

# **From Humiliation to Dignity: From the Brink of Disaster to a Future of Global Dignity in Solidarity**

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## **Abstract**

The notion of dignity has moved to the forefront of the desire of ever more people around the world throughout the past years, and this even though dignity is difficult to conceptualise. The article begins by looking at its critics by asking, 'What if dignity is a useless concept?', followed by the question, 'What if different concepts of dignity are incompatible with each other?' Then the article presents the author's defence of the notion of dignity and summarises how she embeds it in a larger historical context. The significance of the notion of dignity is highlighted by acknowledging the efforts of His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, a leader in the cause of peace and interfaith understanding who has been ahead of his time by working for dignity already since many decades. The article ends with a call for renewed attention to global systemic change so that humanity may face a future of dignity.

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## **Introduction: To live in dignity or indignity?**

'Winning the Human Race Against Time' was the title of a conversation that the important global thinker and former head of the Club of Rome, His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, conducted on 28th June 2022 with Mark Green, the President of the Wilson Center, a think tank that informs public policy and is based in Washington, DC, United States. This conversation was introduced with the following words, 'West Asia-North

Africa is in a race against time. Within the next thirty years, increasing air pollution and climate change-induced heatwaves and droughts will push the region closer to uninhabitability, triggering unprecedented levels of human insecurity and large-scale displacement'.<sup>2</sup>

Not just the Levante, all over the globe, historical times at present are intensifying systemic *sociocide* and *ecocide*. The suffix *-cide* means 'killing'. Words such as genocide, suicide, or pesticide all end on *-cide*, stemming from Latin *-cida* and the verb *caedo, caedes, caedere, caedi, caedum*. Ecocide is the killing of the *ecosphere*, of the ecological world<sup>3</sup> of which humans only are a small part, despite their belief to be its masters. Sociocide is the killing of the *sociosphere*, the cohesion in human communities, local and global. Sociocide and ecocide together are the consequence of long-standing systemic humiliation, of humiliation that had been congealed into systems, just as South Africa was in the grip of humiliation congealed into a system called apartheid.

Ecocide and sociocide are facilitated by the same underlying catalyst, namely, *cogitocide* — the very 'weapon' that is being used to maintain systems of humiliation. The term *cogitocide* was coined in 2020 by Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan.<sup>4</sup> *Cogito* comes from *cogitare* in Latin, 'to think',<sup>5</sup> and *cogitocide* means the killing of our *cogitosphere*, the killing of 'the realm of thinking and reflection',<sup>6</sup> the drowning of humanity in a sightless infosphere.<sup>7</sup>

In the face of this grave situation, what kinds of futures are in store for humanity? After nearly fifty years of experience with research and practice on all continents, Evelin Lindner suggests that there are four possible scenarios, as shown in Table 1.

Possible Scenarios for the Future of Humankind	
Scenario 1: We, the human species, survive in dignity by cooperating globally on the long-term protection of the common good of all living beings on Earth.	Survival in dignity
Scenario 2. If we cannot avoid extinction, even with our best efforts, if it is already too late, then we may at least go down together in dignity.	Extinction in dignity
Scenario 3. If a few were to survive, while the rest perishes in hunger, violence, and war, this would mean survival in indignity, through the humiliation of millions.	Survival in indignity
Scenario 4. If no one were to survive hunger, violence, and war, this would mean that we die out in indignity.	Extinction in indignity

Table 1, four scenarios as envisioned by Evelin Lindner, 2022

Evelin Lindner works for the first scenario, and, only if unavoidable, for the second. Her aim is to avoid the last two scenarios. Her lifelong quest has been to determine what would be needed to manifest the first scenario. Over the past decades, she has developed a model that embeds the notion of dignity in a larger historical context, together with its violation, humiliation. This model sheds light on the reasons for why dignity is difficult to conceptualise, for why the phrase 'human rights' became more prominent than 'human dignity' directly after 1948, even though dignity comes first in the foundational sentence formulated in 1948, which says that 'all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights'.

The article begins by asking, ‘What if dignity is a useless concept?’, followed by the question, ‘What if different concepts of dignity are incompatible with each other?’ Then the article presents the author’s defence of the notion of dignity and summarises how she embeds it in the larger historical trajectory of humanity as a species. The significance of the notion of dignity is highlighted by acknowledging the efforts of His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, a leader in the cause of peace and interfaith understanding who has been ahead of his time by working for dignity already since many decades. The article ends with a call for renewed attention to global systemic change so that humanity may face a future of dignity

### **What if dignity is a useless concept?<sup>8</sup>**

Philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) characterised dignity as ‘the shibboleth of all perplexed and empty-headed moralists’.<sup>9</sup> Ruth Macklin, a contemporary philosopher and professor of bioethics, as well, considers dignity to be a useless concept. For her, dignity ‘seems to have no meaning beyond what is implied by the principle of medical ethics, no meaning beyond respect for persons and the need to obtain voluntary and informed consent, plus the requirement to protect confidentiality’.<sup>10</sup> Psychologist Steven Pinker suggests that *autonomy* is a much more practical and specific term than dignity.<sup>11</sup> Yet others have proposed to replace the concept of dignity with terms such as *respect* or *pride*.<sup>12</sup>

Dignity sceptics can be found in all world regions. Dignity seems to be caught between needs and rights, between peace and justice, and between integrity and power everywhere. In India, for instance, ‘the liberty restricting potential of dignity, and its indeterminacy’ is pointed out as problematic.<sup>13</sup>

Both scepticism and acceptance are informed by more foundational questions. Which concept of human nature should underpin the concept of dignity? Which concept of human nature is correct? Which economic systems do we think are desirable and doable? Do people need competition to be motivated because humans are lazy if not pushed, or do people have an inborn desire to live in harmony and contribute with care to their community? Is equal dignity therefore to be defined as combative autonomy in a context of inequality, a context where parents must teach their smallest children to become ‘tough’? Or can dignity be defined as responsible solidarity in a context of equality? Is poverty a necessary stimulus to motivate lazy people to work harder for their dignity, or is poverty a sign that society fails to offer its citizens’ dignifying opportunities to contribute? If the latter, is poverty removable through ‘trickling down’ or redistribution within existing socio-economic systems, or should notions such a poverty be made redundant altogether with new systems that nurture equal dignity through social and economic equality at the system level? Is dignity realised when women and men are equally represented in a paid labour market? Yet, what if this is an undignifying system, altogether unable to bring dignity to people and planet in the longer term?

It is evident that the concept of human nature lies at the core of all questions. As long as a society does not decide which concept of human nature to embrace, all other debates will be stuck in mutual accusations — those who believe that human nature is inherently ‘evil’ will accuse those who believe in the ‘goodness’ of human nature of wishful naïveté, and both sides will overlook that human nature is relational and expresses itself differently in different socio-political frames.

Evelin Lindner’s model of history entails a defence of the ‘goodness’ of human nature<sup>14</sup> in need of large-scale frames that make space for this goodness to flourish.

### What if different concepts of dignity are incompatible with each other?

Bioethics philosopher Richard Ashcroft offers a fourfold classification of the various ways in which human dignity can be conceptualised.<sup>15</sup> First, there are people who regard ‘dignity talk’ as *incoherent* and *misleading* talk — Ruth Macklin was quoted earlier.<sup>16</sup> Then, there is the notion of dignity as strictly reducible to *autonomy* — Steven Pinker was quoted before. Third, thinkers such as Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum focus on *capabilities*, *functionings*, and *social interactions*.<sup>17</sup> Fourth, dignity can also be conceptualised as a *metaphysical property* possessed by all human beings, a position mainly found in European bioethics and in theological writings.<sup>18</sup>

Other thinkers offer slightly different categorisations, some make a distinction between dignity as a *general* category, dignity as an *inherent* and universal essential attribute of human beings, and dignity needing to be *earned* and contingent on actions.<sup>19</sup> One can take the views of philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) as an example for the general category, his explanation that ‘everything has either a price or a dignity’ and that ‘whatever has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; on the other hand, whatever is above all price, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has dignity’.<sup>20</sup> For Kant, human beings have dignity on the grounds of the freedom they enjoy through the rationality with which human nature is endowed.<sup>21</sup> Following Kant, dignity is a category of all non-market goods — be it aesthetics, nature, compassion, forgiveness, or certain institutions, be it institutions of marriage or institutions like the Supreme Court.<sup>22</sup> Poet and philosopher Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) built on Kant and linked dignity to *grace*, connecting morality with aesthetics so as to bring duty and nature into harmony.<sup>23</sup>

Evelin Lindner prefers the conceptualisation of dignity that is offered by discourse analyst Michael Karlberg, not least because it resonates with her historical model. Karlberg’s field of study is ‘discourse as a social force’. He offers three interpretive frames for human dignity, first, the *social command* frame, second, the *social contest* frame, and third, the *social body* frame.<sup>24</sup>

Michael Karlberg sees the social command frame as a legacy of patriarchal and authoritarian modes of thought, or what Lindner calls the *normative universe of unequal honour*. Systems scientist and activist Riane Eisler speaks of the *dominator model of society*.<sup>25</sup> Eisler has developed a cultural transformation theory through which she describes how during the past millennia otherwise widely divergent societies all over the globe followed coercion- and authority-based models of society with alpha males dominating and leading the pack. From the samurai of Japan to the Aztecs of Meso-America, people lived in hierarchies of domination under a rigidly male-dominant strongman rule, in both family and state. Hierarchies of domination were maintained by a high degree of institutionalised and socially accepted violence, ranging from wife- and child-beating within the family to aggressive warfare at the larger tribal or national level. Looking at the past millennia, Eisler’s dominator model was manifest almost everywhere on the globe, except for a few isolated Indigenous populations. Indeed, the major ‘civilisations’ of the past saw one violent ‘alpha male’ ruler following the next, with anger, ‘wrath’, aggression, brutality, and terror as their ‘badges of honour’.

Michael Karlberg theorises that the second, the social contest frame, emerged historically in response to the injustices and the oppression that the social command frame had caused. Karlberg thinks that at some point, collective well-being was no longer seen as achievable through oppressive power hierarchies but through the structuring of all social institution as a contest of power, based on metaphors of war, sports, fighting, and market competition.<sup>26</sup> Lindner would describe it as the competition between *disconnected autonomous individuals*. Like Lindner, Karlberg hypothesises that the social contest frame draws on a misperception of the social Darwinist metaphor of the ‘survival of the fittest’ insofar as it is misinterpreted

as ‘might makes right’. ‘When human nature is conceived largely in terms of self-interested motives playing out within competitive social arenas, then the autonomy of individuals and groups to pursue their own interests, within a set of rules that apply equally to all, takes on paramount importance’<sup>27</sup> The result is a mistaken normative assumption, namely, that society just needs to harness everyone’s self-interested and competitive energy into competitive contests and that this will produce winners and losers, which, in turn, will make the (surviving) populations ‘be better off’ in the long term.<sup>28</sup>

Lindner’s definition of dignity follows Karlberg’s third frame, the social body frame, which stands in opposition to the first two frames. In Lindner’s words, *interconnected individuality* is at the core of how she defines dignity, people being connected in equality in worthiness and in loving mutual solidarity and responsibility. According to Lindner’s global experience, this frame is far from an ‘imperialist Western idea’, rather, it has its roots in many cultural realms of the past, all around the world. It has re-emerged, as also Karlberg observes, ‘in a modern form over the past century in response to the ever-increasing social and ecological interdependence humanity is now experiencing on a global scale’.<sup>29</sup> The social body frame fits into the context that Riane Eisler calls the collaboration-based *partnership model of society*, or, as psychologist Linda Hartling would prefer to call it, the *mutuality model of society*, meaning a ‘movement towards mutuality in all relationships’.<sup>30</sup>

At the core of this frame is an understanding of society as an integrated organic body where the well-being of every individual or group depends upon the well-being of the entire body. This well-being is achieved within social relationships and institutional structures that foster and guide human capacities in dignifying ways and nurture the possibilities for every individual to realise their potential to contribute to the common good.

### **Equal dignity is an ‘orthopaedic challenge’, it is the art of standing upright**

As referred to above, dignity sceptics suggest that dignity is a useless notion. On the other side of the argument stands the evidence that dignity is being yearned for by a rising number of people all around the globe.<sup>31</sup> In recent years, dignity has been written into most national constitutions. The Treaty of Lisbon which forms the constitutional basis of the European Union (EU) and entered into force on 1st December 2009, stipulates ‘Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected’.<sup>32</sup> Recent revolutions have been called ‘dignity revolutions’, the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2011, for instance, has been described as a ‘dignity revolution’,<sup>33</sup> and just recently, on 18th October 2019, Chilean society ‘exploded as it had never done, unleashing social energy accumulated by decades of injustice and abuse summed up in two words: inequality and dignity’.<sup>34</sup>

Speaking about dignity provides the common ground for inter-faith dialogue. His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal is the Chairman of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Amman, Jordan, and he places ‘human dignity’ at the top of his list of priorities.<sup>35</sup> During his lifetime, he has received many honorary doctorates, among others, he received the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from the University of Oklahoma, U.S.A., in 2002. He was honoured with the following words that show that he was far ahead of his time:

His Royal Highness, Prince El Hassan bin Talal, has devoted his life to the creation of a society in which pluralism is respected and people of all backgrounds and religions can live and work together in freedom and with dignity. His personal vision, his writings, and his leadership for a quarter of a century have greatly impacted Interfaith dialogue, commitment to human rights, educational opportunities, and the alleviation of poverty. He has co-chaired the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues. ... As a man of peace who has fostered mutual understanding among all people by the way in

which he has lived his life, the University honors His Royal Highness, Prince El Hassan bin Talal.<sup>36</sup>

Evelin Lindner stands firmly by the notion of dignity as well. She points out that the phrase dignity alone can be ambiguous and therefore benefits from being qualified. The word *dignitary* highlights the problem as it betrays the traditional hierarchical roots of the concept of dignity — a dignitary is a ‘higher being’ standing above ‘lesser beings’. Only after the Second World War did the *Zeitgeist* embrace the ideal of *equal dignity for all*, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948 and formulated in the sentence ‘All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights’.

In 2022, at the time when this article is written, the *Zeitgeist* is divided: One group strives for equal dignity for all as responsible individuals, free to engage in loving mutual solidarity, while others aim to re-create a world of ranked order, where ‘dignitaries’ are granted the ‘freedom’ to preside over supposedly lesser beings.

In her work, Lindner describes dignity as a lived experience that cannot be defined academically along the line of laws of nature stipulated in physics. Equal dignity is an embodied sense of being able to stand tall and hold one’s head up high, as high as everyone else’s. Equal dignity is an ‘orthopaedic challenge’, it is the art of walking upright.<sup>37</sup> It means looking into the eyes of fellow human beings as equals rather than being humiliated and bowing down in submissive servility or sticking one’s nose up in haughty arrogance.<sup>38</sup> Equal dignity is a posture, a *Haltung*, in German.<sup>39</sup> It is a posture of dignified humility — of humble pride<sup>40</sup> — neither looking up to others from humiliated inferiority nor looking down on others from arrogant superiority. Equal dignity means for inferiors to become aware that they need no longer to accept humiliation in docile meekness, while it means for superiors to learn to step down from arrogating supremacy and stop using humiliation to keep others in an inferior position. *Uppity* was once a derogatory word to describe black persons who held their heads ‘too high’ and ‘didn’t know their place’ in the ranking order.<sup>41</sup> Today, equal dignity invites everyone to reject not just ‘uppity’, but to abandon the entire ranking order for human worth that ranges from superiority to inferiority, more even, to include all living beings and acknowledge that there can be no human dignity if there is no dignity for the entire planet.

For dignity to manifest, equality is not enough, however. Human rights ideals represent more than just an invitation to hold heads up so that all are equals. They invite everyone to do more, namely, to also open their arms and offer respectful solidarity to others. These ideals ask everyone to refrain from sticking their elbows out in divisive competition even if they were equals, just as much as nobody should smother others with choking embraces. Everyone is invited to protect unity in diversity through avoiding hostile division as much as suffocating uniformity. All are invited to meet in the middle between top and bottom, at the level of equal dignity in shared humility and solidarity, so that all can join hands in co-creating a decent future together.<sup>42</sup> Co-creating a decent future means liberating all living beings on the planet from all global political and economic frames that are undignifying.

Like dignity, humiliation is an embodied concept to the extent that people very often cannot find words to speak about it and it is easier to express it in other mediums, such as drawings or photography.<sup>43</sup> ‘Humiliation is hard to understand until one is humiliated’, but ‘then its impact can be devastating’.<sup>44</sup>

In sum, for Lindner, dignity is the ability to stand upright with open arms, lovingly welcoming all others into mutual responsibility for unity in diversity as equals in worthiness. Lindner sees equal dignity as an existential given that is universal, irrespective of the fact that it is being experienced and expressed differently in each cultural context and by each individual.<sup>45</sup> Lindner calls for *respect for the equality in dignity of all individuals as free persons, free to engage in loving dialogue and responsible mutual solidarity with each other*

*and with humanity's ecological foundations, not free to humiliate people or deplete the planet.*

### **The aftermath of World War II — Dignity's window of opportunity**

Human beings are capable of competition as much as of cooperation, of egoism as much as of altruism. It is the cultural environment, the kind of education and training it offers, the opportunities for moral development, and the institutional structures within which people act, that guide which way they will go.<sup>46</sup> As long as humankind fails to define itself as one single global in-group, people must be expected to invest their ability to cooperate into their in-group's competition with out-groups. Political scientists who study international relations theory speak of the *security dilemma*, meaning, simplified, 'We have to amass weapons, because we are scared. When we amass weapons, you get scared. You amass weapons, we get more scared'.<sup>47</sup> The motto of the security dilemma is *If you want peace, prepare for war*.<sup>48</sup> Wherever this dilemma is strong, non-cooperation is enforced between hostile out-groups, while cooperation is imposed within in-groups. Love for 'my people' commands hatred for 'our enemies'. In Evelin Lindner's book on terrorism, she describes how 'violence, hatred, and terror are deeply intertwined with honour, heroism, glory, and love'.<sup>49</sup> Arms races are the result, which lead to war, interrupted only by brief periods of truce that last as long as power balances between opponents are maintained.

The Second World War opened a unique historical window of opportunity to unite humanity into one single in-group and liberate it from the notion of out-groups. The core sentence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 is, 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. This sentence does *not* say, 'All Americans are born free and equal in dignity and rights', or 'All Frenchmen are born free and equal in dignity and rights'.

In February 1947, a group chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt began drafting the International Bill of Human Rights. Kathryn Sikkink, expert of international norms and institutions, offers a concise recapitulation of the chronology that led up to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948.<sup>50</sup>

One lesson to be learned from this historical moment is that norms need not come from powerful states, as shown by the emergence of human rights norms in Latin America and other Global South countries. While Eleanor Roosevelt chaired the new United Nations Human Rights Commission, French jurist René Cassin as a member of the Commission, and deeply involved in writing the UDHR was also Charles Malik from Lebanon, Peng Chun Chang from China — a student of John Dewey — together with Hernán Santa Cruz from Chile, who worked to include economic, social, and cultural rights. People like Bertha Lutz, a Brazilian biologist, feminist, and lawyer, and Hansa Mehta, an Indian delegate and independence activist, insisted on the explicit recognition of equal rights of women and men in the UN Charter and the UDHR.

Not least Begum Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, the mother of Princess Sarvath El Hassan, the wife of Prince El Hassan bin Talal, was a delegate to the United Nations, and worked on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. She was the only Muslim woman participating in this work.

While pro-human rights advocates were brave and enlightened enough to use the unique historical window of opportunity that opened after the Second World War, and while many universal human rights instruments have been added since 1948 through the unremitting efforts of many courageous individual activists, unfortunately, however, the world community as a whole has squandered the window of opportunity that was offered by the end of the Cold War.<sup>51</sup> Until 2006, the number of true democracies increased around the world, while this number has declined since then. The twenty-first century may one day become

known for a rather undignified ‘rise of the autocrat’.<sup>52</sup>

At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic the hope was that it may make humanity pause. The hope was that the *anthro-pause* caused by worldwide lockdown finally would open a new ‘Eleanor Roosevelt moment’ for a major re-orientation.<sup>53</sup> Two years later, this hope has largely waned. Now we must wait for the next window of opportunity, and when it opens, the ‘Eleanor Roosevelts’ of today must be ready.

### Conclusion

In times of global crises, and after being at home on all continents for many decades, Evelin Lindner concludes that it is imperative for humankind to embrace the social body frame of dignity that Michael Karlberg conceptualises, and to do so not just locally but globally. It is vital to do so effectively, systematically and systemically, through building systemic structures for the global village that reflect the oneness of the species *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Global institutional structures are needed that open space for the human potential for global connectedness and cooperation, because only then will it be possible to save the world from cogitocide, sociocide, and ecocide.<sup>54</sup> The consciousness of humanity’s oneness ‘entails a radical reconception of the relationship between the individual and society’.<sup>55</sup> When such structures are in place, it will become safe for parents to cultivate already in the smallest children the capacity for cooperation and altruism that every single individual is endowed with already at birth.<sup>56</sup>

So far, globalisation has had very dark sides, it brought ‘McDonaldisation’ to the world and contributed to the depletion of humanity’s cogitosphere, sociosphere, and ecosphere. However, it also brought a historically unprecedented degree of global interconnectedness that could be used for the good of humankind. There is a unique opportunity to leave behind concepts such as *local military security* and *profit through exploitation of planet and people* and instead practice dignity in form of globally responsible solidarity. There is unprecedented space for the co-creation of global systemic frames that ensure *global human security* and the *protection of planet Earth as humanity’s commons*.

Globally responsible solidarity remains wanting as long as backward-looking cycles of humiliation sap all energy and cloud a clear view into the future. Wherever Lindner goes, all over the world, she comes across cycles of humiliation driven by hot button words. The strongest usually end on -ism, such as ‘capitalism’ or ‘socialism’. Lindner has therefore coined the term *dignism* (dignity + ism) to replace the terminology of capitalism, socialism, or communism as catchwords. She wishes to circumvent the cycles of humiliation that are driven by enraged people who do not even know what these catchwords mean.<sup>57</sup> Lindner’s aim is to turn away from combative retrograde mindsets and point at positive future-oriented goals that can unite all:

Dignism describes a world where every newborn finds space and is nurtured to unfold their highest and best, embedded in a social context of loving appreciation and connection, where the carrying capacity of the planet guides the ways in which everyone’s basic needs are met. It is a world where *unity in diversity* reigns, where we unite in respecting human dignity and celebrating diversity, where we prevent unity from devolving into oppressive uniformity, and keep diversity from sliding into hostile division. Dignism means ending past cycles of humiliation and preventing new ones from emerging. Dignism means loving care for the common good of all of humanity as co-inhabitants of one single finite habitat. Dignism weaves together all dignifying aspects of all the world’s cultures into one decent global village.



For many decades, Lindner has been waiting for a new ‘Eleanor Roosevelt *moment*’ to give new impetus to a worldwide *dignity movement*.<sup>58</sup> As cascading crises unfold around the world, an exponential change of heart is needed so that global unity rooted in respect for local diversity becomes possible. There is only a short time window open for humanity to mitigate catastrophe, as the loss of species and the change of climate accelerates. The central question humanity faces, and that must be asked and answered jointly in all languages, remains:

*How must we, humankind, arrange our affairs on this planet so that dignified life on this planet will be possible in the long term?*

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## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> *Winning the Human Race Against Time: A Conversation with HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan*, Wilson Center, Washington, DC, 28th June 2022, [www.wilsoncenter.org/event/winning-human-race-against-time-conversation-hrh-prince-el-hassan-bin-talal-jordan](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/winning-human-race-against-time-conversation-hrh-prince-el-hassan-bin-talal-jordan).

<sup>3</sup> As a term, *ecocide* dates to 1970, when Arthur Galston, an American botanist, used it to describe the appalling effects of Agent Orange on the vast forests of Vietnam and Cambodia. See also Polly Higgins, *Eradicating Ecocide: Exposing the Corporate and Political Practices Destroying the Planet and Proposing the Laws Needed to Eradicate Ecocide*, 2nd ed. (London: Shephard Walwyn, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> In a personal message to the author on 19th May 2020, Prince El Hassan bin Talal suggested the term *cogitocide*. He proposed the term *cogitosphere* in his Opening Address to the 2004 Annual Conference of the Club of Rome 'On limits to ignorance: The challenge of informed humanity', 11th–

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12th October 2004 in Helsinki, Finland. His address was titled *The Challenge of Informed Humanity: From 'Infosphere' to 'Cogitosphere'*.

<sup>5</sup> *Cogito, ergo sum* is a well-known philosophical proposition by philosopher René Descartes, meaning 'I think, therefore I am'. *Cogito, ergo sum* originally appeared in French as *je pense, donc je suis* in 1637, in Descartes' oeuvre *Discours de la méthode*. Descartes intended to say *dubito, ergo cogito, ergo sum*, or 'I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I am'.

<sup>6</sup> *The Challenge of Informed Humanity: From 'Infosphere' to 'Cogitosphere'*, Prince El Hassan bin Talal's Opening Address to the 2004 Annual Conference of the Club of Rome 'On Limits to Ignorance: The Challenge of Informed Humanity', 11th–12th October 2004 in Helsinki, Finland.

<sup>7</sup> Prince El Hassan bin Talal often refers to cultural theorist Paul Virilio, originator of the concept of *dromology*, 'the science of speed'. Virilio points at a media-driven acceleration that results in an infosphere that diminishes and engulfs the political subject, the accountable leader as much as the participatory citizen and the deliberative process itself. The outcome is what bin Talal calls *infoterror* and *infowar*, and what Virilio describes as the 'aesthetics of disappearance'. See Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e). French original *Vitesse et Politique*, Paris: Édition Galilée, 1977, 1977/2006).

<sup>8</sup> The following sections are adapted from Evelin Gerda Lindner, *From Humiliation to Dignity: For a Future of Global Solidarity* (Lake Oswego, OR: World Dignity University Press, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The Basis of Morality*, trans. Arthur Brodrick Bullock (London: Swan Sonnenschein. German original *Ueber die Grundlage der Moral* or *Ueber das Fundament der Moral*, submitted to The Danish Royal Society of Sciences, Copenhagen, 30th January 1840, 1840/1903), 101. See also Michael Rosen, 'The Shibboleth of All Empty-Headed Moralists', in *Dignity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Ruth Macklin, 'Dignity Is a Useless Concept', *British Medical Journal* 327, no. 7429, December (2003), <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.327.7429.1419>, [www.bmj.com/bmj/327/7429/1419.full.pdf](http://www.bmj.com/bmj/327/7429/1419.full.pdf), Abstract.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Stupidity of Dignity', by Steven Pinker, *The New Republic*, 27th May 2008, <https://newrepublic.com/article/64674/the-stupidity-dignity>. See also Deryck Beyleveld and Roger Brownsword, *Human Dignity in Bioethics and Biolaw* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Clements, professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, and convener of the 17th Annual Conference in Dunedin, New Zealand, in 2011.

<sup>13</sup> 'Defining Dignity: The Concept Is Being Invoked by Supreme Court, But Not in a Uniform Manner', by Pritam Baruah and Vikram Aditya Narayan, *Indian Express*, 9th October 2018, <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/defining-dignity-supreme-court-constitution-5392693/>.

<sup>14</sup> See Evelin Gerda Lindner, *Human Nature and Dignity: If We Continue to Believe in the Evilness of Human Nature, We May Be Doomed* (Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies. Book proposal, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> Richard E. Ashcroft, 'Making Sense of Dignity', *Journal of Medical Ethics* 31, no. 11 (2005), <https://doi.org/10.1136/jme.2004.011130>, <http://jme.bmj.com/content/31/11/679.full.pdf+html>, 679.

<sup>16</sup> Macklin, 'Dignity Is a Useless Concept'.

<sup>17</sup> See the work on development and freedom by Amartya Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), and Martha Martha C. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Ashcroft describes this position as mainstream in European bioethics and theological writing on bioethical topics, as exemplified in Leon Leon Kass, *Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> See Michael Pirson, Kenneth Goodpaster, and Claus Dierksmeier, 'Human Dignity and Business: Guest Editors' Introduction', *Business Ethics Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2016),

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<https://doi.org/10.1017/beq.2016.47>, drawing on Michael J. Meyer and William A. Parent, eds., *The Constitution of Rights: Human Dignity and American Values* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), and Randy Hodson, *Dignity at Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung Zur Metaphysik Der Sitten* (Riga, Latvia: Johann Friedrich Hartknock, 1785), chapter 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. See also Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe Der Rechtslehre. Die Metaphysik Der Sitten, Erster Teil* (Königsberg: Friedrich Nicolovius, 1797),

<sup>22</sup> See, among others, Christopher McCrudden, ed., *Understanding Human Dignity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. Proceedings of the British Academy, Volume 192, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Friedrich Schiller, 'Ueber Anmuth Und Würde', in *Neue Thalia, Dritter Band* (Leipzig: G. J. Göschen'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1793), 205.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Robert Karlberg, *Reframing the Concept of Human Dignity* (Paper originally presented at the conference Reflections on Human Dignity at the University of Maryland, April 19, 2013, 2013), Conclusion.

<sup>25</sup> See Riane Tennenhaus Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987). Her most recent books are Riane Tennenhaus Eisler, *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2007), and Riane Eisler and Douglas P. Fry, *Nurturing Our Humanity: How Domination and Partnership Shape Our Brains, Lives, and Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

<sup>26</sup> Western-liberal political philosophy defines the forms of dignity that can be legally respected and protected by a state as the right to *self-determination*, *autonomy*, and *agency*. See Michael Rosen, *Dignity: Its History and Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> Karlberg, *Reframing the Concept of Human Dignity*.

<sup>28</sup> Karlberg, *Reframing the Concept of Human Dignity*, 7. See also note 768 in chapter 3 of Lindner, *From Humiliation to Dignity: For a Future of Global Solidarity*.

<sup>29</sup> Karlberg, *Reframing the Concept of Human Dignity*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Linda Hartling in a personal communication, 5th October 2020.

<sup>31</sup> See Evelin Gerda Lindner, *The Concept of Human Dignity* (Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/eu-charter/article/1-human-dignity>.

<sup>33</sup> See Zaynab El Bernoussi, 'The Postcolonial Politics of Dignity: From the 1956 Suez Nationalization to the 2011 Revolution in Egypt', *International Sociology* 30, no. 4 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580914537848>. See also Zaynab El Bernoussi, *Dignity in the Egyptian Revolution: Protest and Demand During the Arab Uprisings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

<sup>34</sup> 'Chile, the Revolution of the Indignados: The Dignity of a People Fighting against a Lacerating Inequality', by Fernando Ayala, *Wall Street International Magazine*, 11th January 2020, <https://wsimag.com/economy-and-politics/60151-chile-the-revolution-of-the-indignados>.

<sup>35</sup> See [www.elhassanbintalal.jo/en-us/Human-Dignity](http://www.elhassanbintalal.jo/en-us/Human-Dignity).

<sup>36</sup> Prince El Hassan Bin Talal and Alain Elkann, *To Be a Muslim: Islam, Peace, and Democracy* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004), vii–viii. See for the breadth of HRH's dignity work over the past decades, for instance, Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, 'Water: The One Crisis That Also Represents the Biggest Opportunity for a Middle East People's Peace', *Mediterranean Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1215/10474552-2830891>, Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, Alain Elkann, and Elio Toaff, *Camminare Insieme* (Milan, Italy: Bompiani, 2015), Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, *Peacemaking: An inside Story of the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli Treaty* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, *Continuity, Innovation and Changes: Selected*

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<sup>37</sup> See Franz Josef Wetz, *Die Rebellion Der Selbstachtung: Gegen Demütigung* (Aschaffenburg, Germany: Alibri, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> See Evelin Gerda Lindner, *Humiliation in the Flesh. Honour Is 'Face', Arrogance Is 'Nose up', and Humiliation Is 'to Be Put Down'* (Oslo: University of Oslo, Department of Psychology, 2000), based on George P. Lakoff and Mark L. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); George P. Lakoff and Mark L. Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). See also chapter 4 in Lindner, *From Humiliation to Dignity: For a Future of Global Solidarity*.

<sup>39</sup> See Eva Weber-Guskar, *Würde Als Haltung. Eine Philosophische Untersuchung Zum Begriff Der Menschenwürde* (Münster, Germany: mentis, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> Psychotherapist Carol Smaldino uses the phrase *intrinsic pride* in 'Addressing the "Toxins in Our Hearts": A Conversation with Mary Gordon, Founder of Roots of Empathy', *Huffington Post*, 21st December 2017, [www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/addressing-the-toxins-in-our-hearts-a-conversation\\_us\\_5a3c7b0ce4b0d86c803c70a0](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/addressing-the-toxins-in-our-hearts-a-conversation_us_5a3c7b0ce4b0d86c803c70a0).

<sup>41</sup> A collection of nineteenth-century African American folktales known as Uncle Remus stories became a derogatory way to describe blacks. Uncle Remus is a fictional black narrator, who calls a stuck-up sparrow 'uppity'.

<sup>42</sup> See also *Dignity Is a Vital Force*, by Beth Boynton, 2019, [www.confidentvoices.com/2019/04/23/dignity-is-a-vital-force-medical-improv-holds-the-key/](http://www.confidentvoices.com/2019/04/23/dignity-is-a-vital-force-medical-improv-holds-the-key/).

<sup>43</sup> See Gary Page Jones, *Hiv and Young People: Perceptions of Risk, Resilience and Dignity in an Urban Slum* (Cairns, Queensland, Australia: James Cook University, doctoral dissertation, 2019).

<sup>44</sup> Jones, *Hiv and Young People: Perceptions of Risk, Resilience and Dignity in an Urban Slum*, 54.

<sup>45</sup> See the work of primatologist and ethologist Frans de Waal, who has studied the phenomenon of *inequity aversion*, where he proposes that it arose in humans and other species to make cooperation possible through reinforcing social contracts founded on fairness. If the social contract is broken, the unfairness elicits a strong sense of disgust, leading to the punishment of the violator. See Sarah F. Brosnan and Frans B. M. de Waal, 'Evolution of Responses to (Un)Fairness', *Science* 346, no. 6207 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1251776>.

<sup>46</sup> See, among others, Lindner, *Human Nature and Dignity: If We Continue to Believe in the Evilness of Human Nature, We May Be Doomed*. See also Karlberg, *Reframing the Concept of Human Dignity*.

<sup>47</sup> See for a classical text John H. Herz, 'Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma', *World Politics* 2, no. 2 (1950), <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009187>. Under the conditions of a strong security dilemma, the Hobbesian fear of surprise attacks from outside one's borders is inescapable for a nation and defines the limits of its space for action also in times of peace. Hall Gardner, scholar of international politics, offers a more recent and more complex view of the security dilemma, he speaks of an *insecurity-security dialectic*. See 'Countdown to World War Trump: Iran and the New "Butter Battle" Arms Rivalry', by Hall Gardner, *Wall Street International Magazine*, 18th September 2019, <https://wsimag.com/economy-and-politics/57509-countdown-to-world-war-trump>.

<sup>48</sup> Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus and Michael D. Reeve, *Epitoma Rei Militaris* (Oxford: Clarendon Press. Written possibly in the reign of Theodosius the Great, Roman Emperor from 379–395 CE, first printed edition Utrecht, 1473, 2004).

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<sup>49</sup> Evelin Gerda Lindner, *Honor, Humiliation, and Terror: An Explosive Mix — and How We Can Defuse It with Dignity* (Lake Oswego, OR: World Dignity University Press, 2017), xi. See also Evelin Gerda Lindner, *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict*, ed. Stout Chris (Westport, CT, London: Praeger Security International, Greenwood, 2006); Evelin Gerda Lindner, *Emotion and Conflict: How Human Rights Can Dignify Emotion and Help Us Wage Good Conflict* (Westport, CT, London: Praeger, Greenwood, 2009); Evelin Gerda Lindner and Desmond Tutu (Foreword), *Gender, Humiliation, and Global Security: Dignifying Relationships from Love, Sex, and Parenthood to World Affairs* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, ABC-CLIO, 2010).

<sup>50</sup> Kathryn Sikkink, *Human Rights: Advancing the Frontier of Emancipation* (Boston, MA: Great Transition Initiative, 2018).

<sup>51</sup> See Lindner's contribution to the Great Transition Initiative (GTI) Forum on the topic of 'Human rights: Advancing the frontier of emancipation', 27th March 2018, in response to the essay of the same title by Kathryn Sikkink, *Human Rights: Advancing the Frontier of Emancipation*. See [www.greattransition.org/roundtable/human-rights-evelin-lindner](http://www.greattransition.org/roundtable/human-rights-evelin-lindner).

<sup>52</sup> *The Decline of Democracy in the 21st Century*, by Rodrigue Tremblay, 1st January 2020, <http://rodriguetremlay100.blogspot.com/2020/01/>.

<sup>53</sup> The term *anthropause* was coined by a team of researchers around biologist Christian Rutz, who discuss the possible impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on wildlife. We thank Prince El Hassan bin Talal for introducing this notion in his webinar on ecocide convened by Ghazi Hamed on 29th April 2021. See Christian Rutz et al., 'Covid-19 Lockdown Allows Researchers to Quantify the Effects of Human Activity on Wildlife', *Nature Ecology and Evolution* 4, no. 9 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1237-z>,

<sup>54</sup> An important caveat: The arguments proposed here are not to be confused with the 'great reset' conspiracy narrative that is currently being disseminated by conspiracy entrepreneurs. This narrative has appropriated the 'shock doctrine' of Naomi Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2007). In fact, Karlberg's thinking represents the opposite of this conspiracy narrative. This narrative functions as a kind of container for many smaller conspiracy theories to gather under its umbrella. See, among others, 'How the "great reset" of capitalism became an anti-lockdown conspiracy', by Quinn Slobodian, *The Guardian*, 4th December 2020, [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/04/great-reset-capitalism-became-anti-lockdown-conspiracy](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/04/great-reset-capitalism-became-anti-lockdown-conspiracy). See more in note 27 in the Preface, and see the section titled 'Indignation entrepreneurship hinders sober and constructive action' in chapter 10 of Lindner, *From Humiliation to Dignity: For a Future of Global Solidarity*.

<sup>55</sup> Karlberg, *Reframing the Concept of Human Dignity*.

<sup>56</sup> See more on the concept of human nature and the inborn desire of children to care in chapter 10 of Lindner, *From Humiliation to Dignity: For a Future of Global Solidarity*. See also Michael Robert Karlberg, 'Discourse, Identity, and Global Citizenship', *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 20, no. 3 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402650802330139>. Karlberg recommends Kristen Renwick Monroe, *The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), and Alfie Kohn, *The Brighter Side of Human Nature: Altruism and Empathy in Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).

<sup>57</sup> Evelin Gerda Lindner, *A Dignity Economy: Creating an Economy Which Serves Human Dignity and Preserves Our Planet* (Lake Oswego, OR: World Dignity University Press, 2012).

<sup>58</sup> See Evelin Gerda Lindner, *From Humiliation to Dignity: For a Future of Global Solidarity — the Corona Pandemic as Opportunity in the Midst of Suffering* (Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies. Reprinted in *TRANSCEND Media Service* in May 2020, and in *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* in July 2020. Translated into German by Georg-Wilhelm Geckler, *Von der Demütigung zur Würde: Für eine Zukunft der globalen Solidarität — Die Corona-Pandemie als Chance in der Not*. Translated into Spanish by Rocío Mieres, *De la humillación a la dignidad: Por un*

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