

Humiliation and Racism

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The majority of cultures throughout the world promote respect, tolerance, and benevolence as central values in social relations. Yet, we witness humiliation everyday – from slight insults and offences to severe cases of physical and psychological humiliation. We experience humiliation when another person devalues who we are, how we behave, or how we look. We can also experience humiliation in the context of intergroup relations. I study how humiliation affects responses to racism. As part of the research team of the *Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies Group* (<http://www.humiliationstudies.org/>), my research aims to represent the perspective and experience of those who are the targets of racism. Societally disadvantaged groups, such as ethnic and religious minorities, are often the target of racism. In my talk, I will present and discuss the results of two empirical studies on humiliation and racism among religious and ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom. In a first study, I asked Muslim-British how they feel about the derogatory illustrations of Islam published in some European newspapers. In a second study, I asked Black-British how they feel about the lack of media attention given to crimes committed against members of their group. In both studies, participants felt intense humiliation about the devaluation and mistreatment of their group. They also appraised the devaluation and mistreatment of their group as unfair and wrong. And, they were willing to confront racism by, for example, taking part in public debates where they could denounce racism toward their group and challenge the negative view that others have of their group.