghettos were clearly articulated by Friedrich Übelhör, top civil administrator of the Lodz district in December 1939:

> *The creation of the ghetto is, of course, only a transition measure. I shall determine at what time and with what means the ghetto – and thereby the city of Lodz – will be cleansed of Jews. The final goal, at any rate, must be that we burn out this bubonic plague utterly.* (Goldhagen, 1996, p. 145)

Those 'inside' the ghettos had been confined, segregated, marked and singled out through a major, gradual, ongoing, institutional process of dehumanization which was to have as its final step the annihilation of an entire people.

Death camps represented a major institutional innovation. Augmenting to their maximum the aforementioned processes, inmates in the camps were completely deprived of what could be considered their last vestiges of individuality. They were stripped of their names and history, possessions, dignity and external appearance. Thus, their previous life was effectively terminated. They were abruptly dispossessed of both past and future, brutally confined 'to the present moment' (Levi, 2007/1958, p. 56). They had become just a number among thousands of others; an anonymous cipher in an endless series. As Goldhagen pointed out:

> *The Germans almost never took pains to learn the names of a camp's inmates; in Auschwitz, they denied the very existence of a prisoner's name – this mark of humanity – tattooing each with a number which, with the exception of some privileged prisoners, was the only identifying label used by the camp's staff. In Auschwitz, there were no Moshes, Ivans, or Lechs, but only prisoners with numbers like 10431 or 69771 … The Germans succeeded in making many of the camp system's inhabitants take on the appearance – including festering, open wounds, and the marks of disease and illness – and behavioural attributes of the 'subhumans' that the Germans imagined them to be.* (Goldhagen, 1996, p. 176)

At the end of these processes, the difference between the living and the dead was negligible. The work of oppression reached its highest manifestation in the figure of the *Muselmann*, in the language of the concentration camps. The *Muselmänner*[4] were persons utterly destroyed, devastated, broken psychically and physically by life in the camp. Every gesture they made was uncoordinated; they could no longer lift their legs when walking. While we can hardly understand the nature of such process of physical and psychological decline, it represents the total destruction of both the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* (Arendt, 1957; Sofsky, 1997). It marked the triumph of the Nazis' project of annihilation. As dramatically expressed by Primo Levi:

> *All the Muselmänner who finished in the gas chambers have the same story, or more exactly, have no story; they followed the slope to the bottom … They crowd my memory with their faceless presences, and if I could enclose all the evil of our time in one image, I would choose this image which is familiar to me: an emaciated man, with head dropped and shoulders curved, on whose face and in whose eyes not a trace of thought is to be seen.* (Levi, 2007/1958, p. 64)

The emergence (and drowning) of the *Muselmänner* lay at the end of a project that entailed the construction of specific categories (e.g. Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, etc.); identification and marking of individuals as members of those categories; cutting them off from economic and social life; ghettoizing them; transporting them; compelling them to perform extenuating labour; and finally exterminating them. Throughout the process millions of human beings were stripped of their material possessions, but more radically of their identity, humanity and finally their very life.

Facilitating the work: The creation of (social) distance

How can 'normal' people engage in planning, ordering, committing or condoning acts of mass violence and extermination? This question has troubled scholars from different traditions (Bauman, 1989; Kelman, 1973; Scott, 1985). We will attempt to explain how different institutional practices contribute to creating social distance from the victims, making it easier to regard them as subhuman. Among these practices are authorization, routinization and the use of euphemistic or 'camouflage' language.

Authorization provides the context for legitimizing the action, redefining morality so that individuals are apt to respond to authoritative demands rather than personal preferences. In a system that equated obedience with loyalty, subordinates spared themselves the burden of responsibility (Sofsky, 1997) by making the personal will of their superiors the guiding principle for their actions. A classic illustration is Adolf Eichmann's statement during his trial in Jerusalem that when he had followed the Nazi orders and participated in the Final Solution, he had been behaving in accordance with Kant's categorical imperative – or at least with a version of it that was appropriate 'for a small man's domestic use', in his words. Eichmann stated his version of the categorical imperative as: 'True to the law, obedient, a proper personal life, not to come into conflict with the law.' Accordingly, he saw legitimacy in refusing to take personal responsibility for his actions. It is precisely this certainty Eichmann conveyed that led Hannah Arendt to coin her controversial and disturbing idea of the 'banality of evil': the great evils are not necessarily executed by people who are bad at heart, but rather by ordinary people.

Routinization and the division of labour also favour the construction of distance between the actions and the final outcomes and are essential to the oppressive machinery. Bauman, echoing Arendt's idea, believes the Holocaust reveals how acquiescence and cooperation do not depend only on violence, threat or force. Rather, they are often achieved by 'the ability of modern, rational, bureaucratically organized power to induce actions functionally indispensable to its purposes while jarringly at odds with the vital interests of the actors' (Bauman, 1989, p. 122). The actor's performance is broken into several discrete steps, somehow disconnected from one another. Thus, he can concern himself with keeping accounts, making schedules, assigning personnel, writing reports, 'and dozens of other details and trivia that are part of his normal job' (Kelman, 1973, p. 47). In camps, commandants spent most of their time working at their desks, where they had to sort through and sign piles of circulars, letters, reports and countless forms. As Raul Hilberg pointed out:

> It must be kept in mind that most of the participants [of genocide] did not fire rifles at Jewish children or pour gas into gas chambers … Most bureaucrats composed memoranda, drew up blueprints, talked on the phone, and participated in conferences. They could destroy a whole people by sitting at their desk. (Hilberg, 1985, p. 1024)

Illuminating the process of routinization allows us to see that the number of perpetrators was indeed enormous. Hundreds of thousands of Germans, Poles, French, Lithuanians and others participated in the system put into place by the Nazis. The machinery of mass destruction was composed of almost every profession. To be sure, it included army soldiers, police and other security forces, and railroad officials. But accountants, attorneys, bookkeepers and many others largely contributed to the 'Aryanization' process without having to consider the propriety of such transactions. As these individuals wrote and tracked information, countless others, who once had a name and history, become just transparent ciphers and 'material' within a rather normal, albeit execrable, administrative and production process (of death). The extraordinary and unacceptable became normal and routine.

Finally, the process of creating distance was eased by the use of euphemisms and camouflage language, which contributed to the creation of a closed conceptual universe in which images of the victims 'instill distance and justify violence, protect one's self-image, and reduce conflicts of conscience' (Sofsky, 1997, p. 110). The purpose was to lock in certain thought patterns by shielding them from alternative interpretations and to affirm the subhumanity of the victim. Human beings were transformed into 'raw material' to be exploited and 'residua' to be disposed of – leaving no trace, when possible. Christopher Browning (1985) illustrates this point forcefully, quoting at length a memo prepared by a technical expert concerning the technical improvement of the gas vans:

> *A shorter fully loaded truck could operate much more quickly. A shortening of the rear compartment would not disadvantageously affect the weight balance, overloading the front axle, because actually a correction in the weight distribution takes place automatically through the fact that the cargo in the struggle toward the back door during the operation always is preponderantly located there. Because the connecting pipe was quickly rusted through the 'fluids', the gas should be introduced from above, not below. To facilitate cleaning, an eight-to twelve-inch hole should be made in the floor and provided with a cover opened from outside. The floor should be slightly inclined, and the cover equipped with a small sieve. Thus all 'fluids' would flow to the middle, the 'thin fluids' would exit even during the operation and 'thicker fluids' could be hosed out afterwards.* (Browning, 1985, pp. 64–65)

The improvements suggested in the memo aimed at increasing the efficiency of gassing trucks used to kill Jews, disguised as 'the cargo'. The memo was written by an expert in truck construction, whose job was to deal not with people struggling to breath but with the 'cargo'; and not with human excreta and vomit, but with 'thick' and 'thin' fluids. Likewise, in many other memos, documents and correspondence, the human bone material remaining after the different methods of bodily disposal – burial, cremation in ovens, and burning in the open – was referred to as 'solid substances'. What was then discussed was the use of either a bone-crushing machine or hammers to erase the remnants.

An entire terminology was built around the killing operations, in which the Jews were conceived as 'animals',[5] 'insects' and 'vermin' to be exterminated through a 'cleansing operation'. Thus, the use of gas to kill them was not arbitrary. Hydrogen cyanide, or Zyclon, used in Auschwitz was produced by firms specializing in large-scale fumigation of buildings and ships and the extermination of rodents and insects. As stated by Foreign Office Press Chief Schmidt, 'The Jewish question is no question of humanity, and it is no question of religion; it is solely a question of political hygiene' (quoted in Hilberg, 1985, p. 287).

The work of absolute violence

The creation of categories and subcategories, routinization and standardization, and use of such euphemisms proved to be effective tools for creating the necessary distance for the professional bureaucrat to dehumanize those individuals slated for extermination. Such extreme social distance inhibited any sense of guilt or pity for the victims, thus facilitating the unleashing of violence.

However, such an extreme case as the Holocaust highlights the fact that not everything is achieved solely by defining a category. Physical violence needs to be accounted for as well. The Jews were verbally and physically assaulted even before the ghettos were sealed off. Once confined, fear and terror were their invariable daily fare in a context in which they struggled to the utmost for bare existence. Armando Aaron wrote: 'We were terrified … you can understand, terror is the best of guards' (in Hilberg, 1985, p. 176). Those who ventured to escape from the ghettos

were subjects of the so-called Jew hunts (*Jugenjagd*), in which hundreds of non-Germans willingly collaborated not only in the 'hunt' for Jews but also in their killing with non-dissimulated passion and even violence that surpassed that of the Nazis themselves. When the Final Solution was decided, massive shootings occurred in cities and rural areas. As an illustration, about 19,000 Jews were killed in Minsk during two separate massacres in November 1941 and more than 33,000 on the outskirts of Kiev, at Babi Yar, by the end of September 1941 (Goldhagen 1996). The death camps were the final stage of the process.

Living conditions in the camps were unbearable. The barracks were overcrowded and lacked the most basic elements of clothing and personal hygiene – to get these supplies meant to take them from others. Inmates were forced to perform wearying, useless and meaningless work under the blows of SS officials and *Kapos* while suffering from cold, hunger and disease. Terror and arbitrary violence combined to destroy the different dimensions of the person entering the camps, a process that had already started with the confinement in the ghettos and the transportation in the trains. As many accounts of survivors state, confinement began with a shock. The new arrivals underwent a cleverly devised sequence of humiliation, violence and mutilation – a process that profoundly transformed them (Sofsky, 1997). From then on, for most of the inmates brutality was the daily bread, the air they breathed. And as with the ghettos, boundaries of the camps did not end at the physical barrier and the barbed wire: most people around the camps eagerly contributed to extending the confines by offering to the authorities the very few who dared to escape.

In the end, then, the near-total obedience of the inmates was shaped by the exercise of absolute violence paired with the experience of absolute terror, and rounded self-preservation, pure and simple.

On the actors 'doing' the work

Who does oppressive work? The examination offered so far clearly illustrates how the work intended to maintain and later intensify the oppression was performed primarily by the German army, police and other state forces, but also by civilian German citizens and collaborators in occupied countries. Thousands of willing executioners contributed with hundreds of thousands of small acts and decisions to the extermination of about six million people. Among them, 'some … displayed eagerness, others "excess", while still others approached their task with reservations and misgivings' (Hilberg, 1992, p. 51).

However, many more contributed to the process of category creation, separation and extermination through a 'deafening silence' (Bauman, 1989, p. 126). Here, one can include those referred to by Arendt as the 'inner immigrants' – those who held positions in or collaborated with the third Reich and after the war's end 'told themselves and the world at large that they had always been "inwardly opposed" to the regime'.[6] One can include as well those professionals who 'benefited' from the created social distance when keeping themselves busy with administrative work pertaining to the properties, businesses and lives of the Jews (although for some professions, that social distance was less effective).[7] Finally, as Bauman argues, one could include all established and organized elites of German society as well as some occupied countries 'who could, theoretically, raise their voices against the impending disaster and have them heard' (Bauman, 1989, p. 126), but did not. All of them epitomize what Kershaw wrote in a brilliant and horrifying sentence: 'The road to Auschwitz was built by hate, but paved with indifference' (Kershaw, 1983, p. 364).

Oppressive work is performed first and foremost by the oppressors – those who gain from the persecution of another social group. However, in the case of the project undertaken by the Nazis to implement their racial ideology (as with many other situations of oppression), it is also possible to

observe how the victims were induced to participate in their own oppression rather than resist it, becoming accomplices in their own subjugation, often as a means to escape or relieve themselves from part of the burden. Levi's notion of the *grey zone* captures the issue well (Levi, 2009/1989). When reflecting on his own experience in Auschwitz, Levi wrote:

> There is not a prisoner who does not remember this, and who does not remember his amazement at the time: the first threats, the first insults, the first blows did not come from the SS but from other prisoners, from 'colleagues', from those mysterious personages who nevertheless wore the same striped tunic that they, the new arrival, had just put on. (Levi, 2009/1989, p. 9)

Levi refers to one of the fundamental pillars holding up the camp system: the *Kapos* (prisoner-functionaries who supervised prisoner work squads, or *Kommandos*). The *Kapos* comprised what Sofsky (1997) calls the camp Prominents. They were the only ones who had sufficient food, warm clothing and strong shoes – luxuries in the harsh conditions at the camps, which made their life better in comparison with that of the rest of inmates. How was such co-operation from the victims achieved? For Allen (2008) it was a labour of hate, which encompassed a variegated set of nuanced motivations ranging from 'terror, ideological seduction, servile imitation of the victor, myopic desire for any power whatsoever, even though ridiculously circumscribed in space and time, cowardice, and finally lucid calculation aimed at eluding the imposed orders and order' (Levi, 2009/1988, p. 28). The threat of annihilation turned the prisoner-functionaries into accomplices of the system. Terror became for them a means of self-preservation. They were thus faced with an irresolvable dilemma of 'oppression by choice' (Cudd, 2006). Other instances of such phenomena occurred in different ghettos and especially through the Jewish Councils.[8] Hilberg offers a graphic illustration:

> Moses Merin, president of the Central Council of Elders for Eastern Upper Silesia … On the eve of the first deportations, Merin made his first decision, 'I will not be afraid'" he said, to 'sacrifice 50,000 of our community in order to save the other 50,000. (Hilberg, 1985, p. 196)

In trying to alleviate the suffering of their people, Jewish authorities often simultaneously contributed to their destruction. In some ghettos they would do this by 'sacrificing' those who could no longer work in order to preserve the remainder. Thus, according to Bauman, 'the rationality of victims had become the weapon of the murderers' (Bauman, 1989, p. 160). The metaphor of the grey zone thus suggests that the radical separation between the human and the nonhuman – the oppressors and the oppressed – is in fact inhabited by people with rather ambivalent roles.

Finally, students of the Holocaust have thoughtfully elaborated on how the Jews themselves – but not those situated in the grey zone – contributed to their own oppression and annihilation by their acceptance of imposed regulations and norms. For example, most Jews wore the star immediately. In Warsaw, the sale of armbands became a regular business, to the point that 'there were ordinary armbands of cloth and fancy plastic armbands that were washable' (Hilberg, 1985, p. 75). Even more significant was the act of declaring themselves as Jews; and their attempts to obtain a reclassification 'to prove that one "deserves" to be assigned to a better category' (Bauman, 1989, p. 130). In an insightful study of the Holocaust in France, Mariot and Zalc (2010) offer several examples of such declarations. In a mail exchange with the *Sous-préfet*[9] in Béthune, a woman named Mme Nasselevitch writes to him:

> I am French, born at St. Quentin of French parents, of Jewish origins, my husband joined voluntarily the French Army before the war 14–18, he became French by his enlistment .. My son is now aged 19½. He

volunteered at the age of 18 in Versailles for the 8th Engineers 10th Company 3rd Battalion. … My son was born in Paris of French parents with French origins, he made the campaigns of the war of 39–40 in Remins, Laon, Abbeville, ... and was awarded the Croix de Guerre ...

I would like to kindly ask you, Mr. Deputy Prefect, if with all these French qualities, I must be classified among the Jews under investigation at the moment. ... I would like to keep my French nationality with all my heart. (Mariot & Zalc, 2010, p. 60)

Such attempts had to have terrible consequences since they required one first and foremost to accept the categories imposed. Anyone seeking special consideration, together with preferential treatment, implicitly and unwillingly recognized the rule imposed by the Nazis.[10]

The anti-oppressive work of resistance

If oppression names a social injustice, resistance is prima facie morally praiseworthy. And yet it rarely occurs, and when it does it is frequently unsuccessful. As shown above, oppressive relationships of dominance may develop routines of non-challenge or of participation in inner-group oppression (Gaventa, 1992; Lukes, 2005). However, resistance does exist – in fact it even occurred in Nazi Germany. Our objective in this section is to show different kinds of resistance – individual or collective; covert or overt; mundane or rather 'heroic' – and to illustrate how the nature of those forms of resistance is greatly influenced by the *existing* forms of oppressive arrangements. For example, Jews under the Nazis suffered an escalation of oppression: from the first economic and social regulations that gradually restricted their participation in 'public life'; to their marking and later ghettoization, where they were confronted with punitive restrictions and increasingly violent responses if they failed to comply; to their mass transportation to death camps where everything was designed to fully shatter the human capacity to resist. At the end of such a process of increasing oppression and terror, marked by the annihilation of millions of people, emerged the *Muselmänner*, those who had been robbed of their capacity to act, of their humanity. Broken psychically and physically by life in the camps, for them resistance was not an option anymore. Their life had been reduced to mere existence. They reacted without resistance to blows, insults, kicks. They were 'powerless to act, to think, to feel' (Sofsky, 1997, p. 202). It is crucial to remember that they were the vast majority, in Primo Levi's tough account, 'the best ones, the drowned'. It is in them that we can see the culmination of the Nazi's project, its 'success' and its evil: the creation of subhumans unable to resist, dead alive.

Observing situations of oppression bring to the fore a fundamental question: How is (any kind of) institutional work possible when human beings have been *dehumanized*? In other words, are those who are deprived of humanity, the *subhumans*, able to 'do' work? The answer is, we believe, twofold. First, given that work is one of the fundamental forms of activity of the human being (Arendt, 1957), anti-oppressive work cannot be done by semihumans or subhumans. And second, the work of resisting oppressive systems might be seen as intended, purposeful efforts – even if desperate or hopeless – to reassert one's basic dignity and humanity, before those who negate them. In what follows we will focus on some of those efforts which, whether mundane or extraordinary, can be seen as refusals to concede the superiority of the oppressor and as proclamations of one's humanity and worth.

Resistance to the first blows

Many accounts of the Holocaust suggest that the reaction pattern of the Jews was characterized by almost complete lack of resistance (Arendt, 1973; Hilberg, 1985). During the first five years of

Hitler's rule, indeed, most Jews regarded restrictions on economic activities, movement, communications and so on as a temporary phenomenon 'that one had to live through, or a setback to which one could adjust' (Hilberg, 1992, p. 119). An alternative, at that point, even if not valid for most Jews (Zuckerman, 1984), was the rather uncertain prospect of exile. When flight was available – mainly to the cities at the beginning, in particular for retail owners in small towns and villages (Cesarini, 1994); later on, to other countries – some decided to seize it. There is, to be sure, a long list of well-known scientists, physicians, philosophers, lawyers and artists, who did flee Germany and some occupied territories. However, a large majority among the refugees had little to offer in their exile, no profession or valuable skills, and very little capital. All this made exile a very painful experience. However, afraid of outright confrontation or unable to adjust to the new, worsening and degrading situation, exile was for many a first form of resistance. Others made the decision to join or to form partisan units, which 'said' that they did not accept the imposed restrictions and humiliations, even if that decision meant abandoning possessions and professions, apartments and family members, and hiding in rooms, cellars, monasteries, etc. This choice became much less available later on, when movement restrictions, marking and other forms of control mounted.

A crucial step in the persecution and extermination was the definition of categories of 'subhuman' and the creation of devices that signalled those to whom the categories and their markings applied. As shown above, Jews who declared themselves as such, wore the armbands, and tried to obtain 'reclassifications', were, in many cases, accepting those categories that had been imposed on them. Very few made the decision not to wear the star. However, others did 'work the system' to make categorization more difficult, to avoid restrictions and, later on, deportations. For instance, in some areas couples applied for dissolution of their marriages (as in the Lodz ghetto, where many got divorced as a response to a deportation order for the families of men who had been involved in what were considered illegal activities). Still others, confronted with restrictions, continued with their daily activities, feigned ignorance – which with time became more complicated – or attempted to falsify documents even when that was severely punished. (For example, youngsters in France who were not allowed to pursue their education due to the imposed anti-Semitic regulations tried to falsify their schooling permits so that they could pass their exams and continue with their education; Sansico, 2012, p. 276.) In addition, there were people all across Germany and occupied Europe who issued fake passports, identity cards and work permits that made it possible for many to flee or to hide when movement restrictions became much more stringent (Bauer, 1970).

Another instance of resistance, which some deemed more possible, was sabotage. There were instances of damage inflicted by partisans to sabotage the death industry; efforts to prevent the possessions stolen from Jews to reach Germany, and the 'act of Communist Jews in Belgium who staged a raid on the Jewish community to destroy records', thus making their identification and later deportation more difficult (Hilberg, 1992, p. 178).

Resistance in the face of mounting oppression

Other forms of oppression gradually made life much tougher for the Jews and made dissent more unlikely. Different kinds of resistance and compliance cannot be understood without reference to such transformations that brought about the total exclusion of Jews from economic and social life, and their later ghettoization and transportation to institutions of mass killing. The boundaries of what was possible shifted, and so did the responses to them.

The underlife of the ghettos. As pointed out above, ghettos were very tightly packed areas, and no Jew was permitted to remain on the outside. German authorities had given clear orders to kill

anyone who dared to venture outside the boundaries of the ghetto. As some ghetto diarists wrote, the Jews 'were terrified' and resistance became unthinkable. For instance, recounting an exchange with a Jewish welfare official, the Warsaw ghetto's unofficial historian, Emmanuel Ringelblum, wrote:

> *Why we do keep quiet? Why is there no call to escape to the forests? No call to resist? This question torments all of us, but there is no answer to it because everyone knows that resistance, and particularly even if one single German is killed, its outcome may lead to a slaughter of a whole community, or even of many communities.* (quoted in Hilberg, 1985, p. 200)

The role that fear of the Germans and their many collaborators played in preventing resistance was complemented by formal Jewish leadership, represented by the Jewish Councils in most ghettos. They warned against any type of action that could be considered as against German will and demands, since they might bring untold harm to the Jewish population. However, while the idea of uprising and overt resistance per se was feasible for only a few Jews, many did disregard a good number of orders, regulations and warning messages. Thus, through the work of smugglers who moved in and out of the ghettos (and some death camps, too), Jews maintained some of their former economic ties with the outside world via clandestine workshops. For instance, different accounts suggest that about 80 percent of all the food consumed in the Warsaw ghetto was obtained by smuggling through illegal channels (Cesarini, 1994, p. 153).

Taking advantage of the Nazis' ignorance or indifference to a ghetto's underlife, the Jews undertook a whole range of clandestine activities. Underground press and pamphlets appeared in different ghettos, published in Yiddish, Polish and Hebrew, with the main objective of keeping readers informed – as accurately as possible – about developments in the ghetto. In Warsaw, the first newspapers appeared in the early months of 1940 and continued through the great deportation of 22 July 1942. Against explicit restrictions, an illegal education system developed as well. In Warsaw, after the last Jewish school was closed on 4 December 1939, Jewish teachers who had lost their jobs eventually started offering an 'unofficial' educational programme for a few hours a day in children's soup kitchens. Furthermore, informal lectures on Jewish studies were organized for adults (Rudavsky, 1987). In addition, libraries and an orchestra were organized, concerts held, and religious practices celebrated (Sterling, 2005). These are some, probably only the best-known, of the different kinds of anti-oppressive work done by the Jews as the Nazis moved close to the 'Final Solution'. Quite often, they were collective endeavours that required some (in some cases major) coordination and planning. While they did not represent overt resistance, they typically embodied some sort of symbolic confrontation with the authorities, and the norms and structures imposed (Bauer, 1970).

Responding to inhumanity with humanity. There is one common theme that emerges among many of the stories of resistance: they all represent efforts to resist inhumane oppression, to respond with humanity to the inhumanity the people were suffering, to show, paraphrasing Primo Levi, that 'they were not *yet* animals'. In a situation in which they were told that they were subhuman and tried to be 'made' subhumans, different sorts of mundane acts – such as writing, doing art, but also struggling to be clean, and even walking 'like' humans – while they might seem a waste of energy, pointless, revealed an immense struggle for survival and for retaining one's humanity.

Writing is a case in point. Putting the situation into words empowers the victims, because their voices testify to the struggle to maintain humanity in the face of dehumanization, and to their immense efforts to impede the Nazis' attempts to erase their dignity and human image. Thus,

giving testimony must be seen as an act of resistance, too. Writing does, in this respect, permit a 'humanizing discourse' with a world that, as Arendt reminded us, had ceased to be human. It infuses life with meaning and safeguards mental survival by offering a lifeline and an illusion of historical continuity in a situation in which people were deprived of their past and their future and condemned to living solely in the present. Beautiful examples of such tasks are the narrative-life writings of Etty Hillesum, Anne Frank, and other unknown ghetto diarists and poets. Hillesum writes:

> *The worst thing for me will be when I am no longer allowed pencil and paper to clarify my thoughts – they are indispensable to me, for without them I shall fall apart and be utterly destroyed.* (Hillesum, 1984, p. 140)

Why does writing become so important? By virtue of their recordings, diaries delineate progression from the past into the future: 'Today's entry follows yesterday's and presupposes tomorrow's. Every entry produces anticipation of the next entry and thus creates future expectations' (Brenner, 1997, p. 139). It permits the writer to bear witness and resist the efforts to silence the unspeakable. It is well known that the Nazis took the greatest care so that the 'bearers of secrets' would not tell their story. Nevertheless, out of a sense of the historic mission imposed on them, some members of the Auschwitz *Sonderkommando* documented on paper their lives during the Holocaust. They buried their writings in different sorts of protective utensils near the crematoria, hoping they would be found and read some day. These are some of the words of one camp inmate, Zalmen Gradowski:

> *Dear finder of these notes, I have one request of you, which is, in fact, the practical objective for my writing … that my days of Hell, that my hopeless tomorrow will find a purpose in the future. I am transmitting only a part of what happened in the Birkenau-Auschwitz Hell.*

Gradowski finishes his note with a call to consider his writings when judging those, like him, who had been forced to do terrible and horrifying work. Through these instances of resistance, tragic and hopeless though their efforts are, writers offered to themselves and to others a reason to live, by 'proving' that they were still human beings. These were key motivations behind writing and other creative acts in the ghettos and death camps. In reflecting about creativity, Alexander Bogen, an artist who survived, observed:

> *I think that in the final analysis, creativity in the ghetto represented a form of spiritual self-protection, an armor – a spiritual armor – against the Nazi oppressor. When you are creative, you will not allow your spirit to be broken … the art of creativity then, was a way of combating the Nazis.*(quoted in Rudavsky, 1987, p. 119)

Finally, in such contexts of absolute terror, sheer survival was, and must be seen as, an act of resistance too. Primo Levi recalls that he learned this lesson from his friend Steinlauf, a lesson that he considered necessary for his own moral survival:

> *That precisely because the Camp was a great machine to reduce us to beasts, we must not become beasts; that even in this place one can survive, and therefore one must want to survive, to tell the story, to bear witness; and that to survive one must force ourselves to save at least the skeleton, the scaffolding, the form of civilization. We are slaves, deprived of every right, exposed to every insult, condemned to certain death, but we still possess one power, and we must defend it with all our strength for it is the last – the power to refuse our consent. So we must certainly wash our faces without soap in dirty water and dry ourselves on*

our jackets. We must polish our shoes, not because the regulation states it, but for dignity and propriety. We must walk erect, without dragging our feet, not in homage to Prussian discipline but to remain alive, not to begin to die. (Levi, 2007/1958, p. 26)

The lesson is that it was possible to resist in ways that would serve the purpose of *moral survival* by recognizing that the final objective of the indecipherable process in which they were thrown was one of absolute destruction, of transformation into beasts, and by purposely opposing that process in order to keep a sense of dignity and self-worth.

Resistance when facing fatal threats

There were, to be sure, more overt acts of individual or collective resistance in some ghettos and in death camps (Gutman, 1994; Maher, 2010; Petropoulos & Roth, 2005). Sometimes, unexpectedly, the Germans encountered resistance from Jews using firearms and homemade explosives. Such revolts were utterly hopeless and were the response to a fatal threat perceived as greater than repressive threats (Goldstone & Tilly, 2001; Maher, 2010). Much has been written about the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto in April–May 1943, during the last phase of the ghetto evacuation and destruction (Gutman, 1994). At that time, there were only about 50,000 Jews left, out of the 450,000 who lived in the ghetto at its height.[11] The 'active' resisters numbered about 750 (Hilberg, 1985), and they fought for about three weeks against the SS, police, army units and Ukrainian collaborators, who outnumbered the resisters by about three to one and were 'equipped with some armor and artillery, heavy and light machine guns' (Hilberg, 1992, p. 184). In the end, the Germans and their collaborators suffered sixteen dead and eighty-five wounded. Yet, while the Jews were killed with utmost brutality, Hilberg highlights the radical importance of the Warsaw revolt:

> *For the further development of the destruction process, this armed encounter was without consequence. In Jewish history, however, the battle is literally a revolution, for after two thousand years of a policy of submission the wheel had been turned and once again Jews were using force.* (Hilberg, 1985, p. 199)

Among the different instances of resistance that occurred in the Nazis' death camps, one of the most desperate cases was perpetrated by some members of the so-called *Sonderkommandos.* When the SS had deliberately decided to have the Jews burn the Jews, the *Sonderkommandos* were put in charge of performing the most horrific death works, such as clearing the gas chambers and servicing the ovens. They were left alive 'for a time in order to dispose of their relatives, neighbors, and fellow Jews' (Sofsky, 1997, p. 267). As many accounts testify, the situation suffered by members of the *Sonderkommandos* defies any description and even our capacity to understand (Levi, 2007/1958; Sofsky, 1997). They worked in a situation of constant threat and paralysing violence. Whoever refused to work was put to death. Nevertheless, some members of the *Sonderkommandos* (including the above-mentioned Zalmen Gradowski) decided to revolt. Collective revolts occurred in Treblinka, Sobibor and Auschwitz in situations of utter hopelessness, after several attempted escapes and plans for an uprising had proved abortive. In particular, several elements made resistance in Auschwitz an extremely unlikely phenomenon. The SS were everywhere in the grounds of the crematoria. It was unimaginable that the Jews could get an adequate number of weapons from the SS depots and very unlikely that they could bribe enough guards. By the summer of 1944 the death transports from Hungary started to diminish, and the SS began to 'select' among the *Sonderkommandos* for liquidation. Their willingness to revolt strengthened as the gassing of the Hungarian Jews neared completion and they perceived their own liquidation as imminent. As they sensed that the liquidation of the camp was getting closer, they planned an organized break-out for mid-June 1944. Likewise, in the

case of Treblinka's Upper Camp and Sobibor, different accounts suggest that 'prisoners believed liquidation was imminent' (Maher, 2010, p. 261). What were they looking for? They had no dreams of liberation. They just hoped to damage or destroy the death installations and, if possible, to bring the 'terrifying secret of the massacre to the attention of the free world' (Levi, 2009/1988, p. 129). Indeed, their deeds contributed to make real what Gradowski wrote in his notes, to 'find a purpose in the future' by transmitting (only) a part of what had happened. And as in the case of the Warsaw uprising, the significance of the revolt exceeds what was 'objectively' achieved – the end result was 12 wounded and 3 dead SS men, 451 dead *Sonderkommando* (none of them escaped) and the destruction of Crematorium IV (Maher, 2010; Sofsky, 1997). As Gutman puts it:

> *This revolt of the Sonderkommando became a symbol. At the site where millions of innocent victims had been murdered, the first SS murderers were killed, felled by the avenging hands of prisoners. And it was Jews who did this. This uprising demonstrated to the non-Jewish comrades-in-fate in Auschwitz what Jews were capable of.* (quoted in Sofsky, 1997, p. 274)

All in all, we can see these different efforts, from the more mundane to the more dramatic exploits, as efforts to resist the inhumane oppression human beings were suffering. Certainly, one can argue that few of them ended in victory: Etty Hillesum and Anne Frank died in Auschwitz and in Bergen-Belsen, respectively, the revolt of the Warsaw ghetto and the *Sonderkommando* in Auschwitz ended in the execution of most of them with bayonets and a single shot to the back of the head. However, all these different instances of resistance represent moments of adamant refusal to concede the superiority of the oppressor and to accept their concept of the inferiority of their victims. They represent major efforts to reassert dignity and worth in the face of an essentially dehumanizing situation.

Discussion and Moving Forward

Institutional theorists are equipped with an impressive toolkit for studying different sorts of institutional processes (Schneiberg & Clemens, 2006). However, such tools have thus far been applied to the study of a large but still limited number of known and secure settings (Dover & Lawrence, 2010; Mair et al., 2012). Our argument in this paper is that the study of oppression and resistance might offer an opportunity to examine a familiar set of processes and phenomena on fresh terms and to focus on key elements that existing work has neglected. This echoes recent calls by institutionalists (Lawrence, 2008) and more broadly by organizational scholars (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010) for unconventional organizational research in order to extend our understanding of organizational phenomena. We now elaborate on how our reading of the Holocaust contributes to research on institutional work and, more broadly, institutional theory, and offer grounds for future research.

Oppressive institutional work

In our examination of the Holocaust, we focused initially on the purposeful everyday practices that involved a concerted effort (i.e. 'institutional work') by the Nazis and others to gradually regulate the lives of their targeted populations and separate them, first symbolically, then physically through spatial segregation and – ultimately – concentration camps and death. The different types of oppressive work we referred to – ranging from categorization, seclusion and creation of social distance to the unleashing of absolute violence – share one fundamental aspect: They all contribute to transforming the universal structures of human relatedness to the world: space and time, social relations,

and ultimately the relation to the self. They do it, however, in different degrees. Considering such processes and transformations will expand our understanding of agency and institutions.

One might observe different forms of oppression as characterized by the degree to which they allow actors different spaces of autonomy and leave room and potential for agency. Some types of oppressive work restrict people 'only' by culture and norms; whereas others produce conditions that are significantly more stringent, such as those imposed on the Jews shortly after the Nuremberg laws were passed to severely limit their access to the job market or the running of business; use of public transportation; attendance in school; or participation in religious ceremonies. The creation of taxonomy of categories into which every individual can be pigeonholed appears to be a crucial type of institutional work. Such actions were undertaken by the Nazis in classifying their target population(s) as *Homo sacer* or subhuman (Agamben, 1998). Moreover, such escalation of oppression is eased by the creation of social distance between the oppressors (as well as those who benefit from oppression) and the oppressed by means of authorization, routinization or different types of rhetorical devices – notably what we called camouflage language. Once the categories are created, the oppression continues with spatial separation, dispossession of property and sometimes even one's names, and increasingly violent responses to any noncompliance. Here we are fully entering the terrain of what Goffman called total institutions (Goffman, 1961). In them, one can see different degrees of self-violation and, concomitantly, of spaces of autonomy. The oppressive work applied in ghettos was different from that used in death camps, each featuring distinct types of institutional work. The most extreme setting – the death camp – allowed for almost no resistance as the oppressors exercised near-total control, destroying any vestiges of independent social life (and, in many cases, life itself).

How relevant are those forms of oppression to present-day organizational phenomena, and how do they contribute to our understanding of institutional work? We argue that different forms of oppressive work can be observed today, although certainly none with the horrifying purposes of and the results attained by the Nazis. These occurrences range from well-known oppressive institutional orders to the most regular organizations under the modern, capitalist institutional order. These and others not discussed here offer what we believe is an important opportunity for students of institutional work.

Even though less harrowing than the Holocaust, total institutions of today may still be sadly characterized by humans being belittled and dehumanized; sometimes spatially circumscribed; heavily guarded; often stripped of markers of individual identity; clearly categorized as the 'other'; and often terrorized and treated with violence. Such instances include genocides (Pina e Cunha et al., 2010; Stokes & Gabriel, 2010); the treatment of prisoners of war in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib (Greenberg & Dratel, 2005); institutions such as asylums and mental hospitals (Grob, 1983) or work camps; and cases of forced labour, human trafficking or forced marriage (Bales, 1999). For example, human trafficking has grown over the years as an industry to become according to the United Nations the fastest-growing form of organized crime (United Nations, 2001) – one which is considered a high-profit, low-risk trade for the organizers. Children and women are trafficked for forced prostitution, domestic servitude, unsafe agricultural or sweatshop labour, or sold as brides. Cases such as that of Nigeria's Niger Delta (Akpan, 2010) are well reported. More broadly speaking, forced labour can be found in many countries today, and the International Labour Organization estimates at least 12.3 million people in forced labour worldwide (other estimates show that figure to be as high as thirty million; see Bales, 2004; Crane, 2013). A rather well-known example concerns workers in the charcoal camps of Brazil (Bales, 1999).[12] One can observe in these cases the creation of geographical and social distance, which ease the treatment of enslaved human beings and contributes to their alienation. Sadly, examples like these abound. While differing in forms and degrees of oppressive work, they nonetheless share a common theme: the effort and intent to

shatter the human capacity to resist. We believe the study of various types of oppressive work brings an important perspective to discussions about the paradox of embedded agency (Holm, 1995; Seo & Creed, 2002) by focusing not on how institutional change is possible, but on how – through which types of institutional work – it can be made impossible.

Milder forms of oppressive work can be found today in humiliating practices that pervade developed and less developed countries alike. Some examples are those regulations imposed on immigrants, both documented and undocumented, who seek work permits, access to social welfare services or asylum. Through increasingly stringent regulations, tedious processes that are often experienced as arbitrary, and fearful controls, people are 'invited' to accept and embody imposed, sometimes meaningless, categories. Such categories notably affect people's perception of their rights and civic participation, impact their job-seeking patterns and efforts, and make them suspects in the eyes of others.[13] An insightful study of Central American immigrants in the United States finds that this can 'lead [the immigrants] to accept their self-depreciation as normal' (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012, p. 1413), echoing similar findings from Europe (Escandell & Ceobanu, 2009; McLaren, 2003). Other examples of humiliating practices which are gaining prevalence in today's society include airport security checks and other work legitimated by 9/11 and the war on terror (Molotch, 2012), and the use of different surveillance tools and measures intended to prevent theft by employees.[14] Routinization and authorization play an extremely important role in these practices, which all contribute in varying degrees to damaging people's pride and dignity by imposing a sense of inferiority and subordination (Lindner, 2010). A final and rather puzzling element in most of these practices is that they are often legally sanctioned. Thus, a promising research agenda is to examine oppression through formal structures of power that are publicly respected rather than focus exclusively on the wilful exercise of violence with the intention to inflict suffering. Which carriers of power and what types of institutional work negatively impact the quotidian practices of human beings and reduce their capacity to act?

Finally, a vast body of research by anthropologists, sociologists of work, and critical management scholars has shown how milder, often hidden forms of oppressive work find their way into many contemporary versions of capitalist workplace organization. These types of oppression feel natural, yet they are no less important. In such settings, work discipline is not necessarily enforced by abuse, violence or arbitrary constraints and categorization, but is expressed in other ways. One example would be rigid and exacting guidelines for physical appearance, such as Walt Disney World's instruction that 'fingernails should not extend more than one-fourth inch beyond fingertips' (Leidner, 1993, p. 9). Leidner, drawing on the work of Hochschild (1983) also reports how in some cases organizations seek to extend control through emotional labour too, hoping to direct 'how [the employees] view themselves and how they feel' (Leidner, 1993, p. 64). Alternately, workers are asked to be open to change on short notice, take risks continually, and become ever less dependent on regulations and formal procedures (Delbridge, 1998; Harris-White, 2003). Reflecting on this trend, Sennett (1998) argues that 'pursuit of *flexibility* has produced new structures of power and control, rather than created the conditions which set us free'. Although mild compared to the extreme of genocide described in this paper, and sometimes even hidden, such forms of oppressive work still affect the capacity of human beings to act, think and feel. It seems reasonable to consider them as well in expanding our understanding of agency and institutions.

Resisting: Anti-oppressive institutional work

The prevailing perspective on resistance continues to claim that individuals willingly subject themselves to systems of domination (Willmott, 1993). This structural vision is strengthened by the idea

that groups and individuals usually fail in their attempts to resist oppression (Allen, 2008; Burawoy, 1979; Gaventa, 1992). However, as we have seen, resistance did occur even in the midst of the most horrifying efforts to fully shatter it. An important insight derived from the analysis of oppressive work and resistance in Nazi Germany and occupied Europe is the fact that the parameters of resistance are set, in an important manner, by the institutions of oppression. To the extent that oppressive forms of work are effective, they may fully preclude any forms of resistance. The Nazi project of human destruction reached its peak with the 'creation' of the *Muselmänner*, whose capacity to (re)act and to resist had been completely obliterated. As several authors have argued, they became 'the living dead' and ceased to be fully human. Hence, they were no longer capable of doing any type of work (Levi, 2009; Sofsky, 1997). Acts of resistance that do occur under circumstances of most severe oppression are often either individual and mundane (e.g. walking erect and washing one's face) or collectively but utterly desperate (e.g. revolts by the *Sonderkommandos* in Auschwitz, Treblinka and Sobibor), which may be partially understood in terms of how the level of oppression structures the available options. Thus, depending on the circumstances people confront, their resistance may oscillate from organized but hidden collective acts (e.g. illegal press, theatre performances and the school system in the Warsaw ghetto) to violent overt confrontations (e.g. revolt in the last days of the Warsaw ghetto) – to silent, anonymous acts (e.g. of sabotage and foot dragging) to essentially individual, small-scale efforts such as writing. We attribute this to the existence of some sort of correlation between the two forms of work explored in this article: oppressive and anti-oppressive. Future studies might focus on such oscillation and look at how different types of institutional oppressive work are confronted by different forms of resistance. Future research might also probe the intent of those efforts and how that may impact the specific types of anti-oppressive work done. Is the resistance aiming to fully disrupt the oppressive machinery or to nibble away part of its effects? Is the resister's goal survival, or 'simply' reminding oneself and others that he or she remains a human being? Addressing questions like this might bring a new perspective to discussions – and today criticisms – about the 'heroic' character of most accounts of institutional entrepreneurship. Are (arguably non-heroic and mundane) acts such as writing, walking erect or washing one's face acts of resistance and instances of anti-oppressive work? We have argued that they are, provided they are effortful acts performed with the intention of resisting the takeover of one's autonomy and very humanity. Furthermore, the spectrum of acts of resistance provides students of institutional theory and agency a strong reminder of the need to seriously consider how the nature of the institutional order(s) shape the options (Hwang & Colyvas, 2011) and ultimately the lives of people inhabiting them (Creed, DeJordy & Lok, 2010; Hallet & Ventresca, 2006).

As stated above, our argument is that different forms of anti-oppressive work seen in the Holocaust are present and observable in the most ordinary organizations under the modern, capitalist institutional order (see Bauman, 1989; Clegg et al., 2006). If the objective of the work of oppression is to drive some goals, claims and aspirations to the realm of the impossible and limit people's capacity to think, feel and act independently, our understanding of the reasons and methods behind everyday forms of institutional work can be advanced by studying acts of resistance (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Such work can include both active and passive elements, which has been demonstrated by scholars from diverse traditions studying the contemporary workplace organization (Crowley, 2012; Fleming & Spicer, 2007; Vallas, 2012). Overt forms of collective resistance, which require organized coordination and planning, have received much attention by institutionalists over the last decade – particularly those employing the colourful imagery of social movements (Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008; Tilly & Tilly, 1998). Other examples of active strategies include various forms of machine sabotage, foot dragging, theft, and criticizing supervisors in their absence

(Hodson, 2001; Scott, 1990). Finally, people do play dumb, feign ignorance, withhold enthusiasm, dissimulate and avoid work. These are well-known examples of passive strategies of resistance. While many of these instances stop well short of outright defiance, what is left to scholars interested in institutional work is to examine how the intent to do anti-oppressive work is inscribed in the acts, and what difference such acts does make to the acting individuals.

On the mediations of power

Institutional theory suggests that institutions, through different mechanisms and carriers, shape patterns of thought, action and organization (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zilber, 2002). We argue that the study of oppression and resistance offers new, rather neglected, possible angles to study how actors go about creating, maintaining and transforming institutions. We elaborate on two of them. The first one is the study of physical violence. Recent empirical studies of institutional reproduction and change have concentrated on the tactical, strategic, manipulative and persuasive aspects of power to the virtual exclusion of its coercive, bodily and forceful dimensions (Clegg et al., 2006; Lawrence, 2008). However, the study of oppression reminds us that the use of different rhetorical 'weapons' and social skills (Fligstein, 2001) is not necessarily the end of the story. In order to obtain compliance, human beings are granted education, indoctrinated, given access to media 'and sometimes even taught sociology' (Moore, 1978), but in some cases compliance is attained through fear and even terror, by means of physical coercion and abuse, restricted mobility, rape or forcing people to kill their kin. Less horrendous examples of situations where compliance was attained by force can be seen in today's United States or Europe. For instance, Central American immigrants interviewed by Menjívar and Abrego (2012) explained how their fear of moving around in the cities in search of employment or social services had fundamentally changed their lives. Likewise, some workers labour long hours under hazardous conditions for low pay, subjected to employer abuse with little or no means of self-protection (perhaps out of fear of losing their jobs). In these situations, physical safety and economic survival may depend on silence, which can appear as conformity and compliance (Sennett, 1998; Vallas, 2012).

The focus on oppressive work illustrates how violence can be facilitated by the use of camouflage language, routinization, categorization, and the use of fully legitimate and formal structures of power – namely, the law. All of these mechanisms create social distance between the oppressors and the victims. Yet, in the end, as Barley points out: 'words break no bones' (Barley, 2008, p. 507). Where the exercise of power is concerned, we should look not only at who has it and why, but also at how such power is exercised. More specifically, we should ask how different forms of physical violence (or the threat of such) are mobilized to perform institutional work. While terms such as 'oppression' and 'violence' are frequently regarded as obsolete, they are not. Such phenomena, even if considered to be rare and analytically extreme, are common in the world. Since they are likely to play an important role in a large number of processes of institutional creation, maintenance and disruption, they are relevant and timely for our research community.

The second new angle that we hope to bring to the study of institutional work is the focus on the 'grey zone' (Levi, 1989/2009). One of the more puzzling elements about the Holocaust is the fact that some of the Jews – e.g. Jewish authorities, *Sonderkommandos* – contributed both actively and passively to the extermination of their own people. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of Germans, Poles, French and Lithuanians contributed to the system of domination, not only through their roles as administrators but also by indifference. We believe important new insights can be gleaned by examining who inhabits the grey zone and why, in different situations (with varying degrees) of oppression. This is particularly true with regard to institutional maintenance, which has attracted

only modest empirical interest (Dacin, Munir & Tracey, 2010; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Thus, a promising research agenda is to examine how those populations targeted for oppression (e.g. the Jews, agricultural labourers, women) and those who do not necessarily have an obvious motive to oppress others (e.g. Lithuanians during the Holocaust; co-ethnic supervisors), contribute – willingly or not – to the reproduction of the system of domination, and through which types of institutional work. Furthermore, can anti-oppressive work actually contribute to oppression by reproducing/reinforcing those institutional arrangements that enable it? Studies of resistance in the workplace illustrate the irony of how some of the 'most defiant workers' (Vallas, 2012, p. 25) – those particularly rigid in their opposition to managerial policies – succeed only in reaffirming management's position (Courpasson, Dany & Clegg, 2011; Fleming & Spicer, 2007; Vallas, 2012; Willis, 1977). The contradictory nature of the grey zone and who inhabits it thus represents a promising direction for research in institutional theory – one that demands less clear-cut distinctions between challengers and incumbents in accounts of institutional reproduction and change.

Things that matter?

A final element that may come more forcefully into our conversations through the study of oppression and resistance is the relevance of morality. In existing accounts of institutional entrepreneurship and work, the status of morality is awkward and ambiguous if it appears at all. In that respect, they are similar to most sociological narratives which, according to Bauman (1989) do without reference to morality.

In *Making Social Science Matter*, Bent Flyvbjerg argues that among the three things necessary to 're-enchant and empower social science' there is the need to 'take up problems that matter to the local, national, and global communities in which we live, and we must do it in ways that matter; we must focus on issues of values and power' (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 167). Recent calls by management scholars point out that we – institutionalists in particular (Clegg, 2006; Munir, 2011) – have failed to focus on 'problems that matter' and to address contemporary issues of broader societal relevance, such as the current global financial crisis (Lounsbury & Hirsch 2010; Munir, 2011); forced labour, including for children (Bales, 1999; Crane, 2013); growing job precariousness (often masked as flexibility); or repression in Syria and censorship in China. Moreover, beyond that lack of attention to today's social issues, the question of values and power is rarely discussed in studies of institutional work. As recently expressed by Creed and colleagues, 'In the management literature, institutional change and agency are most often discussed without reference to their underlying moral or political vision' (Creed et al., 2010, p. 1380). Are we suggesting that articles should include a moral (or moralizing?) discussion? Certainly not. The point we want to make is that today there is a marked need for debate and reorientation of values (Bauman, 2008; MacIntyre, 2006) and organization theorists might want to have a say. Indeed, some scholars have taken on the task. For instance, Khan, Munir and Willmott (2007) examined the elimination of the long-standing institutional practice of child labour from the world's largest soccer ball manufacturing cluster in Pakistan; and Creed and colleagues looked at how marginalized GLBT ministers had 'to be the change they wanted to see in their churches'(DeJordy & Lok, 2010, p. 1355). Nevertheless, should we settle for limiting discussions on values and morality to 'just' those studies dealing with issues that appear to be 'morally problematic'? Put differently, are there really 'relevant' settings and contexts for which we can do without reference to morality? Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 167) suggests that doing that would mean the perpetuation of 'science as usual'. Instead, he argues for the emergence of what he calls a 'phronetic social science', whose objective is 'contributing to society's capacity for value-rational deliberation and action'. We think it is worth contributing to such emergence and we see potential

for doing that. For instance, revisiting recent work by Suddaby, Cooper and Greenwood on the role of large accounting firms in the emergence of a transnational regulatory field in professional services, the reader learns how the new emerging dominant logic reduces the concern for citizens' rights and the public interest, emphasizing instead 'commercialism and the protection and promotion of capital markets' (Suddaby et al., 2007, p. 356). These insights join a large number of other studies that show the growing marketization of our society (Bourdieu, 1998; Davis, 2009). Is this a matter on which we, organization scholars, want to say something beyond the fact that 'it occurs'? Likewise, in a recent article Mair and colleagues (2012) study how an intermediary organization in southern Asia builds 'inclusive markets' as a means to generate economic and social development for the least advantaged societal groups. However, while they explicitly attend to the institutions at play and their consequences in form of market and community marginalization, their article seems to assume that market inclusion is all good, and leaves it unproblematized. We see in here food for further reflections and research.

Finally, those interested in how actors are able to do institutional work (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) should ask this key question: Are there or might there be types of social structures, practices, beliefs and technologies that would prevent those who inhabit them from becoming agents? Or if this seems to suggest too extreme a state of affairs – although historically manifested in the figure of the *Muselmann* – are there or might there be types of institutional work that seriously threaten the possibility of agency for others? That certainly appears to be the case in today's world. Addressing questions like that might shed new light on the subject of embedded agency by bringing to our attention what the pre-conditions of agency are, thus helping to explain how institutional change is possible if actors are fully conditioned by the institutions that they wish to change (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Holm, 1995; Seo & Creed, 2002). As we elaborated above, in different forms and to varying degrees oppressive work transforms the capacity of human beings to act, think and feel. If people feel their capacity to shape their lives has been taken from them (Nussbaum, 2000); or that they have been pushed into herds like animals (Marcuse, 1991) or treated with no dignity (Hodson, 2001), is there still any point in discussing how they may transform or create institutions? We believe it does. But we should be well aware that without some minimum control and dignity, institutional work – and for that matter, any sort of work and even life – becomes unbearable (Frankl, 1984/1959; Marcuse, 1991). People need to feel and be treated as worthy human beings in order to envision and execute acts of agency. Thus, we need to focus on how the denial of human dignity and worth occurs if we want to have a more complete understanding of agency and institutions. It also seems necessary to study what actions people may take to regain their dignity (Sennett, 2003; Scott, 1990) and take pride in their accomplishments, no matter how modest they may appear to others. Finally, we need to reflect on how such studies can offer a solid ground for helping us to construct new institutional orders (or change existing ones), with a renewed commitment for a more humane and respectful set of practices, beliefs and technologies for those inhabiting them. In short, we need to study what institutional orders should be pursuing for each and every human being, so that they are empowered and granted conditions and spaces for moral agency.

Concluding Remarks

In closing, we have elaborated on how the study of oppressive work and resistance pushes research on institutions and agency by offering an opportunity to study a familiar set of processes and phenomena on fresh terms and to focus on key elements that existing work has neglected. Such neglect, we believe, is problematic; especially for those who believe that academics should participate in

discussions and debates as well as designs and practices aimed at bettering the human condition in a world in which too many are denied their dignity and live under conditions of flagrant injustice. We have tried to broadly sketch some important themes that the study of extreme cases such as the Holocaust, but also less brutal but still unjust contemporary instances of oppressive and resistance work, might offer to organizational institutional scholars. We realize that this is only a suggestion for different research agendas and that it needs to be fleshed out in several directions. But we believe these agendas cannot be ignored any longer. We are living in troubling times and must therefore address troubling issues.

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Notes

1. Early in 1938, such racial ideology was clearly expressed by – among others – Walter Buch, the Supreme Judge of the Nazi Party, who in a contribution to the journal *Deutsche Justiz* wrote: 'The Nationalist Socialist has recognized [that] the Jew is not a human being' (in Goldhagen, 1996, p. 411).
2. The Nazis did their best to clearly define different categories and subcategories of the non-Aryan, such as *Mischlinge* of the second degree, *Mischlinge* of the first degree, and Jews. *Mischling* was the German term used during the Third Reich to denote those persons with only partial Aryan ancestry. In German, the word has the general meaning of hybrid or half-breed.
3. On 17 August 1938 a decree was issued in Germany obliging Jewish women to add the name Sara and men the name Israel to their given first name.
4. The exact origin of the term *Muselmann* is not known. It seems to have originated in Auschwitz, from where it spread to other camps.
5. For instance, Primo Levi writes that 'In Auschwitz, "to eat" was rendered with *fressen*, a verb which in good German is applied only to animals' (Levi, 2009/1988, p. 77).
6. Arendt mentions that 'a rather well-known "inner emigrant" who certainly believed in his own sincerity, once told [her], they had to appear "outwardly" even more like Nazis than ordinary Nazis did, in order to keep their secret' (Arendt, 1973/1951, p. 356).
7. Hilberg writes that this is particularly the case for physicians, who could not avoid the issue of 'whether the direct or indirect infliction of illness or death was compatible with the basic medical mission of reducing pain and prolonging life. He had to reconcile these contradictory objectives by telling himself that he was still practicing medicine in his new role. Robert Lifon called this transformation "medicalized killing"' (Hilberg, 1992, p. 65).
8. The Jewish councils were designed by the Nazis as channels for regulation imposed on the Jews, and as conduits through which they would petition or appeal to the Germans.
9. The *sous-préfet* is the local servant in charge of local executive power.
10. Hannah Arendt offers the following telling example: 'Even after the end of the war, Kasztner [a leader of

the Hungarian Jews who negotiated with the Nazis an exemption of some of his wards from death camps] was proud of his success in saving "prominent Jews", a category officially introduced by the Nazis in 1942, as though in his view, too, it went without saying that a famous Jew had more right to stay alive than an ordinary one' (Arendt, 1965, p. 132).

11. A total of 375,000 Jews lived in Warsaw before the occupation of Poland – about 33% of the city's total population.

12. In one of the most complete studies on the matter, Bales (1999) describes how men are 'invited' into charcoal camps by promise of a good salary, food and shelter if they leave their *favelas* to go to make charcoal in the Amazonian forest for sale to the steel mills. They arrive in the camps only to discover that their employers are actually slaveholders.

13. Menjívar and Abrego elaborate on how 'workplace raids (or, as they are called in Arizona, employer sanctions investigations), made possible by the 287(g) agreement, Secure Communities, and IIRIRA in general, have increased scrutiny and suspicion of immigrant workers, especially Latinos' (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012, p. 1403).

14. We thank an anonymous referee for suggesting these and other examples.

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