The Faces of Humiliation

Postdoctoral Research Proposal
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Project Summary

The grant applicant has recently earned a doctoral degree in psychology from Oslo University (dr. psychol., 26th May 2001) on the basis of her research – much of which was conducted in Rwanda and Somalia – on humiliation as a factor in violent conflicts. The nature of the topic and circumstances of this research required the applicant both to employ a broad multidisciplinary prospect and to develop innovative survey and interview techniques that encouraged people of varying social strata to talk comfortably about their beliefs, feelings, and experiences. Both the scholarly papers and the more popular articles that have resulted from this work have been well-received, and there is reason to believe (because of the comments of colleagues who have commented on this work) that the applicant's efforts have helped to give the topic of humiliation a more prominent place on the academic agenda. The task at hand involves the further development and dissemination of this work, with the ultimate goal being a more comprehensive theoretical treatment of the sources, and the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup consequences of humiliation. This will include the further evaluation of the interview material on humiliation that has been collected during the past four years. This material will be supplemented with new material where necessary. The current plan calls for three foci, ranging from the 'micro' to 'macro' level of analysis. One focus will address 'Humiliation in the Family,' a second will examine 'Humiliation in Organisations,' and a third analysis will return to the topic of 'Humiliation in National and International Conflicts.' Three books and several papers are planned to address each of these foci, supplementing and complimenting the 17 articles already completed by the applicant and in various stages of the publication process.

Principal objective: Further development of theory and research on the role of humiliation in human conflict.
Sub-goals: Further evaluation and extension of the interview material on humiliation that has been collected during the past four years. Additional interview and/or survey information will be collected as needed, and attention to new and existing historical, sociological, anthropological, psychological, and other scholarly materials will continue. The results expected are three books and several academic articles.

Introduction

The applicant's doctoral dissertation has the title: *The Psychology of Humiliation: Somalia, Rwanda/Burundi and Hitler's Germany*. It consists of an initial volume of 507 pages that summarises the applicant's scholarship and interview methodology, and interview findings regarding Holocausts in Germany, Somalia and Rwanda/Burundi (bibliography of 56 pages), and a second 262 page volume containing a selection of 12 topically focussed articles regarding humiliation (the common reference list for the articles covers 27 pages). The Norwegian Research Council made this work possible.

Two initial observations triggered the applicant's interest in the topic of humiliation. The applicant's experience as clinical psychologist (1980-84 in Germany, 1984-1991 in Egypt) suggested the crucial role of humiliation – both the act and the experience – in human relations. Indeed for many individuals cycles of humiliation may permeate people's lives with an all-consuming intensity, as Vogel & Lazare, 1990, illustrate in 'The Unforgivable Humiliation – a Dilemma in Couples Treatment.' The severity of interpersonal rifts caused by humiliation clearly called for additional research. The second observation was historical. It has often been claimed that the humiliation of the Germans through the Versailles Treaties after World War I was partly responsible for the Holocaust and the Second World War.[1] The Marshall Plan aimed, at least partly, at not humiliating Germany again, but integrating Germany as a respected member of the European family. Political

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[1] See, for example, Haffner & Bateson, 1978, Elias, 1996.

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reasoning at the highest international level often builds on the psychological hypothesis that humiliating your opponents may have adverse effects.

It seemed very important, therefore, to examine the nature and impact of humiliation more systematically and in a broader range of situations that encompasses intergroup conflict and collective violence. Work by Scheff, 1990, Staub, 1989, Volkan, 1997, or Rapoport, 1997, addressed some of the dynamics that pertain to humiliation, but in their work and that of most other investigators the concept of humiliation is not adequately differentiated from related notions such as shame, or trauma. Smedslund, 1997, helped pave the way for the applicant's earlier investigations by forging commonsense definitions of psychological notions such as anger or respect, while Ross & Ward, 1995, accounted for psychological barriers to conflict resolution and thus further demonstrated the value of linking intergroup conflict to basic psychological processes. All of this work, as well as the rich sources of historical material attest to the value of further exploring the topic of humiliation – both differentiating it from other topics, and examining the way in which it provides a central theme in the study of collective violence.

The applicant is a psychologist and physician, and has a history of working and studying in different cultures. She has an unusually comprehensive background of intercultural knowledge (including knowledge of about 12 languages), interdisciplinary scholarship (ranging from medicine to psychology, social anthropology and philosophy) and applied experience (not only as a physician and clinical psychologist but also as an occasional consultant for an international business clientele). For seven years, from 1984-1991, she worked as a psychological counsellor in Cairo, Egypt. Her medical and psychological studies (1974-1984) she carried out in New Zealand, China, Thailand, Germany, Norway, USA, Israel, on a training ship to West Africa. During her training as a physician the applicant learned about the micro level, the human body in its physical and social environment, and through her education as a psychologist she learned much about relationships between individuals. Later, during her medical work in different cultures, but especially during her seven years (1984-1991) as a clinical psychologist in the rather collectivist society of Cairo, Egypt, her attention turned to family relations. Her medical doctorate (1994) addresses the definition of quality of life in Egypt as compared to Germany.

In her most recent research on humiliation (1997-2001) the applicant approaches even larger groups, ranging from clans to nations and ultimately to the international community. She has collected a vast amount of material (100 hours of audio-taped interviews and 10 hours of digital video-material). She carried out 216 qualitative interviews, addressing Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi and their history of genocidal killings, on the background of the Holocaust perpetrated in Hitler's Germany. From 1998 to 1999 the interviews took place in Africa (in Hargeisa, capital of Somaliland, in Kigali and other places in Rwanda, in Bujumbura, capital of Burundi, in Nairobi in Kenya, and in Cairo in Egypt), and from 1997 to 2001 also in Europe (in Norway, Germany, Switzerland, France, and in Belgium). This material formed the basis of the applicant's recent doctoral dissertation in psychology and 17 major articles and it will largely be the basis of the here-proposed project, together with new material that is to be collected in order to complement the existing body of data.

The introduction of a new term – the concept of humiliation – into the academic sphere is a task that cannot be comprehensively carried out in a doctoral period. The field of humiliation – deemed to be crucially important by many academics and practitioners – needs to be worked on further. It is therefore proposed that the applicant evaluates the existing material further and supplements it where necessary, and aims at making this material available to a broader audience. Three foci will be addressed, the micro, meso, and macro level, or, in other words, the dynamics of humiliation as pertaining a) to family relations (including gender relations), b) to relations within organisations (public and private sector), and c) to international interventions. All three levels of analysis are intertwined and enrich each other. The results will include academic articles and a trilogy of books with the proposed title *The Faces of Humiliation*.

The proposed three foci will represent the applicant's attempt to bring the critical topic of interpersonal and intergroup humiliation to ongoing debates about the peaceful transformation of conflicts, and the creation of relationships based on trust and respect instead of dehumanisation and debasement.

Brief Synopsis of *The Faces of Humiliation*

Focus One: *Humiliation in the Family*

Family and gender: Analysis of the changing position of males and females, as patriarchal structures and attitudes are undermined. This part is based on the applicant's experience as a clinical psychologist in Germany and in Egypt, where she had an international clientele.

Focus Two: *Humiliation in Organisations*

Business world and public organisations: Analysis of the forms of humiliation, intended and unintended, committed within and by business organisations.

Focus Three: *Humiliation in National and International Conflicts*

International relations, international intervention and human rights: Analysis of the dynamics of humiliation in the Middle East, the Balkans, Africa and Southeast Asia, including the humiliations, often unintentional, imposed by third parties attempting to maintain peace, protect 'humanitarian' interests, or 'defend human rights.'

Work programme

The project is scheduled to last 36 months, as follows:

Phase I, months 1- 6 (01.04.2002-30.09.2002):

- Analysis and integration of available statistical data and scientific literature concerning incidents of humiliation in the three targeted areas (family, organisations, human rights and international intervention);
- transcription and evaluation of the interviews that have already been carried out during the past four years of research (100 hours audio-tape and 10 hours film, part of which is already transcribed and has been used as basis for the doctorate and 17 articles);
- carrying out of additional interviews when necessary;
- writing of further academic articles that address specific perspectives of the humiliation dynamic;
- revision of submitted articles (17 articles have been submitted in 1999 and 2000, three are published, five are accepted, the rest is under review and requests for revision must be expected);
- a synopsis of the three books is being sent to publishers and agents (contact to publishers has already been made);
- an advisory board of interested academics working in related fields is being set up (and is already largely in place);
- seminars and lectures on the topic of humiliation are arranged.

Phase II, months 7-12 (01.10.2002-31.03.2003): In addition to the tasks begun in *phase I* first outlines of the three foci (leading up to three books) are terminated and sent to the advisory board of interested academics working in related fields for feedback.

Phase III, months 13-24 (01.04.2003-31.03.2004): In addition to the tasks begun in *phase I* the three foci (leading up to three books) are brought to a more final stage.

Phase IV, months 25-36 (01.04.2004-31.03.2005): Termination of the books and dissemination of the results, theoretical conclusions and policy implications through focus groups, seminars, colloquia and mass media outlets.

Academic contacts

In Norway the project will be academically based at the Department of Psychology at the University of Oslo and have strong links to sister departments in Trondheim, Bergen and Tromsø. Strong interdisciplinary links will be maintained with other departments at UiO (political science, social anthropology, sociology, philosophy) as well with numerous institutes (PRIO, NUPI, FAFO, Det Norske Nobelinstitutt, Nansenskole, etc.). All these institutions also have a large international network of academic contacts.

The applicant maintains close contact and enjoys the professional support and assistance of an international academic network that includes leading scientists from Stanford University (Lee Ross), Loughborough

University (Dennis Smith, Ruth Lister and others), Hawai'i University (George Kent), University of Geneva (Pierre Dasen), and Gerard Prunier (Paris). Other renowned scholar including Ervin Staub, Thomas Scheff, William Ury, Dov Cohen, Howard Zehr, Robert Zajonc, Albert Bandura, Michael Billig, Ulrich Beck, Daniel Bar-On, Rudolf Zarzar, similarly have signalled their interest in continuing to monitor work on humiliation being produced by the applicant. Indeed, the list of relevant academic contacts maintained by the applicant now numbers more than 500 names. Finally, it is worth reporting that contact has already been made (through the kind assistance of Rudolf Zarzar) with a number potential publishers, and their initial expressions of interest are currently being pursued.

Innovative and appropriate aspects of the proposed project

The term humiliation systematically connects many aspects of the human condition and academic scholarship. The research on humiliation shed light on the interesting fact that humiliation provides not only a 'red thread' through human history, but is also inscribed within many aspects of the human condition. Humiliation is thus,

- a societal process involving groups(and forcing examination of the legitimacy of) subjugation and power asymmetries between those groups;
- a interpersonal process occurring between individual 'humiliators' and 'victims'
- an emotional state experienced by individual victim, one with profound personal and interpersonal consequences.

In other words, the concept of humiliation connects the form of societal structures, the mode of intergroup and interpersonal relations, and the emotional state of individuals. (Common sense language, it is interesting to note, uses the same word, namely 'humiliation,' for the act committed by the perpetrating individuals or groups and the experience of the victim or victims). As such, the concept of humiliation demands multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary treatment, connecting basic theory and research in psychology with other social sciences and humanities including, social anthropology, sociology, political science, history, and moral philosophy.

Results expected

It is planned to disseminate the theoretical and policy implications of the humiliation dynamic not only to academics through the standard seminars and colloquia, but also (through mass media outlets) to ordinary people concerned with interpersonal and intergroup conflict, and ultimately to relevant global decision-makers.

A trilogy of books with the proposed title *The Faces of Humiliation* will be produced, addressing, at different levels of analysis 'Humiliation in the Family' (including gender relations), 'Humiliation in Organisations,' and 'Humiliation in National and International Conflicts.' The market for the three projected books will be the broad range of readers interested in the peaceful transformation of conflicts at all societal levels, in the family, as well as in corporate and public organisations, or national and international relations. Scholars and students in the disciplines of sociology, psychology, social anthropology, political science and history regarding contemporary African affairs, etc. are perhaps the most obvious potential readers. However the series of books envisaged would seek to gain the same visibility and exert the same impact as recent works such as *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* by Friedman, 2000, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* by Donald L. Horowitz, 2001, or the well-known book *Jihad Versus McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* by Benjamin Barber, 1996. The applicant would love to see *The Faces of Humiliation* volumes at airport bookshops and better bookstore everywhere, but the most important goal is a coherent, comprehensive, but readable treatment of the relevant topics in a manner that is interesting and useful to scholars and lay readers alike.

Several new academic articles will also be written addressing the relevant topics (in addition to the 17 articles that have been written by the applicant on the topic of humiliation so far).

Reflections on Ethics

Research on humiliation is at the core of the present endeavour to implement human rights more thoroughly and more consistently at all societal levels, and to safeguard respect for individual dignity. It fills the call for *The Decent Society* (Margalit, 1996) with life.

It is also at the core of scientific endeavour and its relation with ethics. In the course of her research the applicant developed a new and ethically sound methodology for interviewing people that have survived torture,

war and genocide. The main focus was on not humiliating the interlocutors by turning them into interview 'objects,' but inviting them to become dignified co-researchers. In her article 'How Research Can Humiliate: Critical Reflections on Method' (Lindner, 2001a) the applicant describes the process of developing this methodology.

Research on humiliation is extremely well placed within the framework of Norwegian strategies to develop international excellence in such fields as human rights, peace research, reconciliation, conflict management, conflict prevention, and mental health.

Extended Introduction into the Dynamics of Humiliation[2]

After Germany's defeat in 1945, care was taken not to repeat the humiliation of 1918. Instead of facing draconian demands for reparations, Germany was given help to rebuild its industrial economy and was brought into NATO and the European Community (now the European Union). The clear intention was to avoid a third world war against Germany with all the terrible costs that would entail' (Lindner, 2001b, 2).

The Marshall Plan was central to preventing a renewed humiliation. Willy Brandt, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, confirmed this when he spoke at Harvard University 5th June 1972 at the commemoration of George Marshall's speech 25 years earlier (Brandt, 1999). Brandt's speech was entitled: '1945 Different Than 1918.'

Willy Brandt, with his own talent for making historic speeches, declared: '...Victories, too, can be bitter, especially if they carry the seed for future conflicts as in 1918, when the war was won, and peace was lost for want of reason on the part of the winners and the losers, through stubborn mistrust on the one side, through resentment of the humiliated on the other... George Marshall and others agreed that victory did not relieve his country of its responsibility. The United States did not for a moment claim that responsibility for itself, it shared it with its allies...With his plan George Marshall roused Europe's stifled self-confidence. He gave many citizens of the old continent a concrete stimulus to bring down from the stars the vision of a Europe united in lasting peace... the Marshall Plan was productive proof that America needs a self-confident Europe capable of forming a common political will... it waits for Europe to grow into an equal partner with whom it can share the burden of responsibility for world affairs...1947 marked the beginning of the Cold War, not because of, but in spite of the Marshall Plan.'

An example of humiliation at the international level	
Humiliation	The Treaty of Versailles humiliated a defeated Germany and – together with economic hardship – prepared Germany for Hitler.
Consequences of humiliation	• World War and Holocaust. • As a consequence, all Germans acquired the reputation of being 'willing executioners' who do not deserve sympathy or help.
Reconciliation	The Marshall Plan provided Germany with new dignity, and instead of an excluded pariah, Germany is a member of NATO and EU.

Table 1: An example of humiliation and its aftermath at the international level

The two world wars thus seem to support the proposition that humiliation may lead to war, Holocaust, genocide, ethnic cleansing and terrorism. At the turn of the millennium those very issues are still all very high on the world's political agenda. In recent years, genocide has occurred in Rwanda and Burundi, ethnic cleansing in ex-Yugoslavia, atrocities have been committed in East-Timor and many other places.

To take Rwanda, Clark writes about the genocide in 1994: 'The Rwandan genocide of 1994 was the execution of 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu by Hutu-supremacists in the name of Hutu superiority. It took place at a pace three times that of the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews. This genocide I find to be, with no hyperbole, perhaps the single worst, most immoral, tragic, and horrific event of human history; for a few reasons. First, the genocide was committed not by a military elite but by the populace at large, using crude weapons (mostly

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[2] Quoted from Lindner, 2000.

machetes). Second, the international community (read: the United States and Western Europe) did almost nothing to stop it, despite repeated warnings. Third, the size and rapidity of the genocide was astounding. Fourth, it was the archetype of genocide, nothing motivated the killers besides a hate that had accumulated over the centuries' (Clark, 2000, 1).

Rwanda could be added to the list of sad examples illustrating the dynamics of humiliation. Table 2 proposes a possible version of these dynamics, this time not between states, as in the case of Germany, but within a single state.

An example of humiliation at the national level	
Humiliation	Extremist members of the Hutu ruling class – Hutu being the former 'underlings' in the traditional Tutsi kingdom of Rwanda – feared the return of past humiliation if their former Tutsi masters were to regain influence.
Consequences of humiliation	• Genocide. • As a consequence, all Hutu acquired the reputation of 'genocidaires' who do not deserve sympathy or help.
Reconciliation	Yet to be fully achieved.

Table 2: An example of humiliation and its aftermath at the national level

Examples are not restricted to the national or international level; the global multilateral level is equally affected. In 1993 an angry crowd dragged a dead American soldier through the streets of Mogadishu in Somalia.[3] On New Year's Eve 1998 I interviewed a Somali warlord (Osman Ato, a former ally of General Aidid) who was just one of many Somali voices who insisted that in the eyes of many Somalis (and others) the UNOSOM operation was a big humiliation. This was especially true, he maintained, when a house was attacked and bombed where respected elders had a meeting. He felt even more humiliated, he was adamant, by the cynical and humiliating justification that was given for the bombing, namely that this meetinghouse was supposedly a headquarters. He argued strongly that 'when the Americans feel humiliated because their soldiers' bodies were shown in the streets, they should ask themselves why this happened. They should be aware of the fact that killing elders, for example, is a deep humiliation in Somali society.' The helicopters, the bombing, all this, he maintained, were acts of humiliation that united Somalis against the UN. Osman Ato's views illustrated that he, a warlord, and himself an 'organiser of violence,' fervently thinks in terms of humiliation and 'counter-humiliation,' as do wide circles of the Somali people, who united together with him under the banner of 'necessary' counter-humiliation.

But not only Osman Ato saw humiliation at work. Even some of the most earnest, humane and well willing helpers on the American side felt uneasy. Sam Engelstad, UN's Chief of Humanitarian Affairs, and, on several occasions Acting Humanitarian Coordinator in Mogadishu in 1994, wrote[4]: 'During my own time in Somalia in 1994, humiliation was never far from the surface. Indeed, it pretty much suffused the relationship between members of the UN community and the general Somali population. In the day-to-day interaction between the Somalis and UN relief workers like ourselves, it enveloped our work like a grey cloud. Yet, the process was not well understood, and rarely intended to be malevolent.' Engelstad adds that 'Among the political and administrative leadership of the UN mission, however, humiliation and its consequences were far better understood and were frequently used as policy tools. Regardless of intent, it was pernicious and offensive to many of us.'

A cycle of humiliation was put in motion in Somalia, see Table 3: First the Somalis felt humiliated, and then they responded by inflicting humiliation upon dead American bodies. The latter phase of this cycle is still relevant today to any traveller, especially from the rich world, as incidents of kidnappings and bombings show, which limit the freedom to move internationally because of fear of terrorist attacks. Not even humanitarian workers such as Red Cross and Red Crescent staff are safe from kidnap incidents, such as the one that occurred

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[3] On 9th December 1992, the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), or Operation Restore Hope, was launched in Somalia by the United States, as a response to the failing of the first United Nations operation UNOSOM. However, UNITAF also came to fail, as did UNOSOM II. Especially, the hunt for Somali General Aidid undermined UN impartiality and turned the UN and the US into targets of Somali mistrust and revenge.
[4] Personal communication from Sam Engelstad (28th September 1999), quoted with his permission.

in Somalia in April 1998.[5] Anti-Western terrorism in Egypt (for example Luxor, 1997), or the 1998 bombings of the American embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania, are further examples that have filled the media. The recent kidnap drama on the Philippines may also serve as an instance; an American hostage was 'worth' much more than hostages with other passports, namely claims of ten million dollars and the release of prisoners in the United States (1st September 2000, ARD 'Tagesschau,' Germany).

The humiliating ending of the UN operation in Somalia had profound effects at the global multilateral level, as this quote illustrates: 'The international community's intervention in Somalia has become synonymous with the prevailing mood in many quarters against international intervention in far-flung civil conflicts, against the broadening of peacekeeping into 'nation-building' operations, and against the United Nations in general' (Jan, 1996, 1).

Rwanda paid a high price for this 'mood against international intervention': When the genocide started in Rwanda in 1994 the international community left Rwandans to slaughter each other, because nobody wanted a 'second Somalia.'[6] This is the more shocking since as few as 5000 troops could have saved almost a million lives: 'A modern force of 5,000 troops... sent to Rwanda sometime between April 7 and April 21, 1994, could have significantly altered the outcome of the conflict... forces appropriately trained, equipped and commanded, and introduced in a timely manner, could have stemmed the violence in and around the capital, prevented its spread to the countryside, and created conditions conducive to the cessation of the civil war…' (Feil, 1998, 3, quoted from The International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and the Surrounding Events, 2000, chapter 10, paragraph 9).

An example of humiliation at the global, multilateral level	
Humiliation	Somalis felt humiliated by certain operations that were part of an international intervention that was intended to help Somalis.
Consequences of humiliation	• Somalis killed UN peacekeepers, and publicly humiliated the dead bodies of U.S. pilots. Also today, especially Western tourists are at risk of being kidnapped or even killed in some world regions. • As a consequence, people in need in some world regions have acquired the reputation of being unthankful recipients who do not deserve sympathy or help. The international community, for example, hesitated to protect Rwandans against genocide.
Reconciliation	Yet to be fully achieved.

Table 3: An example of humiliation and its aftermath at the global, multilateral level

Similar dynamics of humiliation may be diagnosed at the intercultural level. As discussed above, Western psychology is ethno-centric. I will relate a story that reinforced my interest in studying this topic; it also connects to the first part of Sam Engelstad's quote. I learned to understand how Western psychology may be inadequate within the framework of other cultures, and may have a humiliating effect, though unintended, upon these other cultures.

I remember how disturbing it was to see how some of my Western colleagues 'humiliated' their Egyptian clients without noticing it, even believing that their actions were for their clients' 'best.' A Western colleague, for example, advised young Egyptian girls who sought her advice because they suffered from problematic family situations, to get their own apartment in order to 'cut the umbilical cord' and, 'by God, get on their own feet!' My Western therapist-colleague was unwilling to understand, when I explained, that in most Egyptian contexts it would be quite harmful for a young girl to move into her own flat, that she rather should move to her grandmother, aunt, or some other relative. My colleague defended her approach and explained to me that she felt that the Egyptian population was disadvantaged because they 'had not yet had the chance' to learn enough about

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[5] Eight Red Cross and Red Crescent staff were kidnapped at the airport in Mogadishu North. See further down my interviews with hostages, among others the head of the group, Ola Skuterud from the Norwegian Red Cross, as well as with the chief negotiator of the Red Cross.

[6] See for example O'Halloran, 1995.

the Western way of life, and were 'deprived' of relevant Western knowledge about how healthy people should behave. When the girls in question did not actually move to a flat of their own, the therapist drew the conclusion that the girls 'did not wish to get better.' The therapist told the girls that they were 'wasting the therapist's time,' and should 'come back when they were serious.'

This example may tentatively be systematised in Table 4 and thus provide an example for the dynamics of humiliation at the intercultural level:

An example of humiliation at the intercultural level	
Humiliation	Some instances of 'helpful' intervention by Western counsellors were not well enough adapted to Egyptian culture. What was intended as help proved to be humiliating in its effects.
Consequences of humiliation	• Some Egyptian clients stopped accepting 'help' from their Western helpers. • As a consequence, these Egyptian clients acquired the reputation of being unthankful recipients who do not deserve sympathy or help.
Reconciliation	Yet to be fully achieved.

Table 4: An example of humiliation and its aftermath at the intercultural level

Finally, the interpersonal level shall be briefly touched upon in this enumeration of illustrative examples of the dynamics of humiliation. On the basis of many years of international experience, I suggest that it is a universal human experience to feel terrible if put down and humiliated. I believe that humiliation is especially salient if your love is being rejected in the very act of humiliation; even worse, if the wish to be loved back is being denied at the same time.

I had a client whose mother-in-law enjoyed saying, in front of the whole family, with disgust in her voice: 'And you want to be part of our family? Who do you think you are?' My client reported to me what she felt when confronted with this behaviour for the first time: 'I was deeply shocked and petrified; I felt cold, could hardly breath, and I was unable to answer.' She came to me because she felt that she was not addicted to alcohol or cigarettes: much worse, she was caught in her own pain. She could not distance herself, could not develop any leisure interests or relaxing hobbies. Her entire life was consumed by her relationship with her in-laws, a relationship that was filled with a continuous flow of incidents of humiliation and counter-humiliation, sometimes minute, sometimes overwhelmingly vicious; she could not stop being obsessed with imagining all kinds of revenge. After her husband's death her in-laws tried to trick her out of her inheritance and she was locked in bitter court-cases with them for many years. She repeatedly became so desperate that she did 'stupid' things as she called it – for example writing 'hysterical' letters, or starting to shout at her adversaries in the court room – behaviour that did not earn her the respect she wished to receive from the judge, her lawyer and others involved in the case.

An example of humiliation at the family level	
Humiliation	My client is being humiliated by her in-laws.
Consequences of humiliation	• My client is obsessed by dreams of revenge. She occasionally gets 'crazy,' writes 'hysterical' letters, or shouts at her adversaries. • As a consequence, she acquired the reputation of not deserving sympathy or help.
Reconciliation	Yet to be fully achieved.

Table 5: An example of humiliation and its aftermath at the intercultural level

These exemplary snapshots indicating the relevance of the dynamics of humiliation are intended to give the reader a taste of what humiliation may entail, and where to find it. Further down in the text some of these examples, especially those at the macro-level, will be examined in more detail.

Tentatively, one may conclude, from the list of examples presented, that the war-torn first half of the twentieth century in Europe suggests that humiliation can lead to war, to Holocaust, genocide, ethnic cleansing and terrorism, while the second half of the century indicates that the same proposition may be true in other parts

of the world as well. Furthermore, the examples presented give a taste of the wide range of consequences flowing from humiliation. Incidents of humiliation may lead to extreme reactions such as massacres, but may also be relevant in the more subtle undermining of, for example, intercultural relations. Moreover, these examples make it, perhaps, clearer how humiliation may be played out at all levels, affecting relations between individuals as well as groups.

In other words, these introductory remarks highlight incidents and processes that invite the hypothesis that deeply damaging experiences of humiliation may be a major cause of the widespread occurrence of the break-down of relations around the world, leading to outcomes ranging from hidden animosity to open violence such as war, genocide, terrorism and kidnapping. The characteristics of humiliation merit detailed investigation. If people feel humiliated, they may strike back when they can, and this may lead not only to extreme outcomes such as war and violence, but also to more muted consequences, such as the hampering of constructive relations, strategies and conflict solutions that otherwise would be attainable.

The Significance of Historic Change for the Way Humiliation Is Perceived, Felt and Reacted To

The results of the research project on humiliation as related to genocide and war show that processes of humiliation are elementary, because genocide and war often occur when 'underlings' try to replace their masters (and keep hierarchy intact), or attempt to rise to equality (and dismantle hierarchical structures) as described by human rights ideals.

The research yielded the thought-provoking results that the current rise of underlings to the level of equality as described by human rights ideals is characterised by a certain sequence of actions and reactions (and that this sequence is not only diachronic, but also synchronic). The sequence of actions and reactions may be summarised as follows:

- Underlings in traditional hierarchical societies may humbly accept their lowliness as divinely ordained or nature's order (see notions of penetration, structural violence, Galtung, 1969, 1996). Masters view their superiority in the same terms – they typically assume that their underlings deeply admire and love them and that their domination represents nothing more than parental patronage.

- Underlings may attempt to rise within ranking orders by imitating elites. Masters typically view this effort with mild sympathy or ridicule.

- At some point underlings recognise that by imitating masters they do not actually achieve the status of a master or gain respect as an equal (Fanon, 1986) and they develop feelings of humiliation regarding their lowly position. They may call for major changes of hierarchical structures, even for revolution and violence, and may accuse masters of having arrogated their superiority illegitimately. At this point masters themselves typically experience feelings of humiliation due to the withdrawal of the thankfulness and subservience that they feel entitled to receiving from their underlings. Violent oppression of their underlings may be the masters' reaction in cases where they stay in power; genocide of the former elite (imagined or real) may the result when underlings gain access to the country's power instruments (Hutu in Rwanda).

These three stages may occur in the course of macro-historical changes – such as the demise of slavery – however, the same society, even the same person, may harbour all stages and incremental transitions between stages within herself at the same time. An underling, for example, may rebel against an elite and feel humiliated by it, while at the same time admiring it and feeling ashamed of this very admiration. The intricate web of threads of feelings and actions that accompany the rise of underlings requires thorough disentangling in order to understand and prevent violent expressions. Processes of humiliation and counter-humiliation stand at the core of this web and give it a comprehensive meaning. The research project on humiliation has shed valuable light on this web, however, more research is required.

Research Findings Suggest That the Current Transition towards Human Rights Ideals Is Characterised by a Multitude of Confrontations and Contradictions

The applicant found ample evidence for the problems entailed in the current transition to human rights based societal structures and facilitates the tackling of such problems by systematising these problems with the help of the concept of humiliation. Today's global society includes

- promoters of human rights who regard degradation of others as illegitimate,

- and at the same time representatives of the opposite stance who justify the same practice as highly recommendable.

    Often the elite of a country or organisation displays the 'old values' and pays at best lip service to human rights, while others call for an earnest implementation of the ideal of human rights. This antagonism creates a host of misunderstandings and bitter feelings that relate to the notion of humiliation. Oppressive dictatorial regimes, for example, face criticism from human rights advocates and are accused of humiliating their underlings, however, such regimes may return the same accusation and deplore that Western imperialist ideas are used to humiliate the non-West. An important policy recommendation arising from the research is that human rights advocacy that does not display respect for those who still adhere to the old honour code, may have humiliating effects on the accused that create secondary problems in the course of a transition that is already difficult in itself. In order to facilitate a smoother transition towards human rights, these findings are crucial, and further research necessary.

Findings Suggest That the Current Transition Towards Human Rights Ideals Can Be Described With Terms Such as Arrogation, Humiliation and Humility

Figure 1 depicts how the current transition to egalitarian relations may be described. It may be seen as characterised by underlings who begin feeling humiliated by their lowly position and who accuse masters of having arrogated their superiority. Underlings attempt to rise to the line of equality, and at the same time call for masters to descend to a common level of humility, thus dismantling hierarchy. In contrast, in the traditional honour society underlings typically rose to the level of the master and kept the old hierarchical structure in place.
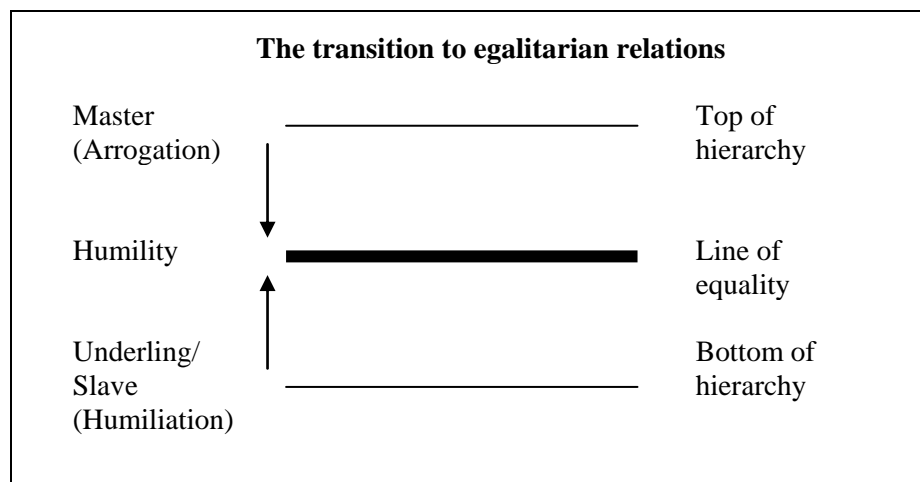

The transition to egalitarian relations

Master (Arrogation)		Top of hierarchy
Humility		Line of equality
Underling/ Slave (Humiliation)		Bottom of hierarchy

Figure 1: The transition to equal dignity for every human being

Findings Indicate That Feelings of Humiliation Become Stronger at the Current Historic Turning Point as the Act of Humiliation Becomes Illegitimate and at The Same Time More Wide-Spread

Central findings of the research on humiliation – with urgent policy relevance – concern the consequences of the current historic transition from 'honour humiliation' (humiliation as legitimate subjugation of some human beings by others in honour societies) towards 'human rights humiliation' (modern human rights based societal structures that regard humiliation as illegitimate).

    This transition dangerously increases feelings of humiliation in many segments of the world population:

- Feelings of humiliation increase whenever underlings come to perceive that their condition of subjugation – a condition they may have accepted as divinely ordained or nature's order – is far from legitimate and represents but illegitimate and humiliating lowliness.

- Global promotion and awareness of human rights is currently contrasted with an increase in violations of this principle – the growing gap between rich and poor is but one example – and this gap increases feelings of humiliation among the less privileged because they feel victimised by what they see as humiliation by 'double standards' or empty 'human rights rethoric.'
- Formerly recommended communication styles that entailed routine humiliation increasingly receive medical labels such as trauma, bullying or mobbing, and thus expand the repertoire of existing medical diagnoses insofar as processes of humiliation become the core of new diagnostic labels.

Since feelings of humiliation have the potential to lead to anger and violence an increase of those feelings within the world population may be described as being as dangerous as a pressure cooker that is building up steam.

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