

**From Humiliation to Dignity:
For a Future of Global Solidarity**
From a Virus Pandemic to a Pandemic of Dignity:
How Can We Escape Complicity with Institutionalized Humiliation?

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Painting by Lisbeth Vilkan Glad created for the cover of the book

Short abstract

The coronavirus pandemic represents an important turning point in the way human activities unfold on our planet. The virus makes it more palpable than ever before that we are all interconnected and interdependent. Never before has it been so clear that we must act together, and fast.

Abstract

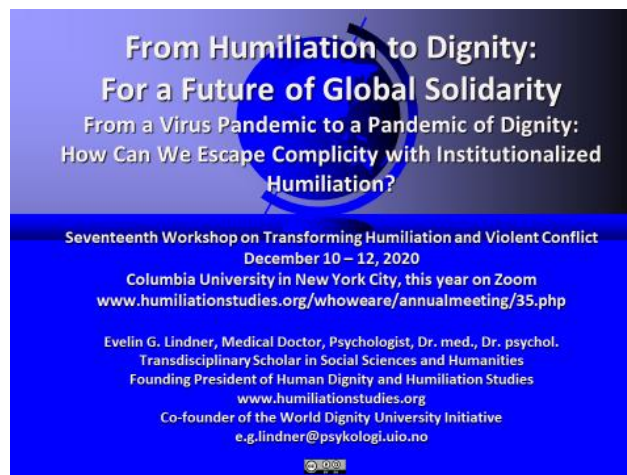
The coronavirus pandemic that unfolds as we speak represents an important turning point in the way human activities unfold on our planet: For the first time, everyone is affected simultaneously. The virus makes it more palpable than ever before that the world has become a village, that we are all interconnected and interdependent. Never before has it been so clear that we must act together, and fast.

The pandemic comes on top of a list of crises that gets longer by the day: Financial crisis, credit and banking crisis, environmental and ecological crisis, biodiversity crisis, housing crisis, well-being crisis, education crisis, spiritual and moral crisis, trust and trusting crisis, indifference crisis, fake news and faking crisis, reality crisis, populism and fascism crisis... all leading to a generalised ‘time of crisis’.

It is always a shock when limits are reached that hitherto were imperceptible. Sudden tipping points change conditions so fast and drastically that it is difficult to bring about equally drastic adaptations. We, as humankind, have the choice of proceeding unimpeded with ‘business as usual’ towards the global depletion of planet Earth’s last resources, or we can rethink and shape our future path by inventing new ways of arranging our affairs on this planet. Never in our species’ history have we encountered more serious challenges. The generations alive now carry more responsibility on their shoulders than any generation before. The presently unfolding coronavirus crisis is likely to be only a small prelude. We stand at historically unparalleled crossroads.

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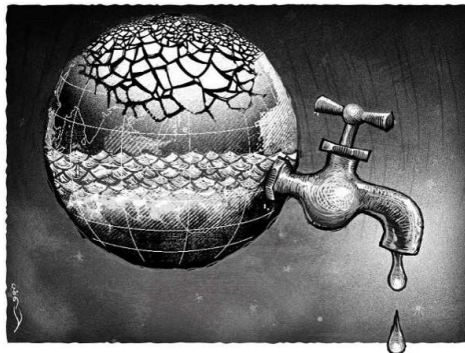
A very warm greeting to everyone!

My name is Evelin Lindner, and I am the founding president of the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies network, fellowship, community, movement, or family, we have many names. First, I would like to thank Linda Hartling, our director, and the entire Digniorganising team, for making this wonderful workshop possible, and the Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution at Teachers College of Columbia University in New York City for hosting this workshop series so lovingly every year since 2003! As you all know, our work is a labour of love, we work with a budget that is close to zero. Everyone gives according to their ability whatever they can — their time, their energy, their creativity — all as a gift of love. I have no words to express my gratitude to all who make not only this workshop possible but our entire global dignity work!

Introduction



The Blue Marble



This is what we do with it. We squeeze our planet to the last drop. We commit *ecocide*, the killing of our *ecosphere*, our ecological world, of which we are only a small part, despite our belief to be its masters.¹ 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*.²



We poison our planet, and we drown it and we burn it. Considering that our planet is our commons, we are caught in a global *commons dilemma*. Ecologist Garrett James Hardin explained the *tragedy of the commons* as follows, ‘an unmanaged commons in a world of limited material

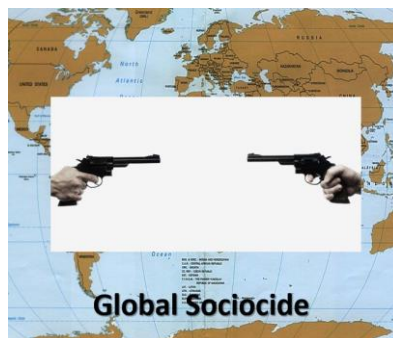
wealth and unlimited desires inevitably ends in ruin'.³ Indeed, ruin is now global, after humanity's campaign of depleting our planet's resources with ever increasing destructive efficiency.



Sociocide is the killing of our *sociosphere*, of the cohesion in our human communities, local and global.⁴ We live in a world now, where hateful polarisation poisons our relationships.



We have a pandemic of disconnection and loneliness, particularly in the Western world, that will outlast the coronavirus pandemic. Britain had to appoint a special minister for loneliness in 2018.⁵



Not enough, the world is also armed to its teeth, citizens against citizens, nations against nations.



Not only are we in the grip of a global *commons dilemma*, we are also in the grip of what political scientists call *security dilemma*. Since the Neolithic Revolution, the past twelve millennia or so, or the past three per cent of modern human history, the history of *Homo sapiens*, most of humanity lived with a lingering sense of fear as a background constant. It was the fear of attack from enemies from outside — it was something that could indeed happen anytime throughout the

past millennia. The security dilemma can be summed up with the motto of Roman thinker Vegetius, *If you want peace, prepare for war.*⁶

Recently, we, as humanity, have compounded the security dilemma with a *growth dilemma* that says *If you want prosperity, invest in exploitation.* Both dilemmas are tragic — war preparation produces war more than peace, and exploitation produces ruin more than prosperity.

As long as we, as humanity, do not find a way out of these tragic dilemmas, sociocide and ecocide will continue, as structural violence,⁷ as systemic humiliation, humiliation congealed into systems, just like South Africa had apartheid as humiliation congealed into a system, just like now military-corporate-political systems drive global races for arms and resources.⁸



Cogitocide

Ecocide and sociocide have the same underlying catalyst, the very ‘weapon of mass destruction’ that systems of humiliation use, namely, *cogitocide*. This term was coined by the former head of the Club of Rome, Prince El Hassan bin Talal in 2020.⁹ *Cogito* comes from *cogitare* in Latin, ‘to think’,¹⁰ and *cogitocide* is the killing of our *cogitosphere*, the killing of ‘the realm of thinking and reflection’,¹¹ it is the drowning of humanity in a sightless infosphere.¹² I therefore fear that artificial *intelligence* may be a misnomer — in many cases, it may rather be artificial *sightlessness*, it may simply be the digitalisation of a kind of sightlessness that in former times was called *fog of war*, simply taking on a new shape and reaching new levels now.¹³ *Big data*, instead of becoming big success, may turn into *big disaster*.¹⁴

All those *-cides*, all those killings, amplify each other. As a result, we risk *omnicide* — the killing of everything, the annihilation of all life on Earth.¹⁵ We live in times of systemic decline where the old order is disintegrating, as environmental and political disruptions augment each other. We are at the end of a lavish party of exploitation,¹⁶ for which our children, if they survive, will have to pay. Natural historian Sir David Attenborough said in 2018, ‘Right now, we are facing a man-made disaster of global scale. Our greatest threat in thousands of years’.¹⁷ Cultural historian Thomas Berry is right, ‘We cannot have healthy people on a sick planet’.¹⁸ I call it *systemic madness* waiting to be transformed into *systemic sanity*. This is where we stand.

Greatest crisis and greatest opportunity



Can we imagine a world without borders and without military forces, only with rule-of-law institutions that keep individual dominators from undermining the global commons? Can we imagine a world of shared global commons, of global unity in diversity, collectively protected and replenished? Can we imagine a *dignity economy*?¹⁹ Can we imagine globally inclusive cooperation, instead of cooperation only sought for the sake of ever more effective domination over ‘enemies’? Can we turn systemic madness into systemic sanity? Can we turn socio-*cide* and eco-*cide* into what I call socio-*sanity* and eco-*sanity*, socio-*salvation* and eco-*salvation*? Can we make such a world work?

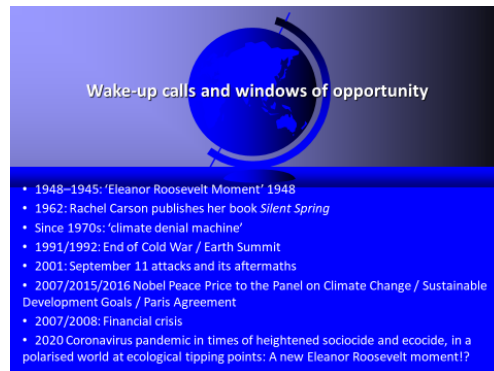
The answer is a resounding *yes*. Very few people take in, and I notice this all around the world, that our species, *Homo sapiens*, lives in a historical moment that is unparalleled not just in terms of crises but also of opportunity. History is not a predetermined process with humans as helpless victims, particularly not now. For the first time in our history, we, humankind, are in a position to succeed in bringing about the adaptations that are long overdue, basically since millennia, adaptations that our forebears could not bring about because they did not yet have the tools we have.

Our ancestors could not see pictures of our Blue Marble from the perspective of an astronaut.²⁰ For the first time in our history, we, as humankind, can fully appreciate our place in the universe. Unlike our forebears, we have the privilege of experiencing the *overview effect* with respect to our planet²¹ — we can see it from outside — an effect that helps us understand that we humans are *one* species living on *one* tiny planet. We can embrace *biophilia*,²² we can feel ‘the ecology of the living’ taking place within *one* circumscribed *biopoetic* space that is shared between all beings.²³ We have access to a much more comprehensive knowledge base about the universe and our place in it than our grandparents ever had. Furthermore, we know from research that human nature is neither ‘good’ nor ‘evil’ but social,²⁴ and that much of human action depends on the ways constitutive rules frame relational contexts — in other words, cooperation in solidarity in the world can be nurtured systemically, through building appropriate societal frames.²⁵ Finally, we have many experiments going on all around the world already now that try out ways to make economic systems compatible with life on Earth, by people who no longer want to sacrifice life on Earth for misguided concepts, such as, for instance, that of money as a commodity that can be hoarded, who no longer wish economy to be a driver of ‘prosperity’ at the cost of ecocide and sociocide — there is a ‘market of promises’ out there!²⁶

As we have made our livelihood dependent on the destruction of our planet and ourselves — a strategy that ultimately destroys the very foundation of our income and GDP — we need new societal frames. Only when a given system has small problems, is it enough to ask small questions from within the system, when a system has big problems, it is time to ask big questions from outside the system.

I suggest therefore that we sit together as humankind, all of us — and many people do that already — and find out which of the existing *regulatory* rules can be sufficiently tweaked,²⁷ and, if not, let us create new *constitutive* rules of engagement²⁸ for our modern *world-system*.²⁹

We fail



In this situation, we fail. Wake-up calls fail to wake us up sufficiently, and we use the opportunities that present themselves to us too timidly. So far, military and economic competition for domination outcompetes attempts to heal and prevent the sociocide and ecocide it causes. Here is a small time line.

1939–1945: The horror of the Second World War made the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 possible, under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt — we could say that it was an attempt to heal from military competition for domination

1962: Rachel Carson published her book *Silent Spring* — it was a call to healing action

Since 1970s: the 'climate denial machine'³⁰ is in place — driven by economic competition for domination, it causes ever more sociocide and ecocide

1991/1992: End of Cold War / Earth Summit — these were opportunities to heal, too timidly used

2001: September 11 attacks and its aftermaths — we saw global sociocide breeding local sociocide

2007/2015/2016 Nobel Peace Prize to the Panel on Climate Change / Sustainable Development Goals / Paris Agreement — these were more attempts to heal that were too timid

2007/2008: Financial crisis — economic sociocide was openly exposed

2020: Coronavirus pandemic in times of heightened sociocide and ecocide, in a polarised world at ecological tipping points: Is a new Eleanor Roosevelt moment imminent?



Think of Titanic: We, as humankind, can no longer think of ourselves as sailing on a luxury cruise ship. What we thought of as a cruise ship, is a Titanic on its way to the iceberg. People of the so-called Global North and the so-called 'developed countries' are the ones who live on the luxury first floor of the cruise ship. They rip out planks from the hull of the ship, there where all the poor people live, to enjoy fireworks on the first floor. When they see cracks in their luxury cabins, they repair them with the best intentions, while overlooking the huge holes they create further down in

the ship. Offering alms to the poor does not achieve what is needed, namely, the change of the design of the ship and the change of its course. Even the world's best-intended philanthropy, if combined with might-is-right competition, cannot be allowed to define the design of our global strategies.

Slowly, we realise that we are on a lifeboat, not a cruise ship. In a lifeboat, all hands are needed on deck, everybody has to contribute with what they can, nobody can 'buy' themselves out of this joint effort. Whoever tries to gain short-term personal advantages by exploiting others or ecological resources, contributes to the faster sinking of the lifeboat. Infighting will make it capsize and nobody will survive.

Global living — A path to theory and practice in times of global challenges



Allow me to share a little bit about my background. This is the rural context in which I grew up. This was when our planet was still blue and green... This was the place where my parents were displaced to after World War II.

Coming from a rural background, and from a family that is deeply traumatised by war and displacement, I see it as my responsibility, my duty, to use the privileges I have been offered in life, together with the technological opportunities of our times, to try to understand our world, so I can suggest viable paths into the future. This is my life mission since childhood.



By now, I look back on forty-five years of being at home on all continents (except Antarctica).

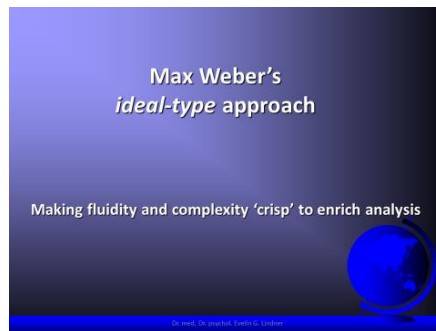
Already as a child, I wanted to understand what we humans are capable of in terms of hatred and love, of violence and peace, of competition and cooperation, of foolishness and wisdom.

Humanity’s foundational questions always inspired me: How do people in different cultural realms conceptualise life and death and peace and war? How do they live love and hatred? Are we an anti-social or a pro-social animal?³¹

Since forty-five years now, I live globally and locally at the same time, deeply rooted in many local places, binding them together with love and tenderness into lived cosmopolitanism. Through living in the global village, I am neither a Western nor non-Western person, I am simply a global citizen in practice, not just in theory. I am a patriot of *Earthland*, including all its living beings.

To realise this global dignity mission, I had to adapt my practical life far beyond what most people would consider possible. It has proven necessary that I live with as few possessions and little money as possible, as otherwise, my privileges would undermine my mission — if I were employed at a national university, for instance, or were to receive major funding from one particular source, my dignity mission would be suspected of being informed by national or corporate interests. Money also easily erects social-psychological barriers, it tends to turn *I-Thou* relationships into *I-It* relationships, to use the coinage of philosopher Martin Buber.³² Loving care is at the core of my dignity work, and this means, furthermore, living *one* integral life rather than many separate lives, it means, for instance, intentionally minimising the separation of professional and private life. Just now, I am talking to you from the living room of my father, who is 94 — it is part of my dignity mission to keep him flourishing also in these times of a corona pandemic.

I am the co-founder of a new educational effort launched in 2011, named World Dignity University initiative. We wish to invite all learners and educators for whom dignity is central to contribute.



In my work, I use the *ideal-type* approach of sociologist Max Weber, which allows for analysis and action to proceed at different levels of abstraction while acknowledging all the grey areas in between.³³ Traffic can illustrate it. Each society has to decide on whether to go for left hand or right hand driving. Diversity can only reign for the vehicles and driving styles that people might want to use. When these different levels of abstraction and action are confounded, accidents are the result.



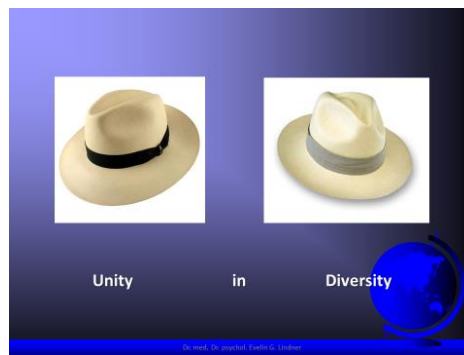
These are my books, and you are warmly invited to write to me to receive review copies.

My interest in the topics of dignity and humiliation emerged from my specific family background and my subsequent global experience. I see humiliation as an interpersonal act, an

emotional state, and a social mechanism, and therefore, it is relevant for a wide range of academic fields of inquiry, among them history, social philosophy, political science, sociology, global studies, anthropology, neuroscience, and, not least, psychology. Humiliation is relevant for all ‘life-centred psychologies’³⁴ — clinical, health, developmental, cultural, community, social, and political psychology.

The phenomenon of humiliation is everywhere, yet, interestingly, it had not been studied much on its own account before our dear Linda Hartling, our relational psychologist with whom I work since 1999,³⁵ before we began attending to it, and one reason may precisely be due to this need for approaches that are trans-, multi-, and cross-disciplinary.

In my writing, I attempt to bridge academia’s siloisation by striving to understand the core messages of various fields of academic inquiry, then I try to bring them together on different levels of abstraction, using precisely the *ideal-type* approach, and finally, I attempt to reconstruct them from the perspective of dignity and humiliation. So far, I have done so with war, genocide, and terrorism (2000, 2017),³⁶ international conflict (2006 and 2009, translated into Chinese in 2019),³⁷ gender and security (2010),³⁸ and economics (2012, translated into Brazilian-Portuguese in 2016).³⁹ Some of my writing is also in other languages, among them Norwegian, French, and German.



Here comes an important caveat: While I am the founding president of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies, and Linda our director, we are also researchers on our own account. This is a very important point, because, when I speak about my work, this does *not* mean that my views should define any ‘official position’ of our community. On the contrary, I wish to inspire all of you to forge your own pathways to exploring dignity and humiliation. The maxim of our overall dignity work is unity in diversity, and in our role as conveners, Linda and I attempt to nurture *unity* by holding *diversity* — the diversity of our network members’ views, of which Linda and I in our role as researchers are only one part.

Why we fail



Starting about sixty thousand years ago, many of the world’s largest animals, also called megafauna, began to disappear, first in Sahul, the supercontinent formed by Australia and New

Guinea during periods of low sea level. Recently, scientists found evidence that early human predation contributed to that megafauna extinction.⁴⁰



Diorama with Vikings at Archaeological Museum in Stavanger, Norway

Throughout the past millennia, particularly since the Neolithic Revolution, we, the species *Homo sapiens*, have increasingly become proud of our ability to be in control, to dominate, to win victories. Pride in human *exceptionality* and *superiority* became definitorial. Throughout the past centuries, particularly the past decades, we have driven competition for domination and control over people and planet to hitherto unseen extremes — nations against nations, citizens against citizens, and all against nature. At the same time, we regard dialogue, mutuality, and nurturing as secondary.

I was trained in medicine and psychology, and therefore I like to use the image of the human body to illustrate my point. Since the Neolithic Revolution, the co-called *dominator model of society* became prevalent all over the globe, as described by social scientist Riane Eisler,⁴¹ where elites — usually men — were allowed to use the right arm, the sword arm, to devise strategies and give orders, to prepare for war if needed, representing the sympathetic system of the body that prepares for flight or fight. Their left arm, the one that stands for maintenance and care, akin to the parasympathetic system of the body, was bound behind their backs. Their subordinates — women and lowly men — suffered the inverse infliction, they were expected to exhaust themselves in service. None could use both arms, none could reach an inner balance, none could unfold their full potential.

This is an injury that lasted for many millennia — it has many names, patriarchy is one of them — I call it a ‘war injury’. Humanity suffered a millennia-long systemic war injury. Our forebears accepted it, lived with it, and maintained it, why — because preparedness for war had to be given priority in a world that was in the grip of the *security dilemma*.



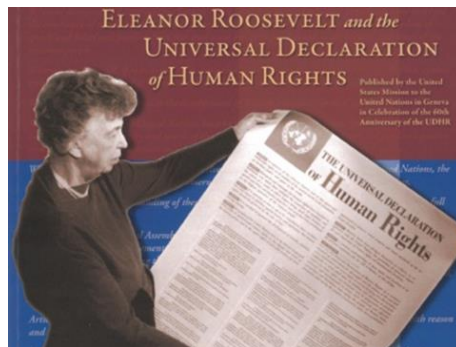
Very seldom you see depictions such as this one, where a woman holds a child with her left arm and a sword with her right arm. This image was given to me by Michael Harris Bond in 1999, cross-cultural psychologist at that time professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

For the past millennia, increasingly, we humans have treated our biosphere as if it were just another enemy waiting to be conquered. By now, our biosphere is like a teacher who enlightens us that competition for domination is a sub-optimal strategy, at its best, and in an interconnected and

finite world, it is even collectively suicidal. Negligence of maintenance and replenishment is a hideous killer, and also here, the human body can illustrate it: heart attack is the outcome, the typical emergency trouble-shooter disease.⁴² When nurturing is seen as negligible and victory as desirable, when the nurturing of relationships among ourselves and with nature is neglected, worse even, when growth is promoted that is cancerous,⁴³ collapse is the result.

This collapse is now with us, it took many millennia to manifest. We risk dying of our war injury, of our misguided pride in domination that creates nothing but all-out heart attack.⁴⁴ Our perpetration of *cogitocide* catalyses *sociocide* and *ecocide* and leads to *omnicide*.

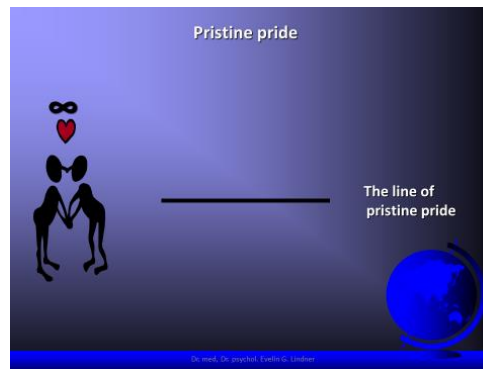
The historical transition to equal dignity



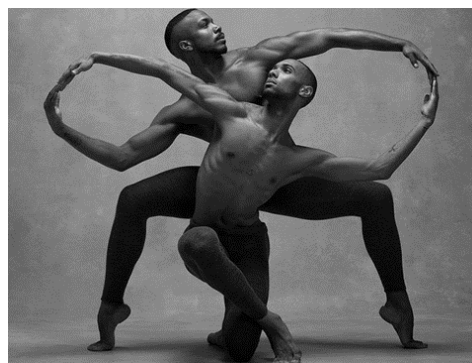
In this situation, we are extremely fortunate that our grandparents have enshrined human rights ideals, because these ideals offer pathways to survival on Earth in dignity, pathways to unite as a human family of equally responsible members who face our life-threatening global challenges together. These ideals offer the compass needed in a situation where war means all-out destruction rather than victory, where competition for domination over people and nature has become infeasible, practically, psychologically, and ethically, where the dominator mindset has overstayed its viability, where the only solution is global cooperation.

As long as dignity is defined as equal dignity in mutual solidarity in the global village, rather than the autonomy of lone heroes competing for domination and control, the concept of dignity can bring together all religions, all faiths, all life-giving ideologies of this world, it can connect the *sustainability* community and the *consciousness* community,⁴⁵ into one overarching meta-narrative.⁴⁶ Many faiths have my definition of religion at their core, namely, ‘love, humility, and awe for a universe too large for us to fathom’.⁴⁷ A culture of peace in dignity can also bring together traditional male and female role descriptions, it can merge the courageous heroism that formerly was reserved for males with the care work that was formerly delegated to women. It can invite all people to embrace the conceptually female approaches that maintain social cohesion through applying strategies that are complex, relational, multilateral, foresighted, integrative, and holistic. We live in a new world now, a world where the glorification of war and domination must and can be transcended, and the *heroism of honour* can transmute into the *heroism of dignity* as highest form of ‘personal meaning making’.⁴⁸

We, the global community, have everything required to manifest what I call *egalisation* — my coinage, short for equal dignity for all in solidarity and freedom — and to dignify globalisation so it becomes *glob-egalisation*. By adding global co-operation, we can arrive at *co-globegalisation* as the shortest summary of the path that can lead us into a dignified future.⁴⁹



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has a long history. Our ancestors prior to the Neolithic Revolution lived in small groups that were rather egalitarian. The line in the middle represents the line of equal worthiness — I respect you just as I respect myself. All members of the group enjoy equal worthiness. I use the infinity symbol or Möbius strip, the horizontal eight ∞ , when I think of unity in diversity, of dialogue in partnership, of solidarity in equal dignity.



Thank you, dear Mara Alagic, for finding this wonderful ‘infinity dance’ on the website of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater in Manhattan!



Then, when our species had completed what I call our first round of globalisation, around the time of the Neolithic Revolution, a dramatic shift occurred in a rather brief historical time span, abundant expandable pies of resources turned into fixed ones, a win-win situation turned into a win-lose situation — *circumscription* is a term used in anthropology — and the *security dilemma* and also the *commons dilemma* became salient. Our forebears responded with a new ethos and emotional coinage, the era of honour began, which legitimised the vertical ranking of human worth into ‘higher’ and ‘lesser’ beings.

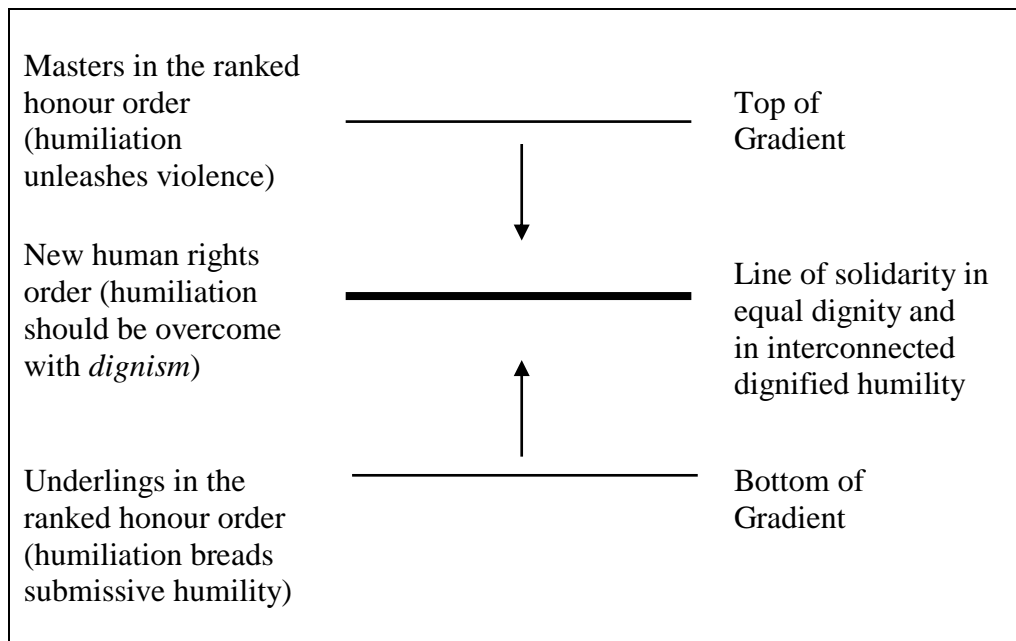
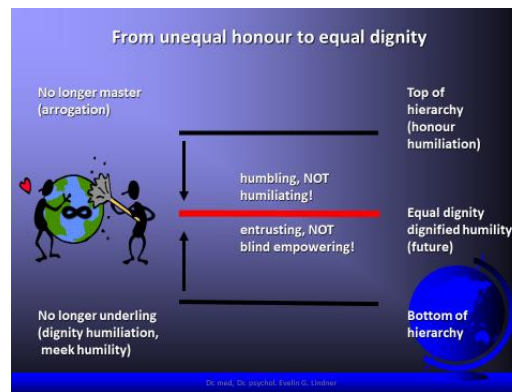


Figure 1: The historical transition to egalisation

Presently, we are participating in yet another radical shift, as significant as twelve thousand years ago — the year 1948 with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as its most prominent marker — we aspire to an ethos and emotional coinage of equal dignity in freedom and solidarity.

At this point we face important hurdles. We will go back again if we define equal dignity and freedom without solidarity. If we look at the maxim of the French Revolution, *liberté, égalité, fraternité* — liberty, equality, and solidarity, cooperation, and care — then all three goals are lost if only liberty is aimed at. Sociocide and ecocide are the result when empowerment becomes narcissism, when liberty is overdone so to speak. The self-esteem movement in Western societies may precisely have suffered such an overshoot of empowerment, it may have created a social climate of solipsistic narcissism characterised by chronic indignation and anger entrepreneurship all against all.⁵⁰

In my work, I therefore avoid using the term *empowerment* and replace it with *entrustment*. Entrustment suggests a larger obligation, it suggests that liberation movements and uprisings need careful limits, that all should meet in the middle between up and down, between the top and the bottom of society, and together shoulder the responsibility for creating a better world in mutually dignifying and joint humility.⁵¹

Our primary task now is to finally unite as human family so we can leave behind all destructive dilemmas, promote global *human* security, rather than *military* security, and realise what I call the *blessings* of the commons in the place of the *tragedy* of the commons.⁵²

Dignity humiliation — The ‘nuclear bomb of the emotions’



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that ‘all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights’. On my global path, I am often astonished when I observe the tremendous strength of this promise despite being undermined and violated so frequently and ruthlessly. The promise seems to be a genie that, once unleashed, cannot be put back into the bottle anymore. It has force now. It induces hope and has become a foundational value far beyond mere legal concepts.

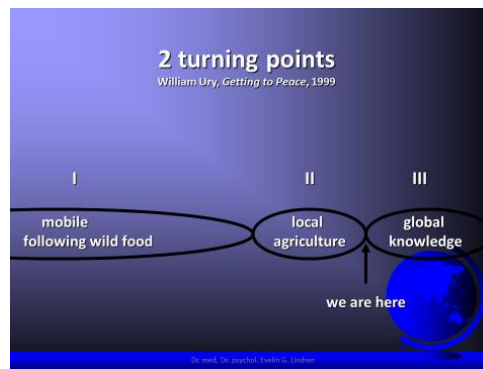
The reason for the strength of this promise appears to be that it speaks to a deep human desire, the desire to rise from being pushed down, the desire to stand upright — an embodied longing, beyond language, beyond legal instruments, the simple and straightforward yearning to be respected as an equal fellow human being among fellow human beings.⁵³



The strength of this yearning is also the reason for why breaking the promise of equal dignity humiliates so much more than when honour is infringed. It is the reason for why the violation of dignity carries the potential to lead to much stronger reactions than the violation of honour, why it can create the deepest of divisions. This is why I describe feelings of dignity humiliation as the ‘nuclear bomb of the emotions’.

Not enough, the promise of equal dignity has also democratised the right to resist and given it to everyone, and, more even, we also live in a world where technology is global now, so that a single angry hacker who feels entitled to seek retaliation for perceived humiliation, can attack an entire country’s electronic infrastructure,⁵⁴ and cheap drones can make the most expensive war equipment obsolete.⁵⁵ Would-be Hitlers can establish global dictatorial mafia-like structures with hitherto unseen ease.⁵⁶ All these factors together have the power to fill the world with hot cycles of humiliation.

Dynamics of humiliation, I fear, will become the strongest obstacle to a dignified future for humanity. *Clashes of civilisations* are harmless compared with *clashes of humiliation*. Clashes of humiliation can undermine our best chances for cooperation, and this in a situation where we need cooperation more than ever, cooperation at a global scale, global trust and mutual care that includes all of humanity.



I value anthropologist William Ury's simplified depiction of history where he pulls together elements from anthropology, game theory, and conflict studies. He describes three major types of society in chronological order, namely, *simple foragers*, *complex agriculturists*, and *knowledge society*.⁵⁷ I use Ury's historical periods as a frame to insert the historical and social development of pride, honour, and dignity as follows:

- I call the first 97 per cent of human history the *era of pride*, or, more precisely, the *era of pristine humble pride*, pristine because it is not yet touched by systemic humiliation. It was the time when foraging and small-scale gardening was prevalent, when there were still no limits for migration and the few people walking the planet still had enough space to freely follow the wild food.
- The past three per cent of human history, the period of complex agriculturalism, was the *era of honour*, or, more precisely, the *era of collectivistic ranked honour*, the era of systemic humiliation and *arrogant pride*.
- I dedicate my life to working for a return to *dignified pride*, for an *era of dignity*, or, more precisely, for a *future of equality in dignity for all, as individuals who are free to engage in loving solidarity with each other, and in mutually dignifying connection with all life on planet Earth*.⁵⁸

Outlook — What must we do



How can we regain our blue and green planet?



Anthropologist Margaret Mead is often quoted as saying, ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has’.

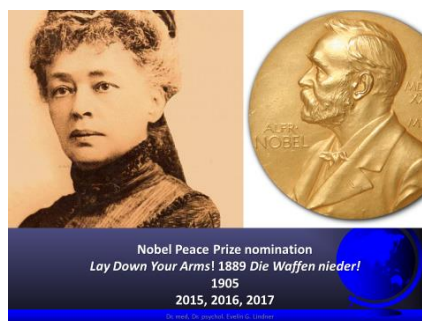
Together with our dear Linda Hartling, you see her in the middle of the picture, and a dedicated core group of scholars, educators, and practitioners, I have the honour of nurturing a global collaborative fellowship of people who wish to walk the talk of dignity. I do this work since the idea for it was born in 2001, Linda joined in 2003, and we do this work together since.⁵⁹

Our dignity fellowship has around 1,000 invited members and around 8,000 people on our address list, and I am so happy to know that many of you are here now. Have a look at humiliationstudies.org to meet the members of our global advisory board, as well as our core, research, and education teams. We have a very long time horizon for our work, we think of our dignity community as a seed for dignity to flourish globally and far into the future, long past our lifetimes

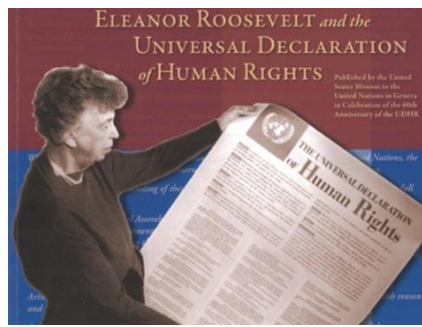


The outcome is in our hands. If we wait that others should save us, if we engage in apathy or selfish carelessness, the best outcome will be undignified survival for a few combined with undignified demise for the rest. If we give it our all, if we embrace appropriate levels of alarm, levels that match the size of the crises we face, and if we invest this sense of alarm into hope against hope, then we will succeed with the dignified survival of all, together, or, if unavoidable, at least, we will go down together in dignity.

Dignism



The Nobel Peace Prize is intended for people who work for ending war through global disarmament, rather than through local arms races in the futile hope of reaching a lasting balance of power. You see here Bertha von Suttner, the woman who inspired Alfred Nobel to establish the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1905 she was honoured by that Prize for her book *Die Waffen nieder*, or *Lay down your arms!* Linda and I, we see our work as following in the footsteps of Bertha von Suttner. Many members of our network were hugely encouraged through the nomination of our work for this prize in 2015, 2016, and 2017.



Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the most important authors of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. After the atrocities of the Second World War, the goal was ‘never again’. This is also my life mission. When Rachel Carson published her book *Silent spring* in 1962, many were full of hope for a substantial turnaround.⁶⁰ ‘Earthrise’ was the high spirit in the 1960s. Unfortunately, it transmuted into ‘profit versus planet’ around 1970–1987, then environmentalism turned into ‘sustainability’ around 1987–1997, and finally into ‘market environmentalism’ from 1998 to 2018. In 2019 came Greta Thunberg, and now, in 2020, the Covid-19 virus. What comes next? Hopefully a new Eleanor Roosevelt moment!



This is pioneer Jean Baker Miller, mentor of our dear Linda Hartling. Both women follow in the footsteps of Bertha von Suttner and Eleanor Roosevelt.

As do I. The fact that I hail from a family that is deeply traumatised by the two world wars of the last century, means that I am particularly aware of the vulnerabilities of our human arrangements on this planet. All my life, I have been preparing for the next ‘Eleanor Roosevelt moment’ like in 1948, waiting for a new window of opportunity to open for dignity to regain the attention it deserves. Together with Linda Hartling and other close collaborators, I am helping to nurture a moment like this to come, ready to be among its co-authors if needed, ready to contribute with our approach of loving dignity.

Important dates

- Roughly 300,000 years ago, a win-win situation of seemingly infinite abundance
- 12,000 years, win-lose, competition for domination, security dilemma
- 1757/1948 *egalisation* + emergence of *dignity humiliation*
- 1967/72 we see our planet from outside, a foundational shift in perspective
- 1980 we start to overuse our resources
- 1991 end of the Cold War, opportunity for *One World*
- 2007/8 collapse of the blind belief in ‘the wisdom of the market’
- Now: The generation alive now carries more responsibility than any other generation before, the responsibility to co-create new ways of arranging our affairs on planet Earth, without systemic humiliation, to co-create the next form of civilisation, where we co-operate with our own evolution, to manifest what Gandhi called *satyagraha*

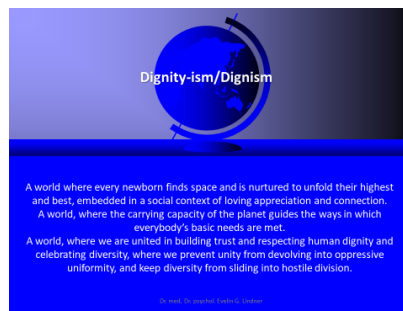
- Roughly 300,000 years ago, our forebears enjoyed a win-win situation of seemingly infinite abundance
- 12,000 years ago, this changed into a win-lose situation, our ancestors adapted with developing strategies of competition for domination, with the security dilemma as outcome
- 1757/1948 we see *egalisation* and the emergence of *dignity humiliation*
- 1967/72 we can for the first time see our planet from outside, a foundational shift in perspective
- 1980 we start to overuse our planet's resources
- 1991 marks the end of the Cold War, an opportunity to unite in *one world*, we missed it
- 2007/8 we see the collapse of the blind belief in 'the wisdom of the market'
- Now: The generation alive now carries more responsibility than any other generation before, the responsibility to co-create new ways of arranging our affairs on planet Earth, without systemic humiliation, to co-create the next form of civilisation, where we co-operate with our own evolution, to manifest what Gandhi called *satyāgraha*



The Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations General Assembly for 2030 are a worthy start, however, only if Goal 8 is seriously reconfigured. Goal 8 shows an exponential economic growth curve, a curve that represents an impossibility in a finite context.⁶¹ Let me quote two experts. Scholar of human needs Ian Gough warns that Goal 8 has the potential to undermine all other goals as it ‘lumps together important need-related goals — participation in work and acceptable conditions in work — with economic growth, a questionable means to achieving these goals’.⁶² Philip Alston, outgoing UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, adds, ‘The UN’s sustainable development goals... are clearly not going to be met without drastic recalibration’, as this framework ‘places immense and mistaken faith in growth and the private sector’.⁶³ This is also my conclusion from my global experience.



For me, dignity is a mandate, the duty to transform the world. I have coined the term *dignism* (dignity + ism).⁶⁴ The aim is to point at the positive goals of *co-globegalisation*. This is how I describe dignism:



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. It is a world, where the carrying capacity of the planet guides the ways in which everyone's basic needs are met. It is a world, 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.

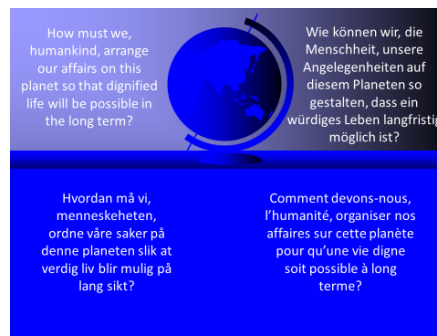


Let me end here. If we, as humanity, wish to heal *ecocide* and *sociocide* and survive in dignity, we need a strong *cogito-sphere*, a strong realm of thinking. Therefore, the first step is to overcome *cogitocide*, the destruction of our thinking. We, as humanity, need to face the fact that we stand at the edge of a *Seneca cliff*,⁶⁵ the kind of rapid collapse that is characteristic of complex systems when they disintegrate.⁶⁶ We have to face this fact without panic and without denial. Our scientists inform us that we have a window of opportunity of around ten years to step back from the edge.⁶⁷

In this situation, we can no longer accept negative peace kept in place by systematic and systemic cogitocide, peace kept in place by military means, by the traditional male role script of uni-dimensional and unilateral strategies of competition for domination and control, by strategies of 'fighting the enemy' and 'conquering the unknown'. In the interconnected world of today, seeking peace through armament amounts to *sociocide* at a global scale, the killing of the cohesion in the global community. It hastens global ecocide through global sociocide by maintaining the *security dilemma* ('If you want peace, prepare for war'), by stoking *cycles of humiliation*, and by putting fuel into the *growth dilemma* ('If you want prosperity, invest in exploitation'). In an interconnected world, in which the promise of human rights ideals is salient, feelings of humiliation are the 'nuclear bomb of the emotions'. Cycles of humiliation will turn the global village into a war zone if we do not step up to prevent it. Citizen-to-citizen trust building at a global scale is the only path to transcending the security dilemma and achieving lasting global peace in dignity.

The call must be: Let us celebrate respect for equal dignity for all as responsible individuals free to engage in loving mutual solidarity. Let us celebrate diversity through unity in equality in dignity without humiliation on this small and finite planet that is our common home.

As the world watches the heart-breaking coronavirus pandemic unfold, our hope is for an exponential change of heart so that global unity rooted in respect for local diversity becomes possible. The central question we face, as humanity, which we must ask and answer together, in all languages, not just the four languages noted here, remains:



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

Wie können wir, die Menschheit, unsere Angelegenheiten auf diesem Planeten so gestalten, dass ein würdiges Leben langfristig möglich ist?

Hvordan må vi, menneskeheten, ordne våre saker på denne planeten slik at verdig liv blir mulig på lang sikt?

Comment devons-nous, l'humanité, organiser nos affaires sur cette planète pour qu'une vie digne soit possible à long terme?



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Notes

¹ See Higgins, 2016.

² See, among others, *The youth have seen enough*, by Rex Weyler, Greenpeace, 4th January 2019, www.greenpeace.org/international/story/20260/the-youth-have-seen-enough/.

³ Hardin, 2007.

⁴ ‘Sociocide is the intended wounding-killing of a society by eliminating the prerequisites for a live, vibrant, dynamic society’, writes peace researcher Johan Galtung, in ‘Sociocide, Palestine and Israel’, *TRANSCEND Media Service*, 8th October 2012, www.transcend.org/tms/2012/10/sociocide-palestine-and-israel/, italics in original:

Sociocide, the killing of a society’s capacity to survive and to reproduce itself, should become equally and prominently a crime against humanity. A society is a self-reproducing social system. So are human beings, with our basic needs for survival, wellness, identity, freedom. Society is also an organism, with a lifespan far beyond that of individuals. For humans to survive as humans, their basic needs have to be met. For that to happen the society has to survive. For the society to survive the basic social *prerequisites* must be met:

- for *security*, against violence, killing, wounding the members
- for economic *sustainability*, against their starvation, illness
- for *identity* culturally, a meaning with life, against alienation
- for *autonomy* politically, to be a master of their own house.

As society unfolds, so do humans, and vice versa. Life breeds life.

This also holds for nomadic societies based on hunter-gatherers. Monasteries are incapable of self-reproduction biologically when based on one gender, but are highly viable societies based on recruitment. Under modernity, identity is carried by the *nation*, with four characteristics: an *idiom*, a *religion-worldview*, a *history* — of the past, present and future — and *geographical attachment*. *Time*, *space*, with the means to communicate and something to believe is crucial.

Under modernity the state is the key executor of all the above.

Sociocide is the intended wounding-killing of a society by eliminating the prerequisites for a live, vibrant, dynamic society.

Sociocide molests the human members. In the longer run, lethally. *Sociocide* is what Western, and not only Western, colonialism has done for centuries, denying others their autonomy, imposing their own identity — language and worldview — moving others out of their own historical dialectic and into history as Western periphery, denying them the land they are attached to with their hearts and minds. And their bodies for security and sustenance, for food, water, health.

See also Cormann, 2015.

⁵ ‘Britain appoints minister for loneliness amid growing isolation’, by Lee Mannion, *Reuters*, 17th January 2018, www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-politics-health/britain-appoints-minister-for-loneliness-amid-growing-isolation-idUSKBN1F61I6. See also *PM commits to government-wide drive to tackle loneliness. Theresa May will host a reception and set out the government’s plans to tackle loneliness*, press release, Prime Minister’s Office, 10 Downing Street, Office for Civil Society, and The Rt Hon Theresa May MP, 17th January 2018, www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-commits-to-government-wide-drive-to-tackle-loneliness.

Extended loneliness diminishes immunity, a risk factor that is particularly relevant in times of a virus pandemic. See an easy-to-read article, ‘Activating the Vagus nerve might lower your Covid-19 risk: While physical distancing and masks are crucial, social interaction could calm the immune system and turn down inflammation’, by Markham Heid, *Medium*, 25th November 2020, <https://elemental.medium.com/activating-the-vagus-nerve-might-lower-your-covid-19-risk-e08ed0ce7a04>, and see scientific references, Cacioppo, et al., 2015, Cohen, et al., 2012, Hanscom, et al., 2020.

⁶ Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus and Reeve, 2004. Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus, commonly referred to simply as Vegetius, was a writer of the Later Roman Empire in late 4th century CE.

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⁷ For the coinage of the concept of structural violence, see ‘Structural violence re-explored’, by Johan Galtung, *TRANSCEND Media Service*, Editorial #333, 21st July 2014, www.transcend.org/tms/2014/07/structural-violence-re-explored/. For slow violence, see Nixon, 2011.

⁸ See ‘The vengeance of history: Thirty years of foreseeable retrogression’, by Hall Gardner, *Wall Street International Magazine*, 18th December 2018, <https://wsimag.com/economy-and-politics/46316-the-vengeance-of-history>. Hall Gardner is professor and chair of the ICP Department at the American University of Paris, and author of *World war Trump: The risks of America’s new nationalism*, Gardner, 2018.

⁹ I very much thank the President of the Club of Rome from 1999 to 2007, Prince El Hassan bin Talal, for his personal message on 19th May 2020, where he suggested to me the term *cogitocide*. He shares his 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, Helsinki, where he suggests the term *cogitosphere*. His address was titled *The challenge of informed humanity: From ‘infosphere’ to ‘cogitosphere’*. He calls on the Club of Rome to elevate the ‘Cogitosphere’, or the realm of thinking and reflection, ‘above that of the Infosphere in order to avoid sightless vision and to focus our deliberative process on the real challenges facing informed humanity’.

¹⁰ *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’.

¹¹ *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, Helsinki.

¹² Bin Talal refers to cultural theorist Paul Virilio, 1977/2006, originator of the concept of *dromology*, ‘the science of speed’, where he points at the 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’.

¹³ The exact phrase *fog of war* can be found in a 1896 text by Prussian military analyst Carl von Clausewitz, describing the state of ignorance of military commanders regarding the strength and position of both enemy and friend. See also ‘kill them all; let God sort them out’, in Latin *Caedite eos. Novit enim Dominus qui sunt eius*, a phrase reportedly spoken in 1209 by the commander prior to a massacre. See Wallace, 2018, for an application of this phrase on present-day problems, p. 1:

emergence of the AI revolution from games of Chess and Go into the real world will fatally encounter the central matters of the Clausewitz analysis of *Zweikampf* warfare. Promises of graceful degradation under stress for large numbers of driverless vehicles on intelligent roads, of precision targeting that avoids civilian collateral damage for autonomous or so-called man/machine centaur weapons, of precision medicine under even normal living condition, let alone during the current slow disaster; of climate change and social decay, of the ability to manage financial crises in real time with agent-based models, and so on, are delusive groupthink or marketing hype that will be beta-tested on human populations, a gross contravention of fundamental moral and legal norms.

Note also *scobel: Ethik der Algorithmen*, by Gert Scobel, 3sat, 23rd May 2018, www.3sat.de/page/?source=/scobel/197051/index.html. 3sat is a public and advertising-free television network in Central Europe.

¹⁴ See Gert Scobel in *scobel: scobel — Ethik fürs Digitale*, by Gert Scobel, 3sat, 3rd September 2020, www.3sat.de/wissen/scobel/scobel---ethik-fuers-digitale-102.html. 3sat is a public and advertising-free television network in Central Europe. See also ‘Mensch über Maschine: Warum künstliche Intelligenz nie mächtiger werden darf als wir’, by Imre Grimm, *Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland*, 26th September 2020, www.rnd.de/digital/mensch-uber-maschine-warum-kunstliche-intelligenz-nie-maechtiger-werden-darf-als-wir-AZOSR3BV6ZDPNIS5S5OI3YAJME.html, where the author recommends the book *Prinzip Mensch* by Nemitz and Pfeffer, 2020, as ‘a profound component in the growing debate about data ethics. It is a fact-rich, anger-free and well-founded pamphlet that will not be welcome reading in Silicon Valley, where the billionaires’ delusions of God have merged with the hippiesque promises of salvation of the Californian can-

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do spirit. Where politics, laws and social discourse are only seen as regional brake blocks on the way to a digital utopia'. Translated by Lindner from the German original:

Prinzip Mensch ist ein profunder Baustein in der anschwellenden Debatte über Datenethik. Es ist eine faktenreiche, zornfreie und fundierte Streitschrift, die man nicht gern lesen wird im Silicon Valley, wo der Gotteswahn der Milliardäre mit den hippiesken Heilsversprechen des kalifornischen Can-do-Spirit verschmolzen ist. Wo Politik, Gesetze und gesellschaftlicher Diskurs nur als regionale Bremsklötze auf dem Weg in ein digitales Utopia gelten.

See, furthermore, the notion of *cogitocide*. I very much thank the President of the Club of Rome from 1999 to 2007, Prince El Hassan bin Talal, for his personal message on 19th May 2020, where he suggested to me this term.

¹⁵ See Torres, 2018. See also 'Who wants to destroy the world? More people than you might expect — and new technologies might give them the power to do it', by Phil Torres, *Medium*, 25th October 2019, <https://onezero.medium.com/who-wants-to-destroy-the-world-e7571c66397>:

bioengineering is 'the specific technology for doing the job right of annihilating humanity — and it's something that could be done by just one person with the necessary expertise and access to the necessary equipment'.

¹⁶ See Randers and Golüke, 2020, saying that just stopping CO2 emissions may no longer be enough to stop global warming, that the world must undertake a massive effort to capture carbon out of the atmosphere and store it back underground, a technology known as carbon sequestration. This will be a task that is 'equivalent to the work involved in putting all the man-made CO2 into the atmosphere, which has taken us 100–200 years of industrial activity. Getting it out again will be the same type of effort'.

¹⁷ The 2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference was the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24), also known as the Katowice Climate Change Conference. It was held between 2nd and 15th December 2018 in Katowice, Poland. See the transcript of the speech by Sir David Attenborough on 3rd December 2018, at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/The%20People%27s%20Address%202.11.18_FINAL.pdf. See also Attenborough, 2020, and his 2020 documentary film *A life on our planet* at <https://attenboroughfilm.com>. See his interview on PBS News Hour, 6th October 2020, www.pbs.org/video/october-6-2020-pbs-newshour-full-episode-1601956801/.

¹⁸ See the biography of Thomas Berry at <http://thomasberry.org/life-and-thought/thomas-berry-a-biography-columbia-2019>.

¹⁹ Lindner, 2012.

²⁰ *Space exploration — A powerful symbol of global cooperation*, Jim Zimmerman, NASA, interviewed by Susan T. Coleman, The Peacebuilding Podcast, 13th December 2016, <http://us11.campaign-archive1.com/?u=e5c2110f5cc4fe346c79bf3d1&id=06298a46ca&e=e7c4dd8362>. I thank Judit Révész for making me aware of this interview.

²¹ White, 2014.

²² Anderson, 2016.

²³ Author Andreas Weber, 2016, develops a creative ecology of the living — a *biopoetics*. This is the book description:

Meaning, feeling and expression — the experience of inwardness — matter most in human existence. The perspective of biopoetics shows that this experience is shared by all organisms. Being alive means to exist through relations that have existential concern, and to express these dimensions through the body and its gestures. All life takes place within one poetic space which is shared between all beings and which is accessible through subjective sensual experience. We take part in this through our empirical subjectivity, which arises from the experiences and needs of living beings, and which makes them open to access and sharing in a poetic objectivity. Biopoetics breaks free from the causal-mechanic paradigm which made biology unable to account for mind and meaning. Biology becomes a science of expression, connection and subjectivity which can understand all organisms including humans as feeling agents in a shared ecology of meaningful relations, embedded in a symbolical and material metabolism of the biosphere.

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²⁴ As to the topic of human nature, see the book proposal titled *If we continue to believe in the evilness of human nature, we may be doomed*, Lindner, 2019. See also Lindner, 2017, chapter 3: Also human nature and cultural diversity fell prey to the security dilemma, in the book *Honor, humiliation, and terror*.

²⁵ Researchers let students play the prisoner's dilemma game and framed the situation by telling them that this is a community game: the students cooperated. Other students were told that this is a Wall Street game, and, consequently, they cheated on each other. See, among others, Axelrod, 2006, Liberman, et al., 2004, Imhof, et al., 2007, Nowak and Highfield, 2011. See also Bernstein, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1990, 2000. I thank Vidar Vambheim for reminding me of Bernstein's work and that Bernstein introduced the concept of framing to describe how control of mental frames is used to regulate thinking and behaviour in educational contexts. Bernstein describes framing as a mental process and a technique to exclude certain aspects of reality from entering the communication. See also Chong and Druckman, 2007.

²⁶ See, for instance, the work of futurist Johan Schot, who speaks of the need for a *second deep transition*. See his talk of the role of narratives in socio-technological transformations at the conference titled 'Narratives in Times of Radical Transformation', that brought together Berlin, Germany, and Kyoto, Japan, 19th–20th November 2020, organised by the Institute of Vocational Education and Work Studies at the Technische Universität Berlin, the IASS in Potsdam, Berlin, the Kokoro Research Center at Kyoto University, Japan, and the International Association for Analytical Psychology (IAAP). See <http://narrativeoftransformation-2020.org/>. See also Lindner, 2012.

²⁷ I resonate with Howard Richards and Catherine Odora Hoppers, who insist that ever more *regulatory* rules are not enough, what is needed are new *constitutive* rules. See, among others, Richards and Swanger, 2006, Richards and Swanger, 2013, Odora Hoppers and Richards, 2012, and Richards, et al., 2018, inspired by the lecture series 'Against Foucault', given by Howard Richards and followed by dialogues with Catherine Odora Hoppers and Evelin Lindner in Pretoria, South Africa, in 2013.

²⁸ See Taylor, 1971, 1993, Searle, 1995. Searle speaks of *institutional facts*, for instance, with respect to property rights and contract rights. See Manicas, 2006. See, furthermore, Porpora, 1993, Donati and Archer, 2015, Richards, 2004, and Lawson, 2019. I thank Howard Richards for including me into his lifelong journey of reflecting on social change.

²⁹ See Wallerstein, 1974–1989. See also Harvey, 2005, or Hudson, 2003. Howard Richards in a personal communication, 23rd October 2016: 'According to Immanuel Wallerstein the global economy is the one and only object of study of the social sciences today; everything else is caught up in a web of causes and effects where the structure of the global economy is the principal cause'. See also Lindner, 2012.

³⁰ "So they knew": Ocasio-Cortez questions Exxon scientist on climate crisis denial', *Guardian News*, 23rd October 2019, <https://youtu.be/FGVW9vJ773k>:

U.S. House Democrats laid out evidence that the oil behemoth ExxonMobil had known since the 1970s about the potential for a climate crisis and intentionally sowed doubt about it. Martin Hoffert, a scientist consultant for Exxon Research and Engineering in the 1980s, responds to the New York congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, testifying that in 1982, Exxon scientists predicted how carbon dioxide levels would rise and heat the planet as humans burned more fossil fuels.

I thank Malvern Lumsden for making us aware of this article.

³¹ As to the topic of human nature, see the book proposal titled *If we continue to believe in the evilness of human nature, we may be doomed*, Lindner, 2019:

I suspect that the survival of humankind on planet Earth may depend on how the story of human nature is narrated... I consider the topic of human nature, with all its intriguing aspects, to be perhaps the most important topic for humankind.

See also Lindner, 2017, chapter 3: Also human nature and cultural diversity fell prey to the security dilemma, in the book *Honor, humiliation, and terror*.

A vast body of literature is available. See, for instance, the work of primatologist and ethologist Frans de Waal, 2009, who disagrees with the proverb *Homo homini lupus est* (man is wolf to man) by saying that it both fails to do justice to canids and denies the inherently social nature of our own species. See also the work of anthropologists William Ury and Robert Carneiro, as well as of world-systems scholar Christopher Chase-Dunn, discussed in chapter 9 of Lindner, 2021.

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³² Buber, 1923/1937. See also Lindner, 2012.

³³ In my work, I apply the *ideal-type* approach as described by sociologist Max Weber, 1904/1949. See Coser, 1977, p. 224:

Weber's three kinds of ideal types are distinguished by their levels of abstraction. First are the ideal types rooted in historical particularities, such as the 'western city', 'the Protestant Ethic', or 'modern capitalism', which refer to phenomena that appear only in specific historical periods and in particular cultural areas. A second kind involves abstract elements of social reality — such concepts as 'bureaucracy' or 'feudalism' — that may be found in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. Finally, there is a third kind of ideal type, which Raymond Aron calls 'rationalising reconstructions of a particular kind of behaviour'. According to Weber, all propositions in economic theory, for example, fall into this category. They all refer to the ways in which men would behave were they actuated by purely economic motives, were they purely economic men.

Michael Karlberg explains how analytical constructs never correspond perfectly with some presumably objective reality. See Karlberg, 2013, p. 9:

Care must be taken, therefore, not to reify these frames or over-extend the metaphors that inform them. These frames can, however, serve as useful heuristic devices for organising certain forms of inquiry and guiding certain forms of practice — such as inquiry into the meaning of human dignity and the application of this concept in fields such as human rights and conflict resolution.

I very much appreciate Louise Sundararajan's comments on the book *The nature and challenges of indigenous psychologies* by Carl Martin Allwood, 2018, that she shared with her indigenous psychology task force on 3rd September 2018, based on her book chapter 'Indigenous psychologies', Sundararajan, et al., 2017. Sundararajan explains how to avoid that abstractions slide towards essentialism. In her view 'essentialism is abstraction mistaken as reality', as it is in the case of 'nation' or 'identity', 'whereas scientific theorising is abstraction treated as abstraction'. As an example she offers the model airplane, which nobody would mistake for reality, since it one can't fly in it. Also the pure form of the model does not lead to essentialism, 'because of the basic understanding that no reality exists in pure forms'. I appreciate her next example, namely that of 'dirt' and she illustrates it by two approaches to reality (X):

A: X=dirt, elements, crystals, subatomic particles

B: X=dirt (elements, crystals, subatomic particles)

Sundararajan explains that in scientific investigations, as represented by A, 'abstraction is context dependent, each level of analysis generates its own abstraction such that there are multiple abstractions (dirt, elements, crystals, subatomic particles)', none of which has a higher status of 'essence' than the other. Essentialism is represented by B, where 'the term closest to the phenomenal world (dirt) is elevated to the status of reality, the essence of which is supposed to be captured by the more abstract terms'. Sundararajan then applies the example of dirt to notions such as culture, nation, and population. If one takes the approach of B, nation or population names reality, 'the essence of which is captured by abstractions'. By contrast, in A, 'abstractions are not inextricably yoked to serve the master script of nation or population which are treated as labels of convenience like any other'.

³⁴ Maureen O'Hara in a personal communication to the Indigenous Psychology Task Force led by I Louise Sundararajan, 27th November 2019.

³⁵ Hartling, 1996, and Hartling and Luchetta, 1999.

³⁶ *The psychology of humiliation: Somalia, Rwanda / Burundi, and Hitler's Germany* was my doctoral dissertation in social psychology at the Department of Psychology of the University of Oslo, Norway, in 2000. *Quality of life: A German-Egyptian comparative study* (in German) was my doctoral dissertation in psychological medicine at the University of Hamburg, Germany, in 1993. *Honor, humiliation, and terror: An explosive mix — and how we can defuse it with dignity*, was my fifth book, and it came out in 2017 in Dignity Press, in its imprint World Dignity University Press, with a foreword by Linda Hartling, director of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies. Please see more chapters and papers in full text on www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin02.php.

³⁷ *Making enemies: Humiliation and international conflict* was my first book on dignity and humiliation and how we may envision a more dignified world, characterised as a path-breaking book and honoured as 'Outstanding Academic Title' for 2007 in the USA by the journal *Choice*. Please see more details on

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www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin/book/01.php. *Emotion and conflict: How human rights can dignify emotion and help us wage good conflict* was my second book. See www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin/book/02.php.

³⁸ *Gender, humiliation, and global security* was my third book, published by Praeger in 2010. Archbishop Desmond Tutu kindly contributed with a foreword (asked for a prepublication endorsement, he kindly offered to contribute with a foreword). The book was ‘highly recommended’ by *Choice* in July 2010. For more details, see www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin/book/03.php.

³⁹ *A dignity economy: Creating an economy that serves human dignity and preserves our planet* was my fourth book, and it is the first publication of Dignity Press, published in 2012 in its imprint World Dignity University Press. See www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin/book/04.php.

⁴⁰ ‘Did people or climate kill off the megafauna? Actually, it was both’, by Frédéric Saltré, Corey J. A. Bradshaw, and Katharina J. Peters, *The Conversation*, 3rd December 2019, <https://theconversation.com/did-people-or-climate-kill-off-the-megafauna-actually-it-was-both-127803>: ‘We found that megafauna extinctions in areas where they coexisted with humans were most likely caused by a combination of human pressure and access to water’. See Ripple, et al., 2020, ‘Scientists have a moral obligation to clearly warn humanity of any catastrophic threat and to “tell it like it is”’. On the basis of this obligation and the graphical indicators presented below, we declare, with more than 11,000 scientist signatories from around the world, clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency’.

⁴¹ See Riane Eisler, 1987. Her most recent books are Eisler, 2007, and Eisler and Fry, 2019. It is a privilege to have Riane Eisler as an esteemed member in the global advisory board of our Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies fellowship.

⁴² When people are in danger, adrenaline rushes into their blood stream and the maintenance tasks of the body are put on wait. For a short while, this is tolerable. However, under conditions of continuous strain, of never-ending states of emergency, the body breaks down and heart attack may ensue. Extended loneliness has a similar effect as it diminishes immunity, a risk factor that is particularly relevant in times of a virus pandemic. In all cases, essential replenishment is neglected for too long. See an easy-to-read article, ‘Activating the Vagus nerve might lower your Covid-19 risk: While physical distancing and masks are crucial, social interaction could calm the immune system and turn down inflammation’, by Markham Heid, *Medium*, 25th November 2020, <https://elemental.medium.com/activating-the-vagus-nerve-might-lower-your-covid-19-risk-e08ed0ce7a04>, and see scientific references, Cacioppo, et al., 2015, Cohen, et al., 2012, Hanscom, et al., 2020.

⁴³ See an impassioned outcry from a young man in Sri Lanka, ‘You have the right to not work: The final labor right is the right to not labor’, by Indi Samarajiva, *Medium*, 28th November 2020, <https://medium.com/indica/you-have-the-right-to-not-work-ec7cc325f76>. Samarajiva refers to an interview of David Graeber, ‘Capitalism’s best kept secret: “Income and utility are inversely proportiona”’, by Anne-Sophie Moreau, *Philonomist*, 7th February 2019, www.philonomist.com/en/interview/david-graeber-capitalisms-best-kept-secret: ‘I suggest a Spinozian theory of caring labor. Caring work is aimed at maintaining or augmenting another person’s freedom’.

⁴⁴ See also the work of primatologist and anthropologist Carel van Schaik. See, for instance, ‘Das Patriarchat ist eine Anomalie in der Menschheitsgeschichte: Eva und Adam waren gleich, erst Sesshaftigkeit und Besitz versklavten im Laufe der Jahrtausende die Frau’, an interview with van Schaik by Rafaela von Bredow, *Der Spiegel*, 48/20, 21st November 2020, pp. 106–110, www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/mensch/das-patriarchat-ist-eine-anomalie-in-der-menschheitsgeschichte-a-00000000-0002-0001-0000-000174103658.

⁴⁵ See, among others, the AMA Project, a transdisciplinary research process initiated and hosted by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) Potsdam, a government funded German sustainability research institute and think tank. See www.ama-project.org. See the talk of Thomas Bruhns on narratives as change agents for communities and social groups at the conference titled ‘Narratives in Times of Radical Transformation’, that brought together Berlin, Germany, and Kyoto, Japan, 19th–20th November 2020, organised by the Institute of Vocational Education and Work Studies at the Technische Universität Berlin, the IASS in Potsdam, Berlin, the Kokoro Research Center at Kyoto University, Japan, and the International Association for Analytical Psychology (IAAP). See <http://narrativeoftransformation-2020.org/>.

⁴⁶ See also Lindner, 2020.

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⁴⁷ See Lindner and Desmond Tutu (Foreword), 2010. I resonate with affect theology and its focus on studying the heart of faith, tracking how human emotions become religious feelings. See <http://revthandeka.org/affect-theology-thandeka.html>:

The spiritual foundation of liberal faith, after all, is not a set of doctrinal claims or creeds or religious beliefs or ideas. Liberal faith begins with transformed and uplifted feelings that exalt the human soul and let us love beyond belief, come what may. I use affect theology's core principle of love beyond belief when I work with congregations. The goal: to transform 'corps cold' churches (as Ralph Waldo Emerson put it) into sanctuaries that warm and elevate the human heart and inspire folks to stand strong on the side of love.

See also Schneider, 2017. See, furthermore, philosopher Alan Wilson Watts (1915–1973) and his 1971 reflections in *Alan Watts: A conversation with myself*, in four parts, beginning with <https://youtu.be/8aufuwMiKmE>.

Read also author Andreas Weber, 2016, who develops a creative ecology of the living — a *biopoetics*. And remember American writer Henry David Thoreau, 1854, who built himself a small cabin in a quiet, idyllic location among the pine trees on the shores of Walden Pond, Massachusetts, in 1845, when he was in his late twenties. He wanted to live in communion with nature, without the support of machines and modern civilisation. I thank Kamran Mofid for reminding me. See 'Why a simple life matters: The path to peace and happiness lies in the simple things in life', by Kamran Mofid, *Globalisation for the Common Good Initiative (GCGI)*, 7th August 2015, www.gcgi.info/index.php/blog/713-why-a-simple-life-matters-the-path-to-peace-and-happiness-lies-in-the-simple-things-in-life.

⁴⁸ Franco, et al., 2016, for a review of the growing discussion on heroic action in a humanistic perspective, 'as heroism aligns with ethical self-actualisation in its highest form, personal meaning making, and social good, and can also involve profound existential costs', Abstract.

See also James Doty — *The magic shop of the brain*, in 'On Being', with Krista Tippett, WNYC (non-profit, non-commercial, public radio stations located in New York City), 8th November 2018, <https://onbeing.org/programs/james-doty-the-magic-shop-of-the-brain-nov2018/>. See also Doty, 2016:

Being a hero can simply mean recognising a situation where somebody is at risk and making the effort to go and just help them. It could be even seeing an elderly person having difficulty crossing the street or seeing a person perhaps being bullied and intervening. The physiologic effects that individuals get, or what occurs in terms of making them feel good or having the release of these hormones associated with reward is actually quite amazing.

Doty is one of the editors of the *Oxford handbook of compassion science*, Seppälä, et al., 2017.

⁴⁹ Lindner and Desmond Tutu (Foreword), 2010, pp. 149–153.

⁵⁰ See, among others, psychologist Jean Twenge, 2017, and her book *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy — And completely unprepared for adulthood — And what this means for the rest of us*. She presents the results of four large national datasets on the mental health of teenagers and college students; baby boomers, Gen-X, and the millennials are all markedly different from iGen, the generation born after roughly 1994, where the rates of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and suicide spike upward. Twenge suggests that social media had a detrimental effect on the nature of social interactions in iGen. See also Curran and Hill, 2017, and Collishaw, et al., 2012.

⁵¹ Steve Kulich, professor of intercultural communications at Shanghai International Studies University, said at the Second International Conference on Multicultural Discourses in Hangzhou, 13–15th April 2007: 'First I have empowered my students. Then they became nasty people. Today, I no longer use the word empowerment. I use *entrustment*'. See also Lindner, 2007. Note also the very negative associations with the word empowerment or *Ermächtigung* in German language. The German word *Ermächtigungsgesetz* usually refers to the Enabling Act of 1933, a cornerstone of Adolf Hitler's seizure of power.

⁵² See also Bollier and Helfrich, 2018, *Free, fair, and alive: The insurgent power of the commons*.

⁵³ Primatologist and ethologist Frans de Waal has studied the phenomenon of *inequity aversion*, proposing 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 Brosnan and de Waal, 2014. Frans de Waal, 2009, disagrees with the proverb *Homo homini lupus est* ('man is wolf to man) by saying that it both fails to do justice to canids and

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denies the inherently social nature of our own species. I highly appreciated meeting Frans de Waal on 11th April 2011, and listening to his talk Empathy and emotional communication: Primate origins, at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. See more in chapter 3 of my 2017 book *Honor, humiliation, and terror*.

⁵⁴ See, among others, ‘Life with A.I.: Elon Musk: “Mark my words — A.I. is far more dangerous than nukes”’, by Catherine Clifford, *Consumer News and Business Channel (CNBC)*, 13th March 2018, www.cnbc.com/2018/03/13/elon-musk-at-sxsw-a-i-is-more-dangerous-than-nuclear-weapons.html. CNBC is an American basic cable, internet and satellite business news television channel. Elon Musk is most known for being co-founder, CEO, and product architect of Tesla, Inc. CNBC is an American basic cable, internet and satellite business news television channel.

⁵⁵ See, ‘The “magic bullet” drones behind Azerbaijan’s victory over Armenia’, by David Hambling, *Forbes*, 10th November 2020, www.forbes.com/sites/davidhambling/2020/11/10/the-magic-bullet-drones-behind--azerbajjans-victory-over-armenia/?sh=3e0abafc5e57. See also ‘The new revolution in military affairs: War's sci-fi future’, by Christian Brose, *Foreign Affairs*, 98 (3), 2019, www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-04-16/new-revolution-military-affairs. In 1898, Polish banker and military expert Ivan Stanislavovich (Jan) Bloch, 1899, predicted that new technologies would finally make war impossible, as they would overturn contemporary thinking about the character and conduct of war.

⁵⁶ See, for instance, ‘Corruption and tax-dodging “rampant”, urgent reforms needed: UN panel’, *United Nations News*, 24th September 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/09/1073442>. Consider also the greatest wealth disparity currently existing in history, following the so-called Cantillon Effect — referring to eighteenth-century economist Richard Cantillon — saying that the higher up someone stands in a power hierarchy, the more they benefit from a central authority’s money printing.

⁵⁷ Ury, 1999, p. 108. It is a privilege to have William Ury as an esteemed member in the global advisory board of our Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies fellowship.

⁵⁸ I shared my adaptation of Ury’s categorisation, for instance, in my book *Making enemies: Humiliation and international conflict*, Lindner, 2006, p. 26.

⁵⁹ We call our global network Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies. See www.humiliationstudies.org. See the doctoral dissertation on humiliation by Linda Hartling, 1996, and, among many other joint publications, see Hartling and Lindner, 2018.

⁶⁰ Carson, 1962.

⁶¹ For the Sustainable Development Goals, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>. If Goal 8 were to be taken seriously, it would undermine the success of more or less all other goals. See an interdisciplinary introduction to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that looks at all SDGs, their progress and challenges, offered by Johan Schot, a historian working in the field of science and technology policy, at www.edx.org/course/the-un-sustainable-development-goals-an-interdisci?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIILQ_qOR7QIViNptCh1Vzg-4EAAYASAAEgL4TfD_BwE. Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director, warns, ‘There’s this idea out there that we have to log, mine, and drill our way to prosperity. But that’s not true. By embracing circularity and re-using materials we can still drive economic growth while protecting the planet for future generations’, see *New trade rules vital to protecting the planet*, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 20th November 2020, www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/new-trade-rules-vital-protecting-planet.

⁶² I appreciate the work of scholar of human needs Ian Gough, 2017, and his book *Heat, greed and human need*, where he refers to eudaimonic psychology’s definition of three universal needs, *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*, see page 44. Katherine Trebeck, a research and policy adviser with Oxfam, summarises Gough’s definition of basic needs on 17th July 2019, on www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/book-review-heat-greed-and-human-need/:

...basic needs encompass physical health, autonomy of agency (mental health, cognitive understanding, opportunities to participate), and critical autonomy. They are satisfied by access to things such as adequate food and water, protective housing, safe work environment, healthcare, and significant primary relationships, and in turn optimised by freedoms from (civic and political rights), freedoms to (rights of access to need satisfiers), and political participation.

I resonate with Trebeck’s appreciation of Gough’s work, as it helps those who are ‘sceptical about the merit of wellbeing as individual self-reported happiness in the hedonic sense’. While preferences and wants

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depend on context, which means that it is not advisable to make simplistic assumptions about how people feel, ‘human needs are objective, plural, non-substitutable and satiable’, Gough, 2017, p. 3.

⁶³ ‘Covid-19 has revealed a pre-existing pandemic of poverty that benefits the rich’, by Philip Alston, outgoing UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, *The Guardian*, 11th July 2020, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jul/11/covid-19-has-revealed-a-pre-existing-pandemic-of-poverty-that-benefits-the-rich. See also Hickel, 2018, and *The parlous state of poverty eradication: Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Advance Unedited Version*, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, NYU School of Law, 2nd July 2020, <https://chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Alston-Poverty-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Lindner, 2012.

⁶⁵ Lucius Anneus Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*, pp. 91–63. See also MacKenzie, 2020, and ‘Complex systems theory explains why covid crushed the world: The more complicated and efficient a system gets, the more likely it is to collapse altogether’, by Debora MacKenzie, *One Zero*, 22nd July 2020, <https://onezero.medium.com/complex-systems-theory-explains-why-covid-crushed-the-world-a2cf5c0f9176>.

⁶⁶ Ruben Nelson’s Don Michael Day Presentation *Civilization next: How human nature is about to change trajectory*, San Francisco, February 2019, <https://vimeo.com/320297382>. Ruben (Butch) Nelson is the executive director of Foresight Canada, and he calls for new ‘co-creative eco-personal cultures’. It is a privilege have Ruben Nelson’s support for our dignity work.

⁶⁷ See, among many other coverages, ‘Climate change: 12 years to save the planet? Make that 18 months’, by Matt McGrath, Environment correspondent, *BBC News*, 23rd July 2019, www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-48964736.