"They called us *Maccaroni,* pasta eaters...." The Integration of Italian Jews in the Nazi Camps

by Bieke Van Camp

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to contribute, through the combination of lexicometric and qualitative analyses, to the study of the unofficial relations of domination conveyed by different forms of interaction in the Nazi camps. By using Italian testimonies, this article will try to shed light on the hierarchical dynamics that developed in the camps, in order to comprehend the particular difficulties related to integration and survival. The testimonies of Italian Jews show indeed that there were many varying forms of stereotypes that arose within the concentration and extermination camps, some originating within the community of those imprisoned on racial grounds, others developing within other categories or groups of prisoners. In the first case, stereotypes are generally based on nationality, language and seniority of imprisonment.

Introduction[1]

The first image that comes to mind when describing other individuals is related to the idea of the category to which each of the individuals is connected[2]. It can refer as much to nationality, to ethnic or religious groups, as to the function that the individual occupies in the given society. In the Nazi concentration and

[1] I am deeply grateful to Prof. Mareen Niehoff, the Max Cooper Professor of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who prompted me to write this paper and provided me good advices and generous help.

[2] Ruth Amossy and Anne Herschberg Pierrot, *Stéréotypes et clichés: langue, discours, société,* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), 34.

extermination camps this is no different: in testimonies, co-detainees are first of all identified as Poles, Italians, Jews, political prisoners etc. and to a lesser extent as doctors, guards and so on. These basic collective representations thus have a considerable impact on the social identity of the deportee and, conversely, on the image he has of his co-detainees. In this sense, these images affect the relationships between groups and their members,[3] which in most cases lead to stigmatization and to relations of dominance. Subsequently, we can ask what origins these representations have and how they are translated during the concentration camp experience as well as in post-war testimonies. This implies considering the concentration camps as a recomposed society and heterogeneous *ensemble* of social sceneries.[4]

After an explanation of the sources and methods applied to accomplish this study[5], I consider the concentration camp society and the groups that are likely to assume a dominant position within it: a typology of informal/tacit hierarchies in the concentration camps and the place of Italians in them are studied. Indeed, historiography[6] has shown how Jews of different origins, crowded together in extreme living conditions, don't necessarily form a homogeneous group. Many historians[7] and former deportees already demonstrated how language – or language proximity –, the number of deportees per country (minorities or majorities in the camps), and seniority of imprisonment are important factors in shaping the individuals' integration in the camps. However, I argue that establishing a corpus of testimonies based on solid criteria as well as a lexicometric approach could validly contribute to this research field. In this regard, this article explores the prejudices elaborated by other groups concerning

[3] *Ibid.*, 34.

[4] Erving Goffman, *Asiles : études sur la condition sociale des malades mentaux et autres reclus,* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1968); Wolfgang Sofsky, *L'ordine del terrore: il campo di concentramento*, (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2002), 21.

[5] This work presents preliminary results on a restricted corpus of sources.

[6] For instance *The Nazi Concentration Camps: Structure and Aims, the Image of the Prisoner, the Jews in the Camps, Proceedings of the Fourth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference – January 1980,* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984), in particular the contributions of Yisrael Gutman, "Social Stratification in the Concentration Camps," *Ibid.*, 172 and Leni Yahil, "Jews in Concentration Camps prior to World War II," *Ibid.*, 86. On stereotypes on the different deportees' nationalities see as well Christopher Browning, *Remembering survival: inside a Nazi slave-labor camp,* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010).

[7] In particular in italian historiography: Giovanna Massariello Merzagora, "Una perpetua Babele. Usi e forme della Lagersprache," in *La lingua dei Lager: Parole e memoria dei deportati italiani,* ed. Rocco Marzulli (Rome: Donzelli, 2017), 119-55. Donatella Chiapponi, *La lingua nei lager nazisti*, (Rome: Carocci Editore, 2004).

Italian Jews as well as the stereotypical images / discourses developed by Italian deported Jews on co-prisoners from other countries. The goal is to understand the hierarchical dynamics in the camps in general, in order to comprehend the particular difficulties related to the integration and survival in the concentration camps, as described in Italian testimonies.

Sources and methods

About the sources: Shoah testimonies

The analysis of testimonies of Shoah victims as historical sources should make it possible to reveal concrete social scenes.[8] We consider as testimony any document exposing a sufficiently long experience "to provide an evolutionary image[9]" of the latter. Thus any object or speech capable of transmitting an experience of the actor (necessarily an eye witness[10] who has assisted in an active or passive way to the related experience) can be analyzed. The truth of the testimony rests in this case on the confidence of its receiver.[11] Moreover, the will to analyze social dynamics and logics, rather than events (characterized by dates and places), should make it possible to go past the debates concerning the truthfulness or falsehood of the testimonies.[12]

The sources - testimonies - are extremely abundant and differ according to their nature, the time of their writing and / or recording, but this does not make them incompatible. Indeed, taking into account testimonies of a diverse nature (testimonial narratives, oral testimonies, letters etc.), induces different kinds of

[8] Frédéric Rousseau, *La Grande Guerre des sciences sociales,* (Outremont: Athéna Editions, 2014), 18.

[9] Helena Trnkova, "De l'engagement et des échafaudages identitaires en guerre. L'exemple austro-hongrois," in *Ibid.*, 30.

[10] Renaud Dulong, *Le témoin oculaire. Les conditions sociales de l'attestation personnelle,* (Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1998).

[11] François Buton, "Que faire des témoignages? Les témoignages, entre usages sociaux et qualifications scientifiques" (introduction to the seminar, Université de Montpellier, France, November 26, 2015).

[12] The former president of the Shoah Foundation Institute USC, Douglas Greenberg, regrets that for many historians there is still a tacit hierarchy of sources, with a predilection for manuscript sources originating from bureaucracy. Douglas Greenberg, "La memoria storica della Shoah: l'uso delle testimonianze dei sopravvissuti," in *Sterminio e stermini: Shoah e violenze di massa nel Novecento,* eds. Renata Badii, Dimitri D'Andrea, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), 295-6.

difficulties or limits and their variety within the corpus is therefore important. Due to the large quantity of sources available, a central question to this research regards the selection of the eye-witness accounts.

Quantitative methods: prosopography and lexicometry

First of all it is necessary to determine the *parent population* (according to 3 main criteria) of the corpus of testimonies. We have thus targeted the Jews (1) who survived deportation from Italy (2) and who have testified (3) on their concentration camp experience in the aftermath of the war. The methods of selection of the witnesses in the analyzed corpus are based on the model of the French *socio-histoire* (both a qualitative and quantitative approach) and on the practice of microhistory.[13]

A privileged "tool" in *socio-histoire* is biography[14] and its inclusion in a global prosopographic study (through the construction of a database) of the considered corpus of testimonies.[15] Therefore, the corpus built according to as many criteria as possible, has to contain a wide variety of Jewish deportee profiles (to get as close as possible to the criteria of a sampling-model with good statistical properties reflecting all the different deportee realities of the chosen *parent population*). The age, social background, education, places of birth, data related to the deportation (trains, camps etc.), and aspects related to the testimonies themselves (date, place, nature, etc.) should therefore be taken into consideration. In other words, the corpus of individuals and their testimonies was the object of a quantitative prosopographic study for the purpose of scientific description (which makes it possible to consider who speaks, when they speak and from which background they speak[16]), before being subjected to qualitative analyses.

[13] In this case, microhistory is not so much understood as an in depth analysis of a single case (Carlo Ginzburg, *The cheese and the worms: the cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller,* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980)) but as a way to put a small number of individuals without direct geographical ties at the center of a study that aims to reveal some key analysis tools to broader studies. Tal Bruttmann, Ivan Ermakoff, Nicolas Mariot, Claire Zalc, "Changer d'échelle pour renouveler l'histoire de la Shoah," in *Pour une microhistoire de la Shoah,* (Paris : Seuil, 2012), 12.

[14] Nicolas Offenstadt, "Socio-histoire," in *Historiographies. Concepts et débats,* eds. Christian Delacroix, François Dosse, Patrick Garcia, Nicolas Offenstadt, (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), vol.1, 618.

[15] François Buton and Nicolas Mariot, *Pratiques et méthodes de la socio-histoire*, (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2009), 15.

[16] Renaud Dulong, *Le témoin oculaire*, 11.

Another operating tool to this study is lexicometry, which was implemented using the TXM desktop software.[17] The contribution of lexicometry helps to quickly grasp the over- or underemployment of words[18] in the testimonies, and above all it allows to carry out a great number of calculations starting from the testimonies' plain text. In this study we use in particular calculations of co-occurrences (the simultaneous presence of two or more words or lemma[19] in the same phrase), and of concordances (allowing to determine the context in which the lemma is mobilized) in order to avoid losing the meaning behind the words/sentences/ etc. when studying representations, this tool has several advantages, but it is necessary, however, to be aware of some of its limitations. The corpus must indeed be digitized, which can be time-consuming (and which explains why I will use a limited corpus for the lexicometric analyses). Also, the texts included in the corpus must be fairly homogeneous (in size, date, nature, etc.) so as not to distort the results. Furthermore, by endowing lexicometric analyses with an explanatory value, the risk is to lose sight of the actors (the witness, the interlocutor, the situation) behind the quantified words or lemma. In this sense, lexicometry makes it possible to test hypotheses, but is not sufficient in itself. If quantitative methods do allow to test hypotheses (trough factor analysis or lexicometric analysis); a qualitative approach alone can provide contexts, sense. Obviously, the results of both types of analyses can be considered

[17] "TXM is free, open-source Unicode, XML & TEI compatible text/corpus analysis environment and graphical client based on CQP and R. [...] it provides qualitative and quantitative analysis tools." TXM was created within the ANR Textométrie project at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon and is particularly adapted to research in Social Sciences and Humanities. Bénédicte Pincemin, Serge Heiden, "Qu'est-ce que la textométrie? Présentation," (2008), http://textometrie.ens-lyon.fr/spip.php?rubrique80. Serge Heiden, "The TXM Platform: Building Open-Source Textual Analysis Software Compatible with the TEI Encoding Scheme," in *24th Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation,* ed. K. I. Ryo Otoguro, (Japan: Institute for Digital Enhancement of Cognitive Development / Waseda University, 2010), 389-98. The software was used as well by Damon Mayaffre in his study on the difference of vocabulary witnesses use to describe their concentration camp experience according to the period in time they testify (Bénédicte Pincemin, Damon Mayaffre, Serge Heiden, Philippe Weyl, "Génétique mémorielle. Shoah, mémoire et ADT," (paper presented at the "13ème Journées internationales d'Analyse statistique des Données textuelles," Nice, France, June 7-10, 2016).

[18] Claire Lemercier and Claire Zalc, *Méthodes quantitatives pour l'historien,* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), 50.

[19] Lemmatization implies grouping words of the same family by dictionary entry (called "lemma").

representative only of the experiences of the individuals included in the analyzed corpus.[20]

Description of the analyzed corpus of testimonies

For the purpose of this article, a group of 40 witnesses[21] was selected: initially, I took into consideration all works written from a first-person perspective published by Italian editors[22] and, as to include individuals coming also from lower classes, I then selected witnesses included in different oral testimonies collections.[23] The final corpus therefore presents the following characteristics[24]: there are 17 men and 23 women (figure 1), the oldest at the time of deportation is 44 years old and the two youngest 11 years old (the age groups are then present in a balanced way; figure 2). A fifth of the witnesses were born in Lazio (especially in Rome), another fifth in Piedmont, followed by the other Italian regions. It should be noted that 2 witnesses were born and deported from the Aegean island

[20] In this regard, the point of view on the questions dealt with in this paper is strictly that of the Italian deportees. A complementary study on how deportees from other nationalities see the Italians is part of the author's research in progress.

[21] The political scientist Nicolas Mariot argues indeed in his work *Tous unis dans la tranchée ?* that manipulating in a same research outcome a group of more than 40 witnesses would become too time-consuming in regards to the additional results other testimonies can reveal: "beyond the analyses of 40 texts, it is necessary to read pages and pages more to discover new elements." Nicolas Mariot, *Tous unis dans la tranchée? 1914-1918, les intellectuels rencontrent le peuple,* (Paris: Seuil, 2013), 406.

[22] Those are in general more in depth testimonies. In order to list the testimonies, I've consulted the catalog of the Central National Library (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale) as well as Anna Baldini's research. Anna Baldini, "La memoria italiana dello sterminio degli ebrei d'Europa (1944-2009)," in *Atlante della letteratura italiana*, vol. III: *Dal Romanticismo a oggi*, eds. S. Luzzatto, G. Pedullà, D. Scarpa (Turin: Einaudi, 2012), 758-63.

[23] In Particular the archives of the deportation in Piedmond (Archivio della deportazione piemontese, Archivio Istoreto, Turin) in the 1980s; the oral history research projects of the Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea ("Interviste alla storia," Archivio della Memoria, CDEC, Milan and to a lesser extent the collection "Ricerca sulla deportazione," CDEC) and the archives of the USC Shoah Foundation (which has a full access point in the Istituto per i beni sonori e audiovisivi, Rome).

[24] I collected the necessary data from the biographical dictionary Liliana Picciotto Fargion, *Il libro della memoria: gli Ebrei deportati dall'Italia (1943-1945),* (Milan: Mursia, 2002).; from the testimonies themselves; from the catalog of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale and from the biographical notes of Istituto Piemontese per la Storia della Resistenza e della Società Contemporanea (*Archos Biografie*). These individuals were the object of a complete prosopography in my master's dissertation under the supervision of Prof. Frédéric Rousseau, "L'expérience de la Shoah par les témoignages italiens. Violences symboliques et stratégies de réponse," discussed June 10, 2016 at Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier.

of Rhodes (under Italian rule at the time) and 2 others from areas of present-day Croatia (in particular the town of Fiume/Rijeka). Almost a quarter of the individuals were born abroad and settled later in Italy, often fleeing earlier racial persecution in these countries (notably Poland and Austria). The different "social classes[25]" in which we have ranked individuals according to their symbolic capitals[26] (e.g. level of study and profession) are present rather equally: the working class represent almost a quarter of the corpus; the intellectual fractions and the petty bourgeoisie about a third (figure 3). This starts from the desire to give the floor to doctors as well as to the most modest workers.

Figure 1
The witnesses according to their gender

	Witnesses	%	*Archivio deportazione piemontese ADP*	*%*
Male	17	43	3	27
Female	23	58	8	73
total	**40**	100	**11**	100

Figure 2
The witnesses according to their age (January 1942)

	Witnesses	**%**	***ADP***	***%***
< 16 years old	9	23	0	0
16 to 20 years old	7	18	1	9
21 to 25 years old	9	23	2	18
26 to 30 years old	7	18	3	27
> 30 years old	8	20	5	45
Total	**40**	100	**11**	100

[25] The categories were established using the scheme elaborated by Christophe Charle, "Les milieux d'affaires dans la structure de la classe dominante vers 1900," *ARSS* 20-22 (1978): 86. The scheme is simplified and reproduced in the work of Nicolas Mariot, *Tous unis dans la tranchée?*, 413.

[26] The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defines the notion of "symbolic capital" in *Raisons pratiques: sur la théorie de l'action,* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 160-1.

Figure 3
The witnesses according to their social background (prior to deportation)

	Witnesses	**%**	***ADP***	***%***
working classes	9	23	0	0
petty bourgeoisie	11	28	4	36
middle classes	4	10	2	18
upper classes	15	38	5	45
unknown	1	3	0	0
total	**40**	100	**11**	100

For the purpose of lexicometric analyses, we had to fall back on a more limited corpus of digitized testimonies, which make up a homogeneous *ensemble.* Indeed, the corpus has to be homogeneous (length of the testimonies; date; etc.) in order to obtain relevant results.[27] The corpus is formed by 11 archival transcriptions originating from the collection of the Piedmontese Institute for the History of the Resistance and of the Contemporary Society [*Istituto Piemontese per la Storia della Resistenza e della Società Contemporanea*],[28] which in the 1980s created the Piedmontese Deportation Archives [*Archivio della Deportazione Piemontese*, *ADP*].[29] It should be noted that this was a regional initiative, which gathered testimonies of political and racial deportees resident in Piedmont at the time of interviews.[30] This archive is made up of 219 testimonies, recorded on audio cassettes, collected between 1982 and 1985. Within

[27] Lemercier and Zalc, *Méthodes quantitatives pour l'historien,* 50.

[28] To the best of my knowledge, this is the only collection of Italian testimonies of which the texts were transcribed and digitized.

[29] Archivio della deportazione piemontese, Istituto piemontese per la Storia della Resistenza e della società contemporanea 'Giorgio Agosti,' Turin.

[30] The testimonies were collected between 1982 and 1985 in the houses of the deportees and registered on audiotapes. The project was directed by Aldo Agosti, professor of the history department of the University of Turin, and coordinated by Anna Bravo, Federico Cereja (both from the University of Turin), Brunello Mantelli (History Institutes) and Anna Maria Bruzzone (expert in the use of oral sources). Parts of the interviews are edited by Anna Bravo and Daniele Jalla, *La vita offesa. Storia e memoria dei Lager nazisti nei racconti di duecento sopravvissuti*, (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1986). On the way Italian post-war culture conceived the figure of the deportee – and on the mixing of racial and political experiences see the works of Paola Bertilotti, who discussed her PhD at Science Po, under the supervision of Marc Lazar, on the memory of Fascist and Nazi Anti-Semitic persecutions in Italy (full title: "Les persécutions antisémites fascistes et nazies en Italie: mémoires et représentations entre 1944 et 1967"). She has published in particular "A poco a poco la memoria. Contrasti e trasformazioni della memoria dello sterminio in Italia," in *Storia della Shoah in Italia*, eds. Marcello Flores, Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci, Simon Levis-Sullam, Enzo Traverso (Turin: UTET, 2010). See also Lorenzo Bertucelli, "Le camp de Fossoli (Carpi, Italie): Histoire, témoignages, mémoires," in *Témoins et témoignages: figures et objets dans l'histoire du XXe siècle,* eds. Charles Heimberg, Frédéric Rousseau, Yannis Thanassekos (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2016), 167.

our corpus 11 individuals, 3 men and 8 women, testified in this manner: these testimonies are therefore subjected both to qualitative and lexicometric analyses. To that end, we have eliminated the interviewers' questions from the text, so to take into account only the witnesses' discourses. It should be noted as well that different interviewers were in charge of the testimonies: if the interviewers give information about what they know in the wording of their questions, the indications given by the latter may lead the witness "to complete his/her perceptions and even to rectify them.[31]" This bias or filter has to be considered at all time when interpreting the results of the lexicometric analyses. Furthermore, these witnesses represent a fairly unbalanced sample in relation to the overall corpus, as can be seen in the present figures (1; 2; 3; 4): women, upper class individuals and elder deportees are indeed overrepresented.

From the point of view of the concentration camp experience, the two witnesses who were interned for the longest time in the camps were arrested in October 1943; The one who was arrested the latest was arrested in August 1944: the duration of their experiences varied therefore between approximately 18 and 8 months. Most of the individuals were deported through the Fossoli transit camp to the Auschwitz camps,[32] and 2 (those from mixed marriages) to Ravensbrück. In the camps these individuals were "selected" for the most diverse forced labor commandos (figure 4): exterior forced labor; factory forced labor; favored interior commandos (kitchens, *Kanada*...); specialists (doctors, nurses, translators ...) and other privileged roles (*Kapos*, *Blockälteste*, ...). If those working in exterior forced labor commandos and factories account for 43% of the present corpus, those who have occupied privileged "functions" and specialists account for 18%.

[31] Dulong, *Le témoin oculaire,* 25-6.

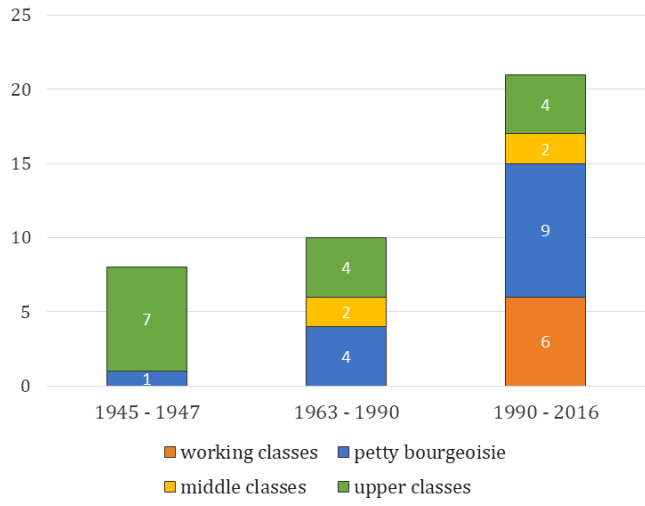
[32] Concerning the dynamics of Italian deportation and the role of Fossoli see Michele Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista. Vicende, identità, persecuzione*, (Turin: Einaudi, 2007); Liliana Picciotto Fargion, *L'alba ci colse come un tradimento: gli ebrei nel campo di Fossoli 1943-1945*, (Milan: Mondadori, 2010); Giuseppe Mayda, *Storia della deportazione dall'Italia 1943-1945: Militari, ebrei e politici nei lager del Terzo Reich*, (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002).

Figure 4
The witnesses according to their forced labor commandos in the Nazi Concentration and Extermination camps

	Witnesses	**%**	***ADP***	***%***
forced labor outside	11	28	5	45
factory forced labor	6	15	0	0
favored interior commandos	10	25	5	45
privileged skilled forced labor	7	18	1	9
Other	6	15	0	0
Total	**40**	100	**11**	100

Finally, regarding the act of testifying, we have consulted a total of 84 testimonies (on average 2 testimonies per witness): 51% of the testimonies in the corpus are published works, with or without the bias of a second person (archivist, historian, journalist…), whereas oral testimonies arising from the important moments of archival collection represent 45% of the testimonies, to which are added a few declarations and letters. It can be noted that only 9 testimonies (representing a quarter of the individuals) is written before 1947 (figure 5). Indeed, in the attempt to establish a corpus that is balanced according to the social backgrounds of the witnesses, we have included testimonies covering a large time interval (1945-2016), as the published testimonial accounts in the first years following Liberation are almost exclusively written by individuals coming from the upper classes.

Figure 5:
The witnesses according to their social background and the period of their testimony



Hierarchical dynamics in the Nazi camps

The categorization of the deportees

The categorization of prisoners in itself acts as a means of hierarchization. Moreover, the insignia of these categories had to be visible on the jackets of the deportees: they were thus categorized/stigmatized as much in the eyes of the SS as amongst the other prisoners. The green triangles (common law criminals) occupy, in general, the official hierarchical functions, which reinforces them in a position of strength in the camps (even outside these roles). However, struggles for informal power are well documented:[33] if internal harmony is ensured when each member (or category) accepts the status that has been assigned to him, the opposite on the other hand can produce internal violence and conflict.[34] To assign different statutes to prisoners, and thus stigmatize them, acts therefore as an instrument of social control.

As historiography has shown, Jewish deportees were to be found at the bottom of the social structure. The analysis of co-occurrences with the lemma "anti-Semitic / anti-Semite(s) / antisemitism" in the ADP corpus shows that antisemitism is particularly present in the comments coming from Polish[35] codetainees. Settimia Spizzichino recalls in her published testimony:

> As soon as I could, I went taking a walk in the camp in search of some Italians. I was informed about three sisters from Trieste who had recently arrived. I went to see them and we began to speak. They said they were political internees and asked: 'And you, who are you? What did you do?' I replied, 'I haven't done anything, I am here only because I am a Jew.' It seemed that they did not understand and I tried to explain myself; I related the raid, the journey, the deportation. 'But that means you are

[33] In particular by David Rousset, *Les jours de notre mort*, (Union générale d'Editions, 1974).

[34] "Internal harmony is ensured [in human groups] when all members accept the status assigned to them. Challenges to the hierarchy, on the other hand, often provoke violence. Thus, a stable social organization both enhances the group's ability to deal with its environment and by regulating group relationships reduces internal violence." Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to authority*, (New York: Harper, 2009), 124.

[35] The word "Poles" occurs 7 times within 10 words distance (left and right) from the lemma "Anti-Semite/Semitism/Semitic." Of all the co-occurrents of the lemma, the word "Poles," presents the most elevated co-occurrence score and number of co-frequency.

> *Jude*!' - said the tallest. '*Jude* is what the Germans say - I exclaimed taken aback - I am Jewish!' They looked at me with disgust. 'We do not want to have anything to do with the *Juden*.' I went away filled with rage and shame ... shame on their behalf, the "politicians."[36]

Settimia Spizzichino, deported from the area of the ancient ghetto of Rome,[37] was clearly seeking to find deportees with whom she would be able to speak Italian and reconnect, through language and conversations, with her life from before deportation.[38] If the deportees thus tried to organize themselves in national groups,[39] also to look for potential support or 'allies' in order to survive, it must be said that the nationality of the deportees goes hand in hand with a whole series of prejudices.

Starting points: lexicometric analyses

The table of the hierarchical lexicon of nouns and adjectives[40] present in the ADP corpus (figure 6) demonstrates indeed the importance given in the testimonies of Italian deportees to the different nationalities present in the camps.

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[36] This quotation, as well as all the following quotations are translated by the author of the paper. Settimia Spizzichino, *Gli anni rubati: le memorie di Settimia Spizzichino, reduce dai lager di Auschwitz e Bergen-Belsen*, ed. Isa di Nepi Olper, (Cava de' Tirreni: Comune di Cava de' Tirreni, 1996), 47.

[37] Settimia Spizzichino, daugther of Mosè Mario Spizzichino, trader, and Grazia Di Segni, was born on April 15, 1921 in Rome. She was the youngest of 6 children. From Tivoli, due to the Anti-Semitic persecutions, the family moved to the area of the ancient ghetto of Rome. During the roundup, on the October 16, 1943, she was arrested with her father, mother and sister Giuditta. Settimia Spizzichino was deported through the Tiburtina station in Rome to Auschwitz on October 18, 1943. In Birkenau, she worked in forced labor commandos before being subjected to medical experiments in the Auschwitz *Stammlager* (Block 10). In January 1945 she was transferred to Bergen Belsen were she was liberated by the British forces. Settimia Spizzichino is the only woman, arrested during the roundup on the October 16, to survive deportation.

[38] Chiara Nannicini Streitberger, "Les Italiens antifascistes dans les camps. L'exemple de Flossenbürg," *En Jeu: Revue pluridisciplinaire de la Fondation pour la mémoire de la déportation* 7 (2016): 22.

[39] Michael Pollak, *L'expérience concentrationnaire: essai sur le maintien de l'identité sociale,* (Paris : Editions Métailié, 1990).

[40] The table portraying the full lexicon (without lemmatization) is to be found in appendix, figure 13.

Figure 6
The frequency of occurrence of the most occurring nouns / adjectives in the Piedmontese corpus

	nouns (lemma)	translation	frequency of occurrence
1	campo/i	*camp*	565
2	tedesco/a/hi/he	*German*	270
3	russo/a/i/e	*Russian*	205
4	italiano/a/i/e	*Italian*	191
5	lavoro/i	*work*	178
6	gente	*people*	134
7	madre/i	*mother*	430
8	SS / S.S.	*SS*	129

If the lemma "German(s)" [*tedesco/a/hi/he*] and "Russian(s)" [*russo/a/i/e*] occupy a prominent place in the testimonies (representing more occurrences than words related to concrete objects/situations of everyday life: hunger, thirst, forced labor, etc.[41]), this is explained in the case of the lemma "German(s)" by the fact that the word embodies both the immediate perpetrators / actors of the persecution and all *evil* related to persecution in general. Furthermore, the lemma "German(s)" returns as much in the beginning of the different testimonies describing episodes related to the persecutions in Italy than in the end of the testimonies, describing the feelings of the witnesses towards "the Germans" in the aftermath of the war. In the case of the lemma "Russian(s)," its high frequency of occurrence can be explained by the fact that for most witnesses the Russians embody liberation (they are also referred to during the concentration camp experience as a temporal reference point: *When the Russians will be here..., Tomorrow the Russians will come... We can hear the Russian* [bombing]). The use of both "German(s)" and "Russian(s)" in the testimonies, goes therefore well beyond their *immediate* meaning, i.e. nationalities (one representing the oppressor, and to a greater extent deportation in itself, the other liberation and hope).

On the other hand, the lemma "Pole(s)/Polish" [*polacco/a/i/e*], figure 7, occupies a prominent place in the same list. It must be said here that these nouns refer both to the language and nationality, which in some way distorts the results

[41] This is the outcome as well in a larger lexicometric study on the effects of the time of testifying on lexical fields. Bénédicte Pincemin, Damon Mayaffre, Serge Heiden, Philippe Weyl, "Génétique mémorielle. Shoah, mémoire et ADT," (paper presented at the "13ème Journées internationales d'Analyse statistique des Données textuelles," Nice, June 7-10, 2016). Paper downloadable on the JADT's website: http://lexicometrica.univ-paris3.fr/jadt/jadt2016/.

(the hierarchical list of lexicon without lemmatization sheds light on this point; figure 13[42]).

Figure 7
The frequency of occurrence of nouns / adjectives related to language and nationality in the Piedmontese corpus (min. 10 occurrences)

	nouns (lemma)	translation	frequency of occurrence
1	tedesco/a/hi/he	*German*	270
2	russo/a/i/e	*Russian*	205
3	italiano/a/i/e	*Italian*	191
4	polacco/a/he/hi	*Pole/Polish*	101
5	francese/i	*French*	58
6	ungherese/i	*Hungarian*	17
7	ceccoslovacco/a/hi/he	*Czechoslovak*	13
8	olandese/i	*Dutch*	11
9	greco/a/i/he	*Greek*	10

If we study the case of the lemma "Pole(s)/Polish" more closely (insofar as Polish is the nationality / language of which the image emerges fairly unanimously after a qualitative study of the testimonies), several hypotheses can be tested. In order to avoid losing the meaning of the words, we first carried out some concordance analyses (figure 8).

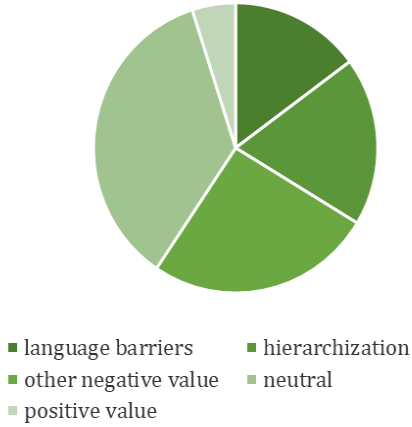
Figure 8
The frequency of occurrence of the word "Pole(s)/Polish" in the Piedmontese corpus according to its semantic value (through concordance analyses)

	Frequency of occurrence	%
Negative value	60	59
language barriers	15	
hierarchization	19	
other	26	
neutral	36	36
Positive value	5	5
Occurrences total	**101**	100

[42] The table portraying the full lexicon (without lemmatization) is to be found in appendix at the end of the article.

From the table of concordances, we have proceeded to the description of different lexical fields (figures 8 and 9). The first three "categories" represent statements in which the lemma is mobilized to describe a rather negative episode. In the category "language barriers" the lemma "Pole(s)/Polish" is used signifying the Polish language [*polacco*]; the statements describe above all the incomprehension (or isolation) related to the lack of language knowledge. The lemma is then associated 19 times with the hierarchical organization (official and unofficial) within the *Lager* (the preeminent place of the Polish, and the abuse of their status, is especially discussed). The third category assembles a heterogeneous *ensemble* of other episodes presenting a negative value ("The Poles with whom we were hated us ... / The Poles were anti-Semites above all .../ The Polish prisoners bullied the other prisoners...").

Figure 9:
The frequency of occurrence of the word "Pole/s" according to its semantic value



In the corpus of testimonies, a rather positive value is attributed to the Poles or to Polish language, when the deportee relates punctual episodes, describing other inmates (in this case it's only the singular "Pole" and not the plural form "The Poles" that is used): "There was a very competent Polish doctor who took care of us... / He was a very nice Pole ...." This goes to show that in order to describe co-deportees in testimonies, it's to their nationality the witnesses refer. This explains partly the importance attributed to lemma related to nationalities in testimonies dealing with deportation.

Finally, the category of "neutral values," refers on the one side to the civilian world (as the majority of witnesses are interned in camps in Poland, the sentences concern civilian workers as well as resistance networks outside of the camps[43]);

[43] The doctor Leonardo de Benedetti included in the ADP corpus, gives indeed a long description on the resistance networks in and outside the camps.

on the other side, and to a greater extent, the lemma "Pole(s)/Polish" can be used in enumerations of different nationalities present in the camp / the block /....

The presence of other nationalities (the French and the Czechoslovaks for example) in close proximity to the word "Poles" is attested as well by the study of co-occurrences (figure 10).[44]

Figure 10
The cooccurrent nouns of the word "Poles" (m., pl.) in the Piedmontese corpus, classified according to the score of attraction probability

cooccurrent	translation	frequency	co-frequency	score	mean distance
polacchi	*Poles (m)*	54	14	18	5,6
antisemiti	*anti-Semites*	3	3	6	6,7
polacche	*Poles (f)*	25	5	6	3,4
tedeschi	*Germans (m)*	144	8	5	3,5
capi	Kapos	24	4	4	1,5
italiani	*Italians (m)*	85	6	4	5,5
cecoslovacchi	*Czechoslovaks*	2	2	4	2
tzigàni	*gypsies*	2	2	4	6,5
padroni	*bosses*	3	2	3	5,5
politici	*political prisoners*	23	3	3	7,3
francesi	*French (m)*	32	3	3	2
criminali	*criminals*	9	2	2	4,5
polacco	*Polish / Pole (m)*	11	2	2	6,5
civili	*civilians*	13	2	2	0
contatto	*contact*	14	2	2	3,5
prigionieri	*prisoners*	65	3	2	5,7
ebrei	*Jews*	70	3	2	7,3

We have investigated the co-occurrences starting from the word "Poles" and not from the lemma "Pole(s)/Polish) (which means the Polish language is not taken into account here). If the presence of the word "Poles" (f. and m.) in the table could be surprising at first sight, this can be explained by the fact that the word "Poles" often returns in the same sentence or at the beginning or end of the next or former sentence. The fact that these are transcriptions of oral testimonies induces a lot of repetitions.

[44] The co-occurrence calculations take into account 10 words distance (left and right) from the key word. The results are classified according to the score describing the probability of proximity between two words or lemma.

It is interesting to note, that the word "Poles" is most often associated with the word "Germans," the two nationalities representing frequently the hierarchy of the Lager (indeed the two words often don't take up their primary and proper meaning of "nationality," but slide to mean *Kapo*, "guards," SS, or in any case privileged prisoner). It's in this same sense that the words "*Kapo"* and "*bosses*" are co-present in the statements containing the word "Poles." Moreover, the word "Poles" seems to be associated with the more advantageous categories of prisoners: political prisoners and professional criminals. On the other hand, the word "civilians" reflects the fact that the civilian workers in the camps were mostly Polish.

Finally, the word "anti-Semites" is used only in connection to the word "Poles." This, again, implies a representation of violent (physical and symbolic) behavior of the "Poles" towards the Jewish (and Italian Jewish) witnesses. Moreover, when the co-occurrence search window is widened,[45] the words "authority" and "*Lager*" can be added to the table, both referring to a prominent position of the Poles in the tacit hierarchy of the camps.

The problems related to the difficult comprehension of the language spoken in the camps come back when one also takes into account the verbs[46]: the verb *capire* [to understand] and above all its form *capivamo* [we understood] results to be the most co-present. To go further into this analysis, we consider the words that co-occur with the words *capivo* [I understood] and *capivamo*; in both cases the word *non* [didn't] has the highest number of co-frequence (and is repeated more than once in the same sentence: 17 co-occurrences with *capivamo*, whereas the latter is present only 13 times in the ADP corpus). The noun "*angoscia* [fear / anguish] has the highest co-occurrence score.[47]

From this case study, through the prism of lexicometric analyses, the two sets of representations insistently associated with the term "Polish/Poles" are, on the one hand, hierarchical organization, on the other, linguistic barriers. Each of these fields subsequently refer to images of anguish, fear, and isolation. Indeed, relationships of dominance can often be linked to language.

[45] Taking into consideration 20 words before and 20 after the key word.

[46] We excluded auxiliary verbs.

[47] The score represents a correlation coefficient taking into account different variables (the frequency of occurrence of the co-occurrent, the co-frequency, and mean distance).

Language as a factor of isolation and hierarchization

If German is considered the official language in the Nazi *KL*, Polish is attested as the "second" language of orders: as the linguist Giovanna Massariello Merzagora points out, the appellation of certain functions occupied by prisoners (*Blockova - Blockowa*: Polish variant designating the function of *Blockälteste*, "dean of the block" in women's camps) is a good indicator on the hierarchical superiority of the Poles.[48] In the ADP corpus subjected to lexicometric analyses, the strongest co-occurrence score of the word "language" (7), apart from functional co-occurrences (auxiliary verbs / pronouns) is to be found in the co-frequency of the word "Polish." This underlines yet again the importance of Polish in the camps. Moreover, the linguistic affinity between Slavic languages and Polish, between Germanic languages and German, provides a greater possibility of exchange between them. Therefore, Italian prisoners who did not master a foreign language, making them initially incapable of understanding orders, were first mistreated by the SS and *Kapos*, and then felt isolated from their fellow prisoners.[49]

Leonella Jona Bellinzona,[50] interned in Ravensbrück and a teacher in primary education in the post-war period, points out the problem of understanding languages:

> I actually tell all the students and mothers I know, 'Without diploma, but languages...' Because if you know some languages, you already have a great advantage over others, on the other hand we... [...] whilst the Russians knew German, the Poles knew French and German, we were

[48] Giovanna Massariello Merzagora, "Il lager come babele: il plurilinguismo nei KZ," in *Il lager: il ritorno della memoria. Atti del convegno internazionale 6-7 aprile – Università degli studi di Verona,* eds. Gian Paolo Marchi, Giovanna Massariello Merzagora, *(*Milan–Trieste: ANED-Edizioni Lint Trieste, 1997), 133.

[49] Donatella Chiapponi, *La lingua nei lager nazisti*, 37.

[50] Leonella Jona Bellinzona, daughter of Federico Jona Bellinzona, a stationmaster, was born on the February 22, 1913 in Turin. Her mother was catholic. Leonella was a primary school teacher before the racial persecutions. After the armistice on September 8, 1943, she entered a Resistance group between Canale and Turin. She was arrested on May 2, 1944 as a partisan and transferred from Turin to Fossoli due to the fact that her father was Jewish. She was deported from Verona in a convoy for Jewish women from mixed marriages on August 2, 1944 to Ravensbrück, where she worked in particular in a sewing commando. Leonella Jona Bellinzona, during the evacuation march, was liberated near Lübz on April 30, 1945, by the Russian army.

> absolute waste, we found ourselves in tragic conditions, our condition as Italians has been tragic. Contempt everywhere.[51]

Language, or rather, the ability to communicate with others (in this case with fellow prisoners, privileged deportees, guards), is indeed one of the (only) pillars that makes it possible to regain a social bond. Moreover, the guards did not hesitate to isolate the newly arrived deportees as much as possible. Leonella Jona Bellinzona remarks: "Then, in the blocs, they managed to put together people from a nationality that didn't amalgamate with the other nationalities."[52]

Isolation is one of the techniques of humiliation theorized by the sociologist Erving Goffman.[53] Feeling isolated tends to prevent redefining one's own role, as no point of comparison to others can be found. Therefore, if the isolation from the outside world, where the deportee left all his points of reference, constituted a clear break and identity crisis, being isolated in the camps constituted an utter crisis. At an encounter between Teodoro Ducci[54] and Achille, another Italian deportee, Achille expressed to Teodoro his condition of isolation:

> You see Teo, in my *Kommando* there are Ukrainians, Poles and Hungarians. Nobody knows a word, I do not say of Italian, but at least French. We understand each other with this mixture of German and Yiddish which is the official language here, if one can say it like that. I live in an obsessive solitude. There is no one I can communicate with. You know what it means not understanding and not being able to exchange a word with those that surround you day and night? I am alone in a

[51] *Trascrizione intervista a Leonella Bellinzona* [IT Coo FD451], 16, interviewer : Laura Matteucci, September 27/29, 1982, October 7, 1982, Archivio della deportazione piemontese, Archivio Istoreto, Turin.

[52] *Ibid.*, 30.

[53] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates,* (Anchor Books, 1961).

[54] Teodoro Ducci, son of Rodolfo Ducci, a sales representative, and Luisa Hoffmann, was born on August 12, 1913 in Budapest (Hungary). His parents moved to Opatija (nowadays Croatia) where he grew up. Teo Ducci mastered at the University Ca Foscari in Venice in Diplomatic Sciences in 1939 and worked as a translator for the University of Padua and for the editor Baldini & Castoldi. In 1943, the family moved to Florence due to the bombings and went into hiding. The family was arrested on February 12, 1944. On April 5, 1944 Teo was deported through Fossoli to Auschwitz. In Birkenau he was subjected to a variety of forced labor commandos (especially *Schädlingsbekämpfung*). He participated in the Death March on January 18, 1945 from Auschwitz to Mauthausen, where he was liberated on May 5, 1945 by the American army.

> heterogeneous crowd of which I am excluded. We have in common only the fact that we're Jews and deported. Believe me, it's scary. I'm going crazy. I haven't heard a kind word in days. Here, in this Babel, they make me die a slow death. I have no one to help me. I'm afraid I won't be able to pull through.[55]

"Babel" (from the Hebrew verb בבל, BBL, "to confuse"), is indeed an image that returns in several testimonies.[56] Babylon becomes the first society provided with a social hierarchy, based on the dispersion of languages and therefore on the division of its subjects. In the testimony of the translator Teodoro Ducci, who had received a religious education, the reference to the Tower of Babel embodies the impossibility of communication and thus mutual help between deportees. Above all, the quotation shows how the knowledge or understanding of languages in the camps was necessarily linked to hierarchical organization.[57] This is also what Liliana Segre reports: "In the factory we were almost all Western Europeans: Dutch, Belgian, and many French women. It was a Babel of languages which, intermingled, made the outcome extremely difficult. There were also prisoners from Eastern Europe who spoke Yiddish and were therefore fraternized by a common destiny."[58]

As these witnesses testify, among the Jewish community of the East (Ashkenazi Judaism) the spoken language is very often Yiddish, conveying a certain sense of common belonging and common destiny. The chemist, Primo Levi, analyses the isolation and stigmatization of Italian Jewish deportees, through the prism of the Yiddish language, in an interview of 1982:

> We were rejected, we Sephardic Jews or Italians anyway, because we did not speak Yiddish, we were foreigners to..., foreigners at first to the Germans as Jews, and foreigners also to the Eastern Jews because we weren't like them, because we didn't have, they had no idea that [another form of] Judaism existed... Many, many Polish Jews of low extraction were annoyed by this fact: 'But you're a Jew? Redest keyn jiddisch, bist ni

[55] Teo Ducci, *Un tallèt ad Auschwitz. 10.2.1944 – 5.5.1945*, (Florence: La Giuntina, 2000), 75.
[56] Giovanna Massariello Merzagora, "Una perpetua Babele. Usi e forme della Lagersprache," in *La lingua dei Lager: Parole e memoria dei deportati italiani*, 119-55.
[57] Roland Barthes, "Leçon inaugurale de la chaire de sémiologie littéraire au Collège de France prononcée le 7 janvier 1977," in *Œuvres complètes,* ed. Eric Marty, (Paris: Seuil, 1995), vol. III : *1974-1980*, 803; Pierre Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique,* (Paris: Seuil, 2001).
[58] Liliana Segre, *La memoria rende liberi*, ed. Enrico Mentana, (Milan: Rizzoli, 2015), 111.

> keyn jid' they say, I don't know if you understand. *Redest keyn jiddisch, bist nit keyn jid,*[59] as *Yiddish* is the adjective that derives from *jid*, and *jid* meaning *Jude*, which means Jewish, it is almost a syllogism, it means a Frenchman who does not speak French. A Frenchman who doesn't speak French is not French. A *Jid* who doesn't speak Yiddish is no Jid. [...] We Italian Jews, we felt particularly defenseless, we and the Greeks were the last among the last; I would say we were in even worse conditions than the Greeks, because the Greeks were in large part accustomed to discrimination, there was anti-Semitism in Thessaloniki, they had built their weapons [...]. But the Italians, the Italian Jews so used to being considered on equal terms with all the others, were truly without shells, naked as an egg without shell.[60]

In her testimony, published in 1947, Liana Millul[61] accentuates the same idea: "The Italian Jewish deportee was in a position of inferiority and isolation, not only because of the hatred of the SS and the *Kapos*, but also because he/she was unable to communicate with the other Jews. In the camp, at once, a strong feeling of solitude grew in all of us."[62]

Language therefore does convey, more than a mere coded statement, relations of dominance. A Jew of the East, who found himself being part of a majority or who has arrived previously in the camps, demonstrated through the exchanges of speeches that he dominated over his interlocutors. This goes hand in hand with a sense of legitimacy to dominate. In the case of the quotation of Primo Levi, the eastern deportees did not speak only in Yiddish to their interlocutors, but in a mixture of Yiddish and a language in which the interlocutor is able to grasp the meaning of the discourse. In this way, the relation of dominance is more concealed from a linguistic point of view (the one who feels himself dominant

[59] Translation: "If you don't speak Yiddish, you're not a Jew."

[60] Anna Bravo and Federico Cereja, "Ex deportato Primo Levi: un'intervista (27 gennaio 1983)," *La rassegna mensile di Israel* 55/2-3 (1989): 310.

[61] Liana Millul, daughter of Corrado Millul, a stationmaster, and Gina Pia Essinger, was born on December 21, 1914 in Pisa. She was an elementary school teacher. In 1940, she moved to Genoa and participated, after the armistice, in the activities of the Resistance group *Otto.* She was arrested on March 7, 1944 and interned in the Fossoli camp. She was deported to Auschwitz on May 16, 1944. Liana Millul worked in a variety of forced labor commandos (mostly outside). By the end of 1944, she was transferred to Ravensbrück and to Malchow where she worked in a munitions factory until her liberation on April 30, 1945.

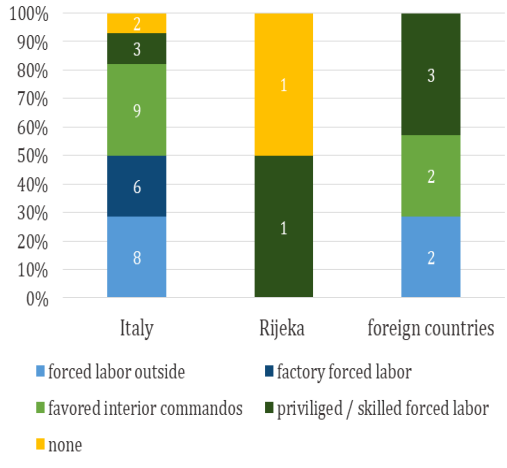
[62] Liana Millul and Donatella Chiapponi, "Intervista a Liana Millul," Genoa, September 15, 1999, in *La lingua nei Lager nazisti*, 119.

descends at the level of the one he thinks he's dominating). By denying this relationship of domination, the dominant emerges only reinforced in his position. This is an example of what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls the "strategy of condescension."[63]

The other quoted examples demonstrate, on the contrary, that the deportees able to speak in Yiddish did not necessarily make an effort to be understood and thus exclude the minority of deportees incapable of understanding. This means they obliged the latter to adapt. The language spoken by the Italian deportees, or rather their lack (in general) of linguistic knowledge placed them therefore automatically below prisoners from other nationalities or Jewish traditions: having had to succeed in an effort of acculturation to maximize their chances of survival (which equals not being isolated), the Italians necessarily underwent a stronger selection.[64] This is what we find as well in the testimony of Alberto Sed in particular, where the deportee receives the punches intended for another prisoner who, by his knowledge of German, knew how to put the blame on Alberto instead of him.[65]

It must be said, however, that the foreign witnesses or those coming from Rijeka (annexed to Italy in 1924) in the present corpus, knew more (Slavic) languages and were far less isolated. In addition, as far as the hierarchical and advantaged commandos go, these individuals seem to have had more chances to occupy privileged positions in the Nazi Camps (figure 11). This demonstrates how the lack of linguistic capital can be a factor of isolation or stigmatization and, conversely, the knowledge of

Figure 11:
The place of birth of the witnesses according to their forced labor commandos



[63] Pierre Bourdieu, Loïc Wacquant, "Les fins de la sociologie réflexive (Le séminaire de Chicago)," in *Invitation à la sociologie réflexive,* (Paris: Seuil, 2014), 194.
[64] Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron, *La reproduction: éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement*, (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1970), 91.
[65] Alberto Sed, *Sono stato un numero. Alberto Sed racconta*, ed. Roberto Riccardi, (Florence: La Giuntina, 2009), 85.

languages a possible weapon of survival.

Nationality and stereotypes

The isolation of the Italian minority of Jews in the camps (6 806 deported individuals[66]), was soon accompanied by stereotypical images or abusive language coming from other Jewish deportees. In the Italian testimonies these stereotypes return many times and isolate the witnesses further. Leonella Jona Bellinzona recalls:

> The Italian woman, who entered the camp between the end of 1943 and 1944, when she entered the camp, found herself even below the sub-proletariat, if it's possible to express it this way, because she arrived in the camp being considered with an evil eye by the Germans, who were calling us *Badoglio* and who spitted when we passed. Considered with an evil eye by the other inmates and surrounded by their terrible mistrust; they called us *Mussolini fascist* and, besides, a complete ignorance of the language.[67]

The insults that the Italians have most endured are undoubtedly those referring to the contemporary political situation in Italy: the use of the names Badoglio[68] and Mussolini were indeed very frequent. It is interesting to note here that in the ADP corpus, looking for co-occurring words with the word "Germans," the word "Badoglio" emerges three times.[69] The oral testimony of Elena Recanati Foà,[70] who was interned in Birkenau, Bergen Belsen, Braunschweig and Ravensbrück, is particularly explicit on the matter:

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[66] Liliana Picciotto Fargion, "Tavole riassuntive della persecuzione antiebraica in Italia," in *Il libro della memoria. Gli Ebrei deportati dall'Italia (1943-1945),* 28.

[67] *Trascrizione intervista a Leonella Bellinzona* [IT Coo FD451], 27, interviewer: Laura Matteucci, September 27-29, 1982; October 7, 1982, Archivio della deportazione piemontese, Archivio Istoreto, Turin.

[68] Pietro Badoglio, Marshal of Italy and future head of state, signs the armistice with the Allies on September 8, 1943.

[69] Frequency of occurrence 3, co-frequency 3, mean distance 8.7.

[70] Elena Recanati, daughter of Luigi Recanati, a trader, and Luigia Simon, was born on November 12, 1922 in Turin. The family, due to the racial persecutions in 1938, fled to Rome. She married Guido Foà on August 9, 1942, in Rome and moved back to Turin, where their first child, Massimo, was born. The family went into hiding in Canischio, but was finally arrested on August 9, 1944. In prison, the baby was put into safety. Elena Recanati Foà was deported through Bolzano to Auschwitz on October 24, 1944. She was transferred after only three days to

> And then I have to say, perhaps because I was used to being persecuted, persecuted as a Jew, persecuted also during the captivity... when I was in the hands of the Germans ... the Germans persecuted me because I was Jewish, but the Poles, with whom we were, also hated us, because we – Italians- were not Jews like them, we did not understand Yiddish, we had a different mentality, we didn't feel equal; so we were already detested by the other Jews who considered us different. And in addition, the Germans hated us because we were Italians. Among the Germans they said: 'Italienen, ah Badoglio.' When I was liberated by the Russians: 'Italianska, ah Mussolini.' It was never ok, I had always been persecuted for one reason or another, for being Jewish, for being Italian, for being a woman.[71]

Apart from the insults related to the Italian political situation, there are also much more "common" insults to be found in Italian testimonies, such as *Macaroni*, and its variants *Maccheroni*, *Macarrone* (litt. "pasta eaters"). This is the case in particular in the testimony of Bruno Piazza:[72]

> I had already experienced during the day how the Italians (and also the Greeks) were treated worse than all the others by the Poles. We were a small minority and they despised us. '*Taliano*?' they asked with a sarcastic smile. '*Maccaroni*?' and they softened the "*r*" so that they seemed to say '*Maccagioni*.' 'Spaghetti,' I replied without losing my composure, 'Tagliatelli in sauce and tortellini from Bologna, quite the opposite of your dishwater,' they didn't understand all of it, but they realized that I laughed at them and repeated seriously: '*Taliani*

Bergen Belsen and from there to Brunswick and then to Ravensbrück. She was liberated on April 30, 1945 by the Russian army.

[71] *Trascrizione intervista a Elena Recanati* [IT Coo FD867], 28, interviewer: Laura Matteucci, March 30, 1982, *Archivio della deportazione piemontese,* Archivio Istoreto, Turin.

[72] Bruno Piazza, son of Giulio Piazza and Olga Frankel, was born on December 16, in Trieste. He was a lawyer and journalist and was married to Angela De Job with whom he had three children. Bruno Piazza was arrested (for the second time) on July 13, 1944 in Trieste because of his supposed antifascist activities. He was interned in the Risiera di San Sabba camp and then transferred to the prison of Trieste (Coroneo). He was deported on July 31, 1944 as a political prisoner to Auschwitz. In Birkenau he supervises the storage area. After being selected for the gas chambers (where he got pulled out because of the fact that he had been deported for political reasons), he occupied the function of *Schreiber* in his block. Bruno Piazza was liberated on January 27, 1945, by the Russian army.

> *maccaroni*, *greco bandito.*[73]" The company of these stupid and wicked people, scum of the backstreets of Cracow, Warsaw, Lviv, and Lublin, was indeed one of the innumerable torments of the camp.[74]

These elements are present in testimonies of deportees interned in different Nazi concentration and extermination camps (in particular Ravensbrück, Bergen Belsen and various Auschwitz camps), which means that they were reproduced independently in different places. The fact that common insults of all times like *Maccaroni* did find their way into the extreme living conditions of the Nazi concentration camps, goes to show that a sort of normality does find its way within these particular social spaces.

Length of internment in the concentration and extermination camps

There was yet another inequality among the deportees, accentuated by the policies of deportation in the respective countries: if the Polish and German Jews seemed to be at the top of the scale (among the Jews) it had to do as well with their "Seniority" of imprisonment (those who survive have now exceeded many selections). The intermediate "positions" were then attributed to those who were or deported at an earlier stage, from 1942 onwards (the French for example), or those who understood the languages of the camps more quickly (due to language proximity).

The fact that Italian Jews entered the camps relatively late made the adaptation time "attributed" to them by the other prisoners extremely reduced.[75] Indeed, the accounts testify about the lack of understanding of the "old" detainees. Especially in the women's testimonies, the hatred against the Italians is clear and is mainly due to the fact that the Italians were able to stay much longer in their homes of origin, that they had to endure "less terrible events": in other words, all those who have not been, at least for a while, in Birkenau did not deserve respect.[76]

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[73] Translation: "*Italians macaronis, Greeks criminals*"

[74] Bruno Piazza, *Perché gli altri dimenticano*, (Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 1956), 85-6.

[75] Yisrael Gutman, "Social Stratification in the Concentration Camps," in *The Nazi Concentration Camps: Structure and Aims, the Image of the Prisoner, the Jews in the Camps, Proceedings of the Fourth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference – January 1980,* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984), 172.

[76] Ima Spanjaard Van Esso declares in particular: "On top of that, they [Polish and Czech deportees] could not seem to forgive us that we had not been in Birkenau." Declaration of Ima

The place of the Italians is, from this point of view, indeed far from being preeminent. Their presence in the camps dating, for the longest, only from October 1943, they found themselves in rather the same conditions as the Jews deported from Greece (deportation being organized from February 1943 for the Jews of Salonica and later for the Greeks of the south). The Italians (and Greeks, for that matter) did not take long, in turn, to assert their seniority on those who arrived later: this is the case in particular with the Hungarians (Hungary being occupied by the Germans on March 12, 1944, deportation was organized, after a stage of ghettoization, from April and until July 1944). If the Poles, in the Italian testimonies we have consulted, had an image of a "violent" people (because of their privileged, hierarchical roles), but were generally respected by the fear they cause and by their ability to have overcome, physically and mentally, so many trials, the Italians soon stigmatized the Hungarians as "Physically degraded, dirty beings." Dora Klein[77] writes how a co-deportee (named Marta), seeing her poorly tended, said: "Calm down then, do your hair and be a little more self-assured, like this you look like a Hungarian."[78] Dora Klein continues: "I had to realize to my great regret how the Hungarian Jews didn't appear to us as victims of a tragic event, but as a symbol of physical degradation." Giuliana Fiorentino Tedeschi[79] explains this change of condition from the bottom of the scale to a

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Shalom Spanjaard Van Esso, interviewer: R.C. Broek, Utrecht, April 13, 1948, n. 854, 250d: Kampen en Gevangenissen, Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Amsterdam.

[77] Dora Klein, daughter of Baruch Klein, a trader, and Rosa Herskowicz, was born on January 25 1913 in Lodz, Poland. The spoken languages within the family household are Yiddish, Polish and German. She was denied access to Medical school (because of her Jewish background) and decided to migrate to Bratislava (Czechoslovakia) in 1930. She was forced to leave the country because of communist activities. She pursued her medical studies at the University of Bologna. Dora Klein then moved to Naples to be close to her fiancé. The couple's first daughter, Silvia, was born on the 25th of November 1937. In order to flee further Nazi persecutions, she left her daughter in Udine and moved to Borgotaro, where she was arrested on the 30th of November 1943. She was deported through Fossoli to Auschwitz on April 5, 1944. Dora Klein was nominated *Ärtzin,* doctor, in the Auschwitz sub-camp Budy. She was transferred in January 1945 to Bergen Belsen where she was liberated by the British army on April 15, 1945.

[78] Dora Klein, *Vivere e sopravvivere: diario 1936-1945*, (Milan: Ugo Mursia Editore, 2001), 236.

[79] Giuliana Fiorentino, daughter of Carlo Fiorentino, a pharmacist, and Rina Rietti, was born on April 9, 1914 in Milan. She mastered in linguistics at the University of Milan in 1936. She married the architect Giorgio Tedeschi and moved to Turin in 1939, where her two children were born. Giuliana was arrested with her husband on the 8th of March 1944, the children were put into safety. Giuliana was deported on the 5th of April 1944 through the Fossoli transit camp to Auschwitz. In Birkenau she worked in the recycling of shoes before being transferred to Auschwitz I, where she worked mainly in construction commandos. Giuliana Fiorentino was

middle position: "Ours was an exceptional group. We had left aside the Greeks, too savage, and removed the Hungarians, unbearable and bleating with those plaintive characteristic of their language, and we had constituted a Latin sector."[80] If at the beginning Italian witnesses testify about inferiority or stigmatization, the more their concentration camp experience settled in time, the more their situation normalized.[81]

Figure 12
The frequency of occurrence of the word "Hungarian/s" according to its semantic value (through concordance analyses)

	Frequency of occurrence
Enumeration of nationalities	3
Witnesses' origins	4
Neutral (descriptive value)	4
Language barrier	2
Humiliating value	4
Occurrences total	17

The lexicometric concordance analyses of the ADP corpus (figure 12) highlight in this same sense how the lemma "Hungarian(s)" [*ungherese/i*] is used in the first place for practical reasons (the enumeration of the nationalities present in the barracks, the possible Hungarian origins[82] of the witnesses, the description of a prisoner, identified by his nationality: *the Hungarian did so, did that*...). However, the lemma is used as well to pejoratively designate a group of off-center prisoners ("The Hungarians who were moribund ... / the lamentations of the Hungarians..."). Unlike the lemma "Pole(s)/Polish," used by the witnesses in statements indicating a feeling of inferiority, the Hungarians are referred to in a rather condescending way.

transferred in January 1945 to Ravensbrück, and from there to Malchow and Leipzig. During the evacuation march from Malchow she fled on April 22, 1945.

[80] Giuliana Tedeschi, *Questo povero corpo*, (Milan: Editrice Italiana, 1946), 61.

[81] "The situation of Italians, in the camp, in the beginning, was terrible; then, slowly, making oneself understood, with gestures and words, the situation got a little better." *Trascrizione intervista a Leonella Bellinzona* [IT C00 FD451], 16, interviewer: Laura Matteucci, September 27/29, 1982, October 7, 1982, Archivio della deportazione piemontese, Archivio Istoreto, Turin.

[82] In this case the deportee Elemer Gyarmatj, born in Baja.

In the ADP corpus, which, as said, remains however very restricted, the lemma "Greek(s)" [*greco/a/i/che*] only occurs a total of ten times. If half of these occurrences relate to the witness's pre-deportation studies (the learning of ancient Greek in high-school) or to the description of other nationalities in the camps; the other half concerns descriptions with a rather positive value: (e.g. "The Greeks were very human…").

Conclusion

Through interactions that occur in the Nazi concentration camps, tacit and informal hierarchical relationships did emerge. When two deportees spoke to one another, a political deportee to a Jewish deportee, a Jewish Polish deportee to a Jewish Italian deportee, a deportee who had been in camps for years to a deportee who had only just arrived, they weren't merely two deportees speaking: through them spoke their social, religious, cultural and political backgrounds and conditions, and more broadly the recent history of persecution and deportation, the general history of Jewish persecutions and diaspora, the history of religious divergences…[83]. This study shows that there are as many mechanisms of subordination put in place officially (through the categorization of prisoners for example), as there are, emerging in a "natural" way.

The fact that Italian deportees constituted a minority within the camps (due to the fact that they were deported relatively late and that their number was significantly lower compared to other nationalities) had as a result that Italian Jews seem to have been particularly disadvantaged. What emerges from the study of 40 of their testimonies is that Italian Jews often felt isolated and therefore even more stigmatized. Belonging to a minority, or to (an) isolated group(s), which, moreover, in general had poor linguistic capacities, represented an additional symbolic violence. It must be added that as the concentration camp experience settled in time, Italians began to find their place and did not hesitate to stigmatize other groups, in particular through the use of abusive language. This further emphasizes a form of normalization of the life within the camps. I would also

[83] The image is borrowed from the description of Pierre Bourdieu. Pierre Bourdieu, Loïc Wacquant, "Les fins de la sociologie réflexive (Le séminaire de Chicago)," in *Invitation à la sociologie réflexive,* (Paris: Seuil, 2014), 195.

argue that the fact that the Italian Jews felt as isolated as their testimonies show, made them connect to one another even more so than other national groups.[84]

It should also be noted that the witnesses of the corpus that seem particularly sensitive to the questions raised in this paper present rather homogeneous profiles. In 7 out of the 40 testimonies[85] we analyzed, an explicit reflection on language, subordination and stigmatization returns predominantly (if in the other testimonies these elements can be present, they are more implicit). These witnesses, four women and three men, all come (except for Elena Recanati Foà[86]) from the "intellectual fraction" (upper classes) of the mobilized corpus: two of them are teachers; one is a translator; another a lawyer / politician; and finally one doctor and one chemist. The witnesses' identity (conveyed by a political, social cultural background of origin, or on the contrary by the peculiarities of his/her experience in the camps or in the aftermath of the war) often seems to decide on the central themes of the testimony. In other words, the witnesses would have been more sensitive in their testimony to particular aspects of deportation according to their experiences before, during and after deportation. Thereupon, we must keep in mind that in the corpus on which we have carried out lexicometric analyses, the individuals coming from the upper classes are overrepresented and that the interviews take place 40 years after their concentration camp experiences.

It should be noted as well, that we didn't get beyond studying informal domination on the scale of groups (Italian Jews), which necessarily implies falling back on generalizations and representations. As in all forms of society, there are even more forms of hierarchization and relations of dominance at the level of individuals, which could be the subject of a more in-depth study.

[84] I carried out this same research based on a corpus of Dutch testimonies. What emerges from this study is that the latter experienced to a lesser extent isolation or incomprehension than the Italians did. Furthermore, the Dutch deportees testify more on mingling with other nationalities than on constituting small national groups.

[85] Liana Millul; Leonella Jona Bellinzona; Primo Levi; Elena Recanati Foa; Dora Klein; Bruno Piazza; Teodoro Ducci.

[86] Her father is a sales representative (petty bourgeoisie).

Figure 13
List of full lexicon classified according to the frequency of occurrence (without lemmatization)

	nouns / adjectives	english translation	frequency of occurrence
1	campo	camp	454
2	lavoro	labor	144
3	**tedeschi**	Germans	144
4	gente	people	134
5	modo	way	134
6	SS	SS	127
7	**russi**	Russians	123
8	madre	mother	122
9	vita	life	117
10	confuso	confused	111
11	giorni	days	109
12	Auschwitz	Auschwitz	107
13	fratello	brother	106
14	notte	night	102
15	campi	camps	101
16	persone	persons	99
17	donne	women	98
18	famiglia	family	95
19	guerra	war	90
20	momento	moment	90
21	Italia	Italy	88
22	mesi	months	88
23	**italiani**	Italians	85
24	marito	husband	83
25	padre	father	83
26	treno	train	80
27	tempo	time / wheather	79
28	esempio	example	77
29	sera	evening	74
30	terribile	terrible	74
31	**tedesco**	German	71
32	ebrei	Jews	70
33	figlio	son	67
34	prigionieri	prisoners	65
35	Fossoli	Fossoli (transit camp)	64
36	punto	point	62
37	medico	doctor	61
38	pane	bread	60
39	bambino	child	59
40	mamma	mum	58
41	giovane	young	56
42	sorella	sister	56
43	forza	strengt	54
44	**polacchi**	Poles	54
45	donna	woman	53
46	periodo	period	53
47	persona	person	53
48	piedi	feet	53
49	acqua	water	52
50	gruppo	group	52
51	camion	truck	51
52	uomini	men	51
53	appello	roll call	50
54	fame	hunger	50
55	posto	place	50
56	Germania	Germany	49
57	mattino	morning	49
58	viaggio	journey	49
59	moglie	wife	48
60	baracca	block	47
61	capo	*Kapo*	47
62	mano	hand	47
63	vista	view	47
64	anno	year	46
65	fortuna	luck	46
66	letto	bed	46
67	scuola	school	46
68	soldati	soldiers	46

Bieke Van Camp is currently a PhD-student in Contemporary History at Université Paul-Valéry (Montpellier, France). She recently has been awarded a European Holocaust Research Infrastructure fellowship. Her doctoral dissertation, supervised by Professor Frédéric Rousseau, is entitled *The Shoah as a Social Experience and the Deportees as Social Groups. A Socio-historical Comparative Approach to Italian and Dutch-speaking Deportees.*

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