Humiliation or Dignity: Regional Conflicts in the *Global Village*

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Abstract. *Often regional conflicts are treated as if they are placed in a vacuum, independent of their environment. This paper attempts to put regional conflict regions into the perspective of a globalising world. It is suggested that feelings of humiliation play a central role in this process. Human rights ideals extend dignity to all humankind and prohibit humiliating people as lesser beings. Human rights ideals thus define high goals and consequently create intense feelings of humiliation when violated. Every local conflict is inscribed into the global debate as to how the* global village *will look like in the future: will human rights reign, or will elites keep underlings in a humiliating position? Expressions that are central to this discourse are discussed in this paper, such as 'protecting my people', 'freedom', 'peace', 'stability', as well as 'war', 'enemies', 'friends', 'terrorists', 'soldiers', and 'police'.*

Keywords: egalisation, globalisation, human rights, humiliation, reactive devaluation, regional conflict.

Humiliation: the force that creates rifts

This paper attempts to convey conclusions drawn from four years of social psychological research, combined with more than twenty years of therapeutic experience. From 1984-1987 I was a psychological counsellor at the American University in Cairo, and from 1987-1991 I had my own private practice. I offered counselling in English, French, German, Norwegian, and, after some years, also in Egyptian-Arabic. My clients came from diverse cultural backgrounds, many from the expatriate community in Cairo, such as Americans, Europeans, Scandinavians, Palestinians, and citizens of other African countries, as well as from the local community, both Western-oriented, and traditionally-oriented Egyptians. Part of my work was *culture-counselling*, meaning that foreign companies working in Egypt asked me for my support in understanding Egyptian culture, Arab culture, and Islam. Before coming to Egypt, from 1974-1984, I studied and worked in New Zealand, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Israel, West Africa, USA, Germany, and Norway, as a student of both psychology and of medicine.

[1] During my research I carried out 216 qualitative interviews, addressing Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi and their history of genocidal killings. Trust was built and authentic encounters were sought, inscribed in non-humiliating relationships that safeguarded everybody's dignity. The interlocutors were invited to become "co-researchers" in a reflective dialogue with the researcher, involving not only the interviewee and the researcher but also various scholars whose ideas were introduced into the dialogue.

Already as a schoolgirl I was interested in the world's cultures and languages and I eventually learned to handle around 12 languages, among them the key languages of the world. My aim was to become part of other cultures, not 'visit' 'them'. I wanted to develop a gut feeling about how people in different cultures define life and death, conflict and peace, love and hate, and how they look at 'others'.

More than 25 years of learning how to be a global citizen have taught me that human beings are less divided and different than believed by people who are residents in one country and visit others as tourists, for business, diplomacy, or fieldwork. As long as you visit others, or live in expatriate ghettos, you stay outside. Yet, there is a growing number of people, who, like me, are currently developing a global or at least multi-local identity and become citizens of the world. For me it was often a painful process. Renouncing old yearnings and beliefs, and building a global identity not only theoretically, but also in practice, is hard. It is like building a ship while at sea.

I was aided, however, by my growing intuition that basically all human beings yearn for recognition and respect. The withdrawal or denial of recognition and respect is experienced as humiliation. Humiliation, I think, is the strongest force that creates rifts between people and breaks down relationships (Lindner, 2001). Thus the desire for recognition unites us human beings. This desire is universal and can serve as a platform for contact and cooperation. Many of the rifts that we can observe stem from a universal phenomenon, namely the humiliation that is felt when recognition and respect is lacking. I do not believe that ethnic, religious, or cultural differences create rifts by themselves. On the contrary, diversity can be a source of mutual enrichment. However, diversity is enriching only as long as it is embedded within relationships that are characterised by respect. When respect and recognition are failing, those who feel victimised are prone to highlight differences. They do this in order to justify rifts that were caused by humiliation.

I began developing this intuition already when I started working as a clinical psychologist in Germany (1980-1984) with individuals and families. My experience indicated that humiliation is of crucial importance in human relations, both as act and as experience (cf. Vogel & Lazare, 1990).

What is experienced as humiliation? What happens when people feel humiliated? When is humiliation established as a feeling? What does humiliation lead to? Which experiences of justice, honour, dignity, respect and self-respect are connected with the feeling of being humiliated? How is humiliation perceived and responded to in different cultures? What role does humiliation play in aggression? What can be done to overcome the violent effects of humiliation? Where can I observe cases of humiliation? If humiliation played a role after World War I for Germany, is humiliation just as relevant in more recent cases of war and genocide, such as Rwanda, Somalia, Cambodia, and so on?

Humiliation means the enforced lowering of a person or group, a process of subjugation that damages or strips away their pride, honour or dignity. To be humiliated is to be placed, against your will and often in a deeply hurtful way, in a situation that is greatly inferior to what you feel you should expect. Humiliation entails demeaning treatment that transgresses established expectations. It may involve acts of force, including violent force. At its heart is the idea of pinning down, putting down or holding to the ground. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of humiliation as a

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process is that the victim is forced into passivity, acted upon, made helpless. However, the role of the victim is not necessarily always unambiguous. A victim may feel humiliated in the absence of any deliberately humiliating act: as a result of misunderstandings, or as a result of personal and cultural differences concerning norms about what respectful treatment ought to entail. A 'victim' may even invent a story of humiliation in order to manoeuvre another party into the role of a loathsome perpetrator.

People react in different ways to being treated in humiliating ways. Some just become depressed, some get openly angry, and others hide their anger and plan revenge. The person who plans for revenge may become the leader of a movement.

Furthermore, a perpetrator might want to commit humiliation but not succeed, and a benefactor might humiliate while trying to do good. A third party might observe victims who do not see themselves as such, or fail to see victims in cases where they do exist. Finally, humiliation may be sought instead of despised.[2]

Globalisation

Every news programme in the world's television channels starts with a turning globe. People all over the world are constantly kept aware of the fact that we are all inhabitants of planet earth. None of our ancestors had this view. We have become aware of the fact that we live in a *global village.* This awareness is moving the frontiers that used to run between groups.

Human beings have a tendency to differentiate in-groups (*us*) from out-groups (*them*). The idea of the *global village* changes relations between *us* and *them*, for example between *us Americans* and *you Europeans, Russians,* or *Chinese*. The term *global village* indicates that a unifying process is taking place; one single large unit is formed of several smaller, formerly separated units. The rifts that used to separate *us* from *them* are affected by globalisation and its unifying force.

When we make a distinction between *us* and *them*, we are creating moral boundaries (cf. Opotow, 1995). 'Individuals or groups within our moral boundaries are seen as deserving of the same fair, moral treatment as we deserve. Individuals or groups outside these boundaries are seen as undeserving of this same treatment' (Coleman, 2000, p. 118).

A whole wealth of social-psychological research relates to the phenomenon of in- and out-group categorisations. The famous Robbers' Cave experiment by Muzafer Sherif (1988) involved boys in a summer camp: The boys were split into two groups engaging in competitive activities with conflicting goals (for example, zero sum games such as football). Hostility between these groups evolved astonishingly fast and almost automatically. Experiments by Tzeng & Jackson (1994) confirm the same dynamics also for adults. This is not a matter of conflicting goals. For example, schoolboys were entirely arbitrarily assigned to

[2] There is a large body of literature that addresses the notion of humiliation as part of shame, or trauma, or aggression. However, there exists only a very limited amount on the notion of humiliation as differentiated from other concepts. Among this literature is Margalit (1996), Miller (1993); Scheff (1990); Steinberg (1991), and Volkan (1997), as well as special issues on humiliation by two journals, the Journal of Primary Prevention in 1991, and in 1997 the journal Social Research.

two groups and asked to allocate money to others; they favoured their in-group even under such minimal circumstances.

All these experiments feed into Social Identity theory, which is a hotly discussed field. Why is the in-group favoured? A Somali nomad would explain to the social psychologists that in a dangerous environment it would be suicidal to not be part of a strong in-group for protection. Many Somalis owe their lives to clan-affiliation; when fleeing, they can count on clan-members they never met before for help wherever they stray. However, many would also admit, that the opposite is also true, namely that overly rigid in-group demarcations perpetuate the very danger they aim to protect against.

This becomes clear at points of transition: Muusa Bihi Cabdi, a former Somali and Somaliland military leader whom I interviewed, professed that his heart was pounding when he flew to Addis Ababa for peace negotiations for the first time. He described how his whole body 'expected' that the Ethiopians would kill him upon arrival. Instead, they offered him tea! He could not believe it. If his fear had taken over, he would have missed the experience that fault lines are perhaps not as eternal as his body told him; they are movable. And globalisation is a strong moving force for such fault lines; globalisation currently creates one large unit from many smaller ones.

Admittedly, the creation of larger units is not new; big empires have been formed from smaller units in the course of human history. But today there is one element that is profoundly new and makes this a historic turning point. It is the fact that humankind is in the process of understanding that the planet earth is limited, and not expandable. In the past, empires were held together by strong centres and their counter position to the rest of the world, a world that for ages had no clear limits in the minds of its inhabitants. But now the *global village* is held together by an increasing awareness of the minuteness of the globe and its interdependence. 'We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now', Martin Luther King said, and this describes the current state of the world. If one country starts a nuclear war with its neighbour, the whole planet is at risk. The idea that we all are in the same boat, makes us one single in-group. All concepts, ideas, and feelings that put others into out-groups lose validity and are increasingly outdated.

Clearly, the planet was never anything else but precisely this small planet in a vast universe. It is not the planet that has changed. What is new, however, is that humankind has understood this. Humankind was aided by a long tradition of tool-making that ultimately lead to astronauts being able to take pictures from space, to airplanes shrinking distances between the continents, and communication technology making networks such as the Internet possible. All this is part of what we call globalisation, and we could label it as being the benign part of it. We can imagine a global village with its populace happily living together, not having other 'villages' to worry about anymore, in other words, no out-groups anymore. However, there is a question, and the question is, how will this *global village* be structured? Will there be lesser beings, 'slaves' and underlings at the bottom of the *global village*'s pyramid of power, and an elite ruling from the top? Today, the global champions of the world are the United States. Will they and their allies rule and the others be second class underlings? Or will the human rights message that calls for 'egalisation' in addition to globalisation be heard?

Egalisation

I use the word *egalisation* as opposed to creating hierarchies that lead to feelings of humiliation. Egalisation refers to a process that results in equal dignity, equal chances and enabling environments for all. The term egalisation is meant to avoid claiming that everybody should become equal and that there should be no differences between people. Egalisation is intended to rather highlight equal dignity, even in the face of a functional hierarchy. For example: the pilot of a plane is making the decisions in the air and not the passengers, that is functional hierarchy. But the passengers are treated as welcome guests. Egality can coexist with functional hierarchy that regards all participants as possessing equal dignity; egality cannot coexist, though, with hierarchy that defines some people as lesser beings.

In one vision of the future of the *global village*, some people are less and others more valuable. In a second vision, all people deserve the same respect and equal chances.

Since both visions are sometimes extremely close to each other, magnifying glasses are necessary to find out where a person or group is standing. The pilot of the plane is the boss in the air, and it is difficult to find out whether he thinks that the passengers are lesser beings as compared to him, or equal in dignity and worth. It is only the way in which he gives orders and the framing of his words that gives away his vision. It is precisely therefore that the actions of the world's top-dogs are currently so scrutinised, particularly by those of lesser resources.

Every person who at present inhabits the globe is categorised according to her power rank within the world order and how she deals with this. A travelling American, European, Japanese politician or business man, as well as local elites, are scrutinised with this magnifying glass by the rest. People want to know: Are these elites planning to dominate the *global village*, or their region? Will they treat the rest arrogantly as lesser beings or not? Are these people taking the human rights ideals they claim they believe in seriously? Are they humble? Or are they throwing their weight around? Do they include us in a common decision making process? Or are they trying to exploit us for their own gain? Do we really get the enabling environment that human rights promise us? Or are these promises merely hypocritical?

According to my view, the broad majority of the inhabitants of the non-Western parts of the planet would like to participate in the quality of life the West offers. The disadvantaged cannot but yearn for it, while many local elites overindulge in the West's luxury goods. Human rights are ideals that represent an invitation. They state that everybody is entitled to quality of life, to a dignified life. The disadvantaged of the world feel indeed invited. However, they fear that the invitation is not serious. And they feel humiliated by what they think is hypocrisy. Confronted with such accusations, elites, on the other side, feel as humiliated. They feel humiliated by the lack of thankfulness and recognition they perceive for the benevolent and generous leadership they either indeed provide, or see themselves as providing.

The two visions for the *global village*

Frontiers that divided the world in several villages may be removed so as to form one unified *global village* with equal dignity for all citizens. This is one vision of the future *global village*. In other words, the *global village* could be a place where everybody enjoys equal dignity regardless of race, gender, religion, colour, material wealth and other status markers.

As pointed out above, the crucial point would not so much be equality, but equal dignity and dignifying living conditions to all, something that would subsequently also further equality. This vision of a *global village* is represented by the human rights vision.

The other vision of the *global village* describes a society divided in hierarchical layers. It becomes a place of exploitation, where masters take advantage of lesser beings and assign lesser value to underlings. Formerly independent cultures existing side by side, would then be transformed into a world where the rich trump the rest. This vision resembles those social structures in human history within which rulers believed that gods had instated them and given them the right to dominate the rest. That rest would then be deemed as of lesser value. Status would not merely signify that some people are more recognised than others. It would be made essential: every human being would be assigned a higher or lesser amount of human value according to his or her status level in the pyramid of power.

These two visions are at the core of current global and local processes. The present formation of the *global village* is characterised by many transitions that illustrate this. For example, words such as *enemies*, *wars*, and *soldiers*, as well as words such as *they* and *us*, are words stemming from times when several villages inhabited the globe. These words lose their anchoring as soon as people conceive of the globe as one single village. Then *we* are in one boat, there are no imperial *enemies* anymore threatening from *outside* because there is no outside anymore. Likewise there is no *they* anymore because there is only one single *us*. That is, the word *enemy* that signifies people threatening *us* from *outside* loses its function together with the disappearance of the outside, as do words such as *wars* and *soldiers*. The only sentence that fits the reality of a village, including the *global village*, would be, *We* are all *neighbours*; some of us are *good neighbours*, some are *bad neighbours*, and in order to safeguard social peace we need police [not anymore soldiers to defend against enemies in wars]. This sentence fits, because a village usually comprises good and bad neighbours, while enemies traditionally have their place outside of the village's boundaries, as have soldiers and wars. And a village enjoys peace when all inhabitants get along without resorting to violence; polarisations into *friends* on one side and *enemies* on the other are not helpful for long-term peace, because they indicate that *bad neighbours* actually are not only *bad* but *outsiders*.

In the course of the past months we witnessed a historic transition, away from the word *enemy* to the word *terrorist*, a transition that illuminates how language adapts to new realities. Terrorists are *inner* enemies. They represent the very *bad neighbour*, the specific subgroup within the category labelled *enemy* that can occur *inside*. We witness the disappearance of *enemies* in the sense of people attacking from *outside.* A *global village* can by definition not have *enemies* in the traditional sense; it can only harbour *inner enemies* or *terrorists*. And to safeguard social peace within the *global village police* is essential, such as peace keepers and peace enforcers. What is obsolete is the traditional *soldier* who left home to reap national and personal glory, fame, and triumph. Or, when traditional Rwandan aristocratic warriors sat together in the evenings – and I got vivid descriptions of this – they chanted their "names of glory"; central to a warrior's glory was the number of enemies he had killed. A modern member of a peace keeping force would be reprimanded if he or she boasted in the same way of having caused the death of human beings.

However, in daily life we still observe that words such as *enemies*, *war*, *they*, and *us* are used widely. The question arises: why and by whom? Are people who use such words merely sluggish in adapting their vocabulary to new realities? In other words, are inexperienced at best, or fools at worst? Or, do those who use such words want to signal something very

significant, namely that they would indeed like to split the *global village* in *us* and *them*? Not anymore in a horizontal way between villages as before, but in a vertical way, in hierarchical levels of those *up* and those *down*?

At the core of these questions is therefore the issue of globalisation and egalisation. Human rights indicate that globalisation should be combined with egalisation. But old Realpolitik indicates that a pyramid of power could be implemented in the *global village*. Two very different scenarios are thus possible, one that combines globalisation with egalisation and another that does not.

In the first case *national interest* would include concern for the well-being of all humankind, in the second case *national interest* would mean defending or conquering the master's throne, or at least a position as high up as possible in the *global village*'s pyramid of power. In the first case leaders who needed to *protect* their people against terror, would perceive the security and well-being of their people as being embedded in the security and well-being of humankind. Such leaders would put the emphasis on fighting *for*, namely for global cohesion. In contrast, in the second case, the term *protecting my people* would mean exclusion, fighting *against*, namely against *enemies*, whose evil motivations would be seen as stemming from nothing but their evil nature. Humiliation would be felt by all potential underlings at any attempt by top-dogs to realise the vision of a *global village* as an exploitative pyramid of power. Humiliation would likewise be felt by top-dogs when discovering that their leadership is not unequivocally welcome.

Globalisation without Egalisation?

What do the two visions for the future of the *global village* entail? Whoever fancies the first vision of a hierarchical *global village* where top-dogs exploit underdogs, may want to try to become a top-dog. There will be top-dogs at the very global level: the members of a world superpower elite; there will also be top-dogs at the regional or local level, in a local hierarchy. Local hierarchies would serve as mandarins for the global top-dog, and help keep the global hierarchy in place. This was the traditional strategy in place. This was the traditional strategy in empires; rulers associated themselves with intermediary classes of aids. These aids would have an own interest in keeping this order because they also profited from exploiting their underlings. Often these aids were formerly independent local lords who at some point in history were subjugated by a stronger centralising force.

The *global village* would in this case comprise local tyrants who ally themselves to a global ruler in order to exploit the rest. The global superpower would support those tyrants, and vice versa, and regional conflicts would be manipulated and fanned in this spirit.

Humiliation would be present everywhere in such a context. Underlings would be systematically humiliated; this would be seen as necessary strategy to maintain the system. Many underlings would feel humiliated, while rulers would emphasise their benevolence and feel humiliated by lack of reverence. However, even more importantly, humiliation would be employed for the age-old power-keeping strategy of 'divide and rule'. 'Divide and rule' is a strategy that works best when the fear of humiliation is used as active agent. The strategy is used by a third party that wants to rule and pitches two other parties at each others' throats by telling each of them that the other is about to humiliate them. The third party reaps the victory after the two others have weakened each other. Like in the following example.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Jimmy Carter's National Security Adviser, describes such a 'divide and rule' strategy. The Soviet Union was decisively weakened by being 'aided' into fearing humiliation from the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan. The former director of the CIA, Robert Gates (1996), states in his memoirs that American intelligence services began to aid the Mujahadeen six months before the Soviet intervention, contrary to the official version that the Soviet intervention preceded US involvement. Zbigniew Brzezinski is asked in an interview by the Le Nouvel Observateur (1998) whether he regrets to have lured the Soviet Union into a trap by helping the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan. Brzezinski responds, 'Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter. We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War. Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war unsupportable by the government, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the break-up of the Soviet empire' (Le Nouvel Observateur, 1998, p. 1). Brzezinski is then asked, "And neither do you regret having supported the Islamic fundamentalism, having given arms and advice to future terrorists?" He replies, 'What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?' (p. 1). Thus, Moslems and Soviets were set up against each other in order to destroy each other and provide the third party, the United States, with the victory. The Mujahadeen believed they had to avert cultural, religious, and national humiliation by the Soviet Union who, however, was rather drawn in because of the US involvement; Afghanistan was used as a ram bock without being aware of it. The Soviet Union was lured because their Cold War enemy, the United States, were hiding behind a battleground that was so insignificant that nuclear might was inapplicable and at the same time so difficult that conventional warfare was ineffective, thus indeed bringing about Vietnam-like demoralisation. The United States triumphed.

Many people in the United States are deeply committed to human rights ideals and put their weight behind them; after all, the American declaration of independence is part of the historical foundation of human rights ideals. Thus, American triumph entails the potential to further the triumph of human rights. In contrast, a *global village* built as hierarchical pyramid of power would have to endure humiliation in a multitude of ways.

Human rights ideals and humiliation

Conversely, whoever works for the vision of human rights ruling the *global village*, will react in profoundly different ways. Such persons and groups will try to empower people so as to create a world of equal chances and enabling environments for all. Local or global tyrants will be regarded as illegitimate and criticised. Currently this is the reigning vision for the world, at least from the official point of view of the world's current elites in the West and many human rights advocating individuals and organisations around the world. Human rights have gained the status of moral correctness that is expressed in a certain 'gut feeling' that has emerged worldwide during the past two centuries. It is the gut feeling that it is wrong when masters treat other humans as lesser beings.

It is not more than about 250 years ago that humankind started its shift from a hierarchical view on human beings' dignity to a non-hierarchical concept. South Africa commenced this process of transition even more recently; still some white South Africans believe in white supremacy today. They feel humiliated by accusations that they are cruel and heartless people; they point at the fact that black South Africans had a much better life than their black brothers and sisters in the rest of Africa. In other words, their gut feeling does not link a sense

of injustice to white supremacy; on the contrary, they experience themselves as benevolent patrons.

However, public discourse is currently not dominated by such vocabulary; on the contrary, buzzwords reign such as *peace*, *stability*, *freedom*, *democracy*, *empowerment*, and so forth. The problem with this language, however, is that each of these words has potentially two meanings, one meaning within the context of the first vision of the *global village*, and another meaning within the concept of the second vision. These buzzwords can be understood by tyrants as calls for securing their grip on their underlings, they may want the *freedom* for their interest groups to highjack a pseudo-democratic system so as to provide *stability*, *peace*, and *empowerment* to precisely their constituency. Human rights advocates, on the other hand, understand the very same buzzwords as calls to extend the promises they entail to all humankind, and not only to some elites. In short, words are treacherous, what counts are deeds; only deeds show the actual scope of justice such words are aimed at.

Feelings of humiliation emerge in the hotbed of this struggle between two visions of the *global village* and its sub-units. Underlings feel humiliated by oppressors, yet, even more by people who lie to them and raise hopes that they then do not fulfil. The West is at present in such a position. The West broadcasts the message of human rights while being perceived as maintaining the opposite reality on the ground. Human rights are like an invitation to the disadvantaged around the world to join the West – after all, all humans are equal – yet, when the poor suitors from far-flung countries want to move in and get 'married' to the rich, they are thrown out. Boats filled with people who seek the promise of 'equality' are turned back, negotiators who try to reach fair global rules and regulations, are blocked.

However, not only underlings feel humiliated, also the rich and powerful feel humiliated. Many in the rich West are fervently working for human rights and feel deeply humiliated by suspicions doubting their motives. They feel that their efforts are ridiculed, minimised, devalued, humiliated. During my fieldwork in Africa I carried out more then a hundred interviews with Western representatives in humanitarian organisations. Many had entered into this life with very high ideals and felt deeply hurt, misunderstood and humiliated when being accused that they merely wanted the fun and excitement of their work and abuse others' suffering for their own gains. Some had descended into cynicism and disillusionment and seemed to even feel ashamed of ever having had ideals. They felt squeezed between superiors who sometimes did not live the ideals they officially stood for and recipients of aid who did not truly appreciate their efforts. Maren (1997) describes similar dynamics.

However, there is also another group. It includes those who focus primarily on their efforts to alleviate the situation and tend to be blind to injustices they indeed may cause. Coleman (2000) describes the propensity of the powerful to be blind with respect to the feelings of humiliation they cause in underlings and that very well may reach boiling points. This 'humiliated fury' (Scheff 1997, p.11) may accumulate in those with lesser power, a humiliated fury that very well may explode, especially when there is 'nothing to lose' anymore, when a human life may not count much anymore, even not one's own.

Regional conflicts are but mirrors of the larger picture. Human rights ideals intensify feelings of humiliation, because any deprivation or inequality that was legitimate before – as God's will or nature's order – is now illegitimate. It is important to realise that these heightened feelings of humiliation have profound effects on people. Those who preach human rights better become more aware that they intensify feelings of humiliation – what I would call the

'nuclear bomb of feelings' – when they overlook the fact that reality does not follow ideals. Feelings of humiliation emerging around the world can therefore, ironical as it may sound, be interpreted as a success of human rights teachings, because feelings of humiliation are sharpened particularly in contexts where ideals are created that do not correspond to reality. In short, when ideals arrive and reality does not follow, there is a problem.

Humiliation and humility

One may discuss the reasons for why human rights were able to permeate the minds and souls of so many people around the world. Human rights give a voice to those at the bottom of the pyramid of power and to their advocates. Insofar they are nothing new. Human history has always seen revolts by underlings who yearned for a better life. What is special with human rights is that they do not only preach the 'death of the king', but also the 'death of oppressive hierarchy' altogether. Formerly, underlings used to topple elites only to replace them and keep hierarchy in place. Rhetoric of equality would be maintained by revolutionaries and 'freedom fighters' only until they had grabbed the rulers' seats. This was then the end of equality. This may even be the 'natural' course of revolutions if nothing else intervenes. Even the Russian revolution ended this way.

However, this course is hampered nowadays by globalisation, or better, by technology that makes such hypocrisy difficult to carry out. The same technology that contributed to the process of globalisation, the technology of mobility and communication, has brought people closer to each other. It shrank distances on the globe and became the vehicle for a continuous revolution. For example: a group of Afghan women went out with cameras hidden under their burkhas; they took pictures and published them on the Internet. American women and human rights advocates became aware of this site. They forged a coalition and contributed with their resources.

The underlings around the world should be lifted up, on one side, and masters learn humility on the other. To use traffic as a metaphor: there should be traffic lights that give the right to pass to large and small vehicles alike. Former underlings with their small vehicles should be encouraged to pass when the light is green, they should not be humiliated by being told that they are not worth being let through. On the other side, masters should be taught to respect red lights and not regard them as humiliation. In other words, also those with large vehicles have to stop when the light turns red, in a new spirit of humility, and wait like everybody else. This learning process is important for everybody, it cross-cuts many other fault lines.

To give an example, although many Somalis perceive themselves as victims, many among them have still to learn humility. Somalia has never been a proper part of any empire that deserved the name, probably because Somali nomads are known to be proud, stubborn, unruly and fickle. Their pastoral democracy (Lewis, 1961) was built on equality, but it did not provide a strong hierarchical ranking order that a conqueror could easily use for his own goals. In other words, Somalis are difficult to humiliate; they are too proud. Somalis are proud – for example, of the fact that they did not bow to colonisation in the same way as others did in Africa. Yet, there is a dark side to that, namely that some Somalis may not always know enough about the humility that is necessary for effective cooperation. Local warlord-ism, for example, undermines attempts to build functioning 'traffic rules' that protect every citizen. Afghanistan is another example; many mountainous or scarce regions preserved a

degree of pristine pride that made them difficult to subjugate for former empires. However, this also makes them difficult to integrate into a new world system where humility is important. Resisting humiliation is not everything, learning humility is equally important.

Reactive devaluation and the task for a third party

One aspect of this humility could be to accept help. People, who live in regions of protracted conflict and are caught in continuous cycles of violence, are not necessarily at their best with regard to balanced thinking and rational protection of their own interest. In-group and out-group differentiations alone lead to serious biases in perception and judgment. This is compounded by the continuous stress of violent and armed confrontations, and finally by the burning intensity of feelings of humiliation. Barriers to conflict resolution will become insurmountable merely because of psychological limitations suffered by the involved parties. Ross & Ward (1995) worked intensively on such barriers, for example on *reactive devaluation* (Ross, 1995). Reactive devaluation means that any proposition for compromise that is put forward by an adversary is rejected, regardless of its contents; while the own group's arguments are regarded by its members with sympathy, just because they come from the own group. Common ground that could serve as a platform for a solution of the conflict is systematically underestimated under such circumstances and possible betterments of the situation not grasped.

Parents may observe this in their children when they have a fight. Children may appear to be quite calm and grown up at times, however, under pressure, in a fight, they may regress and act suddenly very childlike. Apt parents recognise this and help their children out without belittling them. Cooling strategies will restore a more adult posture in children. Yet, not only children need such help; also adults may benefit from it at times. And this is where the third party has to step in.

The first task for third parties would be to extend empathy, compassion and understanding to all members of all sub-groups and forge alliances between the moderates on all side. The characteristic of moderates is that they are more capable of rising above the level of opposing sub-groups and perceive all members as part of a larger in-group. One example for a moderate is Nelson Mandela. He succeeded in transforming his feelings of humiliation after 27 years of prison, into a constructive contribution to social and societal change. He distanced himself from his own urge for revenge.

This inner distancing from the urge for revenge is a sign of personal strength and great maturity. It is this very maturation that the world has to bring about in all people who are caught up in feelings of humiliation and drawn towards violent retaliating acts, if it wants to become a *global village* with an intact social fabric that is the precondition for mental health. Third parties are needed to bring about this distancing step. Third parties, or bystanders, as described by Staub (1989), are in fact all mature and moderate forces in the global community of human beings. They should become active and facilitate constructive social change towards a *global village* based on human rights. Extremists are those who are most caught in humiliation, both as feelings and retaliating acts, and they deepen the rifts of hatred instead of healing humiliation.

Moderates of all camps and third parties have to curb extremism and invite their representatives back into the camp of moderation, of patient change, and of long-term solutions. Mature, moderate, responsible people are called upon to invite young, intelligent

people to follow the example of a Nelson Mandela, and not follow promoters of terror who at some point have translated empathy with suffering into an urge to retaliate with violence.

Moderation in daily life

How could a reader of this journal, for example a worker in an area of armed conflict, meet a situation in which moderation is indicated? And how could he or she accomplish that in practice? During my time in Egypt I frequently witnessed the following scene: An accident happens in the street in the middle of overcrowded Cairo. The two male drivers get out of their cars and look angrily at the damage. They build up anger and subsequently shout and jump at each others necks: they scream, they pull each other at their cloths, they even hit each other. Around this scene, in the street, in coffee houses, in shops, people's attention is caught. The expressions on people's faces change and very fast reach a common expression of seriousness, of urgency, and of respect and involvement. About ten to twenty men, preferably young and strong ones, slowly leave whatever they just did and come to the place of the scene. They separate in two groups of about five to ten men each. Each group of ten men assumes responsibility for one of the opponents. Each opponent is held back and talked to by his 'party'. He is held back sufficiently so that he cannot really hit and hurt is opponent any more, but he is on the other hand not held back too much, so that he still can shout and scream and make brief attack trials. (Therefore it needs strong men as actors, since a man in rage can be quite overwhelming.) At the same time each opponent is talked to in a very special manner. His 'facilitators' speak calmly and with a high degree of respect to him. They show him that they are fully aware of the urgency of any situation which forces a man to go out of his way in such a dramatic manner. They try to understand the nature of the conflict. This can take up various amounts of time dependent on the nature of the conflict; longer time in more complicated cases than a car accident. The 'facilitators' propose various compromises designed to resolve the conflict. At the same time they don't overestimate the rational side of the conflict, they constantly grant respect to the fact that the opponents are psychologically overburdened by the conflict. After about ten to fifteen minutes the opponents' rage loses thrust; they agree on a compromise in cases where this is appropriate. If necessary some facilitators promise to act as witnesses and/or enforcers of the compromises. The conflict is over; the opponents leave; the facilitators go back to their previous occupation; as much as they stayed calm during the conflict, they do not find it necessary to be exited over it afterwards; calming conflicts is but routine.

This story shows that moderation may at times be best provided by third parties who are not involved in the conflict and who are committed to safeguarding social cohesion in a respectful manner and without humiliating any participant. The involved opponents' feelings may often be too hot to be moderate, at least during conflict peaks. A Mandela is all too often missing. The example shows furthermore that an overpowering force of moderates may be needed, something like a ratio of twenty to two, twenty 'moderates' to two angry opponents. Yet, sometimes even a twenty-to-two ratio may not even be sufficient, especially when opponents were allowed to become extremist leaders of political movements. Armed conflicts are usually embedded within an angry atmosphere of 'we' have to stand united against the 'enemy,' 'we' have to protect ourselves, and if you do not agree with 'us,' you are our 'enemy.' This sentence would be interpreted by extremists as saying, 'we' have to eliminate the 'enemy.' In contrast, a moderate would say, 'we' protect ourselves best by working towards a larger 'we' in a constructive manner so as to include those we call 'enemies' today. Both interpretations usually compete, whereby the 'hotter' interpretation promises fast redemption for painful feelings and therefore has a direct appeal, while moderation is much

more difficult to 'sell' and therefore needs the twenty-to-two support to gain weight and credibility.

Workers, who wish to promote moderation in a situation that has been taken over by extremists and their polarizing language, have to build positions in the spirit of the twenty-to-two ratio. This means gathering as many allies as possible from the global third party, the international community. Together they can give weight to moderate positions, help to diminish extremist language, and forge alliances of moderates across all opposing camps. The coming into being of the *global village* facilitates this process, since it becomes increasingly apparent that social fires, wherever they burn, may inflame the whole global village. Local workers could also start collecting and broadcasting all moderate proverbs, traditions, and ancient wisdoms that the opponents' own cultures provide.

Finally, promoting moderation means continuously emphasising the children's future, a future that usually none of any warring party wishes to be bloody and violent.[3]

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[3] *Edna Adan is the former wife of late President of "Somaliland," Mohammad Haji Ibrahim Egal,[3] and Evelin Gerda Lindner interviewed her on 3rd December 1998 in Hargeisa, Somaliland. She had a message to the global village:*

"The international community is usually the one who encourages dictators and the oppressors to progress. Without mentioning any names, you have government dictators who have millions and billions of dollars in banks. Those billions of dollars were not generated through a salary that they earned or a reward that they were given by the people they were heading. Those billions came from the money that belongs to the people, that was given by the international community. The international community should act intelligently, and fairly and honestly and not feed, not allow oppressors, to accumulate so much of the people's money. They should not give them arms, they should not give them money and they should not help them to remain in the power. Because it is the international world that maintains dictators in power. The bombs that were being thrown on my people in Hargeisa in Somaliland, were not manufactured by Siad Barre. They came from all corners of the world; they were American, Pakistani, Egyptian, Chinese, Russian, Czechoslovak, Yugoslav - any body who made arms, who made tanks, who made ammunition sold it or gave it to Siad Barre, to use against his people. So, where was the international world when that was being used against the weak? It should have said 'no,' it should have stopped the inflow of arms to Somalia in that time. It should have prevented the slaughter of the civilians."

Edna Adan concluded that an international community with double standards is humiliating: "I think the international world has different standards. It preaches human rights, and fairness and so on, in literature! In Europe! But then when that humiliation, and that aggression, and that hurt, has taken place in a poor, remote, developing country like Somaliland, no one wants to be bothered, let them stew in their own juice! And these are divided standards, and unfair standards ... It is a humiliation! So, the international community is to blame and I hope you have very strong cupboards in which you can lock up your conscience! Because all the civilians who died here died from bombs that were manufactured by people in the developed countries."

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